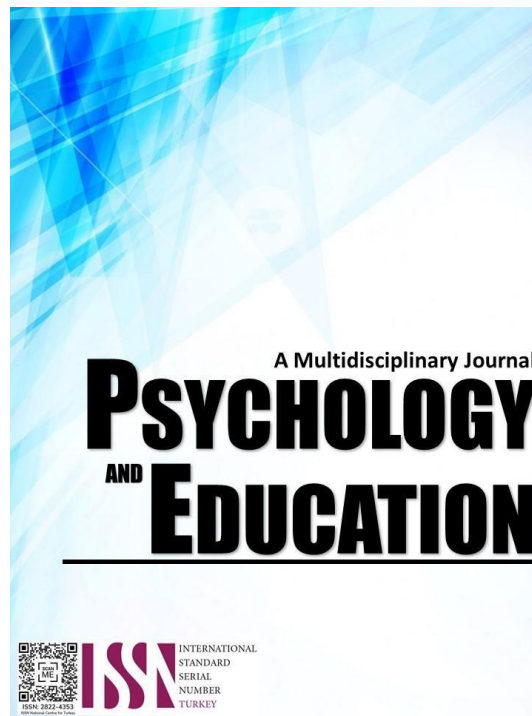


**COPING MECHANISMS AND TEACHERS'
INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN DISTANCE LEARNING:
CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES FOR THE
MODULAR TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH**



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Coping Mechanisms and Teachers' Innovative Practices in Distance Learning: Challenges and Difficulties for the Modular Teaching and Learning Approach

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Abstract

Teachers began preparing for modular and interactive distance learning under the presumption that teaching would continue regardless of the situation. Teaching is attainable, but there are difficulties as well. This quantitative study was to investigate and describe how teachers coped during the COVID-19 pandemic, including innovative practices used by teachers to defeat or simply overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular teaching and learning approach. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design and utilizing a purposive random sampling technique in selecting the respondents of the study. There was a total of 50 public school teachers across the study's locale who responded to the conduct survey, which set the research sample size limitation. The findings of the study showed that the significant relationship between the innovative practices and coping mechanisms of the educators and their ability to overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular instruction and learning approach during the COVID-19 pandemic had the overall correlation coefficient of 0.642 with a sig. (2-tailed of 0.397). Teachers must fortify their hearts to carry out their work and responsibilities despite the greater circumstances. To succeed and develop into a frontline teacher who is effective, they must devote all their effort.

Keywords: *coping mechanism, innovative practices, modular teaching, learning approach*

Introduction

The assumption that education will continue regardless of the circumstances led teachers to start preparing for modular and online distance learning. It is feasible to teach, but there are challenges as well. The education sector is likely one of those most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In today's schools, safety and security are extremely vulnerable. Schools were temporarily closed in order to stop the spread of the virus and stop the spread of diseases because the wellbeing of students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders was at risk (De Villa, 2020).

Regardless of whether the pandemic will continue to have an influence on educational provision, educational institutions can nevertheless overcome challenges in their educational system. Many issues are raised by this serious dilemma, including the future of the students and the deterioration of educational standards. Due to this, educational institutions now have a stronger need to improve their curricula, and using cutting-edge teaching methods will be crucial. Because of the community lockdown and quarantine, which encouraged students to engage in online distance learning, professors primarily work from home (Usak, 2020; Crawford et al., 2020).

Basic education in the Philippines has come a long way. The delivery of learning modalities had been challenging, especially for elementary education. Most

of its students come from underserved groups, which are typically predicted to have fewer access to resources, leading to social disadvantage and the digital divide. Flexible learning is advised for the educational sector, which is also susceptible to assessments and discussions regarding inclusivity and equal opportunity for educational objectives. In implementing its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) for the academic year 2020–2021, the Department of Education (DepEd) is adamant that "education shall continue notwithstanding the scenario." The education bundle interventions in this continuity plan will help with the difficulties in the fundamental education caused by COVID-19 (DepEd Order No. 12, 2020). DepEd protects students, teachers, and staff members' health, safety, and wellbeing in order to stop the epidemic from spreading. While face-to-face classes are still not allowed owing to the public health issue, the department chose to implement alternative learning delivery methods such modular, television- and radio-based instruction, blended learning, and online learning (Pene et al., 2022; Saro et al., 2022).

Several public schools, especially those in rural areas, used modular instruction, which consisted of printed self-learning modules that supplemented classroom instruction. The modular approach to distant learning was also liked by many students and parents (Manlangit et al., 2021). As a result, there has been a dramatic decline in instructors' capacity to provide students with preparation and instruction of the highest

caliber. Due to the pandemic, teachers are now required to play a crucial role in supporting and observing students' growth in the face of challenges and modifications to the educational platform, which now includes home-based learning. Exceptional learning experiences are not restricted to the four walls of the classroom; they can occur whenever and wherever individuals choose, provided they are of a high caliber (Mishra et al., 2020; Butron, 2021).

Due to the considerable changes made by the new educational system, teachers face several restrictions and difficulties. When classical learning continuity was implemented through modular training, several difficulties emerged. Teachers, on the other hand, are responsible for the growth and advancement of their students. If possible, the teacher should visit students who need extra help or remediation at home (Butron, 2021). Adopting the well-known method of remote learning on a regular basis has proven difficult. According to Dangle and Sumaoang (2020), one of the biggest issues encountered during the planning and delivery of courses was a shortage of funding for the school. Additionally, Cardullo et al. (2021) noted that teachers were taken aback when required to provide emergency remote instruction due to a lack of computer literacy and expertise in distance education.

The outbreak undoubtedly placed teachers' capacity for change and flexibility under pressure. They are inspired to come up with original and novel ideas for interacting with their students and coworkers as a result. Furthermore, teachers had specialized training to deliver proper instruction considering the COVID-19 epidemic. On the other hand, educators cannot simply ignore uncontrollable circumstances. Teachers continue to facilitate learning despite the challenges, supporting both themselves and their students as they adjust to the new normal (Agayon et al., 2022).

Utilization of most essential learning capabilities (MELCs), which have been decongested in accordance with the curriculum offer, will also be in line with the acquisition of 21st-century skills including critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and creativity (De Villa, 2020). As a result, the way students and teachers are educated has shifted. The subject is typically taught through a variety of methods, including constructivism, inquiry, hands-on learning, and social interaction (Kim, 2020; Or, 2022).

Teachers do not feel sufficiently capable and equipped to teach the topic remotely, and such pedagogies appear challenging to adopt in distant learning. These

new educational trends require teachers to adjust and contend with them. A need for support such as technical, pedagogical, and time management support arises since some teachers who are completely new to this new type of education may feel unprepared to enable instruction. With so much reliance on technology in today's schools, teachers are ill-equipped and incompetent. Given that it is a necessary skill for lifelong learning and a sought-after talent in industry, digital literacy must and should be practiced (Lichoro, 2015; Downing, 2013; Nilson, 2018).

It is important to comprehend how educators, who serve as the main facilitators of education, adjusted to this transition and what challenges and difficulties they encountered as part of their preparation for the future, even though there are still drawbacks due to its high maintenance and cost, accessibility to online platforms and resources, and incompetence in its use. This pandemic is anticipated to last until a preventive vaccine is developed. The intention of this study was to examine and describe how educators handled the pandemic, including their innovative practices to address the problems that the modular teaching and learning approach brought. The study's findings will also act as a springboard for analyzing and evaluating how educators build resilience throughout the outbreak. This research also identified their coping mechanisms and initiatives, which will help in dealing with any problems and challenges that emerge throughout the transition to the new normal alternate learning strategy. Finally, depending on the person's coping mechanism, it suggests a plan of action or policy for minimizing these problems.

Research Questions

The purpose of this quantitative study is to investigate and describe how teachers coped during the COVID-19 pandemic, including innovative practices used by teachers to defeat or simply overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular teaching and learning approach. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the respondents' demographic profile in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age;
 - 1.2. Gender;
 - 1.3. Designated Position;
 - 1.4. Length of Teaching Experience; and
 - 1.5. Level of Education Imparted?
2. What are the difficulties and challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has posed for teachers using a modular teaching and learning approach in distance

learning?

3. What are the innovative practices and coping mechanisms used by the teachers in defeating or simply overcoming the problems and challenges of the modular teaching and learning approach amid the pandemic?

4. Is there any significant relationship between the innovative practices and coping mechanisms of the educators and their ability to overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular instruction and learning approach during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic affecting families with children presents challenges for teachers in the new normal (Castroverde & Acala, 2021). The Philippines continues to be one of the most impacted nations, even though other nations have been deemed virus-free. The disease has had a significant impact on education, leading to significant changes in academic institutions and schools as a result of the outbreak. Face-to-face education was difficult to provide because of the outbreak (Abbas, 2021). To ensure that successful education continues, the education sector must ensure that each school fulfills its mandate and aim of providing every Filipino student with a high-quality education (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

Teachers make sure that students get the most out of their studies during the epidemic. Nevertheless, despite the COVID-19 outbreak's many restrictions and difficulties, instructors have continued to provide for their students by creating modules that act as classroom learning aids (Alea et al., 2020). Malipot (2020) remarked that while some teachers are anxious about modular distance learning, other teachers are worried about the high cost of reproduction and must stay at the school until the evening to finish the printing on time. The modular distance learning paradigm, according to Macaraeg et al. (2021), has increased workload, health risks, and costs, leading teachers to ask for donations of bond paper and ink to print on in order to keep up with demand. These merely serve to highlight the fact that issues with printed self-learning courses need to be resolved. Teachers must gain the ability to deal with the new normal and fulfill their duties despite potential obstacles in their work (De Villa & Manalo, 2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic, which prompted swift changes in the educational system, presents obstacles for teachers in the new normal, including parents of the students (Alvarez, 2021; Anzaldo 2021;

Castroverde & Acala, 2021). (Guiamalon et al., 2021; Kintanar et al., 2021; Pascual, 2021). Although the threat posed by the virus has already been eliminated in other nations, the Philippines continues to be among those hardest afflicted. The epidemic significantly affects education in the nation, causing considerable changes in academic institutions and schools. The pandemic made in-person instruction more difficult (Abbas, 2021; Cos et al., 2021). Together, the education sectors make sure that education never stops and that every school maintains its mission and vision of giving every Filipino student an exceptional education (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

DepEd Order No.12 series of 2020, which was implemented as a result, established new learning delivery modalities at all levels and is represented in the Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) for the academic year 2020–2021 up to the present (Guiamalon et al., 2021). Online distance learning, blended learning, homeschooling, and modular distance learning in digital or printed format are some of the several learning modalities offered. Most public schools employ the printed self-learning modules option out of all the available modalities. It is because there are not many students who have gadgets and there are not many places with reliable internet access for students, especially in remote areas.

Different claims that coping methods aid instructors in managing their anxiety have been supported by research. The findings of "Research on how Filipino teachers deal with anxiety as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic" point to the following behaviors as coping strategies for anxiety during the quarantine period: information searching, preventive measures, and other coping mechanisms. Toquerob (2020) advises teachers to engage in virtual learning, connect with the professional community, follow quarantine guidelines, and find meaningful activities to help them cope with anxiety brought on by the pandemic's suspension of all national school-related activities in the nation. The use of teaching techniques in modular classes is crucial to ensuring effective instruction.

Multiple techniques enable teachers to manage their workload more effectively and prevent their level of difficulty from rising. In this scenario, teachers need to be proficient in a variety of areas, including communication, giving insightful feedback, technology, administration, learning monitoring, responsiveness, and student assistance (Roddy et al., 2017). Both teachers and students in an online school should practice clear communication for there to be effective interaction between them. It includes the use

of email, in-person queries, online chats, giving feedback, and grading. There is a great need for communication currently (Roddy et al., 2017).

The techniques of feedback for both students and teachers should be included in online or virtual classes. The best way to train students is through live chat, video camera engagement, or live texts. Online settings also have different student fellowships. Compared to in-person classes, making friends in virtual classes is challenging. In online classrooms that are asynchronous, feedback and assessment can be given in a variety of methods. Transparent assessment procedures have been demonstrated to have a beneficial effect on communicating deadlines and assessment requirements (Roddy et al., 2017).

In addition, a different study on the readiness of distance education discovered that 90% of all special education and preschool teachers surveyed were motivated to implement distance education despite having a diverse student body, a shortage of specialists, homeschooled students, those undergoing prolonged medical treatment, those attending short stays with group or family, and those attending private schools (Fedina, 2017). Like this, despite the risks and difficulties with learning materials, pedagogy, monitoring, implementation, and psychological understanding, higher education mentors demonstrate a positive outlook and motivation to teach university students with special needs like hearing and visually impaired (Movkebayeva, 2018).

For students to benefit the most from the modules that are taught to them during the pandemic, teachers are essential. The lack of experience among teachers with the current scenario was noticed by Tosun et al. (2021). Pentang et al. (2020) asserted that teachers must employ appropriate and readily available pedagogy to successfully deliver their teachings in all situations. Despite the difficulties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, educators continue to assist students by creating modules that serve as learning guides (Lapada et al., 2020).

While students receive printed modules and other educational materials from their parents or guardians, teachers may require support from barangay local government units with module distribution and retrieval. Parents now collaborate with educators in the classroom since learning seems to be no longer limited to the four walls of the classroom. As home facilitators, guidance counselors, modulators, and facilitators, among other roles akin to those of classroom teachers, parents play a crucial role in their

children's education. Their main responsibility in modular or blended learning is to get to know the students and direct them through the exercises in the course materials (Everaert & Safari, 2021).

Methodology

The study utilized a quantitative approach. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Also, the mean and standard deviation have been used to describe and examine how teachers coped during the COVID-19 pandemic, including innovative practices used by teachers to defeat or simply overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular teaching and learning approach. It has been concentrated primarily on how teachers view the underlying challenges and difficulties brought by the pandemic. The variables have been utilized because they could be measured and analyzed using the statistical procedure suitable for the study (Creswell, 2008).

Moreover, to analyze and describe how educators coped during the COVID-19 pandemic, including their innovative practices in simply overcoming or just defeating the difficulties and challenges of the modular teaching and learning approach, the researcher gathered data through in-person or actual assessments. With that being said, the researcher secured the consent form for the respondents as well as the letter to the school's principal, which may be the study locale of the research. The study has been conducted at San Vicente National High School, Prosperidad District V and San Luis National High School, San Luis District I, Division of Agusan del Sur, Philippines. This study has been conducted from November 8, 2022, to November 11, 2022.

The researcher designed the survey questionnaire based on the proponent's experiences and empirical observation. The questionnaire was made with the intention of leaning heavily from the researcher's extensive reading of various studies, works of literature, and other examples of questionnaires. With cooperation from the subject matter experts and research associates, the researcher created the questionnaire's original draft. The document was given to three (3) specialists with expertise in education and research for validation and dependability after it had been edited for content, structure, and format. After the questionnaire was turned in for content validation, a small change was made. In order to assess the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher measured the internal consistency of the survey using the

Cronbach alpha statistics. An alpha coefficient of 0.95 was easily accepted by the survey questionnaire, indicating that the items were trustworthy and practicable. The purposive random sampling technique has been used in the study.

The questions and statements were greatly modified and explicitly adjusted to suit the main purpose of the study. In line with the objective of this present study the survey was assessed and determined based on the following variables: stressors, emotions, perceived challenges, perceived difficulties, innovative practices, and coping mechanisms. There was a total of 50 public school teachers across the study's locale who responded to the conduct survey, which set the research sample size limitation. Furthermore, the gathered data were analyzed using the frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and mean as statistical tools to interpret the responses of the involved respondents of the study, which are the teachers. The table below presents the values of the range of means with verbal-descriptive interpretations that will be used in analyzing the collected data. The statistical significance of the relationships among the relevant variables acquired with the use of computerized statistical software during the process of the study was further determined at a 0.05 level of significance. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized in the study.

Results and Discussion

The researchers used a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design to carry out the study. The results of the study have been analyzed and calculated based on the data gathered by the researchers. The study was to investigate and describe how teachers coped during the COVID-19 pandemic, including innovative practices used by teachers to defeat or simply overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular teaching and learning approach. Nevertheless, the mean and standard deviation were used as the actual bases to interpret the teachers' responses describing their perceived challenges, perceived difficulties, and innovative practices related to the modular teaching and learning approach. With that being said, the standard deviation describes the spread of the data. So, a high standard deviation means that the responses from the study's respondents are consistent and spread out (Lapada, 2020).

Table 1. *The Demographic Profile of the Teacher Participants in the Study*

Demographic Profile		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	21 - 30	22	44
	31 - 40	14	28
	41 - 50	11	22
	50 - Above	3	6
Gender	Male	17	34
	Female	33	66
Designated Position	Teacher I	26	52
	Teacher II	15	30
	Teacher III	3	6
	Master Teacher I	4	8
	Master Teacher II	2	4
	Length of Teaching Experience	0 - 5	13
Level of Education Imparted/Taught	6 - 10	10	20
	11 - 15	15	30
	16 - 20	3	6
	21 - 25	4	8
	26 - 30	5	10
	Grade 7	9	18
Level of Education Imparted/Taught	Grade 8	8	16
	Grade 9	10	20
	Grade 10	12	24
	Grade 11	5	10
	Grade 12	6	12
Total		50	100

A total of 50 public secondary teachers in the two study areas in Agusan del Sur, which are San Vicente National High School and San Luis National High School, responded to the survey questionnaire conducted by the researchers. Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the teachers' respondents, and most of the respondents are female, which attained the percentage of 66%, whereas the male respondents obtained 34% of the total population. Furthermore, more female-teacher responses compared to male-teacher responses were attested in the study; this finding is in line with the DepEd records pertaining to the population, which show that 86% of the total teacher population in the Philippines is mostly female (Esplada, 2010).

In terms of age as one of the variables in the demographic profile, most of the respondents normally belong to the Millennial generation and are 21–30 years old, which had a percentage of 44%. The teachers' respondents are mostly in position of Teacher I, which obtained 52% in the whole population of the study. Moreover, the teacher-respondents are greatly distributed as per the level of education imparted or they have taught; based on the findings, most of the participants are from the junior high school department, particularly at the grade 9 and 10 level (20% and 24%, respectively). The Grade 11



(10%) and Grade 12 (12%) results are highlighted. According to the length of teaching experiences and services, most teachers (30%) have an average of 11-15 years, while those with 0-5 years have (26%).

Table 2. *The Stressors of the Teachers' Respondents on the Modular Teaching and Learning Approach Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Items	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal-Descriptive Interpretation
1	I cannot sleep at night due to nature, demands, and concerns, as well as unexpected changes at school work, which is having an impact on my performance. The poor internet connection and lack of ICT equipment for flexible learning, webinars, and online meetings are also having an impact on my performance.	3.75	0.98	Agree
2	It is difficult to address school-related concerns when I communicate with parents, stakeholders, and students, such as how distributing the module and other related learning approaches is inconvenient for us teachers in this new setup.	4.10	1.10	Agree
3	My financial condition is impacted by the lack of remuneration for teachers or their poor pay during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is difficult to handle. Responding to complaints made against teachers on social media and other online platforms is difficult during the pandemic.	4.25	0.95	Strongly Agree
4	My anxiety about how I will handle the current issues has increased as I have no idea when the COVID-19 epidemic will be under control. My duty and my safety are at odds with one another.	3.90	0.87	Agree
5	I am worried about the lack of resources for modular instruction as well as the best learning strategies that might be applied if the students were enrolled in a distant learning program.	3.65	0.99	Agree
Overall		3.93	0.98	Agree

The stressors of the teachers' respondents on the modular teaching and learning approach during the COVID-19 pandemic have been presented on the table. Teaching is certainly one of the most stressful professions when it comes to work-related pressures. The teachers struggle and encounter obstacles with a lot of tension during the day as well as at night since they are still working at a very late time (Pene et al., 2022). As per the results, the overall mean of the stressor as one of the variables related to the main objectives of the study is (m = 3.93) with a standard deviation of 0.98 (agree), which means that the respondents agreed that the indicators that have been included in the stressor are very common to them or that they encountered those indicators during the pandemic (Table 3).

The results in Table 2 were presented as follows: the most highly impacted indicator based on the responses

and the weighted mean value is Item 3, "My financial condition is impacted by the lack of remuneration for teachers or their poor pay during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is difficult to handle. Responding to complaints made against teachers on social media and other online platforms is difficult during the pandemic," with a (m = 4.25) and an (SD of 0.95), the verbal-descriptive interpretation is in a strongly agree, which means the teachers' participants agreed that they have encountered a financial problem during the pandemic because their salary or income will be affected if they are unable to attend school. As a result, the pandemic attached them to a serious problem that causes them stress.

Saro et al. (2022) explained that the learners benefit most from answering the modules because they can just search online for an answer to their question, yet for the teachers, it has been hard for them to prepare for the modular instruction due to a lack of resources or the unavailability of the materials to be used in modular teaching. In line with this, the lack of experience among teachers with the current situation, which includes the COVID-19 pandemic (Tosun et al., 2021), According to the study by Pentang et al. (2020), teachers must use effective and widely accessible pedagogy to successfully deliver their lessons in every circumstance. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic's challenges, teachers continue to help students by developing modules that act as learning guides (Robosa et al., 2021).

Additionally, the process of teaching and learning divides the delivery of education into a separate activity. A range of subjects have been taught using various teaching methods, including constructivism, inquiry, hands-on learning, and social engagement. Since these methods seem difficult to implement in a distance learning context, teachers do not feel fully prepared and competent of teaching the subject remotely (Lichoro, 2015). The likelihood of a global epidemic linked to COVID-19 has shocked the Philippines. System adjustments are now necessary to reflect the "new normal" as a result of the abrupt end to economic activity (Saro et al., 2022).

The daily tasks of teachers must be balanced in order to ensure the wellbeing of the students, and emotions play a significant role in this pandemic time. It gives them the authority to manage their division with whatever goals and tasks they choose. Teachers' lives are impacted by emotions both inside and outside of the classroom. During this period, evaluating their mental health will reveal how they are feeling, despite the several challenges they are now facing. Indicators

of teachers' emotions are shown in Table 4 as one of the key factors affecting how challenging modular teaching and learning strategies are under the COVID-19 framework. The survey questionnaire was answered by the teacher respondents based on their own experiences, including their emotional needs and how the pandemic affected them.

Table 3. *The Emotions of the Teachers' Respondents on the Modular Teaching and Learning Approach Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Items	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal-Descriptive Interpretation
1	Despite the challenges of the new normal school setting, I believe that it is still my professional and ethical obligation to perform my duties. I also try to avoid making too much physical contact with others, especially my family, my students, and my colleagues. Additionally, I firmly believe that I must fulfill my duties as a frontline educator during this extremely important period as a result of the epidemic.	4.79	0.96	Strongly Agree
2	Despite the pandemic situation, I appreciate the administration, the parents, and the students I serve giving me extra praise for my work. If I received a reward that I truly valued, like being appreciated for my work, it would allow me the chance to produce better work.	4.12	0.89	Agree
3	I regret that the transition to flexible learning has resulted in an increase in my workload, yet I considered leaving my job because of pay problems or a lack of adequate compensation.	3.05	0.68	Neutral
4	I prefer to work at home than in school during this pandemic because it makes me more comfortable and gives me the idea that I am in a good place while working at distance learning.	3.45	0.92	Agree
5	I appreciate the financial compensation I received during the pandemic, particularly an allowance that I or we could use as teachers during the outbreak. The administration needs to focus on our health since we are the frontline in educating students during the pandemic.	4.18	1.27	Agree
Overall		3.92	0.94	Agree

Table 3 shows the overall mean of the emotions of the teachers' respondents during the pandemic. As a result, a 3.92 mean value has been gathered for the emotions as variables in the study with a standard deviation of 0.94 (agree). As per the findings, the item with the highest mean value gathered in this table was Item 1: "Despite the challenges of the new normal school setting, I believe that it is still my professional and ethical obligation to perform my duties." I also try to avoid making too much physical contact with others, especially my family, my students, and my colleagues. Additionally, I firmly believe that I must

fulfill my duties as a frontline educator during this extremely important period as a result of the epidemic," which had the weighted mean of ($m = 4.75$; SD of 0.96) with a verbal-descriptive interpretation of "strongly agree." Thus, the respondents agreed on the statement that they have a professional obligation to do so even though the pandemic is in, and they also firmly agreed that the pandemic gives them the realization that education is important for the young during this time.

However, in addition to the physical challenges they face, emotions play a significant role in the effectiveness of teachers. In her article, Sincero (2020) also mentioned that sensations could be seen as a result of a specific directed activity. Data suggested that for the government to continue offering high-quality teaching in higher education, support for teachers, particularly among private and public educational institutions, should be enhanced. It is indeed crucial to address teachers' stress-related problems during the epidemic and assist them in strengthening their coping mechanisms and supportive work environments (Saro et al., 2022).

Despite the challenges, they believe that teachers must carry out their duties while avoiding direct physical contact with others out of a sense of duty and commitment to their profession as frontline educators. These are the primary feelings that educators are experiencing during the outbreak. The findings of Toquerob (2020), which revealed that the anxiety or psychological stress brought on by COVID-19 had caused the Filipino teachers to feel stressed, were consistent with the researchers' findings.

When it comes to concerns about the workplace, issues frequently arise. Like other employees, teachers frequently encounter challenges. Table 4 presents the perceived challenges of the teachers' respondents to the modular teaching and learning approach amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In this, the overall mean is 3.67 with a standard deviation of 0.81 and a verbal-descriptive interpretation of "agree" based on the statistical analysis underneath the variable of the perceived challenges by the teachers involved. As the results flow on the perceived challenges by the teachers, item 4 had the highest weighted mean value of ($m = 4.35$; SD of 0.93): "In addition to finding it challenging to acclimate to the new normal setting, I am having trouble managing the stress brought on by the community quarantine at home and in between the demands of my online classes." This means that the teachers' respondents agreed that the challenges during the pandemic were clearly a big deal to them since it would affect their teaching and their students.

Table 4. *The Perceived Challenges of the Teachers' Respondents on the Modular Teaching and Learning Approach Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Items	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal-Descriptive Interpretation
1	I am finding it challenging to gain the information and abilities necessary to teach remote classes. I am having trouble getting reliable internet access for my distance learning courses.	4.17	1.02	Agree
2	Communication with my pupils or students is challenging for me, and using phones, laptops, tablets, or other gadgets for distant learning is difficult as well. These are the difficulties I am having using email, social media, and other platforms for remote learning.	3.90	0.88	Agree
3	I am having trouble managing my time as I run my classes, keeping track of responses, checking on students' availability, and dealing with various problems related to online classes due to the abrupt switch from in-person to teaching methods.	3.16	0.63	Neutral
4	In addition to finding, it challenging to acclimate to the new normal setting, I am having trouble managing the stress brought on by the community quarantine at home and in between the demands of my online classes.	4.35	0.93	Strongly Agree
5	I am having trouble meeting the dates and specifications established by the administration of the school, especially for the papers of the students and other important educational tasks at school.	2.79	0.60	Neutral
Overall		3.67	0.81	Agree

Table 5. *The Perceived Difficulties of the Teachers' Respondents on the Modular Teaching and Learning Approach Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Items	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal-Descriptive Interpretation
1	Connecting students without the use of technology can be difficult during distance learning education.	3.72	0.88	Agree
2	Infrastructure difficulties and technical challenges brought on by the epidemic.	2.15	0.94	Disagree
3	Due to a lack of the necessary resources during modular education, courses and subject matters were not as effective.	2.90	0.75	Neutral
4	Because there is no live discussion, being unable to understand what the student has learned and how to educate, as well as being unable to promptly respond to the student's queries.	3.12	0.69	Neutral
5	Finding a lesson activity during the pandemic is quite difficult.	3.23	0.91	Neutral
Overall		3.02	0.83	Neutral

Table 5 shows the perceived difficulties of the teachers' respondents on the modular teaching and learning approach amid the covid-19 pandemic. The overall mean of the difficulties encountered by the teachers-respondents were 3.02 with a standard deviation of 0.83, which can be described as "neutral"

or uncertain based on their respective perceptions. This means that the respondents were not quite sure on the indicators underneath the perceived difficulties when they responded on the survey questionnaire provided by the researchers. According to the findings of Amadora (2020), one of the main difficulties they confront in the practice of remote learning education is unstable internet connectivity. Poor network is frequently a big issue for developing countries with underdeveloped telecommunications and information and communication technology (ICT). Although the country has numerous existing internet packages, they are "fluctuating" and not produced similarly in terms of speed and stability (Aboagye et al., 2020).

Table 6. *The Innovative Practices of the Teachers' Respondents on the Modular Teaching and Learning Approach Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Items	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal-Descriptive Interpretation
1	It is great to motivate young people with dependable internet connectivity to use web-based learning platforms like DepEd Commons. Furthermore, because modular learning is self-instructional and lacks face-to-face connections, it is necessary to actively request reinforcement and feedback.	3.72	1.04	Agree
2	It is great to establish a quality control process for the modules before printing in order to verify the accuracy of the information.	4.11	0.97	Agree
3	For students to be well-guided throughout the curriculum, it is important to appreciate parental and familial engagement in distant learning. Both students and teachers would benefit from this innovation.	4.27	0.95	Strongly Agree
4	To avoid misunderstandings, it is ideal to give the parents of the student's guidelines on how to correctly manage the releasing and retrieval of modules as well as the pick-up, response, and drop routine for modules.	4.32	0.87	Strongly Agree
5	It is vital to keep checking on students through social media or just by dropping them a visit.	4.92	0.99	Strongly Agree
Overall		4.26	0.96	Strongly Agree

Based on the findings in Table 6, the innovative practices of the teachers' respondents on the modular teaching and learning approach amid the COVID-19 pandemic had an overall mean of ($m = 4.26$) with a standard deviation of 0.96, which can be described as "strongly agree" based on the responses of the teachers' respondents. As for the results, in Item 1, "It is great to motivate young people with dependable internet connectivity to use web-based learning platforms like DepEd Commons." Furthermore, because modular learning is self-instructional and

lacks face-to-face connections, it is necessary to actively request reinforcement and feedback," had a weighted mean of 3.72, the item 2 "It is great to establish a quality control process for the modules before printing in order to verify the accuracy of the information," had the mean of 4.11 with an SD of 0.97. The third, fourth, and fifth indicators in the innovative practices of the teachers during the pandemic had the mean value of (m=4.27; m=4.32; m=4.92, respectively). Thus, the teachers strongly agreed on the indicators that have been utilized in the innovative practices of the teachers as conducted by the researchers.

Table 7. *The Coping Mechanisms of the Teachers' Respondents on the Modular Teaching and Learning Approach Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Items	Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal-Descriptive Interpretation
1	It is an excellent idea to keep myself engaged at home with various tasks like cleaning and cooking to divert my attention from COVID-19 anxieties, or to simply utilize social media or social media sites for fun and pleasure.	4.56	0.97	Strongly Agree
2	I need to learn about COVID-19's transmission mechanism, prevention, and preventative measures so that I may use virtual and online platforms to interact with my coworkers and the administrator of my school for information and updates.	4.18	0.88	Agree
3	The most effective approach is to look for other income-generating opportunities during lockdown, such as internet selling, online tutoring, or any other educational work that will pay well during the pandemic.	4.87	1.10	Strongly Agree
4	It is preferable to speak with loved ones and friends to decompress and get support while avoiding pressures and stressors at work.	4.96	0.99	Strongly Agree
5	It is advisable to take time for yourself rather than working on school-related tasks after hours.	4.66	0.94	Strongly Agree
	Overall	4.64	0.98	Strongly Agree

For educators to manage the above-mentioned challenges, coping mechanisms are essential. Dealing with problems is crucial. Table 7 shows the coping mechanisms of the teachers' respondents to the modular teaching and learning approach amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall mean value is 4.64 with a standard deviation of 0.98 and a verbal-descriptive interpretation of "strongly agree." Teachers advise students that speaking or being open with family and friends is essential. They get relaxed despite all the tensions they are experiencing. Avoiding overtime at work allowed them to manage their stress. Strengthening crisis self-efficiency is

essential to maintaining and increasing the involvement of teachers at work in the current global health scenario, where teachers in the public education system are pushed to respond to the paradigm shift in the teaching and learning process. To get through the numerous obstacles, one must learn to cope. Education is a great profession. Still, entire devotion and endurance are required (Baloran, 2020; Saro et al., 2022).

Table 8. *Significant Relationship Between the Innovative Practices and Coping Mechanisms of the Educators and Their Ability to Overcome the Difficulties and Challenges of the Modular Instruction and Learning Approach during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Innovative Practices	1.089	0.412
Coping Mechanisms	0.782	0.018
Perceived Challenges and Difficulties	0.054	-0.033
Overall	0.642	0.397

Table 8 presents the significant relationship between the innovative practices and coping mechanisms of the educators and their ability to overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular instruction and learning approach during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the findings, the overall correlation coefficient between the study's main variables was 0.642 with a sig. (2-tailed of 0.397). According to the results, the innovative practices had a CC of 1.089 with a sig. of 0.412 and the coping mechanisms had a 0.782 with a sig. value of 0.018, while the perceived difficulties and challenges had a 0.054 and a -0.033.

According to Schivano (2014), in times of pandemics, employers should also focus on fostering contact and providing social help to employees in order to lessen unpleasant experiences. Teachers need to strengthen their hearts to carry out their work and duties even though challenges are getting harder to handle at this point of time. They must put up all their effort to succeed and become an effective frontline instructor. Teachers are battling to maintain the COVID-19 pandemic scenario's standard of teaching and learning for pupils as well as to satisfy school quality targets despite the psychological demands of the socio-economic and health crises (Saro et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The study was conducted to know how teachers coped during the COVID-19 pandemic, including innovative practices used by teachers to defeat or simply overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular teaching and learning approach. The research has employed a descriptive-correlational research design and a quantitative method of research. The demographic profile of the teachers' respondents shows that most of the respondents are female, which attained the percentage of 66%, whereas the male respondents obtained 34% of the total population. In terms of age as one of the variables in the demographic profile, most of the respondents normally belong to the Millennial generation and are 21–30 years old, which had a percentage of 44%.

Based on the findings, the overall mean of the stressor as one of the variables related to the main objectives of the study is ($m = 3.93$) with a standard deviation of 0.98 (agree), which means that the respondents agreed that the indicators that have been included in the stressor are very common to them or that they encountered those indicators during the pandemic. Also, the overall mean of the emotions of the teachers' respondents during the pandemic. As a result, a 3.92 mean value has been gathered for the emotions as variables in the study with a standard deviation of 0.94 (agree).

The overall mean of the difficulties encountered by the teachers-respondents were 3.02 with a standard deviation of 0.83, which can be described as "neutral" or uncertain based on their respective perceptions. This means that the respondents were not quite sure on the indicators underneath the perceived difficulties when they responded on the survey questionnaire provided by the researchers. Furthermore, the innovative practices of the teachers' respondents on the modular teaching and learning approach amid the COVID-19 pandemic had an overall mean of ($m = 4.26$) with a standard deviation of 0.96, which can be described as "strongly agree" based on the responses of the teachers' respondents. Withal, for educators to manage the above-mentioned challenges, coping mechanisms are essential. Dealing with problems is crucial. he coping mechanisms of the teachers' respondents to the modular teaching and learning approach amid the COVID-19 pandemic had the overall mean value of 4.64 with a standard deviation of 0.98 and a verbal-descriptive interpretation of "strongly agree." Teachers advise students that speaking or being open with family and friends is essential. They get relaxed

despite all the tensions they are experiencing.

Thus, the significant relationship between the innovative practices and coping mechanisms of the educators and their ability to overcome the difficulties and challenges of the modular instruction and learning approach during the COVID-19 pandemic had the overall correlation coefficient between the study's main variables was 0.642 with a sig. (2-tailed of 0.397). According to the results, the innovative practices had a CC of 1.089 with a sig. of 0.412 and the coping mechanisms had a 0.782 with a sig. value of 0.018, while the perceived difficulties and challenges had a 0.054 and a -0.033. Despite the psychological demands of the socioeconomic and health crises, teachers are fighting to uphold the standard of teaching and learning for students in the COVID-19 pandemic scenario and to meet school quality standards.

Consequently, if the schools offer them with adequate support, the teaching group is psychologically ready to adapt to new and innovative teaching techniques. But even though the modular approach to teaching has created several new issues and misunderstandings in the educational setting, the teaching and school communities are prepared to handle these situations. Young children's or young people's learning must go on as usual without being hindered in just about any way. To create a more flexible and high-quality education system during the epidemic, the teaching profession and schools are pushing the limits.

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