Teachers' Perceived Challenges and Coping Strategies in Pandemic-Influenced Teaching:Basis for a School-Based Teacher Support Mechanism

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ABSTRACT: *The current COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected many global activities, including teaching and learning. This research investigated teachers' perceived challenges and coping strategies to craft localized school-based support mechanisms. This study followed a mixed methods convergent parallel design where quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same phase of the data-gathering process. This design was followed to enrich quantitative data with qualitative data. This study utilized two research instruments to gather quantitative data for the following variable – perceived challenges and coping strategies. To collect qualitative data, interviews were conducted using the sub-questions aligned with the study's central question. The data were derived from randomly selected public school teachers of an educational institution in Makati City. Three of those teachers who answered were chosen at random to be interviewed. During analysis, Shapiro-Wilk's normality test was done for the quantitative data to determine the statistical analysis to be employed. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed through Pearson r coefficient and thematic analysis, respectively. Results showed that perceived challenges have no significant relationship with overall coping strategies. However, by analyzing the subcomponents of coping strategies, perceived challenges positively correlate with problem-focused coping. This result revealed that when teachers experience a high intensity of challenges in their teaching practices during the pandemic, they tend to do active coping strategies indicative of grit and a more practical approach to solving the problem. Moreover, qualitative data supported that teachers must also be given mental and emotional support besides physical, technological, and financial support. Furthermore, parallel studies must be conducted with a more diverse and large sample to serve as a guide in crafting a nationwide support mechanism for teachers during a challenging situation*

KEYWORDS: perceived challenges, coping strategies, support mechanisms

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INTRODUCTION

In this time of global health crisis, many sectors were affected. One of these sectors is the education sector. In 2019, many schools were forced to shut down and opted to do remote learning. There were no physical interactions between teachers and students in this setup that secured everyone's safety. However, there are downsides to this abrupt transition from face-to-face to remote teaching. On a global scale, most teachers encounter internal and external problems in distance education. Teachers face pedagogical challenges in teaching the students because the modality is new to internal difficulties. Moreover, access to internet connectivity and equipment, instructional materials, and technical support were some of the external problems teachers faced (Özüdoğru, 2021). Moreover, Dhawan (2020) mentioned that a more severe consequence of a remote teaching setup is students' motivation, time on task, mental health, and work-life balance. In the Philippines, the most prevalent challenges encountered by teachers are the following: too much non-teaching-related work, the quality of students' products and performance, high dropout rates, and mental and physical burnout. External challenges such as financial-related constraints, conflicting home responsibilities, and unstable internet connectivity are secondary for them (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020). Noticing these studies' findings, most teachers encountered internal and external challenges in facilitating remote classes due to the ongoing pandemic.

With these challenges teachers face in remote teaching, several efforts were made to solve the problems. Castroverde and Acala (2021) suggest that in coping with the hindrances in the teaching and learning process, teachers must know how to manage their time and innovate their strategies to address and adapt to the present time changes. Likewise, in higher education, most solutions cover capacitating teachers about the modality and improving their infrastructure to support the transition from the regular face-to-face class to remote learning, eventually becoming flexible (Dayagbil, Palompon, Garcia, & Olvido, 2021). These solutions focused on the capacity-building of teachers and improving infrastructure that would support distance education. However, these coping mechanisms are too general because they do not see the actual picture of the situation at a school level.

With the preceding statements and studies regarding pandemic-influenced teaching, this study established the perceived challenges the selected public secondary teachers encountered. It also defined teachers' coping strategies, which will facilitate resolving the concerns that may happen during the new normal in education. Lastly, it seeks to recommend school-based support mechanisms to assist teachers and bring them back on track.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study would be helpful to various education stakeholders. School administrators can use the results of this study as baseline information to guide them in crafting school-based support mechanisms for their teachers. For teachers, this study would be helpful for them in understanding the challenges that they encounter every day and developing appropriate coping

strategies based on the challenges they face brought by pandemic-influenced teaching. Students will benefit a lot from this in terms of receiving quality learning. If teachers are well-supported when they need one, a positive impact on teaching students is expected. Thus, even though the modality is challenging, as long as the teachers are appropriately assisted, they can play an essential role in teaching and learning.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated teachers' perceived challenges and coping strategies to craft localized school-based support mechanisms. Specifically, this study pursued to answer the following questions:
   a. How related are teachers' perceived challenges and coping strategies in pandemic-influenced teaching? and
   b. What school-based support mechanism for teachers emerged from the perceived challenges and coping strategies?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited to understanding teachers' perceived challenges and coping strategies in a public secondary school in Makati City. The study locale chosen for this research is one public secondary school to achieve the purpose of crafting a school-based support program for its teachers. Thus, the results of this study were not generalizable to all public and private secondary schools in the Philippines. Similarly, the results of this study do not represent those that could be gathered from teachers at the primary and tertiary levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the article explicitly enumerates the challenges of educators in pandemic-influenced teaching. Also, their coping strategies to handle these challenges are pointed out. Lastly, existing support mechanisms done by the school administrators and their effectiveness are cited.

Challenges of Distance Education
The concept of distance education has been there before the current pandemic situation. Its essence was realized when the COVID-19 pandemic afflicted the entire globe. However, shifting from face-to-face to distance learning required adjustments, especially in the Philippines, where the widely used modality is in-person teaching. Likewise, various challenges were faced by all the education system stakeholders – one of which is the educators.

In Turkey, Sari and Nayır (2020) found out that the prevalent challenges of teachers in teaching their students during a pandemic are difficult internet access, insufficient infrastructure at home to support distance learning, and classroom management. In addition, Abedmoneim (2022) noted that even though schools train teachers to possess high e-platform skills, these would be useless since most of them and their students have difficult internet access when they are in the actual online

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classroom scenario. With this, it is noteworthy that preparing for distance education entails a lot of obstacles, and solving one of these challenges is not enough because it may allow another one to arise. Thus, support for a stable internet connection for teachers and students is necessary because the modality runs and requires this tool to deliver instruction successfully.

Mandapat and Farin (2021) made a more comprehensive analysis that teachers' school climate and work-from-home arrangements became challenging for them during the pandemic. Teachers noted that the situation changed their community involvement, student-parent-peer connections, the structure of learning, and the physical environment, which was too challenging for them. Also, work responsibilities increased while administration and technical support seemed to be insufficient, thus, affecting their health and mental well-being. Similarly, struggles for the well-being of teachers were intensified by the extension of distance education. As a result, the situation affects the teaching and learning process, where teachers' efficiency and students' opportunity to gain knowledge become a problem (Rosales & Pagsuyoin, 2021). Besides, the current pandemic affected teachers' quality of life and well-being. Its impact did not vary on sex or socio-economic status (Rabacal, Oducado, & Tamdang, n.d.). Therefore, the new setup did pose environmental and infrastructural challenges to teachers and students as mental and emotional difficulties.

Furthermore, the pandemic situation brought various challenges to teachers of all ages. These external and internal challenges affected their quality of life and well-being. Which, in return, could debilitate their work efficiency, which could result in the poor transfer of learning among students.

Coping Strategies in Teaching Remotely
As distance education due to the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, many challenges have been faced by the teaching community. However, the teachers did several coping strategies and mechanisms to deal with the situation over time. Thus, improving and continuing the teaching and learning process.

In Germany, teachers experience medium to high-stress levels because of remote teaching. Their stress levels are correlated with the amount of time spent working in a remote setup (Klapproth, Federkeil, Heinschke, & Jungmann, 2020). Comparably, Hidalgo-Andrade, Hermosa-Bosano, and Paz (2021) observed that older teachers with home care responsibilities and no training and experience with online teaching showed high-stress levels in Ecuador. Also, female teachers tend to be more stressed than male teachers in the given situation. Then, teachers participated in various leisure activities and physical exercise and seeking social support to cope with stress. All these are proof that the COVID-19 problem made teaching more challenging. However, teachers still are open to possibilities to deal with these challenges.

In a study by Mheidly, Fares, & Fares (2020), they mentioned that prolonged exposure of teachers to various devices used in teleconferencing and online teaching increases anxiety and stress, contributing to additional mental stressors brought about by the lockdown that later on could lead to burnout and exhaustion. Equally, MacIntyre, Gregersen, and Mercer (2020) cited that teachers'

positive psychological outcomes correlate positively with an approach coping strategy and negatively with an avoidant coping strategy. Thus, teachers must have a positive outlook to better deal with the challenges in online teaching during the pandemic. Additionally, the psychological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers call for support to safeguard the overall health of these professionals.

In the Philippines, the challenges brought by the pandemic-influenced teaching pushed them to show their ability to rise above them by employing coping strategies (Agayon, Agayon, & Pentang, 2022). Likewise, most teachers who encounter work-related challenges apply problem-focused and emotional-focused coping strategies like addressing the root cause of the problem, seeking socio-emotional support, and breathing and relaxation exercises (Rabago-Mingoa, 2017). Moreover, Sagales, Gonzaga, Gonzaga, and Miranda (2020) remarked that this health crisis also challenged teachers' resiliency. To cope with these challenges, teachers do the following coping mechanisms: understanding the cause of stress, reinforcing and developing skills, maintaining a healthy way of life, and keeping in touch with peers.

Furthermore, teachers must be well-informed about the best things to do if they face a challenging situation. They will not only be the ones to benefit from this but their students, too. Thus, teaching and learning will become effective even in difficult moments.

Support Mechanisms for Teachers in New Normal Teaching
With the high demand for shifting to online learning due to COVID-19, many teachers struggle to adjust to the situation. Consequently, schools initiated some support programs and mechanisms to help their teachers. However, the support focused on general problems and concerns and not on the local needs of the teachers. Thus, this study suggested support mechanisms tailored to teachers in the study locale.

According to Dolighan and Owen (2021), teachers who reported taking online professional development training for online teaching showed higher levels of online teaching efficacy. Similarly, effective designing of instructional materials among teachers is necessary to support learning since students often learn at home. In this situation, interactive instructional materials that could promote students' critical thinking ability must be used in the online class. To support teachers, schools provide professional development and training in designing instructional materials to upskill them (Wu, 2021). Additionally, information and communication technologies (ICT) tools, mainly digital teacher competence and teacher education opportunities to understand digital competence, are influential in adapting to online teaching during COVID-19 school closure (König, Jäger-Biela, & Glutsch, 2020). This effort has good and bad sides. On the good side, schools can ensure effective learning even in the remote learning environment, as long as teachers are skilled in designing instructional materials to support learning. However, we all know that students are with their parents always; educators should see that students are appropriately assisted in accomplishing the materials. Likewise, designing instructional materials requires more time for teachers to consider several factors, such as learner diversity. Therefore, this could be exhausting on the part of the teacher. To lessen exhaustion, supplementary materials should be collaboratively

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designed so that ongoing material evaluation is employed by the teachers and also to reduce their workload.

Moreover, Almendingen et al. (2021) noted that teachers' challenges in teaching during remote teaching and learning are rooted in the difficulties faced by their students. These include a lack of social interaction, unfit housing situations for home office purposes, insufficient data bandwidth, and an overall sense of reduced motivation and effort. Also, in terms of group activities, the students collaborated well in digital groups but wanted smaller groups with people they knew rather than randomly assigned to groups. Likewise, the preference for written home exams over online versions of previous on-campus exams was likely influenced by students' familiarity with the former. In terms of doing group activities, this is something that the teacher can resolve. However, for the other challenges of the students, the parents and school can help address them. Therefore, an intensified collaboration among the education stakeholders is suggested to assist teachers in ensuring that the teaching and learning process is effective during the remote learning modality.

On the mental and physical impact of online learning, several were noted that were experienced by the teachers. These are as follows: teachers had more screen time which was very irritating to their eyes, physical stress, sedentary lifestyle, stress due to deadlines and more workload, anxiety due to the uncertain direction of work, depression due to worrying that the COVID-19 situation might worsen, and change in sleeping pattern (Idris, et al., 2021). These challenges need medical attention. Schools must consider programs to help teachers lessen these physical and mental difficulties. If not addressed, these could considerably impact the teaching and learning process; in the worst case, those mentioned above would become inefficient.

Still, teachers are also affected by this pandemic situation. One must make a move to help the movers of our education system to benefit the learners.

Synthesis
This part of the study enumerated the challenges faced by the teachers and their coping strategies. Also, the existing support mechanisms were mentioned. With the rigorous literature review, the researcher found that teachers received inadequate support programs and mechanisms while doing distance education due to COVID-19. Thus, the need to conduct this study about creating school-based support mechanisms for teachers based on their perceived challenges and coping strategies is fortified.

Conceptual Framework
 Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework following the input-process-output model in crafting school-based support mechanisms from selected public secondary teachers' perceived challenges and coping strategies. In addition, a relationship between the perceived challenges and coping strategies was examined in the study. Also, the crafting of school-based support mechanisms was based on the convergence of quantitative and qualitative data.
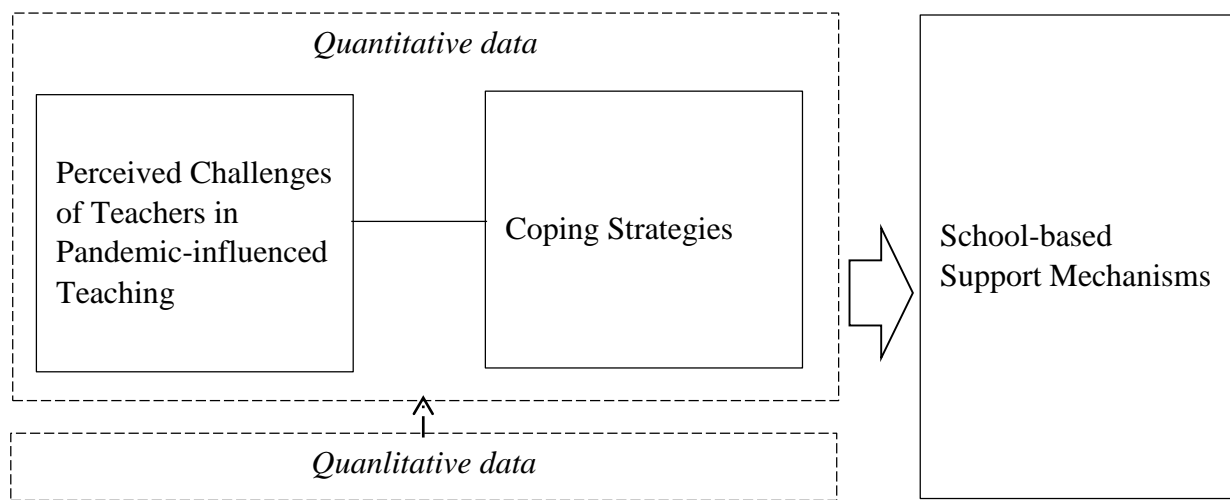
Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

Research Hypothesis
The hypothesis below was tested to determine the relationship between the perceived challenges and coping strategies of teachers.
   1. There is a positive relationship between teachers' perceived challenges and coping strategies in pandemic-influenced teaching.

Definition of Terms
The following terms were conceptually and operationally defined in the study.
Coping strategies are behavioral and cognitive tactics used to manage crises, conditions, and demands that are appraised as distressing (Carr & Pudrovska, 2007). In this study, the term entails certain teachers' practices to handle challenging situations in teaching in the middle of a pandemic.

Perceived challenge is defined in this study as any difficulties experienced and understood by the teachers through their teaching experiences during the pandemic.

School-based support mechanism is specified as any formal system or method of providing support or assistance (Collins, 2022). For this study, school-based aid is based on teachers' perceived challenges and coping mechanisms during remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

This part includes discussions on the research design employed, the sample or the respondents who participated in the study, the research instruments, the data-gathering procedures, and the statistical treatment of the data.

Research Design
This study followed a mixed-methods design, a process for gathering, examining, and "combining" both qualitative and quantitative research methods to understand a research problem. Similarly, a concurrent design was utilized. In the study, quantitative data from the respondents were collected. Likewise, qualitative data was gathered from selected participants, where quantitative data was derived. Both types of data were collected in a parallel timeframe. During this timeframe, an interactive approach was used where iteratively, data collection and analysis drove adjustments in the data collection procedures. Figure 2 shows the framework of concurrent parallel mixed-methods study design
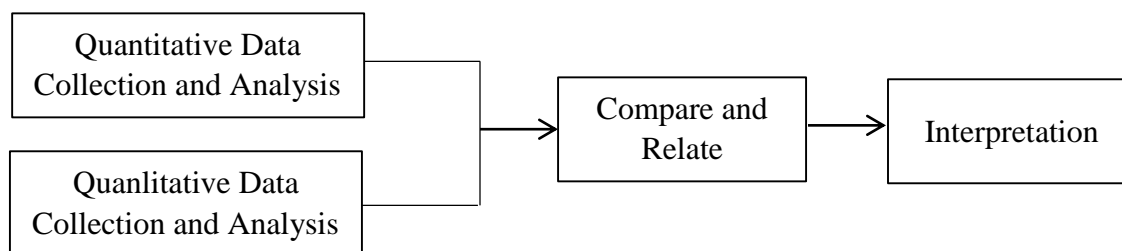

Figure 2. *Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design*

Research Participants and Sources of Data

This study followed a clustered sampling technique where the researcher divided the population into smaller groups (according to grade levels taught) which decisively sought based on the study's objectives. From a population of 185 teachers, the target sample size was 60 teachers (10 teachers per grade level). However, only 32 teachers responded to the invitation to participate in the study. The response rate for this study is 53.33% which falls within the acceptable response rate for online surveys, which is 50% or higher (Nulty, 2008). These participants are public secondary school teachers in a regular school in Makati City. Table 1 presents the participants' profiles showing their gender and grade level. Regarding gender, 14 male and 18 female teachers participated in the online survey.

Table 1
Participants' Demographic Information and Response Rate

Grade Level	Male	Female	Total	%
7	3	3	6	60
8	2	3	5	50
9	2	4	6	60
10	2	3	5	50
11	3	2	5	50
12	2	3	5	50
Overall	**14**	**18**	**32**	**53.33**

The sources of data in this study for data triangulation are limited to the following: online survey, data transcripts during semi-structured interviews, and the researcher's observation of the participants (covert and overt). Moreover, three interesting cases were chosen and interviewed for qualitative data sources.

Research Environment
The research environment is a public secondary school in Makati City. It consists of integrated junior and senior high school levels. Aside from the regular academic curriculum, the research locale focus on TVET and Sports. The main reason the school was chosen to implement the study is that the researcher was formerly affiliated with the said school. Thus, the output of this study will contribute to the school.

Research Instruments
This study utilized two research instruments to gather quantitative data for the following variable – perceived challenges and coping strategies.

The researcher adopted two survey questionnaires for quantitative data to measure the two variables – perceived challenges and coping strategies. The first instrument is the New Normal Challenges Inventory by Khan, Kamal, Illiyan, and Asif (2021). The instrument is a 7-item Likert scale with a Cronbach's alpha value of .78. The second instrument is the Brief COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) Inventory. This instrument is a 28-item Likert scale designed to measure effective and ineffective ways to cope with a stressful life event. There were three coping subscales in the tool - problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping. The said instrument has a Cronbach alpha of .88, which shows high internal reliability and consistency of the items.

Four open-ended interview questions were formulated by the researcher for qualitative data aligned with the study's central question. Experts validated these open-ended questions before the interviews. Also, these questions sought to answer this main question - *What school-based support mechanism for teachers emerged from the perceived challenges and coping strategies?* Table 2 presents the interview guide used by the researcher in conducting the interviews to gather qualitative data.

Table 2
Interview Guide

Open-ended Questions
1. What are the challenges that you experienced during the pandemic-influenced teaching?
2. How did you cope with these challenges?
3. What kind of support did your institution give you during this challenging time?
4. What other support mechanisms do you wish were provided to help you handle the challenging teaching situation?

Data Collection and Processing Procedures

Initially, the researcher did an extensive literature review to solidify the need for the study. Before data gathering, a letter requesting to conduct the student was sent to the principal of the institution chosen for the student. The researcher received the permission a day after submitting the letter to the principal's office. Due to the limitations of data gathering because of the current pandemic, the survey was conducted online using Google forms. In the said Google forms, informed consent was included to be read by and accomplished by the participants. While participants were answering the survey, the researcher chose three interesting cases to be interviewed to collect qualitative data. These qualitative data were used to enrich the quantitative data. Both data were collected in a parallel timeframe.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to analyze data collected from the online survey, data transcripts during semi-structured interviews, and the researcher's observation of the participants. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts was performed to support the quantitative results of the study.

Before determining the relationship between perceived challenges and participants' coping strategies in pandemic-influenced teaching, a normality test was employed to establish if the data were normally distributed. Thus, appropriate statistical techniques were done.

Since the study has a small sample size, N=32, determining the distribution of both variables (perceived challenges and coping strategies) was necessary for choosing the appropriate statistical methods. So, a Shapiro-Wilk test was performed on the data, and it indicated that the scores were normally distributed from both perceived challenges, $W(32)=.966$, $p=.385$, and coping strategies, $W(32)=.984$, $p=.908$ (Table 3). A parametric test, Pearson's product-moment correlation, was used to examine the relationship between the two variables – perceived challenges and coping strategies.

Table 3

Test of Normality

Variables	N	SE	SD	W	*p*
Perceived challenges	32	.095	.538	.966	.385
Coping strategies	32	.066	.375	.984	.908

Note. If the computed *p*-value is greater than .05 means normal distribution.

For the qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis was used. After coding transcripts, an inter-rater was invited to check the accuracy of the codes made by the researcher. Then, an iterative comparison of themes was made to look for patterns in the data set.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents and discusses the qualitative and quantitative results. Following mixed-methods convergent parallel design, the qualitative data is used to enrich the interpretation of the quantitative data being collected. Also, this part of the study answers the two research questions stated in the previous sections of this paper.

Relationship between Perceived Challenges and Coping Strategies
Results regarding the first research question, "How related are the perceived challenges and coping strategies among teachers in pandemic-influenced teaching?" which aimed to determine the association of perceived challenges and coping strategies made by the teachers, are shown below.

The survey results were analyzed using the Pearson coefficient to determine the linear relationship between the perceived challenges and the coping strategies of teachers during pandemic-influenced teaching. Table 4 provides an overview of the results of the said statistical analysis. Overall, Pearson r showed that there was no correlation between the two variables, $r(30) = .040$, $p = .415$. However, upon assessing the relationship between perceived challenges and the subcomponents of coping strategies, Pearson r indicated a moderate positive correlation between perceived challenges and problem-focused coping, $r(30) = .512$, $p = .037$.

Table 4
Correlations Between the Perceived Challenges and Coping Strategies by Subcomponent

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	2.1	2.2	2.3
1	2.88 (.54)		.040	.521*	.149	.241
2	2.82 (.38)			.751**	.910**	.716**
2.1	3.38 (.41)				.612*	.280
2.2	2.95 (.48)					.463**
2.3	2.07 (.49)					

Notes. 1=Peceived Challenges, 2=Coping Strategies (Overall), 2.1=Problem-focused coping, 2.2=Emotion-focused coping, and 2.3=Avoidant
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

The Pearson r coefficient revealed that when teachers experience a high intensity of challenges in their teaching practices during the pandemic, they tend to do active coping strategies indicative of grit and a more practical approach to solving the problem. Also, it showed that teachers barely resort to emotion-focused and avoidant coping when dealing with professional challenges. Hence, this implies objective and rational decision-making when dealing with difficult situations. These agree with the results of the study of MacIntyre, Gregersen, and Mercer (2020) that teachers' positive psychological outcomes correlate positively with an approach to coping strategy. Thus, teachers must have a positive outlook to better deal with the challenges in online teaching during the pandemic.

Additionally, these results were evident in the interview responses of the participants. The following snippets (Table 5) include the challenges and coping strategy facets, revealing that teachers deal with the obstacles promptly and dispassionately.

Table 5
Corresponding Coping Strategies to the Perceived Challenges

Participants	Perceived Challenges	Coping Strategies
Teacher A	Bulk of tasks to accomplish	*"...to have a daily schedule for me to divide and accomplish my task."* [Active coping]
Teacher B	Limited time for synchronous discussion	*"...maximize the Homeroom Guidance time during Friday and conduct interventions and other enrichment activities were carried out to ensure the mastery of the lesson."* [Planning]
Teacher C	Academic integrity issues	*"I customize my exams/Google forms. I shuffle the questions, hide the answer key, and even set just a short period for the students to answer some activities."* [Active coping]
Teacher E	Technological challenges	*"...I also seek help from my colleagues and friends (teachers from other schools) when there are some technology and strategies I need to learn/understand."* [Active coping]
Teacher F	Non-compliance of requirements	*"I extended the period of submission and had talked to the parents of those students who were always not complying with the required tasks."* [Active coping]

Based on the verbatim responses, the participants apply various facets of problem-focused coping such as active coping and planning to manage challenging situations well. Also, they do this to help them adjust to stressful events while maintaining their emotional well-being. These results corroborate the study's outcomes by Agayon et al.(2022) that the challenges brought by the pandemic-influenced teaching pushed them to show their ability to rise above them by employing coping strategies.

School-Based Support Mechanisms Provided for Teachers
Based on the ongoing results, several school-based mechanisms were provided for teachers, such as training, psychosocial support, technical assistance, and connectivity allowance. The summary of these support mechanisms, lifted from the interview responses, is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Perceived Challenges of Teachers and School-based Support Mechanisms

Participants	Perceived Challenges	School-based Support Mechanism
Teacher A	▪ Time management ▪ Learners' non-compliance ▪ Connectivity issues	*"The institution provided seminars and training to help us cope with the challenges. Our department head continuously motivates and monitors our condition."* [teacher training and motivation]
Teacher B	▪ Technological issues ▪ Managing an online class	*"continuous communication through professional learning community is conducted."* [teacher training]
Teacher C	▪ Insufficient device and infrastructure for the online class	*"The Department of Education has provided a communication allowance for a few months. The local government of Makati has provided us with materials we can use for our online classes such as laptops, microphones, a tripod, and the like."* [monetary and device assistance]
Teacher D	▪ Technological issues during the delivery of instructions	*"The school provided us with some training about preparing the lessons using technology but not yet enough."* [teacher training]
Teacher E	▪ Lesson delivery problems ▪ Connectivity issues	*"They did give training and workshop. There was a time they gave us financial support for the internet, but that was just one time."* [teacher training and monetary assistance]
Teacher F	▪ Non-compliance with tasks and inactive students ▪ Declining attendance of learners	*"Departmental LAC (Learning Action Cell) session was carried out."* [teacher training]

Upon analyzing the participants' responses, most school-based support mechanisms given to them during the pandemic-influenced teaching are training, financial and device assistance, and motivation. These support mechanisms are vital during this situation. The mentioned support mechanisms agreed with those mentioned by Wu (2021) and König et al. (2020) that schools should provide professional development and training to teachers about designing instructional

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materials to upskill them. This training should focus on information and communication technologies (ICT) tools to provide digital teacher competence and teacher education opportunities to understand digital competence, which are influential in adapting to online teaching during the COVID-19 school closure.

However, some utterances indicate that these support mechanisms were insufficient because of the broad impact of the pandemic on one's well-being. Table 7 shows other necessary support mechanisms for teachers to help them deal with this challenging time.

Table 7
Other Support Mechanisms Needed by Teachers

Participants	Other Support Mechanisms Needed
Teacher A	*"I hope that the institution and the agency helped with the internet connection of teachers and, if possible, the students—additional support from LGU and barangay personnel to assist students with gadgets and internet connection concerns."* [Additional Technological Support for Teachers and Learners]
Teacher B	*"Deployment of non-teaching personnel. It will help to lessen the things that we need to do that are sometimes beyond our job."* [Support on Reducing Clerical Work]
Teacher C	*"The school and the Department of Education have provided teachers seminars they can attend that talk about mental health; however, these will not be enough because having a mental health issue is not just about being ignorant. Mental health issues should be treated, not taught; thus, psychiatrists/therapists should be assigned to the treatment of the mental health issues of teachers."* [Support on Mental Health]
Teacher D	*"Involvement of parents in monitoring their children during synchronous and asynchronous sessions."* [Support from Other Stakeholders]
Teacher E	*"They also should have established a psychosocial support department in Deped to address the psychological effect of this pandemic and distance learning for teachers and students."* [Psychosocial Support]

The verbatim responses in Table 7 suggest that teachers should be assisted holistically. It is not enough that they are provided with just training and financial and device assistance. Instead, they should also be given mental health support since the pandemic did exhaust them physically only but also mentally and emotionally. These suggestions on additional support for teachers agree with what Idris et al. (2021) mentioned: aside from physical exhaustion, teachers also experience anxiety due to the uncertain direction of work and depression due to worrying that the COVID-19 situation might worsen and change in sleeping patterns.

Implications in Education

With the input derived from this study, it is vital to prioritize the teachers' physical well-being and mental and emotional status. To do this, the school must provide a holistic support mechanism to ensure that the front lines of education can still do their work well. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the learners are well-equipped with the needs for online learning, and support must also be extended to them. In doing this, we can ensure a pandemic-resilient education system. This assistance is critical to ensure that the teaching and learning process continues even when facing health and other related crises.

Limitations of the study

This study has various methodological limitations that further studies can improve. Firstly, there might be issues with the research sample and selection. Due to constraints of time and situation, a limited ability to a broader geographic scope of samples was taken into account. With this, the samples who participated from one educational institution may not represent those teachers in the entire country, and the sample size may not be sufficient for statistical measurements. Secondly, the data collection method through Google forms showed less than a 60 percent response rate, which might be insufficient for conclusive results. Hence, further studies resolving this must be done. Thirdly, time constraints and conflicts arising from cultural and personal bias might affect the study's legitimacy. Therefore, a thorough methodological approach and practices must be made in the future to address all these limitations being enumerated.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the initial results of this study, the following conclusions and recommendations were made.

1. Teachers tend to resolve their challenges in teaching brought about by the pandemic through problem-focused coping.
2. It was evident that teachers were supported by their schools. However, this support only focuses on teaching-related matters.
3. This study figured that a holistic approach to supporting teaching is necessary to promote quality teaching and learning.
4. Further studies are suggested to address the study's limitations to make a national framework of support mechanisms for teachers during difficult situations.

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