

## The Duties and Functions of the School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Group of the Disaster-Prone Schools

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**Abstract:** The primary concern of the study was to determine the performance of the School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Group (SDRRMG) of the disaster-prone schools in terms of duties and functions as basis for SDRRM capacity enhancement program. It utilized quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Survey questionnaires were used to determine the performance of the SDRRMG. Interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and triangulation were employed to obtain more information about the study. The analyses of the data acquired from the survey revealed that the school heads exercised their roles and functions in organizing SDRRM group as mandated by Department of Education Order no. 55, series of 2007. There were schools which lacked human resources and so they appointed willing parents and barangay officials to complete the SDRRMG. The SDRRMG performed their expected duties however, they failed to do it efficiently for they lack the equipment that are needed in the conduct of their functions. The findings further revealed that the lack of knowledge due to dearth of seminars and pieces of trainings also affected the performance of the duties and functions of the SDRRMG.

**Key Words:** duties, functions, disaster-prone, management

### Introduction

Schools are considered to be safe havens for millions of children and the greatest socializing institutions after the family. However, the experiences with disasters demonstrate the need for schools to prepare for all-hazard crisis possibilities (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015).

School disaster planning is a facet of the larger community plan and, therefore, requires coordinated planning and allocation of financial and human resources (AAP, 2015). When it comes to disasters management, it is always public safety that is given emphasis in designing a program. As part of the schools' preparation, the creation of a comprehensive and well-functioning School Disaster Risk Reduction Program Management Plan should be given much attention. In fact, this idea was made clear in Republic Act No. 101211, an act that strengthens the Philippine Disaster Risk and Management System that provides for the development, promotion, and a comprehensive implementation of a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP).

An effective NDRRMP requires the ability to establish command and control that is to move the management of the response from the primary reactive mode to one where the scope of the event is understood. It recommends appropriate response actions in alignment with response strategies, and where the outcome of the incident is being driven by a clear set of objectives to

protect people and the environment. Cubillas (2016) explained that the development of the disaster risk reduction management plans requires coordination with the SDRRM coordinator, first aid team, search and rescue team, fire safety team, damage and salvage team, communication team and security team which primarily are composed of the stakeholders of the school. Drabek (2003) elucidated that the in-charge of Disaster Risk Reduction Management in school must have control and command over his members and the organization as a whole. Performing the duties and functions of the people involved in DRRM is essential to be able to make mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery possible. Thus, leadership is a critical component of the comprehensive emergency management.

Noting all the considerations mentioned, it is a necessity for institutions like public elementary schools to measure the duties and functions of the leaders in the School Disaster Risk Reduction Management program of the disaster-prone schools.

Whether these areas of concern are already implemented in the said schools or not as perceived by the stakeholders is assessed by this study. Furthermore, the results of this research are used as grounds for designing an intervention program for a School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Capacity Enhancement Program.

### **Methodology**

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. Its main objective is to determine the performance of the School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Group of the Disaster-Prone Schools in terms of their duties and functions as basis for crafting an intervention capacity enhancement program. There were a total of 295 select respondents who answered the questionnaires. Twenty (20) of the respondents were school heads, twenty (20) SDRRM coordinators/members, twenty (20) barangay officials, twenty (20) General Parent-Teachers Association (GPTA) officers, one hundred fifteen (115) teachers and one hundred (100) pupils. They answered the same set of questionnaires and were asked to answer based on their observations and perceptions on how the duties and functions being performed by SDRRMG in their respective school. The researcher used the questionnaire developed by the DepEd Disaster Risk Reduction Resource Manual of 2008 as the primary data-gathering instrument. The modification was made to suit the researcher's objectives in conducting the research.

The first part of the questionnaire contains the profile of the respondents. The second part contains the duties and functions of the SDRRM Group composed of namely; SDRRM coordinator, first aid team, search and rescue team, fire safety team, evacuation team, damage and salvage team, and security team. The researcher collected extensive data on the problem using a digital audio recorder, field notes, and camera to document any related activities. The data were transcribed, tallied, tabulated, processed and submitted to the statistician for analysis and interpretation. Triangulation is done through follow-up interview with the key informants to clarify issues and to validate and enrich the interpretation of data. To enrich the results of the

investigation, he went to the City Risk Reduction Management Office for the secondary data. Such data were taken from the outcome of the evaluation of the earthquake drills of the public elementary schools.

The research made use of the following statistical tools to quantify the data gathered. Frequency count and percentage computation were employed to determine the profile of the respondents. Mean was also utilized to measure the performance of the SDRRMG in terms of their duties and function.

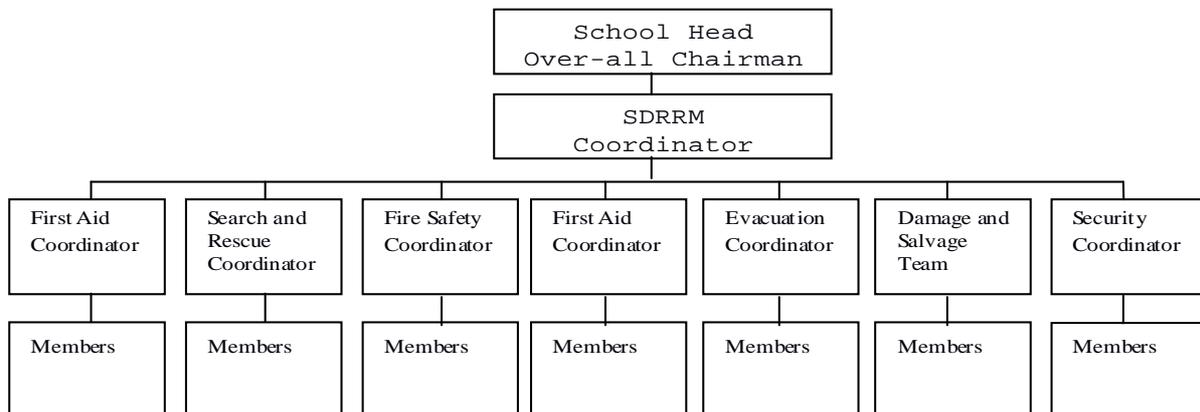
**Findings**

**On the organization of the SDRRM group**

Department of Education Order no. 55, series of 2007 affirmed that it is the duty and responsibility of the school head to initiate the organization of the School Risk Reduction and Management Group.

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Group in schools is composed of the following: the school head, as the over-all chair; SDRRM coordinator, an appointed teacher; first aid team; search and rescue team, fire-safety team, evacuation team, communication team and security team. Each team mentioned has members who played their respective roles and functions (CDRRMO-Butuan, 2015).

**Fig 1. Compositions of SDRRM organizational structure**



The study revealed that there were three (3) schools that had fell short of members. One school had a head teacher and only two (2) teachers. Another school has four (4) teachers and a school head, and the other one has only five (5) teachers and a school head. Due to lack of human resources, the school appointed eager parents and barangay officials to join in the SDRRG.

*School head (SH13) expressed:*

*“There are only 3 teachers here in our school including myself. In the organization of the SDRRM team, we included the parents and barangay officials to complete the group. The only thing Sir is until formation of the group only after that no more. Our members have no idea of what to do”.*

Further results showed that school heads exercised their roles and functions in organizing SDRRM group. However, the SDRRM as a group, cannot achieve their objectives for they lacked knowledge about disaster-preparedness.

One of the SDRRM coordinators (SDRRM4) said:

*“In our school sir, we organized teams but not formally appointed, I and my school principal will just appoint members. Once they were appointed, they do not complain. However, they can’t do much for they only have little knowledge on disaster preparedness. For example in search and rescue, we really don’t have any idea about it, even myself as coordinator, how much more our members”.*

The results of the evaluation of the CDRRMO XIII implied that the schools of the division organized SDRRM group to comply with the mandate of the department. School head and SDRRM coordinator tried to form a team regardless of the number of teachers but because of lack of knowledge, the said teams were not functioning accordingly.

Educational Facilities Manual (2010) stated that every school shall have an organized Disaster or Risk Control Group, which shall take charge of the overall risk or disaster reduction program. According to the terminal report summary of the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management office (2015), there was the presence of the members of the SDRRM group during the conduct of drill. The 20 respondent-schools had organized SDRRM group. They helped in facilitating the different activities. However, the duties and responsibilities of the members of the SDRRM group were not followed and observed for they do not know their roles and functions. The lack of knowledge is due to their lack of training and seminars. These teams include first aid, search, and rescue, fire safety, evacuation, damage and salvage, communication and security. Each team’s performance will affect the whole performance of the SDRRG. It is imperative for respondent-schools to capacitate all members of the SDRRG teams to be able to enhance the level of the program implementation. A similar idea was emphasized in the incident management theory of IPIECA (2013) in which stakeholders are called upon to work together to provide expertise, assistance or response resources during an emergency.

Further results showed that there were no SDRRM organizational structures posted or placed in strategic areas. The CDRRM evaluating team made a recommendation to schools to make and post SDRRM organizational structures in such areas. To be able to make stakeholders aware and

well-informed about the SDRRG in the school, it is necessary that the SDRRM organizational structure will be posted in strategic areas.

### On the Duties and Functions of the SDRRM group

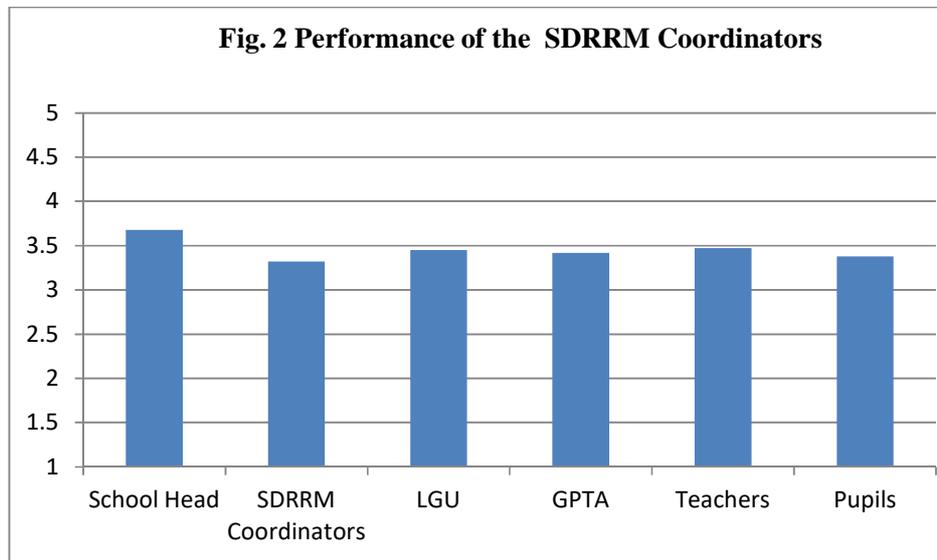
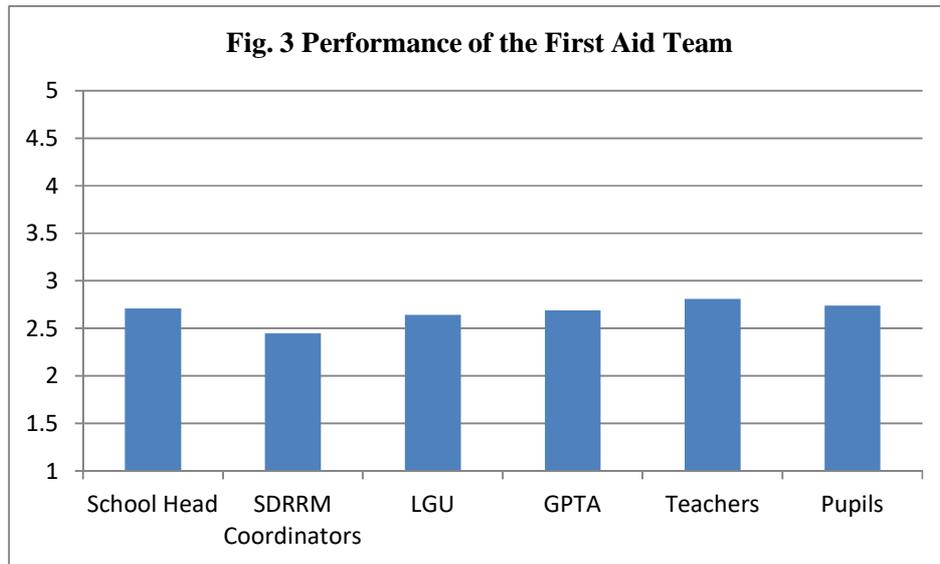


Fig. 2 shows the duties and functions of SDRRM coordinators. As shown by the results of the data, all indicators of the duties and functions of the SDRRM coordinator were rated fair. May not be seen all the time but maintains contacts as necessary ranked the highest having a total mean of 3.45 while exercises interactive management components, each of which contributes strength and efficiency to the overall system has the lowest with a total mean of 3.43. The school heads gave the highest rating of 3.68 as an over-all mean which means satisfactory, or they perceived the implementation of the duties and functions of the SDRRM coordinators as moderately extensive and functioning well.

The results showed that the duties and functions of the SDRRM coordinators were met. This implied that they established common terminology and standards of organization, doctrine, and procedures that enable the members to work together effectively. They practically exercised interactive management components, and they may not be seen all the time but maintain contact as necessary. In connection with the statement above, Demiroz&Kapucu (2012) explicated that being able to cooperate with other stakeholders, being flexible in decision making and having effective communication with other stakeholders and the public are most important leadership traits. For the respondent-schools to attain the highest level of implementation of the duties and functions of the SDRRM coordinators, it is necessary for schools to send these concerned people to training to hone their skills in interactive management. Good leadership will lead to the success in the implementation of the program.



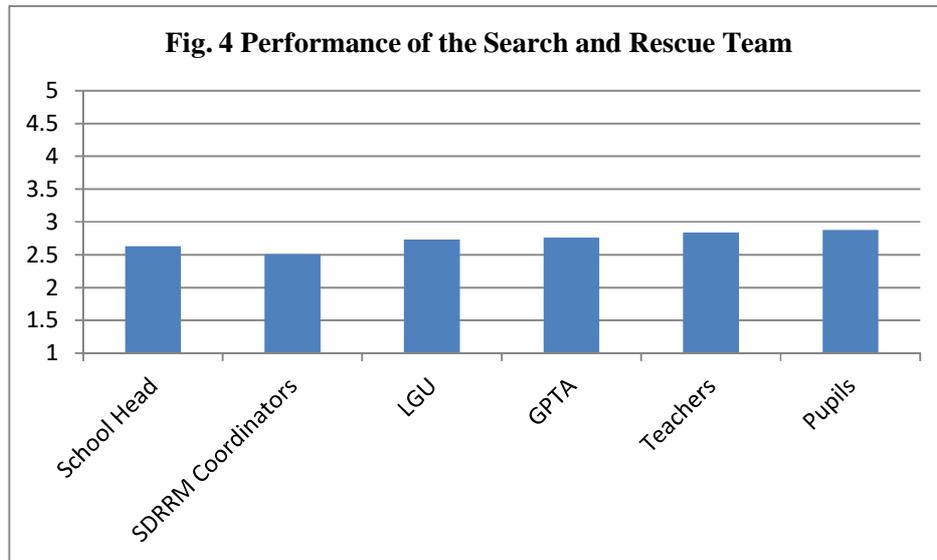
It is revealed in fig. 3 that majority of the duties and functions of the first aid team were rated fair which means the implementation was met. SDRRM coordinators gave the lowest mean of 2.45 which means they perceived the implementation of the duties and functions of the first aid team as poor or limited. Administration of first-aid and coordination with hospitals and other health agencies for emergencies gave the highest mean of 3.10. But regarding the use of equipment for communication and basic knowledge in first aid, they were rated poor.

Teacher participant (T8) said:

*Our first aid team can manage first aid activities since the team coordinator has a little knowledge about it. The only problem is that only he has such knowledge. The rest of the members will only assist him. He can't easily pass such knowledge for he is always busy. It's a good thing that we can ask help from the health officers from other agencies.*

The statement above implied that it is necessary for the members of the first aid team of the respondent-schools to be sent to training and seminars to capacitate their members.

The same result was revealed in the terminal report summary of the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (2015) conducted in the different public schools in Butuan City. The duties and responsibilities of the members of the first aid team were not followed and observed. The dearth of equipment that will be used during the drill and actual scenarios was observed. Out of 6 equipment, they only had one which was their personal phone. Such finding was in contrast to one of the requirements of CDRRMO that first aid team must have spine board, splint, triangular/elastic bandage, medical kit, radio, and phones. The said equipment will be used by them to perform properly during operations.



All respondents rated the duties and functions of the search and rescue team as shown in fig. 4 as fair which means the implementation was met. Pupils gave the highest mean of 2.88. Among the four duties and functions, administration of search and rescue and coordination with agencies for the search and rescue operations got the highest mean of 3.15. Equipment for and technical knowledge of search and rescue were rated poor which means the implementation was limited. According to terminal report summary of the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (2015), most of the schools performed search and rescue operations during the drill but their duties and responsibilities were not followed and observed. The lack of equipment of the team that will be used during the drill and actual scenarios was also observed. They only had personal mobile phone. This is in contrast to one of the requirements of CDRRMO that search and rescue team must have a flashlight, whistle, spine board, splint, triangular/elastic bandage, medical kit, radio, and phones to be used during emergencies.

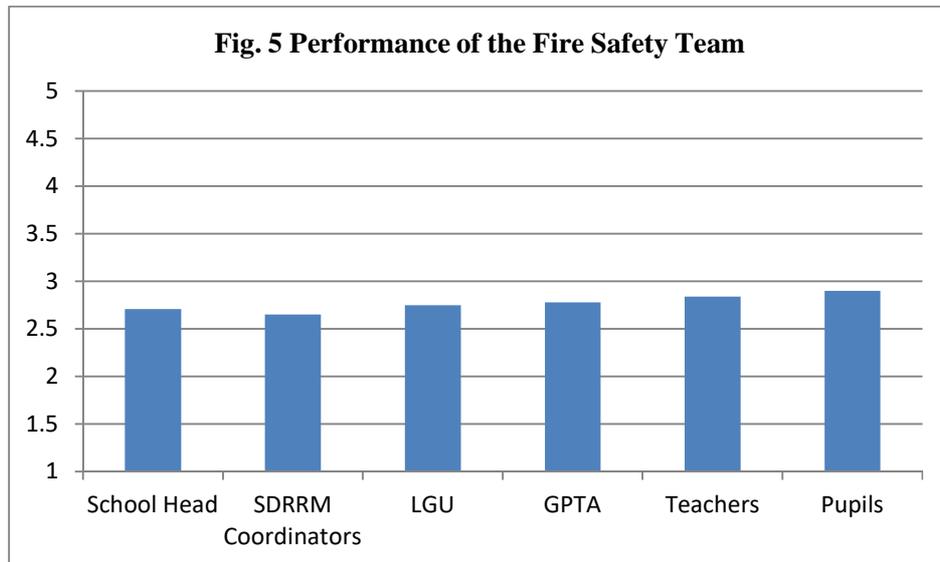
One pupil (P16) respondent expressed:

*“I haven’t seen equipment for search and rescue only whistle that we use for scouting. My teachers here have cell phones which will be used for communication.”*

The results entailed that the search and rescue team in the respondent-schools performed their duties, however, their equipment is insufficient.

In addition, the said team also lacked knowledge on search and rescue. This can be improved if the school will exhaust efforts for them to obtain such equipment and to equip the members of the team with knowledge of search and rescue operation. Such claim is supported by Community Emergency Response Team (2014) which elucidated that experiences from previous disasters have shown and taught people with no search and rescue skills a lesson like not to act spontaneously after every disaster. If one does not possess knowledge about search and rescue,

he or she should not be impulsive. For more often than not, these unrestricted rescue efforts result in severe injuries and compounded problems. However well-meaning, rescue efforts should be planned and practiced in advance. Well-trained and well-equipped rescuers will lead to successful search and rescue operation.

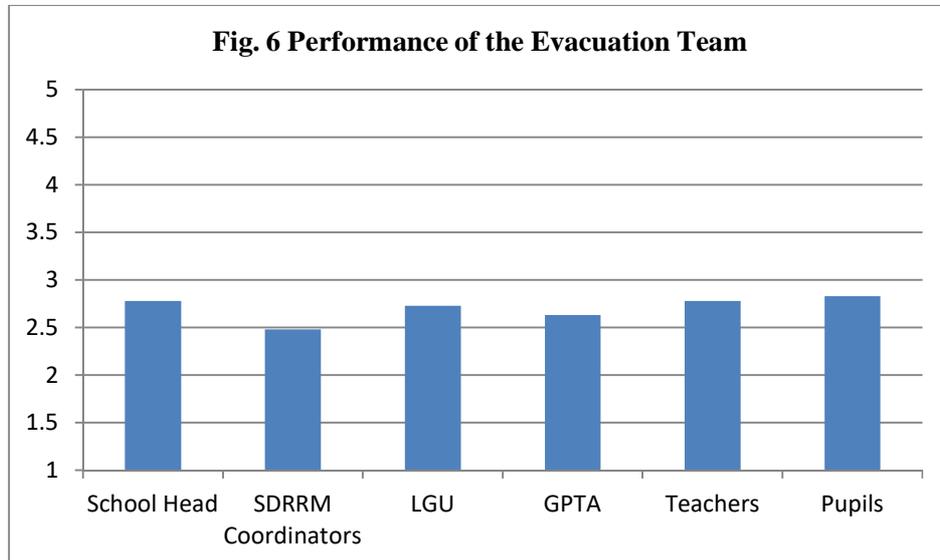


As presented in the figure, the majority of the indicators of duties and functions of the team were rated fair which means that the implementation was met. Uses communication equipment or other means of communication was rated poor, or it was limited. All respondents rated the team's duties and functions fair. Teachers gave the highest rating with an overall mean of 2.90 while SDRRM coordinators gave the lowest with a mean of 2.65.

The results showed that the duties and functions of the firefighting team can be satisfactorily done if there were available equipment that includes self-contained breathing apparatus like mask and oxygen, fire suit, radio, and phones. Personal mobile phones of the members of the group were the only tool they had.

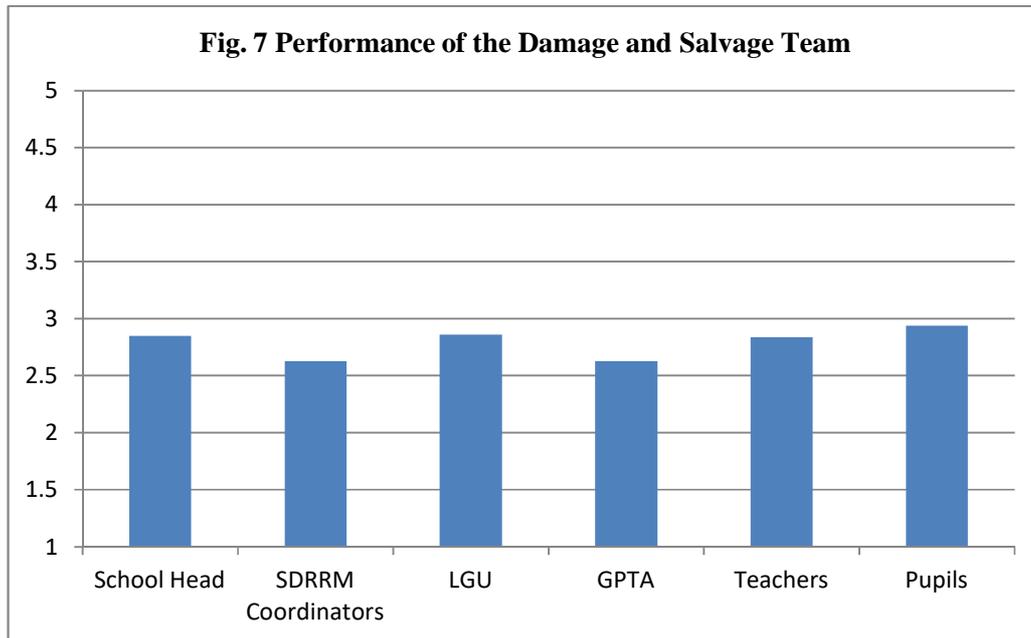
In the CDRRMO Terminal Report Summary (2015), old public elementary school buildings lacked equipment especially emergency bells or fire alarm which is necessary during emergencies. CDRRMO suggested to the concerned schools to install an alarm system that is loud enough to be heard by everyone in the school premises for the immediate evacuation in case of fire and other disasters. Furthermore, CDRRMO also advised the schools to procure fire extinguishers, fire hose reels, fire hydrants, fire detection systems, gaseous suppression systems and fire sprinkler systems. Lynch (2012) proposed that every office and structure must spend significantly on fire safety measures in the form of fire protection systems and equipment to help minimize the ill-effects of fire to men and their properties. Careful assessments must be carried out to identify if the fire protection equipment and systems are fit for the purpose intended. It can

include fire extinguishers, fire hose reels, fire hydrants, fire detection systems, gaseous suppression systems and fire sprinkler systems.



As displayed in fig. 6, uses communication equipment, or other means of communication was rated poor which means that the implementation was limited in terms of procuring equipment. While most of the indicators were rated fair or the implementation was met. The majority of the group rated fair except SDRRM coordinators who got the lowest mean of 2.46 or poor which means they perceived the team's implementation of their duties and functions as limited.

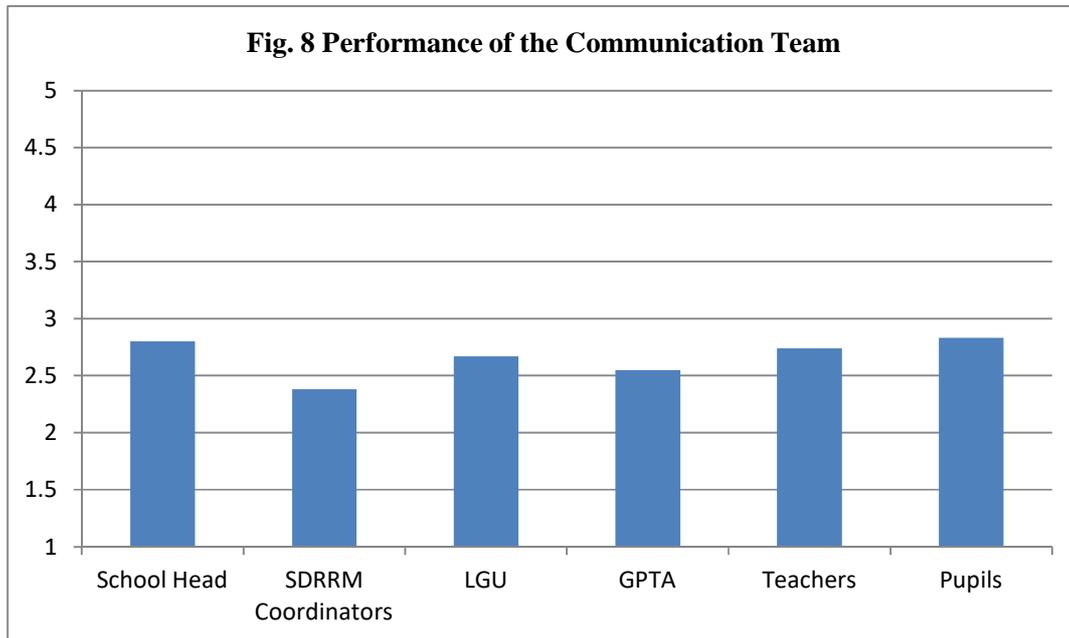
The results revealed that the equipment for communication is needed to improve the services of the evacuation team. The team could not perform well if there were no available equipment. In accordance to the CDRRMO Terminal Report Summary (2015), most public elementary schools in Butuan City were found to have a dearth of equipment to be used by the SDRRM in performing their roles. Such tools must include phones and radios for communication. Plastic blackboard, wheelchair, easy-fold wheeled stretcher kit, evacuation chair and vehicles must also be present for they are also useful during the evacuation. Environmental Health Services (2014) suggested that for an emergency evacuation team to do their task swiftly and safely, it is important that the premises have a system of control and well-functioning communication equipment. It is vital for schools then, to possess equipment needed to improve the services of the evacuation team for the team cannot do their functions well if the needed equipment is unavailable.



It can be observed in the fig. 7 that all respondents rated the team's duties and functions fair, or the implementation was met. Most indicators were rated fair except the use of communication equipment or other means of communication which was rated poor or lack of communication equipment. The rating indicated that for the damage and salvage team to function well, they must possess equipment for communication such as radio and phones.

In the CDRRMO Terminal Report Summary (2015), it was found that most public elementary schools in Butuan City lacked equipment for communication. The members of the team had their personal mobile phones, but that wouldn't be enough to respond to the standard operating procedure. The team needed phones and radios for them to communicate quickly in case they need help or in relaying information that they may obtain during the conduct of their functions.

Moreover, Damage Control Organization, Communication, and Information (2014) explained that damage control is vital to all communities and organizations. If a particular establishment is damaged in by fire or storm, the damage has to be repaired quickly. Through assigned jobs, training, instructions, use of diagrams and efficient communication equipment, the aims of the organization are achieved. Since communication equipment is vital in the conduct of the damage and salvage operations, it is suggested that schools must exhaust all efforts to procure such equipment for the damage and salvage team to function well.



All respondents rated the implementation of the team's duties and functions fair which means it was met as shown in fig. 8. Most indicators were given a fair rating by the respondents except the use of communication equipment or other means of communication which was rated poor or the implementation was limited. The results signified that equipment is significant to the communication team for them to function accordingly. Relaying information to the stakeholders is the primary function of the team. The functions of each team will be affected if the information that they will get is late or delayed. One of the recommendations made by the CDRRMO in the Terminal Report Summary (2015) was that each school must acquire equipment to be used by the SDRRM such as radios, whistles, and phones. The teams had their personal mobile phones, but that wouldn't be enough to relay information in a standard operating procedure.

Moreover, Baker (2012) stated that managers should not be dependent on mobile phones as the company communication system during a disaster for they are only good if they are not loaded overly with users and crashes. It is where the importance of selecting the right communication equipment is highlighted. If the equipment fails, it doesn't matter how skilled the emergency management team in school is, they cannot talk to each other passing on vital data. As Baker (2012) suggested schools should find resources to procure the needed communication equipment.

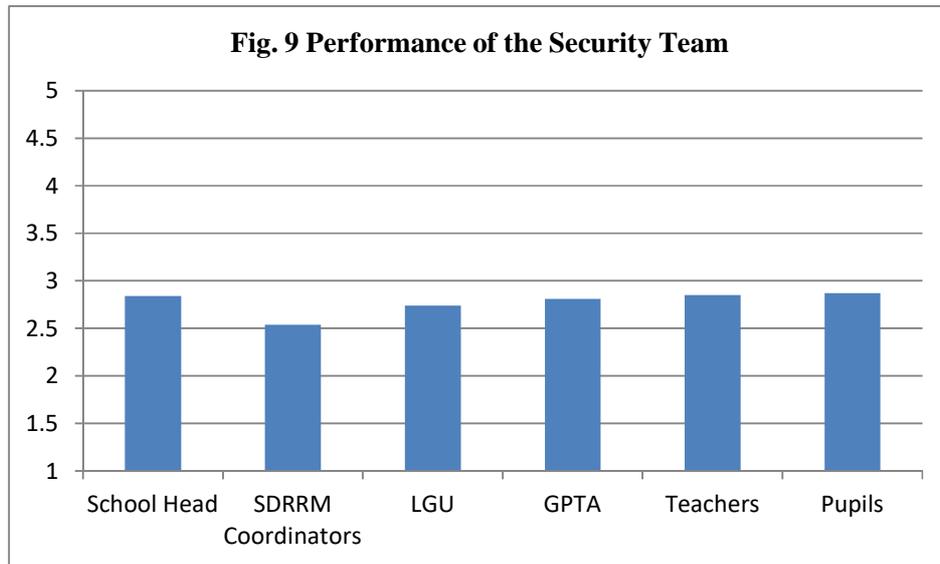


Fig. 9 displays the duties and functions of the security team. The results exhibited that all respondents rated the team's duties and functions fair which means the implementation was met. Teacher respondents gave the highest mean of 2.87 while SDRRM coordinators gave the lowest mean of 2.54. Responds quickly and correctly during crisis ranked as the highest having a mean of 3.13. Uses communication equipment or other means of communication had the lowest mean of 2.34 which means the security team's equipment was lacking.

The results implied that more focus is needed on the procurement of equipment to attain the highest level of implementation. In the CDRRMO Terminal Report Summary (2015), public elementary schools were found to have a lack of equipment which is necessary for the execution of the duties and function of the DCG. Radios, phones, log book, whistles, weapons (gun, tear gas and night stick "batuta") and warning devices are the equipment needed by the team. Silva Consultant (2015) explained that it is essential to have a good communication system for security officers to work effectively. When help is needed, the system needs to allow security officers to be summoned, as well as allow communications between security officers as they carry out their daily activities. Because of this, procurement of equipment in schools that will be used by the security team in performing their duties and functions becomes a priority, especially during emergencies.

## Conclusion

The compliance of the disaster-prone elementary schools with the mandate of the Department of Education which is to organize SDRRMG in schools is important to implement or make possible the objectives of the SDRRM program and the aims of the department as a whole however, the essential factor which is the careful appointment of the members who will be part of SDRRG

was not considered. Designation and delegation of tasks to the competent individuals is required in organizing SDRRMG for it to be more efficient in the conduct of each team's duties and functions.

Each SDRRM team's performance will affect the whole performance of the SDRRMG. It is imperative for respondent-schools to capacitate all members of the teams otherwise, the SDRRMG cannot do their duties and functions well.

The duties and functions of the SDRRM team are significant factors in the implementation of the SDRRM program. If the teams are knowledgeable and equipped with tools, the better the program will be implemented. DepEd personnel, local government units, pupils and parents are collaborators of the schools' safety. Without the help of stakeholders, the implementation of the SDRRM program will not be possible.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

DepEd Officials and School Disaster Risk Reduction Management Group

1. Formulate plan and programs to enhance disaster education in the division, district and schools.
2. Fund allocation for the procurement of equipment and conduct of series of trainings and seminars for the enrichment and enhancement of the knowledge of teachers, parents and pupils regarding disaster preparedness.
3. Strengthen the implementation of SDRRM program through monitoring and evaluation.
4. Issue a memorandum allowing teachers to allocate activities/lessons to mainstream disaster risk reduction concepts in all subject areas and in all grade level.
5. Coordinate with the LGUs and CDRRMO on standard requirement for DRRM as well as the needed equipment and logistics.

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