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PITFALLS OF TEACHERS ON MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING: BASIS FOR A PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to determine the pitfalls encountered by grade five teachers during modular teaching and learning. Specifically, it aimed to find out the pitfalls encountered by teachers along with students' comprehension, students' academic behavior, monitoring of students' education, and physical interaction with the learners. The personal profile of teachers, out of the total respondents (56), most of the teachers are female-dominated. Most of them belong to the age bracket of 34 to 45 and most of the teachers are married. Most of the teachers had attended post-graduate studies. Most respondents are still young in the service, holding Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 positions, and attending local, national, and regional training. On the level of pitfalls encountered by teachers in modular teaching and learning, most respondents experienced a slight gravity level in the four aspects. The computed average weighted mean along comprehension is 2.50, along academic behavior is 2.54, along monitoring of students' performance is 2.58, and along physical interaction is 2.79. All have an equivalent value of moderately grave. There is a specific profile of teachers that is significantly related. Age is significantly associated with monitoring students' learning. The computed r value is .270, while the calculated significance level is 0.04. Training attended by the teachers is significantly related to some aspects of students' comprehension, (computed sig. value is 0.04 and physical interaction is .02), which is lower than the .05 level of significance. The grade five teachers who served as respondents are mostly female dominated; they are in their early forties and married. Most of them are attending post-graduate studies and have attended relevant training. Second, the level of teachers' pitfalls is mostly moderately grave. In addition, age is significantly related to monitoring, training is significantly associated substantially with physical interaction and comprehension.

Keywords: pitfalls, modular distance learning, action plan

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INTRODUCTION

In a conventional classroom setting, the classroom atmosphere is expected to be conducive, free from noise and disturbances, and a pleasant room to study. Teachers are encouraged to believe that the learning environment must be orderly and inaudible so that teaching and learning activities must be operative. A quiet, tidy, and well-managed classroom may mean effective teaching and learning. With the fast and growing movement toward cooperative learning, many teachers are making use of varied activities wherein learners take active participation, and at the same time can make for noisy classrooms they must be learning at the same time.

This conventional way of a teaching-learning situation in the classroom was suddenly changed when the news that a certain kind of deadly virus had started to spread in the country of China, the Covid-19 virus, way back in the early days of March 2019. This was declared a pandemic situation by health experts throughout the world and up to the present time. The conservative way of a face-to-face encounter between the learners and the teachers in the classroom was not prepared by almost all sectors of society due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has made a significant transformation in our educational scenario and remarkably made redirection from a new normal condition. It has dramatically affected the usual conduct of activities of the school and the whole community. We may have to adjust due to the sudden declaration of school closure and lockdowns in many areas of the country.

The outbreak of the new coronavirus infection known as COVID-19 first occurred at Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan City of China in December 2019 *(Wikipedia,2020).* Within a couple of months, it turned out to be a global health emergency. It has rapidly affected thousands of people who are sick or being killed due to the spread of this disease. It resulted in widespread disruption, such as travel restrictions, closure of schools, and global economic recession.

Schools were temporarily closed worldwide, teachers have reported on a limited schedule, and suddenly, no learners are allowed to enter but just stay at home. But despite these declared pandemic situations, educating the learners must continue to move on. Our government has mobilized all its efforts and resources so that education in the country must not suffer and to sustain the thirst of the learners to learn.

Many countries, if not most, around the world, have temporarily closed educational institutions certain the spread of the virus and to reduce infections *(Tria,2020).* The normal face-to-face mode of engagement of students and teachers within the school has also been suspended. In our country, the process of adapting to the new standard form of education at present, continuous innovations of educators, and active involvement of other stakeholders are the driving forces for its success. For the continuity of education and for every school to still attain its mission and vision to provide quality education to every Filipino learner, the Department of Education implemented Modular Distance Learning. Distance Learning refers to a learning delivery modality where learning takes place between the teacher and learners who are geographically remote from each other during instruction. This modality has three types: Modular Distance Learning (MDL), Online Distance Learning (ODL), and TV/RADIO-Based Instruction *(Quinones,2020).*

During this pandemic, the teacher, together with the parents, has a pivotal role in controlling and implementing proper discipline in their children's learning. Because most of them are at home to study and learn, most parents have control of their domain for them.

The most significant concern of teachers, administrators, and parents is the issue of classroom management, the fact that most of the learners are not physically present in the school. Providing a safe and supportive learning situation at home and allowing students an opportunity to learn and grow is the top concern for everyone in the field of education. Schools have implemented the work-from-home strategies, and various policies were adopted and used to stop and prevent students attain quality education despite the new normal condition.

Because everyone was caught barefooted, the Department of Education had to think of good and best learning modalities and approve the use of the blended learning modality. The learning and teaching delivery are done through modular and online learning that fits the learning situation of the learners.

Modular learning is the most popular and appropriate type of Distance Learning for valid reasons. In the Philippines, this learning modality is currently used by all public schools because, according to a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents with children who are enrolled this academic year *(Bernardo, J, 2020)*. This kind of modality is also in consideration of the learners in most rural areas where the internet is not yet accessible for online learning. The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask for assistance from the teacher via e-mail, cellphone, or text message/instant messaging for monitoring and communicating with others.

Research Questions

This study focused on the classroom-related pitfalls of modular learning and interventions implemented by the teachers of Villasis District during the SY 2021-2022.

Specifically, it attempted to answer the following questions.

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
    a. Age;
    b. Sex;
    c. Civil status;
    d. Highest educational attainment;
    e. Position;
    f. Years in the service; and
    g. No. of relevant training attended?
2. What is the level of seriousness on the pitfalls encountered by teachers in modular learning:
    a. Learning in terms of comprehension;
    b. Pupils' academic behavior on motivation;
    c. Monitoring of students learning; and
    d. Physical interaction with learners?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the degree of gravity of the pitfalls encountered by teachers and their profile variables?
4. What plan of action could be proposed to address the pitfalls of teachers on modular learning?

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the review of theories and concepts of Dewey on the idea of Inquiry, Skinner`s Reinforcement theory, Marvin Marshall`s Management theory, and Canter`s Assertive theory on behavioral approaches, and others.

Dewey thought that inquiry is called for whenever we sense something is indeterminate or out of balance. Such situations may range from trivial to life-threatening. It is important to note, however, that Dewey avoided subjectivism: it is the whole experienced situation, and not just the experiencing subject, that is problematic. We do not know in advance whether we will need to alter things that are external relative to us or accommodate ourselves to them. Dewey thought that resolution, or "adjustment," usually requires a mix of alteration *and* accommodation. In any case, a problematic situation must be analyzed to identify which of its elements are relevant to the problem at hand. Those elements must be reconstructed to restore harmony and balance.

Once we take note of a problematic situation, therefore, there is still a great deal that remains to be done. We must decide precisely what problem is most pressing, develop proposals for its solution, determine which tools we will need to test our recommendations, and then test them against the conditions that initiated the inquiry in the first place. Sometimes matters are even more complicated: as we go through this process, we often change our minds about what Dewey calls our "ends-in-view" and what types of tools are required to achieve them.

A theory of discipline, derived from Dewey's theory of growth and inquiry, provides the following guiding principles for classroom management. They are tried and tested in classrooms, a scientific morality of logically determining values should be advanced.

Moreover, Marvin Marshall's approach is for children to conduct themselves in socially and personally responsible behavior- so give children their responsibility to behave well. Stress may be silently sabotaging kids' success in school. A little pressure is good. It heightens alertness and improves performance.

On the other hand, B.F Skinner's work is built on the assumption that behavior is influenced by its consequences. Reinforcement theory is the process of shaping behavior by controlling the implications of the behavior. Reinforcement theory proposes that you can change someone's behavior using reinforcement, punishment, and extinction. Rewards are used to reinforce the behavior you want, and disciplines are used to prevent the behavior you do not wish to. Extinction is a means to stop someone from performing a learned behavior. The technical term for these processes is called operant conditioning.

In addition, this study is also premised on the Theory of Constructivism. Lee and Lin (2009) argued that the chief responsibility of the learners is to construct one's understanding based on how they make meanings and essences on the different experiences provided by the teachers and the environment. From the constructivist's point of view, the teachers are merely facilitators of learning, and the learners are responsible for their learning. When applied in modular instruction, teachers provide learning experiences to the learners through self-learning modules. The interaction between the learner and the material, and the learner and teacher, will be the determining factor in building the learner's understanding. In the same manner, the theory reminded teachers that although learning is the sole responsibility of the learners, teachers should provide various experiences to them, and facilitate the process of meaning-making effectively.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptualization of this study was based on the different readings and other related studies related to the present study. The problems can be described objectively through the conceptual framework formulated by the researcher for easier understanding.

Of the different forms of pitfalls or challenges experienced by many teachers in this new normal, like lack of funds for the reproduction of printed instructional materials, delivery of instructional materials, and monitoring of learners' performance are just a few being experienced by them, be it in the school or at home.

With the present research, the conceptual framework will guide us in understanding better some of the different challenges or pitfalls of teachers during the conduct of modular distance learning. Some of the pitfalls revolved around the following indicators, which also served as the dependent variables of the study re: learning in terms of their competence, the pupil`s academic behavior on motivation, monitoring of student learning, and the physical interaction of the learners. It looked into the gravity of these indicators as related to their conduct of modular distance learning of the students.

These were correlated to the profile variables of the learners, which also served as the independent variables that include Sex, Age, Highest educational qualifications, Position, Years in service, and training attended. A plan of action will be conducted to address the indicators which were identified as more severe conditions.

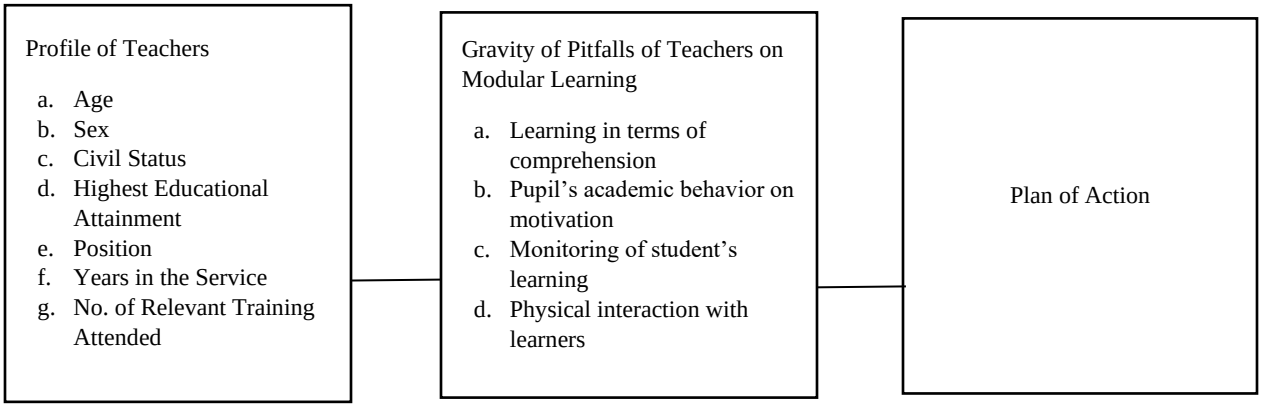

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive survey method will be employed in conducting this study. *(Shuttleworth,2018)* defines descriptive design as a scientific method that involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in a way is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to explain what exists concerning variables or conditions in a situation. The methods involved range from the survey, which describes the status quo. This correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, and the developmental studies, which seek to determine changes over time.

A descriptive survey was employed in determining the following: a) profile of the grade five teachers, b) degree of gravity of the pitfalls encountered by teachers on modular learning and their profile, and c) significant relationship between the pitfalls encountered by teachers on modular learning and their profile. This is suitable whenever the subjects vary among themselves and to know the extent to which different conditions and situations are obtained among the subjects.

Research Methodology

The researcher used the questionnaire checklist as the primary tool gathering instrument. The questionnaire was made up of two parts. Part one focused on the profile of the respondents, which included their age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, position, length of service, and the number of trainings attended for the last five years. Part two of the questionnaire contained the four different areas on the gravity of the pitfalls encountered by teachers in modular learning.

Research Participants

The respondents of this study were the fifty-six (56) Grade Five Elementary School teachers of Villasis Districts for the SY 2021-2022.

Data Analysis

The data is analyzed using a descriptive survey. It is done by looking over the frequencies, percentage mean, and ranking of the criteria. The interpretation of means was based on the following:

Table 1. Interpretation table

Mean Scale Value	Point Value	Descriptive Rating/Interpretation
3.41 – 4.0	4	Grave (80 to 100 % performance not achieved)
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderately Grave (70 % performance not achieved)
1.81 – 2.60	2	Less Grave (60 % performance not achieved)
1.00 -1.80	1	Least Grave (above 50 % performance was achieved)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, civil status, highest educational qualifications, position, length of service, and the number of trainings attended for the last five years.

Table 2. Data on the profile of the respondents.

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age	50- and above	11	20
	45-49	9	16
	40-44	15	27
	35-39	11	20
	30-34	8	14
	25-29	2	4
	20-24		
Sex	Male	12	22
	Female	45	80
Civil Status	Single	12	22
	Married	41	73
	Widow	3	5
Highest Educational Attainment	BS – Graduate	3	5
	M. A. Graduate	24	43
	with M. A. units	26	46
	Doctorate Graduate	2	4
	with Doctorate units	1	2
Position	Teacher I	14	25
	Teacher II	20	36
	Teacher III	25	45
Length of Service	0 – 4 years	9	16
	5 – 9 years	16	29
	10 – 14 years	8	14
	15 – 19 years	8	14
	20 – 24 years	5	9
	25 – 29 years	5	9
	30 – above years	5	9

Trainings Attended	0 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 9	10 above	Percentage
District	31	20	4	1	29%
Division	23	27	4	2	29%
Regional	15	1	0	0	8%
National	47	9	0	0	29%
International	6	0	0	0	3%
Total	**122**	**57**	**8**	**3**	**100%**

As gleaned from the table, along age, there were 15 or 27% who are aged 40-44; there were 11 or 20% who belong to the age bracket of 35-39, and there were 11 or 20% who are 50 or above, and 8 or 14% belongs to age bracket of 30-34-year-old.

The data presented can attest that most Grade Five teachers are at their peak age in the teaching profession.

Sex. The data present that most of the Grade Five teachers are female. There are 45 or 80% are female, and only 11 or 20% are males. The number of females can only attest that the teaching profession is dominated by women.

Highest Educational Attainment. Regarding the highest educational attainment of grade five teachers, it can be gleaned from the data that almost all the total respondents had attended post-graduate studies. There were 24 or 43% who finished their Masters' degrees. There were 26 or 46% who earned Masters' units. Out of the 56 respondents, only 1 or 2% completed a doctoral degree out of the whole total population. There were 3 or 5% who had not attended post-graduate education.

Position. Regarding the position they are holding, most of the respondents were occupying a teacher three position. There were 25 or 45% who were Teacher III; 20 or 36% who were occupying Teacher II position, and there were 11 or 25% Teacher I position.

Training Attended. As presented from the data, most of the respondents had attended training to enhance their teaching competency and to improve and enrich their professional development. The respondents had tried to participate in either on the district level, division level, and national/regional level. Few had participated at international level too. This is probably because there are a lot of webinars being conducted by some educational organizations to enrich their teaching competencies despite the pandemic situation at present.

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Pitfalls Encountered by Teachers on Modular Learning

Along Comprehension. Table 4 presents the data on the pitfalls encountered by teachers on modular learning in terms of comprehension.

Table 4. *Pitfalls Encountered by Teachers on Modular Learning Along Comprehension* (N- 56)

	Statement Indicator	Mean	DE
1.	The pupils cannot comprehend instruction and learn. It gathered on their own	2.57	LG
2.	The pupils have decreased understanding of the lesson	2.61	MG
3.	The pupils had not necessary knowledge from the module	2.57	LG
4.	The pupil's engagement and interest levels remain low as instruction from the modules are easy to grasp.	2.57	LG
5.	The pupils did not completely understand the contents of the module	2.50	LG
	Average Weighted Mean	**2.56**	**LG**

The statement on increasing understanding of the lesson posted an average weighted mean of 2.61, which is equivalent also to less grave.

The total computed mean of the items on learning comprehension is 12.81, and the average weighted mean is 2.56, equivalent to less grave. This means that the level of understanding of the students

during the modular mood of learning is not such a serious condition among the teachers. The respondents, based on the results, agree that the learners can comprehend instructions and learn on their own with the guidance of their parents.

This statement may be corroborated by Thorndike, 2017 who described reading comprehension as simple as thinking.

Table 5 presents the data on the pitfalls of teachers along with academic behavior and motivation

Statement Indicators	AWM	DE
1. Pupils are interested to learn and know more.	2.52	LG
2. Pupils have a good study strategy and high study effort.	2.50	LG
3. Pupils are highly motivated to learn the topics presented.	2.54	LG
4. Pupils are persistent to pursue learning even when faced by obstacles during the learning process.	2.54	LG
5. Pupils have the drive to reach out their learning goals	2.59	LG
Average Weighted Mean	**2.54**	**LG**

As presented from the table, it can be inferred that the respondents had encountered a slightly serious study strategy and high study effort of the pupils, as shown by the computed average weighted mean of 2.50. On the other hand, the respondents inferred that the pupils were interested in learning and knew more, as proven by the computed average weighted mean of 2.52. Likewise, the respondents had also seen that the pupils had were persistent in pursuing learning even when faced with obstacles during the learning process, as manifested by the computed average weighted mean of 2.54 respectively.

These statements were supported by Robbins, 2020 when he found out that achievement motivations can energize and direct behavior toward achievement and are a significant determinant of academic success. Meanwhile, Table 6 contains the data on the pitfalls of teachers along with monitoring of pupils' learning.

Table 6. Monitoring of Pupils Learning (N – 56)

Statement Indicator	**AWM**	**DE**
1. Unable or hard to contact the learners	2.63	MG
2. Pupils/Parents have no contact numbers/internet connections.	2.61	MG
3. Difficulty in validating pupils' performance	2.59	LG
4. Personal monitoring may cause health risk	2.61	MG
5. Hard to monitor due to limited face to face transaction	2.48	LG
Average Weighted Mean	**2.58**	**LG**

These statements were supported by Robbins, 2020 when he found out that achievement motivations can energize and direct behavior toward achievement and are a significant determinant of academic success. Meanwhile, Table 6 contains the data on the pitfalls of teachers along with monitoring of pupils' learning. Based on the data, it can be inferred that limited face-to-face transaction is one of the main problems because learners are hard to monitor. The learners might be doing their learning in different places, not only in one designated area. This was proven by the computed mean of 2.48, which equals slightly severe. Consequently, the respondents encounter difficulty in validating pupils' performance, it was confirmed through the computed weighted mean of 2.59 followed by a pitfall in personal monitoring, for it might cause a health risk, and the concerned learners do not have contact numbers to monitor. The weighted mean of the two is 2.61, which is moderately grave.

Meanwhile, Table 8 contains the data on the pitfalls of teaching along with physical interaction with the learners.

Table 8. Physical Interaction with the Learners

	Statement Indicators	AWM	DE
1.	Reaching the pupils that needs response	2.66	MG
2.	The teachers can easily communicate with their pupils as others have means for other ways to communicate	2.57	LG
3.	Parents provide feed backs for the students experience in answering the module	2.57	LG
4.	Parents are representative in expressing their concerns regarding the module	2.66	MG
5.	Various online platforms such as messenger provide direct possible interaction of the student teacher in the modular approach	2.48	LG
	Average Weighted Mean	**2.79**	**MG**

Based on the data, it can be inferred by the respondents that due to the help of various online platforms like messenger, cellphones, and other forms of digital technology gadgets, most of the teacher-respondents did not find difficulty in monitoring their pupils or learners. This was proven by the computed weighted mean of 2.48. Parents provide feedback on the student's experience in answering the module. The teachers can easily communicate with their pupils as others have means for other ways to communicate, having a computed weighted mean of 2.59 and 2.57, respectively.

The data from the table mean that teacher respondents have the means to communicate with the students through their parents or various platforms. This coincides with the findings of Adams, 2017 who said that teachers had made countless real-time decisions and tried to facilitate a lot of interactions through them and the students/learners through different modalities of learning.

Significant Relationship Between the Pitfalls of Teachers and their Profile

Table 9 presents the data on the significant relationship between the pitfalls encountered by teachers on modular learning and their profile variables.

It could be gleaned from the table that there are some profile variables that have no significant relationship to the pitfalls encountered by the teachers in modular teaching. However, there are also some profile variables that are significantly related.

Like age, it is significantly related to monitoring of pupils' learning. The computed **r** value is .270, while the calculated significance level is 0.04. It is lower compared to the .05 level of importance. Based on the data gathered regarding age, it was found that most teachers are at their peak age. Most belong to the bracket of early forty`s and fifty`s. It could be said that teachers of these ages are taking safety nets in monitoring the pupils due to the pandemic; going from house to house may impose health risks on their part.

Table 9. Significant Relationship Between Degree of Gravity and Profile Variables

Profile Variables	Comprehension		Motivation		Monitoring		Physical Interaction	
	R	Sig.	R	Sig.	R	Sig	R	Sig.
Age	0.143	0.295	-0.249	0.064	.270*	0.044	-0.217	0.108
Sex	0.118	0.386	0.132	0.331	0.242	0.073	0.143	0.293
HEQ	-0.223	0.099	0.161	0.236	0.033	0.812	0.218	0.106
Service	0.076	0.58	-0.05	0.716	0.115	0.398	-0.066	0.629
Rank	0.116	0.386	0.136	0.336	0.246	0.073	0.143	0.296
Civil status	0.061	0.653	0.045	0.742	-0.009	0.945	0.052	0.706
District	-0.048	0.724	-0.084	0.537	0.131	0.337	0.037	0.785
Division	0.019	0.889	0.062	0.648	0.02	0.885	0.124	0.364
Regional	-.267*	0.046	-0.018	0.895	-0.26	0.053	-.300*	0.025
National	0.083	0.544	0.183	0.176	0.067	0.622	0.008	0.956
International	0.097	0.475	-0.116	0.396	-0.109	0.423	0.104	0.446

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Another profile variable that is significantly related is training attended by the teachers. It is reflected from the data that the number of trainings followed by teachers is significantly associated with

some aspects of student comprehension, (computed sig value is 0.04 and physical interaction is .02), which are lower than the .05 level of significance. This could be related to the sudden pandemic outbreak; the teachers were not prepared to embrace the shifting of primary teaching modality. There was no training conducted about the use of the new modality. It was only after a couple of months had passed that the higher authorities ran webinars on the modular platform of teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are formulated. The grade five teachers who served as respondents are mostly female dominated; they are in their early forty`s and peak of age and married. Most of them are attending postgraduate studies and have attended relevant training. The level of teacher's pitfalls is mainly on a moderately grave level. Age is significantly related to monitoring, and training is significantly associated with physical interaction and comprehension.

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