

Challenges Met and Coping Mechanism of Teachers in the Implementation of Distance Learning

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Abstract —The study aimed to determine the relationship between the perceived challenges and expressed coping mechanism of teachers in the implementation of distance learning. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational research design for an in-depth analysis of the study, the researcher used the survey on perceived challenges of Raagas (2021) and survey on coping mechanism used by De Villa, et al., (2020) in their study. Standard Deviation, Weighted Mean and Spearman's rho were the statistical tools used. The data revealed high extent of perceived challenges and good coping mechanism in terms of positive well-being and time management while very good on openness to change, peer mentoring and collaboration. Moreover, this study shows a significant relationship between the perceived challenges and expressed coping mechanism of teachers in terms of openness to change, peer mentoring and collaboration while no significant relationship was found on positive well-being and time management. Though barriers surfaced during the implementation of distance learning, teachers find its ways to overcome it to cope with the challenges of the new normal. These help them meet the demands of the learning modality and being able to perform their duties and responsibilities as facilitators of learning to attain quality education despite this pandemic.

Keywords — *Challenges Met, Coping Mechanism, Teachers, Distance Learning*

I. Introduction

Education sector is one of the most affected fields brought about by COVID-19 pandemic. Schools have become the most vulnerable to safety and security. Health concerns of school personnel, students, parents, and other stakeholders are at stake; thus, temporary closure of schools was enforced to contain the spread of the virus and reduce infections (UNESCO, 2020). Community lockdown and quarantine led work from home among teachers and study from home among students through online distance learning (Crawford, et al., 2020) and other learning modality. Other schools cut their classes short than expected, which causes serious disruption to more educational opportunities. The opening of classes for the academic year 2020-2021 was delayed, giving more time to schools to prepare continuity plans and manage alternative learning modalities. Teaching and learning which mainly happens inside the classroom becomes the most

susceptible to disturbance, so education leaders decided to cope with and adopt the New Normal education.

The immediate transitions and improved sophistication of today's world existing challenges and establish new demands on our education system, Department of Education (DepEd) generates plenty of problems for students and teachers, but because the government's signed to pursue the school year 2020-2021. The teacher, who considers the second mother of a student, was having a tough time addressing the new normal founded. Simultaneously, the shortage of apparatus and material support at the start of the category, whether we Filipinos can handle this new test in our lives. With this, plenty of scholars and even teachers experience stress and burnout while sailing amid the pandemic.

Having been able to finish the present school year, facts cannot be denied that struggles among teachers, school heads, parents, pupils, and other stakeholder in the implementation of distance learning modalities is visible. The immediate change in the curriculum made everyone create innovative ways to make learning easy while students are learning at home. Parents and other members of the family experienced being the learning facilitators at home. The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the students. The students may ask assistance from the teacher via e-mail, telephone, text message/instant messaging among others. Where possible, the teacher does home visitation to students needing immediate attention, remediation, and assistance. Printed modules and other learning materials were delivered to students through their parents or guardians and sometimes teachers had to tap the Barangay Local Government Units to ask for assistance in the delivery and retrieval of the modules.

Since education is no longer held within the school, parents serve as partners of teachers in education. Parents play a vital role as home facilitators, guidance counselor, modulator, facilitator, and other functions of teachers in school. Their primary role in modular learning or blended learning is to establish a connection and guide the child (FlipScience, 2020) in accomplishment the activities in the learning materials given.

With the announcement of Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones that the president of the Philippines, Hon. Rodrigo R. Duterte that school year 2021-2022 will start on September 13, 2021 has created more questions on whether the previous learning modality has been successfully implemented. Are the teachers ready to face another challenging school year? Are they able to learn lessons from the previous school year? Are they equipped with the knowledge, skills, and materials for another battle to face? Are the challenges encountered in the previous school year addressed? These are only some of the questions that the researcher had formulated which motivated her to conduct this study. Thus, this study aims to determine the challenges encountered by the teachers and how they overcome these challenges. An intervention plan will be formulated based on the findings of the study.

It is in the rationale that the researcher who is currently teaching in the above mentioned local, would like to delve worthy research undertaking that will benefit the school she is currently teaching and that of her Graduate Program.

This study determines the relationship between the perceived challenges and expressed coping mechanism of teachers in the implementation of distance learning in selected schools in Leyte II District, Leyte Division.. A proposed intervention plan was formulated based on the findings of the study.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of challenges met by teachers in the implementation of distance learning?
2. What are the coping mechanisms that teachers did to address the challenges they met in terms of the following:
 - 2.1 Positive well-being;
 - 2.2 Time management;
 - 2.3 Openness to change;
 - 2.4 Peer mentoring; and
 - 2.5 collaboration?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the challenges met and coping mechanisms of teachers in the implementation of distance learning?
4. What intervention plan can be proposed based on the findings of this study?

II. Methodology

Design. This study employed the descriptive-correlational research design employing the qualitative and quantitative data to determine the relationship between the perceived challenges and expressed coping mechanism of teachers in the implementation of distance learning. Macupa Central School and Belen Elementary School of Leyte II District, Leyte Division is the main locale of the study. The thirty-five (35) teachers in the said locale are the main respondents of the study and a survey developed by Raagas (2021) in her study Challenges, Opportunities and Performance of Elementary Teachers in times of Pandemic and survey used by De Villa, et al. (2020) in their study on Secondary Teachers' Preparation, Challenges and Coping Mechanism in the Pre-Implementation of Distance Learning in the New Normal were utilized. This research focused in determining the extent of challenges met and teachers expressed coping mechanism in the implementation of distance learning and its relationship. A Proposed Intervention Plan based on the findings of the study is the output.

Sampling. There are 35 teachers involved in this study. The research instruments were distributed personally with consent from the Local IATF and strictly following the prescribed Health Protocol during the school meeting.

Research Procedure. The researcher prepared the research design and tools to be utilized in the study. Approval and recommendation from the Panel of Examiner of the Graduate Studies was sought. A letter request to conduct this study was forwarded to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon approval, permission from the District Supervisor and School Head was secured before the actual gathering of data. Validation of the instruments through the School Head and District Supervisor was sought. Orientation of the participants and administration of the questionnaire was done through face-to-face. Permission from the Barangay and Local IATF was secured. After accomplishing the survey, the researcher collected. Data were tallied and submitted for statistical treatment. Analysis and Interpretation of Data. Making of Proposed Enhancement Plan followed.

Ethical Issues. The right to conduct the study was strictly adhered through the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division, District Supervisor of the District, and school principal. Orientation of the respondents was done using face to face modality. In the orientation, issues and concerns were addressed and consent to be included in the study were signed.

Treatment of Data. The Standard Deviation and Weighted Mean were employed to determine the extent of challenges met and teachers expressed coping mechanism in the implementation of distance learning. Spearman rho was used to determine the significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Perceived Extent of Challenges in the Implementation of Distance Learning

	Indicators of Challenges in the Implementation of Distance Learning	Mean	S.D.	Description	Interpretation
1	Unstable internet connectivity.	4.60	.55	Strongly Agree	Very High
2	Lack of materials and equipment for the reproduction of learning resources.	4.03	.86	Agree	High
3	Unable to deliver the lesson to the pupils on face-to-face classroom.	4.49	.66	Agree	High

4	Unsure of the lessons conveyed is mastered by the pupils.	4.34	.59	Agree	High
5	Increase number of non-readers and non-numerates in the class.	4.14	.85	Agree	High
6	Enhancing the skills of the learners.	3.83	.86	Agree	High
7	Parents support in the learning of the pupils.	4.11	.68	Agree	High
8	There are certain parents who lack the desire and ability to teach their children the substance of the lessons.	4.51	.61	Strongly Agree	Very High
9	Some parents never provide guidance and assistance to their children's studies.	4.37	.73	Agree	High
10	Low marginal status of the family.	4.06	.68	Agree	High
11	Teachers are affected by this DepEd intervention.	4.34	.59	Agree	High
12	Some of the time is used in the implementation of the DepEd program	4.20	.47	Agree	High
13	Teachers continue to work overtime only to comply with all of these undertakings.	4.51	.56	Strongly Agree	Very High
14	Lack of training to craft video lessons.	4.49	.61	Agree	High
15	Teachers are still under stress in the execution of their roles and obligations.	4.17	.66	Agree	High
	Overall Perception	4.28	.35	Agree	High

Table 1 presents the perceived extent of challenges met in the implementation of distance learning. It was revealed on the table that the perceived extent of challenges met in the implementation of distance learning has an overall perception of 4.28 with standard deviation of .35 which is interpreted as high. This means that teachers agree that they met challenges as they implement distance learning. This implies that since distance learning is new modality to all school personnel and stakeholders and with the fact that the school heads had provided the teachers with their needs, still we cannot do away with them experiencing challenges. Moreover, with the

unstable internet connectivity, parents who lack the desire and ability to teach their children the substance of the lessons and teachers continue to work overtime only to comply with all of these undertakings are the indicators with very high extent of perceived challenges. This means that these indicators contribute most of the challenges that teachers experienced while implementing distance learning. on the other hand, lack of materials and equipment for the reproduction of learning resources got the lowest mean of 4.03 which is interpreted as high. This means that the government has done its task to provide the materials and equipment for the reproduction of learning materials. And with the initiative of the teachers and school head, they were able to tap stakeholders who can assist them in providing these materials.

Table 2
Teachers' Expressed Coping Mechanism to Address Challenges in the Implementation of Distance Learning

Dimensions	MEAN	S.D.	Description	Interpretation
Positive Well-Being				
Boosting self-confidence by encouraging others.	4.20	0.76	Often	Good
I take vitamins for my health to reduce stress.	4.06	0.97	Often	Good
When I feel tired, I also take a rest for a moment and pray for God's strength.	4.40	0.85	Often	Good
The only thing I have in mind now is positivity.	4.31	0.83	Often	Good
I still believe that above all of these things we are experiencing right now, there will always be ways to reduce the learners holistically.	4.54	0.66	Always	Very Good
<i>Overall Positive Well-Being</i>	4.30	0.32	Often	Good
Time Management				
Even there are a lot of things to do, I still do my best to accomplish those things on time.	4.46	0.66	Often	Good
I give more than enough time to work with the learning materials even late at night.	4.51	0.78	Always	Very Good
I believe that time management is very important to accomplish the tasks.	4.74	0.51	Always	Very Good
I make my on time line in accomplishing the tasks given me.	4.29	0.86	Often	Good
I work on the task given me and submit or accomplish it on time.	4.46	0.66	Often	Good
<i>Overall Time Management</i>	4.49	0.28	Often	Good

Openness to Change				
It's a good thing that I'm very open to new learnings and I'm very interested in the new techniques as to the technology tools and online resources are involved.	4.60	0.60	Always	Very Good
We, teachers, are very adaptive to the changing teaching-learning process because we are said to engage in never-ending learning.	4.63	0.60	Always	Very Good
Every day we learn new things and these things are helpful for us to cope with the challenges of the new normal.	4.54	0.66	Always	Very Good
I am resilient to change.	4.43	0.65	Often	Good
I tried my best to learn new things from peers and superior to effectively implement the new normal way of education.	4.46	0.66	Often	Good
<i>Overall Openness to Change</i>	4.53	0.44	Always	Very Good
Peer Mentoring				
Seeking help from my co-teachers since we are dealing with the same pressure in making good outputs is important.	4.57	0.70	Always	Very Good
I ask help from my colleagues in studying different computer applications and gathering online resources and references to make my teaching easier.	4.49	0.70	Often	Good
I ask assistance from those who are experts in using technology so I will be more acquainted in integrating it into my lessons.	4.57	0.70	Always	Very Good
I value the support given me by my colleagues.	4.57	0.65	Always	Very Good
I apply the technical assistance given to me by my mentor.	4.49	0.74	Often	Good
<i>Overall Peer Mentoring</i>	4.54	0.43	Always	Very Good
Collaboration				
We ask assistance from the stakeholders in the proper implementation of distance learning modality.	4.69	0.63	Always	Very Good
We seek help from external stakeholders for the other things we need that our schools cannot provide.	4.51	0.70	Always	Very Good
I seek help and support from the parents of my pupils in assisting and guiding their children learning at home.	4.71	0.52	Always	Very Good

I join school activities which will help improve my teaching career and in dealing with people during this pandemic.	4.57	0.56	Always	Very Good
We ask support from the stakeholders in providing materials for our learners.	4.40	0.81	Often	Good
<i>Overall Collaboration</i>	4.58	0.36	Always	Very Good

Table 2 presents the teachers expressed coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning in terms of positive well-being, time management, openness to change, peer mentoring and collaboration. It was revealed on the table that the teachers expressed coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning in terms of positive well-being has an average mean of 4.30 with standard deviation of 0.32 which is interpreted as good. This means that teachers often expressed positive well-being as their coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning. this implies that encouraging outlook, self-confidence gained from encouragement and motivation, healthy lifestyle and stress reduction allows them to continue performing their duties and responsibilities despite the challenges of these trying times.

Moreover, this table also revealed that teachers expressed coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning in terms of time management has an average mean of 4.49 with standard deviation of 0.28 which is interpreted as good. This means that teachers often expressed proper time management to meet the demands of home and work. This implies that time management help them accomplish things on time. This lets them attend school duties, do household chores and regain energy through rest. This implies further that establishing routines through habits and practices in a set schedule help them to utilize time efficiently.

Furthermore, it was also revealed on the table that teachers expressed coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning in terms of openness to change has an average mean of 4.53 with standard deviation of 0.44 which is interpreted as very good. This means that being flexible and adaptive to changes allows them to survive and still succeed. This implies that flexibility and adaptability are important qualities that every teacher must acquire.

Additionally, it was revealed on the table that teachers expressed coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning in terms of peer mentoring has an average mean of 4.54 with standard deviation of 0.43 which is interpreted as very good. This means that peer mentoring always helps them to collaborate and share best practices. They seek guidance and support from one another especially in preparing learning resources or materials. This implies that as teachers embrace change, peer mentoring allows them to build confidence and nurture competence in the new normal. They value the support gained from one another as a beneficial way to stay connected.

Finally, this table also presents the teachers' expressed coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning in terms collaboration. It was revealed on

the table that the teachers expressed coping mechanism to address challenges in the implementation of distance learning in terms of collaboration has an average mean of 4.58 with standard deviation of 0.36 which is interpreted as very good. This means that due to limited resources, the gaps are filled through the continuous support of stakeholders through community engagement and partnership. This implies that everyone in the school system is involved in designing learning opportunities to attain quality education despite of this pandemic.

Table 3
Spearman’s Correlations Between Perceived Challenges and Coping Mechanism (n=35)

Coping Mechanism	r	Interpretation	p-value
Positive Well-Being	-.09	Negligible	.607 ^(ns)
Time Management	-.19	Weak	.272 ^(ns)
Openness to Change	.577	Moderate	<.001**
Peer Mentoring	.418	Moderate	.013*
Collaboration	.402	Moderate	.017*

* Significant
 ** Highly Significant
 ns – not significant

Table 3 presents the Spearman’s correlation between the perceived challenges and coping mechanism of teachers in the implementation of distance learning. It was revealed on the table that the r value of -0.9 is less than the p-value of .607 at .05 level of significance so null hypothesis is negligible, so null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant relationship between the perceived challenges met and teachers expressed coping mechanism in terms of positive well-being. This implies that being positive does not mean that an individual will no longer be experiencing challenges. Challenges are still present especially if the modality or situation is new. Since COVID-19 became pandemic, the field of education has experienced drastic changes including the adoption of remote learning. These changes contribute meaningfully the challenges that teachers met in the implementation of distance learning.

Moreover, the table also revealed that the r value of -.09 is less than the p-value of .272 at .05 level of significance which is interpreted as weak, so null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant relationship between the perceived challenges met and teachers expressed coping mechanism in terms of time management. This implies that time management as coping mechanism does not affect the challenges met by teachers in the implementation of distance learning. This implies further that despite the fact of careful planning and time management to meet the needs of the learners, still challenges are present.

Furthermore, the table revealed that openness to change has an r value of .577 which is greater than the p -value of .001 at .05 level of significance which is interpreted as moderate, so null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between the perceived challenges met and teachers expressed coping mechanism in terms of openness to change. This implies that due to this pandemic, teachers and other people had encountered challenges which made their lives change. Being positive and open to whatever changes in the curriculum or learning modality can help them address the perceived challenges. Working with positive mind results to a successful educational endeavor.

Additionally, this table also presents the extent of perceived challenges met and teachers expressed coping mechanism in terms of peer mentoring. It was revealed on the table that the r value of .418 is greater than the p value of .013 which is interpreted as moderate, so null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between the extent of challenges met and expressed teachers coping mechanism in terms of peer mentoring. This implies that with the changes in the curriculum and learning modality, teachers need mentoring to achieve educational goals. To address these challenges, asking for help and sharing of best practices is important and the conduct of peer tutoring within and outside of the school support them in making their work easier and achievable.

Finally, the table shows the extent of perceived challenges met and teachers expressed coping mechanism in terms of collaboration. It was revealed on the table that the r value of .402 is greater than the p value of .017 which is interpreted as moderate, so null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between the extent of challenges met and expressed teachers coping mechanism in terms of collaboration. This implies that working with fellow teachers and helping one another to accomplish the tasks given contributes to address the challenges met in the implementation of distance learning. This implies further that seeking for support from the stakeholders and engaging the community in the education of the pupils may help ease the challenges met by the teachers. Due to this pandemic, remote learning or learning at home is implemented by most of the schools in the country. With these, parents or guardians are the learning facilitators of the pupils. By collaborating with stakeholders, the burden of going to respective households of the learners which contributes risks to teachers and pupils, help in meeting the demands of this new learning modality and teachers will be able to perform their duties and responsibilities as facilitators of learning.

IV. Conclusion

The data revealed that there is a significant relationship between perceived challenges in the implementation of distance learning and expressed coping mechanism of teachers as regards to openness to change, peer mentoring and collaboration. On the other hand, the relationship between perceived challenges in the implementation of distance learning and positive well-being and time management shows no significant relationship. Though barriers surfaced during the implementation of distance learning, teachers find its ways to overcome it to cope with the

challenges of the new normal. These help them meet the demands of the learning modality and being able to perform their duties and responsibilities as facilitators of learning to attain quality education despite this pandemic.

V. Recommendations

1. The proposed intervention plan formulated should be utilized.
2. Teachers should formulate appropriate plans and implement adequate strategies to meet the demands of teaching and learning process in the new normal.
3. Teachers should have a growth mindset towards the situation, embrace changes and explore possibilities by getting out of their comfort zones.
4. The higher offices and school authorities may work with teachers in addressing the challenges they face as they mitigate to the new normal teaching practices.
5. Necessary resources and relevant trainings should be provided among teachers to successfully deliver quality education.
6. Engaging community and partnership to stakeholders should be enhanced by all school personnel to gain support in the implementation of distance learning; and
7. Future researchers should replicate this study to include different locale and include different variables aside from the mentioned in this study.

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