

Teachers' RA 4670 awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic times

Giselle Ann Alcoran-Alvarez^{a*}, Negros Oriental State University, Physics and Geology Department, Cagawasan Avenue, Dumaguete City 6200, Negros Oriental, Philippines <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0632-544X>

Maria Milagros C. Velez, Graduate School, Saint Paul University Dumaguete 6200, Negros Oriental, Philippines. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6304-0956>

Christine Lorraine T. Tijing, Principal 1, Bayawan National High School, Brgy. Villareal, Bayawan City 6221, Negros Oriental, Philippines. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5773-3318>

Carlito A. Tapis Jr., Secondary School Teacher-1, Julian Calibo Memorial High School, Brgy. Sto. Niño, Tanjay City 6204, Negros Oriental, Philippines. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5382-7392>

James D. Basas, Secondary School Teacher 2, Negros Oriental High School, Dumaguete City 6200, Negros Oriental, Philippines. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2471-6241>

Christian Edu B. Villegas, Guihulngan National High School, Guihulngan City 6214, Negros Oriental, Philippines. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2137-0812>

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Abstract

This study investigated the public schoolteachers' level of awareness of the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (RA 4670). An online survey was administered to public schoolteachers from three congressional districts and data were treated using appropriate statistical tools. The results revealed the respondents' high awareness on the observance of due process at each stage of any disciplinary procedure, gradual salary progression every 3 years and required information was given in case of transfer. However, they were less aware of the permanency status of non-eligible teachers after rendering 10 years of service with no probationary period for eligible teachers. Also, there was a significant difference between teachers from districts 2 and 3, with the latter having a higher level of awareness. Therefore, this study recommends intensified information dissemination of the Magna Carta for Teachers, and further study may examine the relationship between teachers' experience and awareness level of the said law.

Keywords: Pandemic times, Magna Carta, RA 4670, ANOVA, awareness.

* ADDRESS OF CORRESPONDENCE: Giselle Ann Alcoran-Alvarez, Negros Oriental State University, Physics and Geology Department, Cagawasan Avenue, Dumaguete City 6200, Negros Oriental, Philippines.

Email address: giselle9407@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Great teachers are indispensable for improving the citizenry anchored on 21st-century skills. Within this context, the Philippines has persistently sought changes for quality education even during the pandemic times heightened by societal dynamicity. In light of the crucial role that educators play in nation-building, it is necessary that the nation promotes the protection and security of rights in these difficult times. Teachers at the Department of Education (DepEd) have access to a variety of professional development projects, including the in-service trainings, teacher induction programme (TIP) and other DepEd-related programmes and workshops. With the insights and knowledge gained from these capability-building initiatives, teachers become more invested in the existing teaching-skill enhancement programmes, which motivate them to become well versed in a variety of documents and policies (DepEd Order No. 42, 2017).

To address the need for qualified and dependable teachers, the Philippine government is advised to supervise programmes and projects to ensure that administrators and instructors maintain their shared goals (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). These are typically referred to as turnover targets and are typically established when not only the assignment of school administrators but also the political system affecting the bureaucracy is constantly changing. Although turnover targets are based on the need to achieve the nation's development priorities, they frequently result in work-related disillusionment and discontent. The frustrations of teachers include unanswered questions by administrators, dissatisfaction, unresolved grievances, non-observance of ranking procedures, excessive workload and a lack of financial transparency that existed even during the COVID-19 era. Some authors opined that the lack of understanding of current laws, guidelines, policies and tactics that address their interests could be attributable to the well-known causes of teacher dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is essential that educators have extensive information and education regarding their rights and benefits, as specified by the Philippine legislation (Rice, 2020).

To safeguard, protect and improve the lives of teachers, the Philippines passed the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act 4670), also commonly known as RA 4670. Although issues with responsibilities, finances and social dilemmas cannot be resolved immediately, having effective regulations would lessen the occurrence. RA 4670 grants educators privileges, regulations/policies on employment, working hours and pay, along with a variety of benefits, such as the ability to join or establish teacher associations, and it addresses the welfare of teachers (Arellano Law Foundation, n.d.). As a result, it is crucial that every public schoolteacher understands the rules and regulations that apply to them (Esguerra, 2018).

It is acknowledged that awareness is a cognitive and emotive function. It is about how a person perceives the facts of himself. The ultimate factor for the realisation of self-environment interaction and the universe is consciousness, which extends conscious zones proportionately (Eski, 2019). The capacity for awareness provides the necessary feedback to manage actions and reactions between the self and the environment. It is impossible to build successful self-environment interactions without such feedback. Therefore, the availability of such feedback assists an individual in overcoming encountered difficulties (Akkoyun, 2005).

When a person becomes conscious, new mental schemes are generated, expanding the consciousness zone for oneself and the surrounding environment. Nevertheless, certain stimulants

do not reach a certain threshold to activate the sensory organs to generate a new scheme (Dokmen, 2002). In this situation, a person does not build new schemes; hence, awareness is not established.

The current study aims to establish the level of awareness among public schoolteachers across all grade levels as outlined in RA 4670 during the pandemic while Negros Oriental was under the modified general community quarantine. This study aims to augment the indicators used in the previous study (Alvarez et al., 2020) by adding more awareness-level indicators.

1.1. Conceptual framework

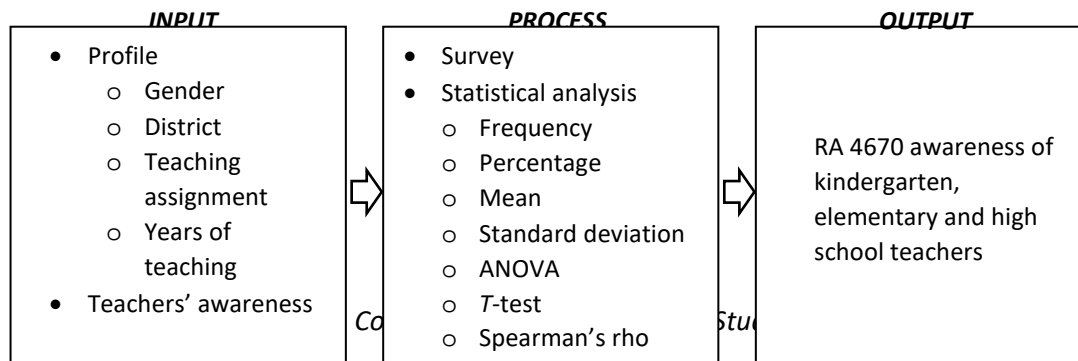


Figure 1 shows the study's conceptual framework using the input process output (IPO) (Gouran, 1973) and survey (Karasar, 2015) models. First, the profile and teachers' awareness were established. Then, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the survey data. From these, the level of RA 4670 awareness was determined.

1.2. Related research

Teachers' duties not only focus on academic tasks but also on numerous co-curricular activities beyond the ordinary rule stipulated in the law. Educators are given ancillaries related or not related to their field of specialisation. Thus, even a DepEd official remarked that the demise of two educators in 2018 prompted DepEd to lessen the unreasonable demands and requests on educators' time, however, muddled (Mateo, 2018).

On teaching loads, teachers in public schools need to cover teaching assignments on a full-time basis. A maximum of 6 hours per day is given to every teacher. In the practical and pragmatic sense, a few extra obligations are given to each educator. Nevertheless, these additional responsibilities are not included in school timetables. Various government programmes not related to teaching are assigned to them, but in reality, educators wish to focus on actual teaching and other related works on teaching inside the classroom, taking into account diverse learning techniques in the the classroom setting. Additionally, issues of remuneration were not among the concerns mentioned during interviews. The foremost issue deemed of prime importance was the teaching load due to the teaching hours.

David and Albert (2015) pointed out that educators undergo steps in promotions, evaluations and assessments using the required individual performance form, with incentives as remuneration. When the school year terminates, teachers report the drop-out rate per class, which is used as one of the

performance indicators for teachers (DepEd, 2012). Similarly, approaches, rewards, strategies and procedures can be used to achieve a 0% dropout rate. Teachers are urged to record and monitor each student's reasons for absence. Teachers visit the families of drop-out candidates to encourage them to continue their education (Railsback, 2004).

Chetty et al. (2014) emphasised the primary role of teachers in students' future success in life. Such an impact could only significantly improve through professional development. Teacher efficiency is positively linked to students' living standards. Such potential of high teaching efficiency in enhancing students' lives makes it a must for the teacher's viability.

Goe and Stickler (2008) linked 'teacher effectiveness' to better student performance, validated usually as improved assessment grades. Moreover, better education for poverty alleviation is highly expected. Hargreaves (2005) and Harris (2009) highlight the invaluable role of education in getting opportunities for better lives. Filipino students enrol in government institutions, especially impoverished ones, relying on better education for future success free from poverty. Also, public officials argue that the new K+12 thrust would bring about poverty alleviation in the country. In fact, before the pandemic, teachers visit homes to follow-up and give extra guidance to poorly performing and dropping-out students (Railsback, 2004).

The government must oversee the support they require to ensure that teachers are effective and are of high quality. Work-related discontent can result from a lack of support, notably financial assistance. Determining elements that enhance teacher performance helps lessen frustrations (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). Furthermore, that teachers know about their rights and privileges is vital, as guaranteed and stated in the country's numerous legal systems (Rice, 2020). The RA 4670 defends, enhances and strengthens the status of teachers in many economic and social circumstances in the Philippines. This outlines and specifies several teacher rights and policies pertaining to hiring, working hours, remuneration, benefits and the formation or affiliation of teacher unions (Arellano Law Foundation, n.d.). Thus, every teacher in government schools should gain knowledge of the laws and penalties associated with this Republic Act.

Awareness in the teaching profession is about being cognitively and affectively aware of one's self and the environment. It is about knowing what one knows and does not know regarding their rights and privileges regarding teaching loads, leave benefits, promotion and remuneration, and use these information and schemes in one's life according to demands and needs. Becoming aware is an activity dealing with the cognitive and affective parts of the human system. When people form new mental schemes like extending the consciousness zone, the cognitive and affective part activates and leads to awareness. Through it, consciousness of the world increases. A stimulant is noticeable when it is strong enough and goes beyond a certain limit straight to the senses. However, there are times when people are unaware of the stimulant reaching the senses. Thus, awareness happens through the association of a new stimulant with the existing schemes, the reaction from experience about it and interaction with it so the new stimulant can be noticeable (Dokmen, 2002).

Yontef and Jacobs (2008) stated that awareness is an experience of somehow establishing contact with the important event using energy and cognition, and attaining the required support at an individual and environmental level (cited by Clarkson, 2004). Moreover, Akkoyun (2005) posit that awareness is about the realities of oneself – one's knowledge who he really is. It is a significant experience and a key factor to realise the individual–environment interaction. The level of awareness

helps in giving necessary feedback to regulate people and the environment. The feedback of experiences and the effects of reactions to the environment are the two basic noteworthy issues in which a good individual–environment interaction relies on. Without it, is nearly impossible to have an effective interaction.

COVID-19 transformed lives worldwide. The pandemic victims experienced fear, trauma, depression and anxiety. The pandemic has interrupted the lifestyles of Filipinos, particularly teachers, who are concerned for the safety of their loved ones. Although Filipino teachers maintain an optimistic outlook despite the COVID-19, they are nonetheless subject to anxiety as the pandemic continues internationally. These teachers know how to handle educational, social and personal worries. This article shows that Filipino teachers adopt anxiety-reduction strategies because they follow DepEd and CHED's preventive and pedagogical programmes in the fight against COVID-19. Because of the insufficient teachers' response to the online questionnaire and reliance on self-reported experiences, this study cannot be extended to all Filipino teachers. The study has unanticipated societal effects. The social ramifications of this research depend on faculty communication skills and adhere to government laws regarding distancing and safety precautions posted on various media. There are no previous studies regarding the experience of teachers forced to stay at home during the COVID-19 outbreak, demonstrating the novelty of this work. Further research should focus on the vital importance of Facebook, email, texting etc., during the pandemic, and a comprehensive examination should analyse the consequences of the pandemic on the mental and emotional health of Filipino teachers and students (Talidad & Toquero, 2020).

In the province of Negros Oriental, Philippine policies and laws for teachers were implemented by DepEd during the COVID-19 lockdown. All national and regional officers of the DepEd were then directed to identify all vital work concerns and requirement for that period (16 March–14 April 2022) and set alternative working arrangements to ensure required distancing, as well as to finish all work requirements. All workers, from regulars to contractual, faculty and staff, were tasked to oversee the COVID-19 situation. A task force was formed to implement all anti-COVID-19 measures, and teachers were allowed to use Microsoft Teams for teaching–learning. ICTs were tasked to activate mobile online programme and training sessions (DepEd Memorandum No. 043, s. 2020).

Another letter formed the Central Office Task Force COVID-19, which is in charge of executing preventative measures in the Central Office, such as cleanliness, sanitising places and setting school worker and visitor norms (DTFC-19 Memo No. 002, s. 2020). Additionally, teachers were authorised to utilise Microsoft Teams for educational purposes to facilitate efficient distance learning. The ICTs were ordered to swiftly put up the programme on the DepEd Central Office officials' laptops and mobile devices and conduct simultaneous training sessions (DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Memo No. 012, s. 2020). Additionally, all school heads were authorised to send all kinds of ICT/technological devices to activate online trainings and courses during this period. Accountability for ICT losses and mismanagement was put in place (Office of the Undersecretary for Administration MEMO 00-0420-0029, 2020).

To resolve the ensuing financial crises among teachers, the DepEd Instituted Republic Act 11469, a financial act asked lenders to give affected teachers time leeway to make payments delayed by the COVID crisis, in the spirit of cooperation and consideration for limitations of the DepEd payroll programmes (DepEd Order 003, s. 2020). More importantly, significant policies were instituted to

promote mental health and psychological wellness among teachers and students amidst COVID-19. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service initiated prayers, art-based programmes and other exercises to support healthy coping and adaptation to enhanced community quarantine and lockdown environments (DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Memo No. 27, s. 2020). Lastly, teachers were provided materials and activity guides while learners without Internet and television were provided playbooks and comics (DepEd Task Force COVID-19 Memo No. 109, s. 2020).

A recent study was published by Alvarez et al. (2020) on teachers' level of awareness of RA 4670. However, knowledge gaps were found, specifically the inclusion of kindergarten teachers as respondents and the awareness level was gauged only from 20 indicators of the Act.

Other indicators in the said Act were not covered. Thus, this current research aims to comprehensively measure the extent of teachers' awareness at all grade levels on RA 4670 policies during the COVID-19 lockdown, when the province of Negros Oriental was under the modified general community quarantine. This study likewise aims to fill the paucity of indicators used in the previous study by adding more awareness-level indicators.

1.3. Purpose of the study

This research aims to determine levels of awareness among kindergarten, elementary and secondary schoolteachers of Negros Oriental province regarding the Magna Carta for Teachers' provisions on acceptance, working hours, remuneration, receivables, leaves, retirement programmes and labour union through the specific questions:

1. How aware are teachers of RA 4670 during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Are the levels of awareness among male teachers statistically different than female teachers?
3. Are the levels of awareness statistically different among teacher groups from the three congressional districts?
4. Are the levels of awareness statistically different among teacher groups from kinder to secondary?
5. Is there a significant relationship between years of teaching experience and RA 4670 level of awareness?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research model

This research employs a survey technique that tries to accurately characterise the current conditions. In short, it attempts to depict an occurrence, person or thing in the present state as they are (Karasar, 2015, as cited in Eski, 2019).

2.2. Participants

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage of the teacher respondents' gender, district and years of teaching. A total of 374 kindergarten, elementary and high school teachers from the three school districts of Negros Oriental, Philippines, participated in the conduct of this study.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Respondents and the Overall Level of Awareness

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	305	82
Male	69	18
District		
District 1	112	30
District 2	159	43
District 3	103	28
Teaching assignment		
Kindergarten	129	34
Elementary	100	27
High school	145	39
Years of teaching		
0–5 years	182	49
6–10 years	79	21
11–15 years	58	16
16–20 years	24	6
21 years and above	31	8
Total N = 374.		

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents were from District 2. It means that teachers from this district are more equipped with Internet and gadgets than the other two districts. Furthermore, almost half of the respondents were new to the teaching profession. This implies that the new teachers are more responsive and are technology savvy compared to the old teachers. Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that as the number of years gets higher, the lesser is the number of respondents which could imply that the survey generated more respondents from the younger teachers due to their proficiency in using technology.

2.3. Data collection tools

This study utilised a 30-item, self-made questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument based on RA 4670. The tool was reviewed by experts and approved by the St. Paul University Dumaguete Ethics Committee. It has a good internal consistency with a coefficient value of 0.95 for Cronbach's alpha (Aron et al., 2013).

2.4. Data collection process

The level of teachers' awareness was investigated through an online survey from 28 January 2021 to 12 February 2021, which was exactly 1 year after the first suspension of classes in the entire province. The Microsoft survey form was distributed through purposive and snowball techniques using Facebook and email due to restrictions of the Negros Oriental province's COVID-19 risk reduction policy of modified general community quarantine. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) suggested these mixed sampling methods when respondents are hard to reach.

2.5. Data analysis

Data were examined in this study using descriptive and inferential statistics. Microsoft Excel and SPSS 27 were specifically used to compile and acquire the frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), *t*-test and Spearman's rho. Standard deviation (SD) values less than or equal to three were interpreted as homogenous response levels, but those more than or equal to three were interpreted as heterogeneous (Aiken & Susane, 2001, as cited in Refugio et al., 2019). Moreover, the mean (*M*) of the teachers' RA 4670 level of awareness is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean of the Teachers' RA 4670 Level of Awareness

Scale	Verbal description range	Verbal descriptions
5	4.21–5.00	Very Much (VM)
4	3.41–4.20	Much (Mc)
3	2.61–3.40	Moderate (Md)
2	1.81–2.60	Less (L)
1	1.00–1.80	Not at all (NAT)

Furthermore, Spearman's correlation coefficient (ρ_s) was interpreted as shown in Table 3 (Dancey & Reidey, 2007 as cited in Akoglu, 2018).

Table 3

Spearman's Correlation Coefficients

ρ_s		Interpretation
0	0	Zero
+0.1	-0.1	Weak

+0.2	-0.2	Weak
+0.3	-0.3	Weak
+0.4	-0.4	Moderate
+0.5	-0.5	Moderate
+0.6	-0.6	Moderate
+0.7	-0.7	Strong
+0.8	-0.8	Strong
+0.9	-0.9	Strong
+1.0	-1.0	Perfect

3. Results and discussion

The teachers' RA 4670 level of awareness mean, standard deviation and interpretation are presented in Table 4. The overall awareness mean score of the kindergarten, elementary and high school teachers in the province of Negros Oriental was 'much', with $M = 4.07$ and $SD = 1.14$.

Table 4
Teachers' Magna Carta Level of Awareness

Magna Carta Provisions	Awareness		Verbal description
	<i>M</i>	\pm SD	
No probationary period for civil service eligible	3.39	1.46	Md
Probation to permanent promotion after 10 years	3.33	1.42	Md
No transfer without consent	4.17	1.31	Mc
Confidentiality of disciplinary action	4.29	1.03	VM
No discrimination for teacher entrance	4.32	1.05	VM
Same locality assignment for married couples	4.37	1.03	VM
Academic freedom in discharging duties	4.09	1.07	Mc
Six hours of actual daily teaching	4.26	1.03	VM
25% added to salary for extracurricular tasks	3.75	1.47	Mc
Gradual progression of salary every 3 years	4.46	0.91	VM
Information for required station transfers	4.42	0.88	VM
Due process at each stage of any disciplinary procedure	4.50	0.81	VM

No dismissal or transfer without due process or justifiable cause	3.57	1.57	Mc
Recruitment follows minimum educational qualifications and temporary status in absence of qualified applicants	3.63	1.36	Mc
Written information, access to evidence, defence and appeal during disciplinary action	4.37	0.90	VM
Administrative hearings done by superintendent, representative and supervisor	3.99	1.08	Mc
Salary compares with similar qualifications to ensure reasonable living standards	4.11	1.06	Mc
Local to provincial salaries at par with national	3.98	1.11	Mc
Salary includes a cost-of-living allowance based on the updated cost-of-living index from local/national	4.12	1.14	Mc
Salary in Philippine legal tender or equivalent checks or treasury warrants cashable at any treasurer's office of bank, local to national	4.19	0.99	Mc
Regional medical examination and necessary treatment upon entrance and yearly thereafter	3.97	1.36	Mc
Due compensation for recognised physical and nervous occupational disease	4.07	1.25	Mc
Study leave after 7 years of service	3.93	1.28	Mc
More than a year indefinite leave of absence in case of serious illness	4.05	1.16	Mc
One range salary increase upon retirement	4.18	1.14	Mc
Enjoyment of all basic rights of assembly	4.08	1.10	Mc
Protection from discrimination due to membership in an organisation	4.25	1.01	VM
Due consultation of National Teacher's Organisation for national policies and standards	4.13	1.01	Mc
Implementation of RA 4670 by DepEd Secretary	4.14	1.03	Mc
Penalty for breaking teachers' rights in any form	3.98	1.08	Mc
Grand mean and standard deviation	4.07	1.14	Mc

Table 4 shows that the teachers had a high level of awareness of the following: a) due process at each stage of any disciplinary procedure ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.81$); b) gradual progression of salary every

3 years ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.91$); and c) information for required station transfers ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.88$). These imply that these provisions were well understood by the teachers during the start of the year conferences.

On the other hand, the table also reveals that teachers were least aware of the following provisions: a) promotion from probationary to permanent position after 10 years of service ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.42$). This may be attributed to their trust and confidence that with gradual increase in salary, there was no need to change in their status; and b) no probationary period for civil service eligible after due training ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.46$). This might mean that the school division never had the observance of this provision until the TIP was established (DepEd Order 43, S. 2017).

Table 5

Demographic Profile of the Respondents and the Overall Mean and Standard Deviation of the Level of Awareness

Categories	Awareness	
	<i>M</i>	\pm SD
Gender		
Female	4.04	0.31
Male	4.20	0.22
District		
District 1	4.03	0.36
District 2	3.93	0.34
District 3	4.32	0.19
Teaching assignment		
Kindergarten	3.95	0.36
Elementary	4.17	0.27
High school	4.10	0.30
Years of teaching		
0–5 years	4.11	0.78
6–10 years	4.16	0.64
11–15 years	3.95	0.71
16–20 years	3.99	0.63
21 years and above	3.90	0.81

Total $N = 374$.

Table 5 provides a summary of the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) of the respondents' gender, district where they belong, teaching assignment and teaching experience. The results disclosed that male teachers are more aware than female teachers.

Table 6

Overall Awareness Level by Gender and Independent Samples t-Test

Gender	No. of items	<i>M</i>	\pm SD	Std. error mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
Female	30	4.04	0.313	0.057	0.022*	-0.165	0.070
Male	30	4.20	0.219	0.040			

*Significant if <0.05 .

In Table 6, the *t*-test considering equal means between the overall level of awareness between female and male teachers showed that the null hypothesis is rejected. This discloses that there was a significant difference between the levels of awareness of the two groups. Clearly, as shown in Table 6, the male respondents were 'very much' aware of RA 4670 ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.22$) compared to female ones. Verba et al. (1997) supported this result in their article which stated that women tend not to engage so much on political matters as compared to men. Also, according to the findings of Mendez et al. (2010), both men and women agreed to the notion that men are more politically minded and interested in political problems.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of the Overall Magna Carta Awareness Level by District

	District 1	District 2	District 3
Mean	4.03	3.93	4.32
Standard deviation	0.36	0.34	0.19

Table 7 shows the summary of the overall awareness on the RA 4670 in terms of district. Among the three districts, data show that teachers from District 3 had the highest level of awareness ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.19$). This means that this school district had a younger set of teachers open to information dissemination hastened by technology during the pandemic. This is in parallel with the study of Olson et al. (2011) on the discovery of the younger persons utilising a wider variety of technology than older adults.

Table 8

Magna Carta Awareness One-Way ANOVA Results for the Various Districts

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
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Between groups	2.506	2	1.253	13.285	0.000*
Within groups	8.204	87	0.094		
Total	10.709	89			

*Significant if ≤ 0.05 .

Table 8 presents the one-way ANOVA results for the three districts having a significant difference in the overall awareness' mean, $F(2,87) = 13.29$, $p < 0.001$. It was therefore necessary to run t -tests in order to determine which district made this significant difference.

Table 9

Summary of the Independent Samples t-Tests Between Districts Assuming Equal Variances

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Remarks
Districts 1 & 2	1.070	58	0.289*	0.097	0.091	Not significant
Districts 2 & 3	-5.467	58	0.000*	-0.392	0.072	Significant
Districts 1 & 3	-3.985	58	0.000*	-0.295	0.074	Significant

*Significant if < 0.05 .

Using a t -test on independent samples, the significant differences in teachers' awareness of RA 4670 by congressional district were determined. According to Table 9, there is no statistically significant difference between Districts 1 and 2. However, there was a significant difference between the awareness levels of teachers in Districts 2 and 3, $t(58) = -5.47$, $p < 0.001$. This implies that there were many schools in District 2 that lacked Internet accessibility and intensity of information dissemination due to financial, territorial and COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) constraints compared to District 3 during the time of data gathering. Furthermore, this also discloses that information dissemination in District 3 was intense despite IATF restrictions.

In addition, a t -test on independent samples revealed a statistically significant difference between the awareness levels of teachers in District 1 and District 3, $t(58) = -3.98$, $p < 0.001$, with faculty in District 3 having a very high awareness of RA 4670. This may be attributed to the Internet accessibility, nearness of schools to the District 3 offices and openness of young teachers and administrators to information and change during the 2021 conduct research. To sum up, Districts 2 and 3 and Districts 1 and 3 showed significant mean differences.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Overall Magna Carta Awareness by Level of Teaching

	Kindergarten	Elementary	High school
Mean	3.95	4.17	4.10

Standard deviation	0.36	0.27	0.30
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Table 10 shows the summary of the overall awareness on the RA 4670 in terms of teaching assignment. Among the three levels, data shows that elementary teachers had the highest level of awareness ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.27$) which is interpreted as 'much level of awareness'. With this, there is a need to run a one-way ANOVA to check if there is a statistically significant difference in the means of the awareness of teachers among various levels.

Table 11

RA 4670 Level of Awareness One-Way ANOVA Results by Teaching Level

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	0.727	2	0.363	3.725	0.028*
Within groups	8.483	87	0.098		
Total	9.209	89			

*Significant if ≤ 0.05 .

As indicated in Table 11, a one-way ANOVA demonstrates a statistically significant difference in general awareness among the kindergarten, elementary and secondary schoolteachers of Negros Oriental, $F(2,87) = 3.73$, $p = 0.03$.

Table 12

Summary of Independent Samples t-Tests by Level of Teaching Assuming Equal Variances

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Remarks
Kindergarten and elementary	-2.600	58	0.012	-0.215	0.083	Significant
Elementary and high school	0.892	58	0.376	0.065	0.073	Not significant
Kindergarten and high school	-1.745	58	0.086	-0.149	0.086	Not significant

*Significant if < 0.05 .

Again, the independent samples tests were used to determine which instructional groups led to the significant difference. In Table 12, there is a statistically significant difference between the kindergarten ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.36$) and elementary teachers ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.27$) in terms of RA 4670 awareness, $t(58) = -2.60$, $p = 0.01$. This implies that kindergarten teachers are focused on play activities with the children and closer relationship with parents for parental support. Also, they have

a culture of their own being passionate with play activities and parental support since they are the first level of workers that children are exposed to.

During the *t*-test comparing elementary and secondary schoolteachers, $t(58) = 0.89$, $p = 0.38$ was found. This indicates that there is no significant difference in their levels of awareness. The *p*-value for the *t*-test between kindergarten and high school teachers was also >0.05 . Thus, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the kindergarten and high school groups. Thus, the rejection of the null hypothesis during the one-way ANOVA with level of teaching as variable was due to the significant difference between the overall awareness of kindergarten and elementary teachers of the Negros Oriental province.

Finally, the relationship between RA 4670 awareness and teaching experience was determined using Spearman's rho. Using SPSS 27, the data revealed a significant negative weak correlation between teachers' experience and level of awareness, $\rho_s(372) = -0.109$, $p < 0.05$, at the 0.05 significance level. One possible explanation is the time of data collection. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the survey was conducted during the modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) of the entire province. With this restriction, all the teachers were carrying out distance learning paving the way for younger teachers to use technology at a greater depth compared to older ones. Moreover, this result coincides with the study conducted by Olson et al. (2011) that younger adults use more technology than older ones.

4. Conclusion

This study is limited to teacher respondents who were reachable through various social media platforms. In the gathering of data, purposive and snowball techniques were employed. The results showed that the overall RA 4670 awareness level among teachers in the province of Negros Oriental during the MGCQ owing to the COVID-19 problem is merely above average ('much'). However, a high level of awareness was found regarding the process at each stage of any disciplinary procedure, the gradual progression of salary every 3 years and information for required station transfers. On the other hand, the teachers of the province of Negros Oriental were least aware of the promotion to permanent position after 10 years of service, no probationary period for professional civil service passers after due training and non-dismissal or transfer without due process or justifiable cause.

In addition, the independent samples *t*-test showed that male teachers are 'very much' aware of the RA 4670 provisions compared to female teachers, which coincides with the studies of Verba et al. (1997) and Mendez et al. (2010). Teachers in the third congressional district had the highest level of awareness. With teaching level as the independent variable, the one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference between the levels of awareness, with elementary teachers having the greatest level. Lastly, there was a statistically significant but weak negative correlation between teachers' awareness of RA 4670 and their years of experience as educators.

5. Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

(a) Maintain information dissemination regarding due process at each stage of any disciplinary procedure, gradual progression of salary every 3 years and information for required station transfers;

(b) Increase information drive regarding the promotion to permanent position after 10 years, no probationary period for civil service passers after due training and non-dismissal or transfer without due process or justifiable cause;

(c) Further study on the relationship between RA 4670 extent of awareness and years of teaching focusing on indicators such as access to Internet and use of technology during the pandemic times in the Philippines;

(d) Comparative study between the level of awareness of teachers' rights in private and public schools;

(e) With the limitations of the purposive and snow ball techniques, other sampling methods are highly recommended during non-pandemic times to increase generality.

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