

Adapting to online education: Social and emotional learning and teaching efficacy among Filipino teachers post-pandemic

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Abstract

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. With the help of online learning, students were able to continue their education. Since the outbreak of the pandemic nearly five years ago, online learning has become an attractive alternative in a number of situations for the Philippines. High temperatures, flooding, and other weather conditions make online learning a certainty. Recently, there has been an increased emphasis placed on integrating social and emotional learning into day-to-day classroom activities. The same is true for online learning as well. To better understand the current situation in the Philippines, 139 teachers who took pre-service teacher education during the pandemic were surveyed. The results indicated that teachers exhibit high levels of social and emotional learning, while online teaching efficacy is moderate. Importantly, compassion fatigue seems moderate with no specific relationship to the other variables. These findings suggest that while teachers are adapting well to social and emotional learning, there is room for improvement in their online teaching efficacy. It is crucial to provide ongoing support and resources to enhance teachers' skills in this area. By addressing these needs, the education system in the Philippines can continue to thrive in a predominantly online learning environment.

Keywords: online teaching and learning, social and emotional learning, teacher efficacy, optimism, pessimism, resilience

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1. Introduction

During COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippines was also heavily affected, as well as many other countries (Joaquin et al., 2020). The sudden shift to online learning has been accompanied by questions regarding its readiness (Briones, 2021). These readiness requirements pertain not only to the physical infrastructure itself (such as the internet and other information technology), but also to both teachers and students (Clemen et al., 2021). Schools and teachers have faced significant challenges in adapting to new digital platforms and teaching methods (Alea et al., 2020). This lack of preparedness highlighted the need for training and resources to ensure effective online education (Chin et al., 2022). Additionally, the disparity in technology access further complicated the transition for both educators and students (Marquez et al., 2020). More important the various relevant psychological issues related to online learning during COVID-19 (Lim et al., 2022; Rotas & Cahapay, 2020).

Online learning in the Philippines during COVID-19 was characterized by a range of challenges. Students reported the greatest challenge as being related to their home learning environment, while the least challenging was their level of technological literacy (Barrot et al., 2021). A number of other issues are associated with insufficient internet connectivity, inadequate learning resources, power outages, vague learning contents, overloaded lesson activities, limited teacher scaffolding, poor peer communication, conflict with home responsibilities, a lack of a learning environment, financial issues, physical health challenges, and mental health problems (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020). As for the psychological effects, research indicates that the majority of teachers have stress and anxiety-related problems (Mordeno et al., 2023; Talidong & Toquero, 2024). In addition to anxiety, teachers have also been found to suffer from depression and compassion fatigue, leading to burnout (Aruta et al., 2022). While research also indicates that Filipino teachers tend to be resilient and have the ability to cope with a variety of issues (Aragasi & Pangandaman, 2021; Edara et al., 2021), teachers are nonetheless still quite susceptible to burnout (Carreon et al., 2021). Thus, it is noted that further research is necessary, particularly in the area of exploring how teacher preparation programs can better prepare future educators to handle these psychological challenges.

In light of these issues, the current study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- Determine the levels of social emotional learning, compassion fatigue, and online teaching efficacy of teachers who underwent teacher training during COVID-19;
- Determine the relationships between teachers' optimism, pessimism, and resilience with social emotional learning, compassion fatigue, and online teaching efficacy; and
- Understand the predictors of compassion fatigue

2. Background of the study

Compassion fatigue is not a new concept. It is clinically defined as a form of *vicarious traumatization* (McCann & Pearlman, 1990) or *secondary traumatic stress* (Figley, 1999). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this condition is more commonly described as a *work-related stress* response among healthcare providers (Sinclair et al., 2017). As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds, compassion fatigue has risen again as a significant cause of burnout in healthcare related occupations (Lluch et al., 2022). More importantly, recent researches have noted that besides healthcare professions, teachers, especially those involved in online teaching during the pandemic, have also experienced compassion fatigue (Fute et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021). Within an academic

standpoint, compassion fatigue in teachers can be defined as the physical, emotional, and psychological effects of helping students during COVID-19 (Chao et al., 2024). Moreover, teachers' constant need to adapt to online classrooms, support students emotionally, and all the while also managing their own stress has significantly contributed to their burnout (Oberg et al., 2023). This parallels the struggles of healthcare professionals and teachers, which highlights a widespread issue across professions that requires high levels of empathy and adaptability (Ormiston et al., 2022). Accordingly, the ability to adapt during COVID-19 corresponds to the social emotional learning competencies of teachers (Gultom et al., 2022; Yang, 2021).

Social and emotional learning is first conceived as public health approach to education (Greenberg et al., 2017), while also coined as similar to character education, soft skills, and non-cognitive skills (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). In some sense, social and emotional learning or social emotional learning (SEL) involves various soft-skills that are said to be able to help an individual understand and manage his or her own emotions. Since it equips students for both academic and personal success, social and emotional learning has gained more and more recognition in recent years as one of the most crucial facets of education (Greenberg et al., 2017).

Issues during COVID-19 was concurred by various scholarships that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought an unprecedented change in people's lives across the globe. It has affected the educational sector where the landscape of educational engagements was stirred. Some observed that different learning institutions "have taken necessary measures in responding to the imminent threat this pandemic has to the lives of educators, learners, and other school personnel" (Pandey et al., 2021, p. 38). This measure leads to a series of suspensions and cancellations of classes that interrupt the learning of students and the customary operations of schools. In effect, online education and distance learning were given attention as the practical learning continuity plan. Studies have noted that as a crucial reaction to the educational difficulties caused by COVID-19, online learning has grown in popularity, enabling schools to keep teaching even while many campuses were closed, and students were required to maintain physical distance (Bao, 2020; Dhawan, 2020). As a result, online learning continuity manuals were designed and implemented throughout the pandemic. In fact, one of the provisions of the online learning continuity manual has something to do with capacity building for teachers. Capacity building is centered on enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers in utilizing technology and applications to facilitate learning in an online setup (Huang et al., 2024).

Capacity building in an online education framework ought to involve developing staff competencies in online course design and facilitation, assessing e-readiness, and implementing supportive strategies like pilot programs and stakeholder engagement to enhance online learning experiences for both staff and students (Kuboni, 2013). Therefore, teachers across all generations who are actively teaching cannot but familiarize themselves with the demands of an online learning setup, and the proper procedure in using technologies and applications in ensuring that learning becomes interactive. Nevertheless, if the sudden shift in the educational landscape causes different mental, physical, and emotional problems for students (Pandey et al., 2021), the same goes with teachers. It was not only the students who experienced mental, physical, and emotional disturbance, educators as well had experienced these disturbances. Online learning, while providing a solution to continuing education during the COVID-19 pandemic, has also introduced new sources of stress for teachers. Below are some of the sources of stress that teachers experience in an online learning environment.

Increased workload and preparation time was clearly observed within the learning continuity plan (Mendoza & Ocampo, 2022). Teachers have had to redesign lesson plans to fit online formats, often spending more time preparing digital materials, recording lectures, and setting up online assessments. This additional workload frequently extends beyond normal school hours, creating a sense of "always being on" and blurring the boundary between work and personal life (Dhawan, 2020). Similarly, **technical challenges and digital literacy** issues was also observed. Many teachers were unfamiliar with the necessary technology and online platforms before the pandemic, leading to stress as they learned to use new tools on the job (Rodriguez et al., 2022). Technical issues like unstable internet connections, software malfunctions, and difficulties in managing digital classrooms add to this stress, especially for teachers who may have limited technological support.

Student engagement and classroom management is challenging (Lin et al., 2021). Teachers often find it challenging to maintain students' attention in a virtual setting, as they lack physical proximity and the usual cues to manage classroom behavior (Santos et al., 2021). Keeping students engaged online requires extra effort and innovative teaching methods, adding pressure on teachers to find new ways to reach and motivate students (Roberts & Ching, 2023). Furthermore, **isolation and reduced peer support** becomes a common problem. Teaching can be a collaborative profession, with colleagues providing support and resources. The isolation of online teaching limits teachers' interactions with peers, making them feel more alone in managing the demands of online instruction. This isolation can contribute to emotional exhaustion and feelings of disconnect (Crawford et al., 2020).

Balancing emotional and academic support is needed. Teachers have increasingly found themselves providing not only academic instruction but also emotional support to students coping with the stresses of the pandemic. This additional emotional labor, coupled with their struggles, can increase burnout and contribute to stress (Ferri et al., 2020). In front of the challenges that teachers met, challenges that take a significant toll on the overall well-being, in ensuring that learning of students continues there were interventions that different schools have applied in ensuring the personal and professional health of teachers (Ching & Gungon, 2023). These interventions are aimed at helping teachers manage stress, maintain their well-being, and adapt effectively to the demands of online education. One of these has something to do with recognizing the rapid shift of schools to online learning as an opportunity to provide professional development programs focused on digital skills, including how to use learning management systems, video conferencing tools, and virtual classroom management software. Training in these areas has been essential for helping teachers build confidence in using technology effectively, reducing stress related to unfamiliar platforms (Dhawan, 2020).

Conceivably, what could reinforce the **professional development programs** of schools during the pandemic is to also provide technological resources to teachers (Chin et al., 2022). The rapid shift to online education has highlighted the necessity for reliable technological resources. Many teachers initially faced challenges in adapting to digital teaching due to a lack of adequate technology, internet connectivity, and digital literacy. Recognizing this, schools have provided resources like laptops, tablets, and internet subsidies to ensure that teachers have the tools necessary to teach effectively (Rodriguez et al., 2022). By supplying these resources, schools address a critical barrier to online teaching success, especially for teachers in underserved areas. Research indicates that teachers who have access to reliable technology and stable internet connections experience less frustration and are better equipped to maintain instructional quality, which is directly related to student engagement and learning outcomes (Rodriguez et al., 2022). Furthermore, access to these resources enables teachers to experiment with various educational technologies, ultimately increasing their digital competence and confidence in delivering online instruction.

Aside from programs that provide solutions to problems related to the conduct of classes in an online environment, schools also make it necessary to raise **significant awareness about mental health** issues. Schools have begun to incorporate mental health support for teachers, such as counseling services, virtual support groups, and wellness programs. These initiatives address the psychological strain of online teaching and help teachers manage feelings of isolation, burnout, and anxiety. Some schools also conduct regular check-ins and provide access to stress-management resources, like mindfulness training and relaxation exercises, to support mental well-being (Crawford et al., 2020). In maintaining a well-balanced workload and to reduce the stress that teachers during the pandemic, several schools have implemented a flexible work schedule. To alleviate the demands of online teaching, some schools have implemented more flexible work schedules, allowing teachers time to balance personal and professional responsibilities. Others have reduced workloads by hiring additional staff or providing teaching assistants to support online classes, enabling teachers to focus on core teaching tasks and reducing the strain of extended work hours (Mendoza & Ocampo, 2022). The physical demands of online teaching - such as prolonged screen time, limited movement, and the need for ergonomic workspaces - have been shown to affect teachers' physical well-being. Schools have addressed these challenges by offering resources and guidance on maintaining physical health in a virtual setting.

Many institutions **provide ergonomic recommendations**, such as proper desk setups and posture guidelines, to prevent strain from extended computer use (Dhawan, 2020). Schools have also encouraged teachers to incorporate regular breaks and physical activity into their routines to counteract the sedentary nature of online work. Some have even offered virtual wellness programs, including yoga and mindfulness sessions, aimed at reducing stress and promoting relaxation. Research shows that teachers who receive support for their physical health are better able to maintain energy levels, reduce fatigue, and avoid burnout, all of which contribute to sustained teaching efficacy in an online environment (Dhawan, 2020). Santos et al. (2021) also mentioned the importance of strengthening the sense of community among teachers. Hence, Peer collaboration and mentorship programs play a critical role in helping teachers adapt to the demands of online education. Schools have developed these initiatives to reduce feelings of isolation, which can significantly impact teachers' mental health and motivation. Through organized virtual meetings, discussion forums, and structured mentorship relationships, teachers have been able to share resources, discuss effective online teaching strategies, and receive feedback on their challenges. These programs create a platform for experienced teachers to mentor those less familiar with digital teaching tools, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. Studies show that peer collaboration strengthens teacher efficacy and builds resilience by fostering a sense of community, which is crucial in a setting where face-to-face interaction is limited (Santos et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, in an online teaching environment, **feedback and evaluation** play a crucial role in teacher development, issues such as instructor immediacy and presence are critical in student motivation (Palmes et al., 2024). However, during the pandemic, many institutions shifted to supportive evaluation practices, focusing on growth and learning rather than strict performance assessments. Schools implemented feedback mechanisms, often through regular one-on-one meetings with administrators or instructional coaches, to provide constructive guidance and affirm teachers' progress in digital education (Rahim, 2020). This supportive approach acknowledges the challenges teachers face in adapting to new methods, encouraging them to refine their skills without the fear of negative consequences. Additionally, such feedback mechanisms offer teachers an opportunity to voice their concerns, creating a more responsive and understanding educational environment. Research suggests that constructive feedback enhances teaching efficacy, as it helps teachers adapt to the online format with a sense of encouragement, rather than criticism (Phillip et al., 2024).

All together these interventions reflect a **comprehensive approach** to supporting teachers as they navigate the unique challenges of online education. By investing in their professional competence and personal health, schools have contributed to building a resilient teaching workforce capable of adapting to ongoing changes in education. Through peer collaboration, technological support, constructive feedback, and physical wellness programs, schools create an environment that values both the well-being and professional growth of teachers. These initiatives ensure that teachers are not only equipped to meet the technical demands of online education but are also supported in maintaining their health and motivation, ultimately benefitting the quality of education delivered to students during the pandemic and beyond.

The aforementioned interventions enable teachers to adapt to the sudden changes in the education landscape, shifting from physical learning interactions into digital ones using various online applications, which the pandemic brought is part of the principles of **social and emotional learning**. Social and emotional learning is increasingly recognized as a foundational element of effective teaching, particularly in virtual classrooms where traditional student-teacher interactions are altered (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019). Social and emotional learning encompasses competencies such as self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making - skills that support both student and teacher resilience and adaptability in changing educational environments. Within an online settings, social and emotional skills are essential for teachers as they establish rapport, build a positive classroom culture, and support students' emotional well-being, often without physical presence (Meyer et al., 2021).

Research specific to Filipino educators highlights those teachers who integrated social and emotional practices reported **improved classroom cohesion**, student engagement, and a sense of connectedness despite

physical distances (Santos et al., 2021). These outcomes are particularly relevant in the post-pandemic context, where students face increased stress and anxiety, and many have experienced learning losses or disruptions (Briones et al., 2021). Social and emotional learning practices, such as creating routines, fostering open communication, and offering emotional support, have been shown to mitigate some of the psychological impacts of online learning, benefiting both students and educators (Santos et al., 2021). Furthermore, teachers with high social and emotional learning competencies should demonstrate greater resilience and adaptability in virtual classrooms, essential traits for navigating the challenges associated with online education.

Teaching efficacy can be defined as an educator's belief in their capacity to positively influence student learning, has been closely associated with effective teaching practices and student outcomes (Bandura et al., 1999). During the transition to online education, Filipino teachers reported declines in teaching efficacy, particularly in their confidence to engage students and manage classroom dynamics effectively (Mendoza & Ocampo, 2022). This decline can be attributed to multiple factors, including the unfamiliarity of virtual instruction, lack of experience with digital tools, and reduced face-to-face interaction with students, which many teachers relied on for cues and feedback (Martin et al., 2012). However, as the post-pandemic landscape has evolved, there has been an increase in targeted training programs to bolster Filipino educators' digital competencies and pedagogical adaptability (Carreon & Villanueva, 2023). These training sessions focus not only on technical skills but also on enhancing teachers' confidence in using digital platforms and fostering engagement in online classrooms. Studies indicate that teachers with higher levels of teaching efficacy in online settings tend to create more interactive and engaging learning environments, which are positively correlated with improved student learning outcomes (Lopez & Cruz, 2022). Teachers who feel more competent in their digital teaching abilities are also more likely to experiment with new instructional strategies and incorporate feedback effectively, contributing to a more dynamic and responsive online teaching approach (Martin et al., 2012).

Lastly, **teachers' professional development** has been identified as a critical pathway for enhancing social and emotional learning competencies and teaching efficacy in online education (Chao et al., 2024). Research suggests that social and emotional learning-focused professional development improves teachers' ability to support students emotionally, creating a safe and inclusive learning environment even in virtual classrooms (Flores & Hernandez, 2021). Filipino teachers who participated in such training programs reported higher levels of emotional resilience, improved classroom management skills, and increased confidence in fostering a positive online classroom climate (Hu et al., 2024). These findings underscore the need for comprehensive training that goes beyond technical skills to address the emotional and relational dimensions of online teaching. Furthermore, professional development initiatives that incorporate social and emotional learning principles have been shown to benefit teachers' well-being, enhancing their resilience and reducing burnout - factors that, in turn, positively impact their teaching efficacy (Datu & Restubog, 2020). In essence, social and emotional learning does not only aids teachers (and students) in managing their emotions and stress, but also equips them with strategies for modeling emotional regulation and empathy, which are vital for maintaining student engagement and well-being in any learning contexts.

In sum, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered the educational landscape, necessitating a shift to online learning and distance education. This transition has introduced new stressors for teachers, who must adapt to new technologies and methods while managing their own stress and supporting their students emotionally. Therefore, understanding teachers' compassion fatigue is crucial as it directly impacts their well-being, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in the classroom. By recognizing and addressing this issue, schools can implement supportive measures, such as professional development, mental health resources, and a supportive work environment, to help teachers manage stress and maintain their passion for teaching. This not only benefits the teachers but also enhances the overall learning experience for students, fostering a healthier and more productive educational environment.

3. Method

The current study uses a cross-sectional quantitative research approach to further understand the relationships between teachers' optimism, pessimism, and resilience with social emotional learning, compassion fatigue, and online teaching efficacy. The study also utilized control variables (teachers' age, gender, tenure (years teaching), and hours spent online (weekly average) to eliminate the tendency for false relationships among the variables under study (Spector, 2019). Meaning that the data was collected at a single point in time, which enables researchers to gather data from a defined population and analyze the relationships between these variables (Kesmodel, 2018). Additionally, the study used a volunteer sampling strategy (Stanley, 2015), wherein an email with the online survey link were sent to students who took teacher preparation training during COVID-19. The use of volunteer sampling or sometimes referred to as convenience sampling, which involves recruiting individuals who are readily available and willing to participate in the study (Emerson, 2015). Before the participants answer the survey, an informed consent statement was provided. The survey data were collected in a secure manner and kept confidential and no identifiable information were collected. In total 139 teachers completed the online survey.

Data analysis included descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the data. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between variables (Bollen & Barb, 1981). Finally, regression statistics was conducted to determine the predictors of teachers' compassion fatigue. For the survey instrument, the current study used Chao et al. (2024) instrument as an attempt to replicate the study made in Taiwan for possible future comparison. Cronbach's (1951) Alpha reliability of the instrument is computed at .60, denoting an adequate internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis of the instrument was performed using Structural Equation Modelling with AMOS version 26.0 software (Schreiber et al., 2006). Due to the low number of participants, bootstrap method with sampling repeated 2000 times was used to achieved multivariate normality (Mallinckrodt et al., 2006). Criteria for confirmatory factor analysis model fit were computed with all values within the accepted norm (Hu & Bentler, 1999): Significant Chi-Square with 89.04, $p < .001$ and Chi-Square divided by degrees of freedom with 1.06 (a value less than 5 is acceptable). RMSEA = .021 (.001, .052) 90% CI, and GFI = .93, TLI = .91, and CFI = .93, all of which have values greater than .90, indicating good. Lastly, the current study has some limitations. The use of volunteer sampling may limit the generalizability of findings. Hence, the findings are only suitable within the Philippine setting and only for those teachers who undertook teacher training at the height of COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, online surveys are self-reported and limited to the fact that it may not collect the full complexity of the teachers' experiences.

4. Results and discussions

The results and discussions are separated into sections highlighting the findings of the corresponding research objectives. For the descriptive statistics, table 1 shows that among the 139 teacher respondents, 88% (or 122) are female teachers with the remaining 12% (or 17) are male. Majority 73% (101) teachers works at state or public schools in the Philippines, while the remaining 27% (or 38) are affiliated with private institutions. As for the teaching levels, 53% (or 74) taught in elementary, while 47% (or 65) taught in high schools. Most of the participants 75% (or 105) have bachelor degrees, while the remaining 25% (or 34) took graduate education. As for prior online experiences prior to COVID-19 pandemic, most teachers 66% (or 91) have no internet teaching or learning experiences, while the remaining 34% (or 48) have online experiences. Lastly, average age of participants is 28 years old, while the average work tenure is around 2 years. Denoting just appropriate group of participants who took their teacher preparation studies during COVID-19 pandemic. These findings explained the typical situation in the Philippines, wherein prior to COVID-19, online teaching and learning is quite limited (Dela Pena-Bandalaria, 2009).

Table 1*Descriptive statistics*

Variables / Items	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	17	12
Female	122	88
School type		
Public school	101	73
Private school	38	27
Teach level		
Elementary	74	53
High School	65	47
Graduate studies		
Yes	34	25
No	105	75
Previous online experiences		
Yes	48	34
No	91	66

N = 139

4.1 Levels of social emotional learning, compassion fatigue, and online teaching efficacy of teachers who underwent teacher training during COVID-19

Table 2 shows the total mean scores (including the standard deviation - SD) together with the male and female participants' mean scores. Importantly, independent samples T-tests results indicates that only **emotional learning** $t(139) = 2.10, p < .05$ with male teachers scoring higher than female teachers. Previous studies all noted the importance of emotional stability in teachers (Kanagaraj & Rajeswari, 2023; Singh & Kumar, 2009), however, studies have provided varied findings (Shehzad & Mahmood, 2013), denoting the inconsistency of gender issues with regards to teachers' emotions, hence the need to further investigate this issue.

For the levels of optimism (Philippines: 9.73, Taiwan: 9.04), pessimism (Philippines: 8.61, Taiwan: 6.69), and resilience (Philippines: 3.17, Taiwan: 3.31) [Taiwan scores based from (Chao et al., 2024) study], upon comparison, there seems to be not much difference between optimism and resiliency scores. However, Pilipino teachers seems to scored higher in pessimism denoting the perceived difficulties of online teaching and learning during COVID-19 (Decena, 2023; Samifanni & Gumanit, 2021). Furthermore, **no** significant gender differences were found in optimism, pessimism, or resilience scores. Both male and female teachers demonstrated comparable levels of psychological traits that influence their ability to cope with the challenges of teaching during the pandemic. This similarity suggests that resilience and outlook are not inherently tied to gender, but may in some sense influenced by external factors such as institutional support and personal experiences.

For the mean scores, on weekly average teachers spent time online (studies/teach) reported around 16 to 17 hours, while spending almost 12 hours in preparation (this include either studying or preparing lessons offline). Time spent online during COVID-19 is quite similar to previous study in Taiwan with an average of around 16 hours per week (Chao et al., 2024). This finding somehow reflects the demanding nature of online education during the pandemic and suggests that time investment in teaching was consistent across genders.

For the mean scores of social and emotional learning, findings show that within a four-point Likert (1932) scale, social and emotional learning seems moderately high with **social learning** = **2.97** and **emotional learning** = **2.95**. There were **no** significant gender differences in social learning scores, denoting that both male and female teachers reported similar levels of understanding their students' challenges, paying attention to students' emotions, fostering community, and encouraging idea-sharing. As for **compassion fatigue** with mean score of **2.26**, which indicate moderate level of secondary trauma (Figley, 1999), incurred from teaching or learning online during the pandemic. Furthermore, **no** significant gender differences were also observed in compassion

fatigue scores. However, it is notable that both male and female teachers scored relatively low on items like *losing sleep over others' traumatic experiences* and *difficulty separating work and personal life*, which in a wider sense might actually be a good thing.

Table 2
Gender differences

Items	Total		Male		Female		<i>t</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Emotional learning	2.95	0.38	3.13	0.47	2.93	0.36	2.10* M>F
I am realistic about the strengths and limitations of my online teaching abilities	2.95	0.78	3.12	0.70	2.93	0.79	
I will continue to develop my skills to better support my online teaching abilities	3.27	0.52	3.41	0.62	3.25	0.51	
I am able to calm myself when I am stressed or nervous	2.78	0.65	2.88	0.78	2.76	0.63	
I am able to balance my emotions when teaching online	2.81	0.79	3.12	0.86	2.77	0.77	
Social learning	2.97	0.37	2.93	0.56	2.98	0.33	ns
I am able to understand the challenges my students face in learning	2.90	0.62	2.88	0.70	2.90	0.61	
I pay attention to the feelings of my students	3.02	0.65	3.00	0.79	3.02	0.64	
I have fostered a sense of community within the class	2.82	0.62	2.82	0.88	2.82	0.58	
My students are given the change to share their ideas	3.16	0.59	3.00	0.71	3.18	0.58	
Compassion fatigue	2.26	0.57	2.22	0.50	2.27	0.58	ns
I am losing sleep over others' traumatic experiences	2.19	0.93	2.00	0.79	2.22	0.95	
I felt weak and tired after teaching online	2.54	0.90	2.24	0.75	2.58	0.91	
I have difficulty separating my work and personal life	2.05	0.90	2.41	0.80	2.00	0.91	
Online teaching efficacy	2.48	0.62	2.79	0.83	2.43	0.57	ns
I am able to promote critical thinking	2.45	0.99	2.94	1.03	2.39	0.97	
I am able to overcome difficulties in teaching online	2.47	1.00	2.94	0.90	2.40	0.99	
I am able to understand the value of teaching online	2.53	1.07	2.53	1.07	2.53	1.08	
I am able to stay motivated when teaching online	2.45	0.85	2.76	0.97	2.41	0.82	
Optimism	9.73	2.09	10.41	2.58	9.64	2.00	ns
Pessimism	8.61	1.94	9.35	2.37	8.51	1.86	ns
Resilience	3.17	0.42	3.33	0.45	3.15	0.41	ns
Teach online (hours per week)	16.62	9.95	16.88	10.94	16.58	9.85	ns
Preparation (hours per week)	11.88	7.07	11.24	7.29	11.97	7.06	ns

Note. N=139, Cronbach Alpha reliability = .82, SD = standard deviation, *t* = independent samples t-test. Male = 17 or 12%, Female = 122 or 88%. * $p < .05$, ns = non-significant

For **online teaching efficacy** with mean score of **2.48**, which can also be considered as moderate. In addition, while there were **no** overall significant gender differences were found in online teaching efficacy, male teachers reported slightly higher mean scores ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.83$) compared to female teachers ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.57$). On individual items, male teachers scored higher on *promoting critical thinking* ($M = 2.94$ vs. $M = 2.39$ for females) and *overcoming difficulties in teaching online* ($M = 2.94$ vs. $M = 2.40$ for females). These findings suggest that male teachers might feel more confident in their ability to handle the challenges of online teaching, which may stem from differences in self-efficacy or teaching approaches.

In sum, these results somehow show the need for further integration of digital literacy and online pedagogy into teacher preparation programs, particularly in public institutions where the majority of educators are trained. Policymakers should prioritize funding for both initial training and ongoing professional development to address gaps in digital readiness. Given the relatively young and early-career profile of the respondents, mentorship programs that pair experienced educators with newer teachers could also serve as a valuable resource for navigating the complexities of modern teaching environments.

4.2 Relationships between teachers' optimism, pessimism, and resilience with social emotional learning, compassion fatigue, and online teaching efficacy

Several independent samples t-tests were computed, wherein results show that there were **no** significant differences between teachers who worked at public and private school, elementary and high school, and whether they had previous online teaching experiences. As for the correlation between the variables, table 3 shows that *age* (1), *teaching tenure* (2), and *hours spent teaching online weekly* (3) showed **weak** to **no** significant

relationships with the main study variables. *Emotional learning* (5) was positively correlated with *online teaching efficacy* (8) with $r = .19, p < .05$, suggesting that teachers who are emotionally aware of their online teaching capabilities tend to have higher perceived efficacy in online teaching. *Social learning* (6) exhibited a moderate positive correlation with *emotional learning* (5) with $r = .37, p < .01$, indicating that teachers who are better at understanding and managing social dynamics also have higher emotional learning.

Table 3
Correlations between the variables

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) Age										
(2) Tenure (years teaching)	ns									
(3) Teach online (hours per week)	.17*	ns								
(4) Preparation (hours per week)	ns	ns	ns							
(5) Emotional learning	ns	ns	ns	ns						
(6) Social learning	ns	ns	ns	ns	.37**					
(7) Compassion fatigue	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns				
(8) Online teaching efficacy	ns	ns	ns	ns	.19*	ns	ns			
(9) Optimism	ns	.22*	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns		
(10) Pessimism	ns	ns	ns	-.19*	ns	ns	ns	ns	.21*	
(11) Resilience	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ns = non-significant

Interestingly, *compassion fatigue* (7) showed **no** significant correlations with any other variables, suggesting it operates **independently** within the context of this study. *Optimism* (9) was positively correlated with *teaching tenure* (2) with $r = .22, p < .05$, hinting that longer teaching experience might foster or create a more positive outlook on the COVID-19 situations. In addition, *pessimism* (9) showed a **weak negative** correlation with *preparation time* (4) with $r = -.19, p < .05$ and a weak **positive** correlation with *optimism* (9) with $r = .21, p < .05$, reflecting a complex relationship between these emotional dimensions. Lastly, *resilience* (11) showed **no** significant relationships with any of the other variables, indicating it might act as a stable personality trait unaffected by the factors measured in this study.

The correlation findings highlight the complexity of teachers' experiences during online education. The positive relationship between emotional learning and online teaching efficacy suggests that fostering emotional skills could enhance teachers' confidence in managing online classrooms. This aligns with previous studies indicating that emotionally competent teachers are better equipped to adapt to challenging environments (Carreon & Villanueva, 2023). Furthermore, the moderate correlation between emotional and social learning underscores the interconnected nature of these competencies. Teachers who are skilled at navigating social interactions are likely to possess stronger emotional self-regulation, which could be critical in online teaching contexts wherein direct human interaction (student-teacher) is limited. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of equipping teachers with emotional and social learning skills to enhance their online teaching efficacy while addressing the broader psychological challenges they face in an increasingly digital educational landscape.

4.3 Predictors of compassion fatigue

A hierarchical linear regression was used to compute for the predictors of compassion fatigue. Demographic variables such as teachers' age, gender, tenure (years teaching), and hours spent online (weekly average) were input into the first block to serve as control variables (Spector, 2019). While the remaining variables emotional learning, social learning, online teaching efficacy, optimism, pessimism, and resilience were entered into the second block. Interestingly, results showed **no significant** predictors. Unlike the previous study noted in Chao et al. (2024), wherein teachers' resilience is negatively related to compassion fatigue, while teachers' sense of pessimism is positively related to compassion fatigue, which are expected. Furthermore, previous study also noted the positive relationship between online learning efficacy with compassion fatigue (Chao et al., 2024), which explained that excessive emotional burden can cause compassion fatigue.

The absence of significant predictors for compassion fatigue in this study highlights its potential complexity and suggests that the variables measured here may not directly account for the phenomenon in the sample. One possible explanation for this discrepancy could be the relatively short tenure and limited online teaching experience of the sample. As most teachers in this study had minimal online teaching exposure before the COVID-19 pandemic, the stressors they experienced might differ from those of more seasoned educators. Furthermore, cultural or contextual factors specific to the Philippine education system could contribute to the variance in findings. Overall, while the findings do not support previous models, they underscore the complexity of compassion fatigue and the importance of considering diverse factors in future research to develop comprehensive support mechanisms for teachers in online environments.

5. Conclusions

The current study explored the relationships among teachers' optimism, pessimism, resilience, social-emotional learning, compassion fatigue, and online teaching efficacy while controlling for demographic factors such as age, gender, tenure, and online teaching hours. Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of the participants were young, early-career teachers with minimal prior online teaching experience, reflecting the typical profile of Philippine educators during the pandemic. While some gender differences were found in emotional learning and online teaching efficacy, key constructs like compassion fatigue showed no significant predictors in the regression model. These findings suggest that the factors contributing to teachers' emotional burdens may be more complex and multifaceted than anticipated, potentially influenced by unmeasured variables such as workload, institutional support, or cultural context.

The implications of these findings are twofold. First, the lack of significant predictors for compassion fatigue highlights the need for more nuanced research that includes both personal and systemic factors affecting educators' well-being. Future studies should investigate the role of institutional policies, access to mental health resources, and professional development opportunities in mitigating compassion fatigue. Second, the findings underscore the importance of equipping teachers with skills in emotional and social learning, as these elements may indirectly influence their ability to manage stress and maintain teaching efficacy in challenging environments. Policymakers and school administrators must prioritize tailored interventions, such as resilience training and peer support networks, to foster a supportive teaching ecosystem. By addressing these gaps, educators can be better prepared to navigate the demands of online and hybrid teaching environments, ultimately improving teacher well-being and educational outcomes.

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