

Teachers' perception, challenges and coping mechanism in the implementation of modular learning modalities in the new normal

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine the teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanisms in implementing modular learning modalities at Bagong Pag-Asa Elementary School during the school year 2020–21. Respondents were the 40 selected teachers who are handling modular distance learning. The researcher utilized non-probability sampling, specifically the purposive sampling technique, to determine the study's respondents. The study used a descriptive research method to determine the significant difference between the extent of teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanisms in implementing the modular learning modalities in terms of their Profile. More so, the study utilized the researcher-made instrument as the major tool in the study. The study found out that there were more female than male teacher-respondents; most of them were in the age range of 31–40 years old, some were married, and have a length of service seven years and below. The teachers' agreed that the implementation of modular distance learning has an organized and clear scheduled in the distribution unscheduled of learning modules and activities. They strongly agreed that they are highly challenged in reaching out their pupils due to the pandemic to the situation. They have difficulty evaluating pupils' works and assessing their learning tasks and output, especially in ensuring honest and valid outcomes. They are always do something to negate the stressful mind into a positive mindset. They watch TV, K-Dramas, Netflix, movies, shopping, or listening to music to overcome and cope with the new normal challenges. Finally, there is a significant difference between the extent of teachers' challenges in implementing the modular learning modalities in terms of length of service, since the obtained p -value of 0.00 does not exceed at 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. These teachers' length of service significantly influences the challenges they are experiencing in modular distance learning. Meanwhile, age, sex, and civil status have no bearing on the teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanisms in implementing modular distance learning.

Keywords: perception, challenges, coping mechanism, implementation, learning modalities, new normal

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted our education system, changing what classrooms and learning look like on a day-to-day basis. As a result, educators are navigating a constantly shifting landscape, with the health of students, teachers, and the community at large at stake. Instructional delivery is shifted into different ways in the teaching and learning process. For example, the subject matter has been taught in different ways, such as inquiry, hands-on learning, social interaction, and constructivism. However, such pedagogies seem difficult to implement in distance learning, and teachers do not feel adequately able and prepared to teach the subject remotely (Lichoro, 2015).

Teachers who are new to distance learning may feel unprepared to facilitate teaching, thus, need support as to technical, pedagogical, and time management (Dyment, 2013). In addition, instruction heavily relies on technology, leaving the teachers unprepared and lacking competence (Goodson, 2018). Accordingly, students also have experienced some problems that affect teacher's instruction. For example, teachers in all-remote environments reported higher student absenteeism and less student work completion than teachers in face-to-face classrooms. These online teachers also said that they needed more support and guidance in planning instruction than their colleagues who were teaching in person (RAND, 2020).

In the Philippines, support the teachers' capacity building and equipping the desired skills needed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of education developed reforms stated in the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) that aims to demonstrate resilience in countering adversities and upholding its duties and responsibilities (Department of Education, 2020). This is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4), which focuses on quality education and emphasizes the critical role of the curriculum in promoting quality learning and in the articulation and promotion of comprehensive development-relevant education. In this, we assume that the curriculum is crucial in realizing SDG 4, given its important role in providing quality learning for all children and young people and articulating and promoting education related to holistic learning (Stabback, 2016). In its aim to continue education amid pandemics, DepEd has provided three learning delivery modalities. Among the three, the highly convenient for most of the typical Filipino students is Modular Distance Learning. It was also the most preferred learning system of most parents/guardians based on the result of the Learning Enrollment and Survey Form (LESF, 2020). The enrolment data further revealed that 8.8 million out of the 22.2 million enrollees are currently under modular distance learning for this school year.

Modular learning in the country is a form of distance learning that uses Self-Learning Modules (SLM) based on the essential learning competencies (MELCS). The modules include sections on motivation and assessment that serve as a complete guide of both teachers' and students' desired competencies. Teachers monitor the learners' progress through home visits (following social distancing protocols) and feedback mechanisms and guide those who need special attention. The teachers are also to craft a Weekly Home Learning Plan (WHLP) and additional activities based on the lessons in the modules. However, with the limited time and preparation for the crafting, quality is being compromised. The challenges in Modular Distance Learning are not only experienced by students and parents. Teachers, being in the forefront, also have some problems and challenges to overcome. Train teachers to assess children and recognize those experiencing specific difficulties as they return to school (International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) UNESCO, 2020). Teachers' creativity in teaching students is located in far-flung areas where the internet is limited with free data, and Facebook exhausts all personal and contextual resources. Along with the use of strategies that contribute to the resiliency, wellbeing, emotions, and motivation to work and exert all possible effort are necessary (Fell, 2016).

Home skills in various teacher preparations that will show flexibility are important in planning for better delivery of the learning modality. Moreover, teachers learn not only by themselves but also through interaction with colleagues and help from administrators and other superiors. Thus, this study was conducted to explore the secondary teachers' lived experiences in the New Normal. Particularly investigating the teachers' preparation, challenges, and coping mechanisms in implementing Modular Distance Learning. According to Ambayon (2020), the developed module consisted of excellent content, relevance, and mechanics, as evaluated by experts in the area. The students also assessed the module as highly acceptable, valid, reliable, and usable. The students were divided into control and experimental groups. The groupings were based on their GPA during the previous semester. While the experimental group utilized the developed module, the control group did not. The test instruments were the different exercises given every after the topics, which lasted for one hour. Based on the results, the performance of the college students in literature in the experimental group had improved from poor to excellent achievement. In contrast, the control group had relatively improved from poor to fair achievement. Hence, it is recommended that the module be used in similar contexts, particularly in learning mythology and folklore.

Dangle (2020) added that the face-to-face learning engagement of students and teachers within the school had been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has paved the way to implementing Modular Distance Learning as an urgent response to ensure continuity of education. The Philippines is adapting to the new normal form of education at present, and continuous innovations of educators and active involvement of other stakeholders are the driving force for its success. The main challenges that emerged were lack of school funding in the production and delivery of modules, students struggling with self-studying, and parents' lack of knowledge to academically guide their child/children. In conclusion, the study was able to determine the prevailing challenges of the participants in terms of resources, preparedness, and communication. This study may serve as a springboard for the future improvements of the schools' existing programs and guidelines on the implementation of modular distance learning.

Similarly, De Villa and Manalo (2020) identified three core themes related to preparation: gathering resources and establishing practices, profiling learners, and capacity building for continuous learning and development. In addition, three core themes related to challenges such as complexity of assessment, difficulty in instructional delivery, and the digital divide. And five core themes related to coping mechanisms include positive wellbeing, time management, openness to change, peer mentoring, and collaboration. Findings revealed that as education migrates to a New Normal, teachers make necessary preparations to equip themselves with distance learning. Though they face challenges that may hamper their work, they still manage to cope with the new normal to continue their tasks. Therefore, the higher offices and school authorities should work with teachers at the pre-implementation of distance learning to address their needs in resources and training to effectively facilitate quality education for students.

Further, Kwaah (2017) showed in his study that 'academic workload,' 'high frequency of examinations,' 'financial problems, family/marriage problems' were the major causes of stress among the students. The study also found some statistically significant differences between married and unmarried students, with married students feeling more stressed with 'financial problems' and 'family/marriage problems' than unmarried students. Students used multiple strategies, mainly praying/meditating, self-distracting activities such as watching TV, and listening to music to cope with stress. Other important stressors coping strategies were emotional and instrumental support from family, friends, and lecturers. The study recommended that the counseling unit at the College of Distance Education of UCC organize frequent stress management programs for students and assign academic counselors to students.

1.1 Significance of the study

The following individuals benefited from this study:

Schools Division Office/ Curriculum Planners - They may give technical assistance to the teachers to cope

with the problems and challenges they encountered in implementing the different programs.

School Heads - The study's findings may help them plan an appropriate strategy concerning the implementation of modular distance learning. Also, the study's findings will guide the school administrators to support the needs of the teachers, which can be the basis in crafting training programs on the mental health of the teachers.

Teachers - The study would be helpful in planning and initiating appropriate strategic intervention programs that could help them cope with the challenges and problems they encountered in the implementation of modular distance learning.

Future Researchers - The study would motivate them to seek a deeper perspective of the problem that may lead to other researchable problems in the areas in the furtherance of the curriculum of their interest. Then, this study may serve as a valuable source of data while conducting their studies.

2. Research methodology

Sampling - The study respondents were the forty (40) selected teachers in Bagong Pag-Asa Elementary School who are handling modular distance learning. The researcher utilized non-probability sampling, specifically the purposive sampling technique, to determine the study's respondents.

Data collection - The study used a descriptive research method to determine the significant difference between the extent of teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanisms in implementing the modular learning modalities in terms of their Profile. More so, the study utilized the researcher-made instrument as the major tool in the study. The data for this research were collected from the instrument used. The following range of scores to be used and the corresponding verbal interpretations on the extent of teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanism in the implementation of the modular learning modalities are as follows:

Score	Teachers' Perception and Challenges		Teachers' Coping Mechanism
	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.51 – 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	Always (A)
3	2.51 – 3.50	Agree (A)	Often (O)
2	1.51 – 2.50	Disagree (D)	Sometimes (S)
1	1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Never (N)

The experts validated the instrument used in the study with a reasonable background in test construction and on the topic to comment on its content to finalize the items to be included in the instrument. Upon completion of the content validation form, the researchers sought permission from the principal's office to administer the instrument to the respondents. Then, immediate retrieval of the instrument was done.

Data analysis - To determine the extent of implementation of the modular approach assessed by the respondents, mean was utilized. To determine the Profile of the respondents, frequency and percentage distribution were applied. To determine the extent of teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanisms in implementing the modular learning modalities assessed by themselves, a mean was utilized. To determine if there is a significant difference between the extent of teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanisms in implementing the modular learning modalities in terms of their Profile, ANOVA was utilized. In addition, the results gathered from the instrument and the performance of the pupils were treated and interpreted using the appropriate statistical tools mentioned above.

3. Discussion of results and reflection

This page presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered. What is the Profile of the respondents in terms of Age; Sex; Civil Status; and Length of Service?

Table 1

Descriptive of the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, and length of service

Age	Frequency	Percentage
30 years old & below	9	22.50
31-40 years old	16	40.00
41-50 years old	11	27.50
51-60 years old	4	10.00
Total	40	100.0
Sex		
Male	6	15.00
Female	34	85.00
Total	40	100.0
Civil Status		
Single	12	30.00
Married	28	70.00
Widow/er	-	-
Total	40	100.0
Length of Service		
Seven years & below	16	40.00
8-14 years	12	30.00
15-21 years	8	20.00
22 years & above	4	10.00
Total	40	100.0

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of teacher – respondents in terms of age. It is quite clearly out of the total respondents investigated in this study, the overwhelming majority (f= 16, 40.0 percent) of the respondents are in the age range of 31 – 40 years old; some (f=11, 27.5 percent) of the teachers are in the age range of 41 – 50 years old; followed by the (f=9, 22.5 percent) of the teachers are in the age range of 30 years old & below; and few (f= 4, 10.0 percent) of the teachers are in the age range of 51–60 years old. This information confirms that most of the teacher-respondents are in the age range of 31-40 years old, thus belonging to the young adult group. This means that the teachers who comprise the teaching workforce are young adults.

It can be manifested from the table that in terms of the sex of the teacher-respondents, almost (f=34, 85.0 percent) of the teachers are female, and six (6) are male teacher-respondent. It simply means that female teachers dominate teachers in Bagong Pag-ASA Elementary School. The data implies that female teachers have more passion for their profession and a desire to help children from any walk of life overcome their learning challenges. It can be gleaned from the table that in terms of civil status of the teacher- respondents, most (f= 28, 70.0 percent) of the respondents are married, and some (f=12, 30.0 percent) of them are single. Therefore, the data confirms that most of the teachers who teach in Bagong Pag-ASA Elementary School are married. This means that they are more capable of teaching young children due to their motherly care traits.

It can be surmised from the table that in terms of length of service of teacher-respondents, most (f=16, 40.0 percent) of the teachers are seven years and below in service. Followed by several (f=12, 30.00 percent) of the teachers are 8 – 14 years in service; some (f=8, 20.0 percent) of the teachers are 15 – 21 years in service; and few (f=4, 10.0 percent) of them are 22 years and above in the service. It simply means that most of the teachers are a neophyte in the service. It implies more females than male teacher-respondents; most of them were in the age range of 31–40 years old, some were married, and have a length of service seven years and below.

It can be gleaned from the table that the overall mean of the extent of teachers' perception in the implementation of modular distance learning is 3.37. It means that the teachers agreed that modular distance learning has an organized and clear schedule in the distribution and retrieval of learning modules and activities. The findings suggest that teachers should give more time to the pupils to accomplish their learning tasks and activities.

Table 2*Teacher's perceptions in the implementation of modular distance learning*

Teachers Perception in the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning	Mean	Interpretation
The learning module distribution and retrieval schedule are suited to the available time of parents, guardians, and teachers.	3.46	Agree
The orientation of the distribution and retrieval of learning modules was organized and clear.	3.48	Agree
If the parents could not submit the learning modules on time, the school seek the help of the barangay officials.	3.42	Agree
Teachers provided parents with tips and ideas on utilizing time to answer the learning modules accurately and wisely.	3.30	Agree
Teachers gave a lot of time to the pupils to accomplish the learning activities and tasks given to them.	3.18	Agree
Overall	3.37	Agree

Table 3*Teachers' challenges in the implementation of modular distance learning*

Teachers Challenges in the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning	Mean	Interpretation
Assessing learners' progress	3.86	Strongly Agree
Stress from working at home	3.18	Agree
They are reaching out to students from socially disadvantaged homes.	3.92	Strongly Agree
Preparing the content of WHLP and learning activities in teaching modular modalities	3.82	Strongly Agree
Access to technology such as computers, stable internet connection, sending necessary videos and presentations to learners, and others.	3.61	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.68	Strongly Agree

It can be gleaned from the table that the overall mean of the extent of teachers' challenges in implementing modular distance learning is 3.68. It means that the teachers strongly agreed that they were highly challenged in reaching out to their pupils due to the pandemic situation. They have difficulty evaluating pupils' works and assessing their learning tasks and output, especially in ensuring honest and valid works.

Table 4*Teachers' coping mechanism in the implementation of modular distance learning*

Teachers Coping Mechanism in the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning	Mean	Interpretation
They are doing something about the situation and taking action to negate the stressor.	3.59	Always
Learning to live with the situation and accepting it.	3.68	Always
Doing something to take my mind off the situation, such as watching TV, K-Dramas, Netflix, movies, shopping, or listening to music.	3.87	Always
They are making fun with the situation, like making funny TikTok or videos and posting them on social media.	3.50	Always
Getting emotional and instrumental support/advice from friends, colleagues, administrators, and family	3.58	Always
Overall	3.64	Always

It can be gleaned from the table that the overall mean of the extent of teachers' coping mechanism in implementing modular distance learning is 3.64. It means that the teachers are always do something to negate the stressful mind into a positive mindset. For example, they watch TV, K-Dramas, Netflix, movies, shopping, or listening to music to overcome and cope with the new normal challenges.

Table 5*Significant difference between the extent of teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanism*

Aspect	F-value	p-value	Decision	Verbal Interpretation
Age				
Teachers' Perception	.397	.755	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Teachers' Challenges	1.135	.338	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Teachers' Coping Mechanism	1.607	.191	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Sex				
Teachers' Perception	1.322	.252	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Teachers' Challenges	1.267	.262	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Teachers' Coping Mechanism	.208	.649	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Civil Status				
Teachers' Perception	.114	.893	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Teachers' Challenges	.215	.807	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Teachers' Coping Mechanism	.108	.898	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Length of Service				
Teachers' Perception	1.497	.195	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Teachers' Challenges	3.131	.011	Rejected Ho	Significant
Teachers' Coping Mechanism	1.712	.137	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant

The table reveals that it was statistically found out that there is a significant difference between the extent of teachers' challenges in the implementation of the modular learning modalities in terms of length of service, since the obtained p -value of 0.00 does not exceed at 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. It simply shows that the teachers' length of service significantly influences the challenges they are experiencing in the implementation of modular distance learning. Meanwhile, age, sex, and civil status have no bearing on the teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanism in the implementation. Thus distance learning, since the obtained p -value of 0.00 exceeds at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis is failed to reject.

4. Summary of findings and reflections

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following findings are at this moment summarized: There were more female than male teacher-respondents; the majority of them were in the age range of 31 – 40 years old, some of them were married, and have a length of service seven years and below. The teachers' agreed that the implementation of modular distance learning have an organized and clear scheduled in the distribution and retrieval of learning modules and activities. They strongly agreed that they were highly challenged in reaching out their pupils due to the pandemic situation. They have difficulty evaluating pupils' works and assessing their learning tasks and output, especially in enchasing honest and valid works schedulee always negate the stressful mind into a positive mindset. They watch TV, K-Dramas, Netflix, movies, shopping, or listening to music to overcome and cope with the new normal challenges. Finally, there is a significant difference between the extent of teachers' challenges in implementing the modular learning modalities in terms of length of service, since the obtained p -value of 0.00 does not exceed at 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected. It simply shows that the teachers' length of service significantly influences the challenges they are experiencing in the implementation of modular distance learning. Meanwhile, age, sex, and civil status have no bearing on the teachers' perception, challenges, and coping mechanism in implementing modular d. This learning, since the obtained p -value of 0.00 exceeds at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis is failed to reject.

5. Recommendations/ advocacy plans

The results and findings of the study were the basis of the researcher in creating and developing programs and projects that can help them overcome and cope with the challenges of the new normal. The researcher joined and participated in different research conferences, forums, symposiums, and other related research congresses,

which can help her upgrade and share the study's findings with other research enthusiasts. Finally, the researcher submitted the study's abstract to international and division publications or other research magazines and journals. The researcher believes that this research contributed a lot to improving education standards.

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