Unveiling Truths Amidst the Transition of Instructional Practices in Public High Schools

Christine S. Nayre[1], Elizabeth M. Quimbo[2]

[1,2]Master of Arts in Teaching Social Science, Department of Education

Abstract

The study aimed to determine the root cause of stress of secondary public school teachers in Leyte Division during the transition of instructions from modular distance learning or blended learning to face-to-face learning modality. The study also aimed to determine the coping mechanisms of teachers amidst the stress of transition. The study interviewed ten public school teachers from Leyte Division who were selected through purposive sampling technique. The interviews were conducted using a researcher-made interview guide. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using Colaizzi's method of analysis. The study found three emergent themes on the causes of stress among secondary public school teachers during the transition The themes include: readiness to accept the transition, relearning teaching skills and uplifting of learners condition. For the coping mechanism of the participants, the study found four emergent themes. The themes were quality time with family and friends, support system in the workplace, embracing realities towards positive mindset and alleviating stress through rest and recreation. Further, the participants found three emergent themes for their recommendations to improve the plight of secondary public school teachers. The themes were reduced number of students in classrooms, enhanced administrative support and revisit teachers' roles.

Keywords: secondary public school teachers, stress, MDL, face-to-face learning, transition, coping mechanisms, teachers

Chapter 1
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM
Background and Rationale

Teaching is one of the most stressful occupations in the world. They play a vital role in any country's educational system, including providing academic instructions, social-emotional support, and building relationships with students and families. As a result of their positions, it is common for teachers to experience stress, which is a complicated and multifaceted issue as they shape the country's most valuable asset. Therefore, the leaders and managers of educational institutions turn their critical and fundamental concerns to the teachers' performance since the success of educational institutions is the economic backbone and primarily depends on teachers. Moreover, stress is a permanent part of educators' lives and negatively affects their professional performance. It reduces individual and institutional productivity, which strongly affects institutions of learning. Thus, it has become a necessity for educational leaders and managers to focus on understanding teachers' work-related concerns (Alson, 2019).

Stress is prevalent among teachers even before the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The circumstance is triggered because aside from teaching loads, teachers are also assigned to various clerical

tasks such as enrolling learners to Learner Information System (LIS), doing home visitation, conducting research, attending side by side trainings and the like. This situation became even more serious when the Covid19 pandemic relegated teachers to remote teaching arrangements.

When the global pandemic of Covid-19 struck, no school was completely prepared. Being forced to close and offer classes remotely, teachers and students suffered in great extent. The restriction of face-to-face classes has posed huge barrier to the teaching-learning process that led to teachers' heightened stress due to the unusual learning environment they have had to facilitate. While it has been almost 2 years since the implementation of remote teaching in the Philippines as of this writing, its effect seems to be extending capriciously because of many factors being considered by the local government. The situation created an enormous emotional load for most teachers, who were forced to combat the situation in order to ensure that learning continues despite the global pandemic.

In this period of global health emergency, teachers have to adapt to a remote work environment (Sokal et. al., 2020). According to the Asia Society Philippines (2020), a combination of online, broadcast, and modular as a remote teaching was intended to protect the safety of both students and teachers in the event of the global pandemic. Gaps and even hazards have become inevitable realities as a result of the hasty adaptation and creation of curricula and resources for remote teaching and learning modes. Different remote teaching approaches, such as online (synchronous or asynchronous), paper-based or printed-modular, and hybrid learning, were employed to deliver education in the new normal. Teachers resort to delivering lessons via live streams. Also, educational content streaming via gadgets or television, parent facilitated learning, and knowledge exchange are all incorporated as instructional scaffolding. In comparison to traditional approaches, the task of teachers appears to have been doubled in these distant work modes. Teachers must not only devise the best technique for facilitating remote learning, but they must also ensure that each learner is provided with the best learning opportunity possible according to their context.

The Philippine government undertook two approaches to continue education amid the restrictions imposed to stem the spread of COVID-19. The Department of Education (DepEd) implemented what it termed "blended learning" by issuing DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020 on 19 June 2020. The memorandum contains the adoption of the basic education learning continuity plan for the school year 2020-2021, considering the COVID-19 public health emergency. The DepEd is mandating schools to shift from face-to-face classes to blended learning as a temporary mode of instruction while waiting for the subsidence of the pandemic (Oñate et al., 2022). DepEd defines Blended Learning as "face-to-face with any or a mix of online distance learning, modular distance learning, and TV/Radio-based Instruction." It is designed to enable the schools to "limit face-to-face learning, ensure social distancing, and decrease the volume of people outside the home at any given time." Addressing the widespread misconception that this is a fresh approach, Department Secretary Leonor Briones clarified that the government has been using distance learning for decades (Fernan & Laguda, 2020).

However, this modality brought different challenges to the teachers' digital competence and self-efficacy. Yes, A. J. 2022 found that the teachers encountered connectivity problems, and using technology in online learning was the most common challenge. The delivery of the lesson and the child's learning is affected. Aside from online distance learning, most public schools in remote areas use modular instruction through printed self-learning modules. Furthermore, most students and parents prefer modular distance learning over other alternative modalities (Pham, Anh Le, & Trang Do, 2021). As a result, teachers were challenged in instructional strategies since they could not provide students with high-quality instruction and

preparation. The local study by Cabardo et al., (2022) found that it is time-consuming for learners to submit incomplete and unanswered modules where parental support seems inadequate and have insufficient training to effectively use the learning modality in teaching and learning with these challenges. There were several difficulties with modular training as an alternate method for learning continuity. Still, teachers need to monitor their students' development and success. If possible, the instructor should attend to students who need support or remediation at home (Llego et. al., 2021). Because of these sudden changes in the new educational system, many teachers may have encountered frustration associated with the pandemic and new learning delivery. The study by Cortez et al., 2021 found that teachers with varying educational systems experienced elevated stress in delivering distance learning modalities in times of crisis. Teachers are still having a hard time adjusting to the new normal, affecting their effectiveness.

Various challenges arose as a result of the difficult task of remote teaching. Communication limitations have always been one of the most difficult obstacles that teachers have to overcome (Bakar et. al., 2020). Teachers were also perplexed and stressed since there was confusion on their responsibilities and keeping connections with pupils in order to assist learning has been very challenging. Even in the best of circumstances, transitioning to distance learning systems has been difficult and frustrating. In many cases, school closures result in teacher furloughs or separations (Aguirre et. al., 2020). According to UNESCO (2020), transferring learning from classrooms to homes on a large scale and in a drastic manner poses huge human and technical hurdles (i.e., creating, maintaining, and improving distance learning, or measuring and validating learning). In remote teaching mode, teachers have been creating and managing virtual classrooms, communicating with their students and their parents over social media platforms, and learning by doing as they provide distance education. Despite government's efforts to provide training and resources to support teachers in this new learning environment, turning from face-to-face to virtual classroom in such a short time is indeed a huge challenge. Thus, it is common for teachers to suffer higher levels of stress in such unprecedented and uncertain times. Teachers do, in fact, require socio-emotional assistance to handle the increased demands placed on them to provide instruction during a crisis (UNESCO, 2020). As stated in the study of Ozamiz et al., (2021), providing support for teachers' psychosocial well-being is an essential component of supporting students especially in crucial times.

The global health crisis has the longest-term effect in Philippine education system, making it the last country to implement remote work mode and prohibit face-to-face classes. The adaptation of remote work mode as the new normal in education system truly contested the threat of the Covid-19 global pandemic. However, the status quo in the Philippine education system in time of pandemic has offered a plethora of concerns to teachers. Various challenges which are stumbling blocks to the success of the teaching and learning process in the new normal has been beating teachers for two years now. As particularly mentioned in the study of Aviles et al., (2021), the following are some of the identified challenges faced by teachers: problems in access and affordability of the hardware and software to go online reliably and sustainably; the logistics and health protocols for offline components of modular teaching; the redevelopment and adaptation of teaching content and materials on electronic and digital transmission; lack of preparedness or comfort in new and experimental methods of teaching; unresolved questions on monitoring, evaluation and grading of students and teachers performance; the potential impact, and limiting effects of the described home environment on remote teaching; and rising mental and psychological challenges among teachers, students, and parents. These impediments and predicaments to distance education are the major cause of teachers' mental health concerns which need appropriate actions.

In accordance with the research done by Orlanda-Ventayen et al. (2021) titled "Stress and Depression in the Workplace of Educators in the Philippines," the data revealed that some teachers do occasionally feel job stress, whereas others do occasionally experience depression. The study recommends that teachers should be aware of effective stress management techniques and ways to prevent depression.

The Department of Education (DepEd) continues to consider that taking classes in person helps students develop academically and generally improves their mental health and well-being. There is nothing disputing the fact that in-person instruction is still the best choice for basic education, according to a number of published research. Thus, DepEd issued a DepEd Order (DO) No. 34, s. 2022 in accordance with its commitment to the resumption of 5 days in-person classes despite the health crisis brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. Article 4, Section 11 states that regardless of the COVID-l9 alert level set by the Department of Health or the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases in areas where schools are located, this DO shall be in effect. Furthermore, as indicated in section 16 of the aforementioned DepEd Order, the DepEd intends for schools to have enough time to gradually transition to the need to resume 5 days of in-person instruction due to the COVID-l9 pandemic by implementing any of the following options: a) 5 days of lessons taken in person; b) blended learning (3 days of in-person instruction followed by 2 days of distance learning (in the form of modules, online courses, or television or radio broadcasts), followed by 4 days of in-person instruction and 1 day of distance learning (in the form of modules, online courses, or television or radio broadcasts). Schools may only use the aforementioned options up until October 31, 2022. All public and private schools must switch to five days of in-person instruction by November 2, 2022. No school shall be permitted to implement solely online or blended learning after the aforementioned date, with the exception of those implementing alternative delivery methods in accordance with DO 27, s.20l9, "Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program," and DO 01, s.2022, "Revised Policy Guidelines on Homeschooling Program."

Through the reviewed studies and literature, the present study aims to bridge the gap of identifying the challenges caused by the transition of instructional practices in public high schools. Even though a good number of studies discussing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector, there is a lesser focus on how teachers cope with stress. With that said, the researcher was driven to conduct this study focusing on coping mechanisms of public teachers used to reduce stress in the midst of the several challenges they face during the transition of Instructional Practices in Public High Schools. Also, the conduct of this study hopes to give benefit by establishing a more profound knowledge about the effect of this pandemic to teachers, particularly, during the transition period. It may proffer relevant suggestions for the enhancement of strategies and policies being performed by the department at present. It is assumed that this research provides a better and clearer comprehensibility of the stress experienced by teachers.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is anchored on the Adaptation in Piaget's Theory of Development (Piaget, 1936). This is to provide a research direction in order to narrow the scope of relevant data, assess and analyze the data collected, and create information that either supports or challenges the theoretical tenets.

The capacity to adapt to new knowledge and experiences is defined as adaptation in Piaget's Theory of Development. In essence, learning is adjusting to an ever-changing human environment. People can develop new behaviors that help them deal with change by adapting. One of the fundamental mechanisms directing cognitive growth is adaptation.

Adaptation through assimilation is how individuals adapt knowledge from the outside world to match their

thoughts and notions. Sometimes new information may be easily integrated into an existing schema (Di Paolo et al., 2014). People adjust their mental representations to match new information as they process it through accommodation. People frequently need to create a new schema to account for new knowledge or change their old mental categories when confronted with material that challenges their beliefs (Bjorklund, 2015). As people encounter new things, schemas continue to evolve. Through the adaptive processes of assimilation and accommodation, both children and adults can take in new information, form new ideas or modify pre-existing ones, and adopt new behaviors that will better equip them to deal with their environment (Pate & Grote-Garcia, 2011).

The application of Adaptation Theory is significant in this study to discover how teachers match their knowledge and adjust themselves to deal and cope with the stress they experience amidst the transition of instructional practices in public high schools. It also discovers their mental flexibility in solving problems, processing new information, and maintaining the efficiency that leads them to be digitally competent and instructional strategies as they still manage the safety of the digital learning environment and student engagement.

Statement of the Problem

The primary concern of this study was to find out the root cause of stress of secondary teachers in the Leyte Division during the transition of instruction, their coping strategies and to come up with a recommendation to strengthen teachers' stress coping mechanisms.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the challenges caused by the transition of instructional practices in public high schools that contribute largely to the stress of teachers?
2. How do teachers cope with their stress?
3. What recommendation/s can be proposed to improve the plight of the teachers based on the findings of the study?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This research study focused on determining the challenges caused by instructional transition in public high schools that contributed largely to the stress of public school teachers. This study was limited to secondary public school teachers assigned within Leyte Division for the school year 2022-2023 and have been in the service for at least three years.

Further, this study only discussed stress of transition or the stresses of teachers that are related to the recent transition of MDL to face-to-face modalities. It did not delve into other causes of stress among teachers.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are presumed to be fruitful in facilitating the transition of instruction from blended learning to full blown face to face instruction. The researcher believes that the completion of this research study would contribute enormously to the following beneficiaries:

Teachers. This study may benefit the teachers as it determined the stress they have in teaching during the transition period which may not be recognized and addressed properly by their school or the department. The findings of the study may help them learn certain strategies to overcome the challenges of teaching in the transition period. Also, teachers would be able to generate insights about intervention programs that could ease the hindrances for a successful teaching-learning process during the transition period.

Parents. Since most learning throughout the distance learning set-up takes place at home, parents play a vital role in the success of their children in their studies. And just like teachers, they may experience stress in acting as para-teachers to their children. The findings of this study could disclose all aspects of stress

and coping strategies of teaching in the distance education including the learning environment, which at present happens at home, parent support and learners' participation. As parents play a vital role, the findings of the study may incite the creation of intervention programs that can help parents in doing the daunting task as para-teachers.

Learners. Whatever happens to the teacher, it has direct impact on learners. If teachers fail in this distance education endeavor, there is high chance that students will also fail. Since this study is presumed to be beneficial to the teachers, therefore, learners may also benefit in the findings of this study. The department's policies and programs can be aligned to alleviate the burdens of teachers and students during the transition of instruction.

Administrators. The school administrators are the usual support to teachers in dealing with the challenges they encounter in delivering education to learners. Through the findings of this study, school administrators may be presented with the realities of the stress of teachers and most specially during the transition of instruction.

Staff. Through the insights derived from this study, the school head or principal as well as other supporting staff will be able to plan and make effective teachers development program which will boost stress coping strategies and urge to pursue professionalism in teaching in time of crisis. Thus, enhanced training and workshops for pedagogical approaches may be enacted.

School Stakeholders. The study may help the school stakeholders in terms of making evidence-based information that can guide them in making informed decisions. For example, educational research can offer insights into effective teaching methods, curriculum design, assessment strategies, and student support systems. Stakeholders, such as local government units, school administrators and teachers can use research findings to shape policies, instructional practices, and resource allocation.

Future researchers. The outcome of this study could be used as a reference topic of future researches and studies relative to this topic. This paper could be replicated for further investigation by using a new array of variables and measuring an additional range of hypothesis.

Definition of Terms

For a deeper understanding of the study, the following terms were defined operationally:

Challenges refer to difficulties, obstacles, or problems that hinder progress, achievement, or the successful completion of a task or goal. They are situations or circumstances that require effort, skill, and perseverance to overcome.

Coping Mechanisms are the strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage painful or difficult emotions. In this study, it refers to how teachers deal with stress during the transition of instruction.

Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes one feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is the body's reaction to a challenge or demand. In this study, this pertains to teachers' reaction to the negative effects of distance learning during the pandemic as in-person instruction gradually returns to normal.

Transition of Instruction refers to the period of slowly going back to the normal education which is the face-to-face classes.

Chapter 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, relevant studies and literature have been reviewed to support the conduct of the present study. It will further guide the researcher in making justifications towards the findings of the study.

Challenges Caused by Instructional Transition

As soon as the Department of Education started providing experimental face-to-face classes, COVID-19's effects on education started to diminish. The preparations for and challenges encountered before the start of classes after the COVID-19 outage must, thus, be examined from the viewpoint of the teachers. In response, Jackaria (2022) carried out a study entitled, "Elementary teachers' experiences and instructional challenges during the return to school after the COVID-19 closure in the Philippines." It was discovered that as for the challenges experienced with regard to instruction, the teachers expressed concern about the alarming number of non-readers and students who are mentally and socially unprepared. Other difficulties include the necessity for new instructional techniques, the difficulty in maintaining health protocols, and problems with time management. Based on research, it is recommended that the school reopening approach includes programs for comprehensive reading intervention and psychosocial first aid. In addition, the study suggests that educators receive training on how to deal with pupils in the post-pandemic period.

To date, teachers have largely done what they can under the very difficult circumstances of remote teaching mode (Özüdoru, 2021). Teachers need help as they continue to work to support students in time of pandemic and moving towards the transition period of returning to normal education. Remote work mode highlighted what teachers have done under the most difficult of scenarios. Teachers were important long before COVID-19, but perhaps, the pandemic put greater emphasis on the contributions and challenges of educators in this endeavor.

In March 2020, 165 countries, including the Philippines, have closed all their schools because of the COVID-19 virus, affecting nearly 1.5 billion students and 63 million primary and secondary teachers (UNESCO, 2020). The school closures post unprecedented challenges for education systems throughout the world. In these difficult circumstances, teachers—who are the cornerstone of educational systems and crucial to achieving learning objectives regardless of context or circumstance—have been forced to walk a mile to ensure that learning will continue despite the appearance of a global pandemic. Teachers served as the frontline ensuring that learning continues. This showed how significant the job of the educators are. But it is still a must to understand that even teachers have their own limits that need to be recognized. In this time of pandemic, the job of the teachers become very crucial.

However, the role of the teachers in the distance learning was not easy. As stipulated in DepEd Order Memorandum No. 018 S. 2020 dated July 20, 2020, teachers ought to deliver learning by means of varied learning delivery modalities that they must adapt to facilitate distance learning. In distance learning, the teacher is located at a distance from the student, and the student, being prohibited to step out and go to school, may use technology to interact with the teacher and construct personal meaning and learn from the experience by using their modules or printed materials and navigate a self-regulated learning at home. In the prescribed learning delivery, the role of the teacher is not only facilitating learning, but also to monitor the progress of the learners in their programs so that necessary assistance could be provided accordingly. In such complex set-up, the inevitable occurrence of critical issues and challenges in the process incites heightened stress among teachers. Through the distance learning students learn to adapt in a new situation. It is the challenges, however, that make it hard for them to continue causing stress.

The prolonged effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has carried out many consequences that affected people's general mental health and wellbeing. On the other hand, the virus itself created personal situations in which, in addition to the disease's symptoms, human emotions such as fear (Asmundson &Taylor, 2020), worry, panic, or depression-related distress (Bao et al., 2020) appear more commonly among people. Such are true among teachers as the study of Dabrowski (2020) where he discussed how teachers' wellbeing during the pandemic has turned to critical level. Indeed, in recent studies about the psychological impact of this pandemic among teachers, an increase in stress levels between the first days and the third week of the implementation of distance learning delivery has been found (Ozamiz et. al., 2021). Mental health should always be prioritized (Codd, 2020). It is an important aspect of human being as it carries the capacity to do job and think. With this, the literature emphasized a huge challenge on this dimension, and it must be regarded at all.

In an article published in the ASEAN Post authored by Malindog-Uy (2020) entitled "Is the pandemic destroying the Philippine Education?", it tackled issues including the side-to-side call for academic freeze due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have perceived problems related to the implementation of the distance/blended learning program of the DepEd. There have been calls for a national academic freeze from university students and professors at institutions like the University of the Philippines (UP), Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU), De La Salle University (DLSU), University of Santo Tomas (UST), St. Louis University (SLU), Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), and others. Malacañang, however, rejected the request for an academic freeze, arguing that the situation is manageable. Additionally, Malindog-Uy (2020) stated in his publication that the country's third-world information technology (ICT) amenities and infrastructures, coupled with many socio-economic factors, are partly to blame for the difficulties related to the deficiencies of blended/flexible learning. As a result, there is now a digital divide, where those who are less advantaged have less access to technological infrastructures and some learners, parents, and teachers have poor levels of digital literacy. With this, only the knowledgeable one can go along the process, this is a negative aspect to pinpoint. The difficulties and deficiencies should all be addressed and equipped with right and appropriate solutions where everyone has an equal chance to be a part.

The Asia Society Journal (2020) published an article on Asian Perspective In Back-to-School: Challenges for the Philippines and Responses from around Asia emphasizing on resilience and adaptability which are crucial to the education sector's burden. It argued that the biggest challenge in education is not with technology, not with content but with a major shift in enrolment patterns. Some private schools have reopened to smaller student populations as early as August 2020, while some totally did not accept enrollees for the school year. The blend of online, broadcast and modular learning was adapted and applied to ensure the safety of both the students and teachers. However, with the risked adaptation and development of curricula and materials for the blended learning modalities, gaps, and even risks were inevitable realities which resulted to failure in the attempt of some schools to navigate their distance education. Problems in access and affordability of the hardware and software to go online reliably and sustainably, the logistics and health protocols for offline components of modular learning, the redevelopment and adaptation of teaching content and materials on electronic and digital transmission, lack of preparedness or comfort in new and experimental methods of teaching, unresolved questions on monitoring, evaluation and grading of students and teachers performance, the potentials, impact, and limiting effects of the described home environment on online learning, rising mental and psychological challenges among teachers, students, and parents, and an acknowledgment that more issues and

unanticipated scenarios can only inevitably arise as classes resume were just some of the overwhelming concern vent to schools and educators. This showed weaknesses over the condition of the students. Though home environment gives the safest possible way of education, it indeed needs to be considered appropriately towards the sake of the students.

Henshaw (2020) published an article in the United Kingdom about the teachers' wellbeing: COVID threatens to leave a legacy of stress, depression, and burnout. According to the Annual Teacher Wellbeing Index, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a potential to exacerbate existing problems with teachers' well-being and has a high probability of leaving a lasting legacy of stress, despair, and burnout among teachers. The study discovers that more educators are disclosing signs of mental illness, such as anxiety and depression. The report is based on research that comprises two surveys of education professionals, one conducted in July 2020 with 3,034 teachers and another in October 2020 with 1,072 teachers. A key finding shows that in October 2020, 84% of teachers and 89% of school heads described themselves as feeling "stressed" or "very stressed". There were also noted a rise in insomnia, tearfulness, and lack of concentration at work. There is also a high indication of professionals saying that they have considered quitting their job this year. Employment had also been affected and so economy does. Due to numerous impact of COVID-19 which is perceived to be negative, many have chosen to quit their job. This had been significantly interpreted negatively as this indicated high percentage of stress among the teachers.

On the other note, the Teach for America Editorial Team made an article about, "Tackling COVID-19 Fatigue as a Teacher", which was published in October 2020. It highlights the fact that the type of burnout that teachers are experiencing now is intimately related to how unrelenting the stress is. It seems like there is no end in sight for the pandemic. This burnout is different because it affects far more teachers, leading to a systematic issue of demoralization. The burnout among teachers causes them to lose their interest as well as to feel fatigue towards their job. With this, it is vital to make teachers reflect upon themselves.

Remote work mode has caused detriments in the health of teachers. Rabacal, Oducado, and Tamdang (2020) carried out a study named "The Impact of COVID-19 on Teachers' Quality of Life: A Cross-sectional Study." To ascertain the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the standard of living of professional teachers in the Philippines, a study was undertaken and published in an online issue of the Asian Journal of Public Opinion Research A descriptive cross-sectional study with 139 certified professional educators was conducted. Results showed a moderate COVID-19 influence on teachers' quality of life. The effect of COVID-19 on quality of life varied significantly depending on the degree program. The effect of COVID-19 on quality of life, however, did not significantly differ by age, sex, marital status, employment status, monthly salary, the presence of COVID-19 cases close to their residence, personal knowledge of someone who was infected or died from COVID-19, the presence of medical conditions, and perceived threat. It was noted, however, that teachers' psychological health and general quality of life must be taken into consideration, and teachers must be given help as they continue to adjust to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While Teach for America (2020) reported that teachers were suffering from compassion fatigue, a condition marked by emotional and physical stress that impairs one's capacity for empathy or compassion for others. Typically, this term is applied to healthcare professionals such as nurses or psychologists. Teachers can experience it too because of their emotional connection and concern for their students. With more and more students feeling vulnerable, teachers are being exposed to more of their struggles.

As a result, they are more likely to experience compassion fatigue. The article also tackled the ways teachers can adapt in the face of trauma or stress. It is believed that attitude plays an important role in

adapting to the multitude of stressors being faced by teachers. The awareness of what you can and cannot control can help you to focus your energy on things that you can change. Also, the acknowledgment of one's resiliency will be of big help to recover and move forward in life.

As a result, teachers in this new normal of education face a variety of challenges, including those relating to the transfer of learning quality, the distribution and retrieval of modules, the difficulties students have adhering to instruction, power outages, internet connectivity, and health risks brought on by the pandemic (Agayon et al., 2022). As such, this elevates stress among teachers.

Instructional Transition Challenges Causing Stress among Teachers

Ojeka (2019) discussed that teaching was formerly thought to be a stress-free career. Stress, on the other hand, is progressively becoming endemic in a variety of occupations. Recent studies, however, demonstrate an exponential growth in the percentage of educators stating that stress is interfering with their profession. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the causes, indicators, symptoms, and repercussions of occupational stress among Junior Secondary School teachers in Abuja. A targeted group was interviewed for information in this qualitative investigation. Data produced was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that teachers' stress was caused by external and internal work settings, which had a moderating and mediating influence on the degree of stress that individual felt while doing his or her duties. Furthermore, the observed stresses have psychological, behavioral, and physiological repercussions. Also, the study recommends preventative and interventional approaches that might help instructors cope with the detrimental impacts of stress (Ojeka, 2019).

In the study of Alson (2019), the author examined the different forms of stresses experienced by teachers in public national high school, as well as their coping techniques. The purpose of the study was to look into the teachers' work-related, emotional, and personal pressures and coping mechanisms. It was based on the Person-Environment Fit or Mis-Fit Model (PEFM) and the Conceptualization of Emotions in Stress Coping (Alson, 2019). According to the findings of the study, the instructors were stressed as a result of unsafe working conditions, lack of supplies and tools to complete their duties successfully. There was a sense of excessive surveillance and administration productivity demands. This was sometimes exacerbated by contradictory directions. Personal stress was typically prompted by exhaustion at the end of the day, and it was occasionally publicly exhibited via emotional outbursts. Although stress transcends gender and age, each individual developed their unique cognitive (thinking-centered) stress coping techniques (Alson, 2019).

Numerous accounts of the psychological effects of COVID-19 on teachers have been made (Vindegaard, 2020). One of these studies was Li et.al., (2020) which found that age, sex, teaching experience level, and school location were all connected to teachers' COVID-19-related anxiety levels.

Caringi (2015) discussed that although studies on secondary traumatic stress (STS) in mental health workers, child welfare workers, and other human care professions have been conducted, studies on STS in public school teachers have just recently begun. This is the first study to look at the factors that impact STS levels in public school instructors. Qualitative methodologies were used to create a detailed account of educators' experiences in public school settings based on their STS level. Themes investigated were student characteristics, class load size, and a personal history of trauma. During the data analysis, new themes arose. The evaluation also includes extrapolation based on quantitative metrics presented in prior research (Caringi, 2015).

In addition, according to Sandilos (2018), the current study looks at how participation in a 14-week professional development course designed to improve teacher-child interactions in the classroom

moderated the relationship between teacher-reported job stress and gains in observed teacher-child interaction quality from the start to the end of the intervention. Participants were preschool instructors with an average of 11 years of experience (N = 427; M age = 42). Only at the pre-test did teachers describe how intensively they felt various forms of stress (i.e., prior to being randomized into the treatment condition [course or control]). Pre and after intervention classroom observations were used to assess teacher-child interactions. Control teachers who experienced more professional investment stress exhibited smaller increases in observed emotional support than control instructors who experienced less professional investment stress. In the course condition, these findings were not visible to teachers. Instructors with higher levels of professional investment stress demonstrated smaller increases in instructional support in the control condition and bigger gains in the course condition, compared to teachers in their respective treatment groups with lower levels of professional investment stress. The findings indicate that participation in the professional development intervention buffered the unfavorable link between professional investment stress and emotional support. Concerning instructional assistance, it is plausible that teachers' increased knowledge and worry about the need for professional development made them more receptive to an intervention meant to enhance practice (Sandilos, 2018).

In relation to the aforementioned study, the study of Kemunto (2021) similarly found related findings stating that occupational stress is a worldwide problem that expresses itself in workers as a result of demands from inside or outside the workplace. Teaching is the second most demanding job in the world, behind ambulance driving, and incidents of teachers feeling occupational stress have been documented in Borabu SubCounty. Given the importance of education in molding society, the crucial roles performed by teachers worldwide and in Borabu SubCounty cannot be overstated. Some research on teachers' occupational stress have focused on variables that cause or contribute to stress, or the consequences of occupational stress on teacher performance, but none have looked at the impact of student discipline on occupational stress among secondary school instructors. The study of Kemunto (2021) looked on the impact of student discipline on occupational stress among teachers in Borabu-Sub County, Nyamira County.

In order to assess perceived work-related stress and related variables, a cross-sectional study was conducted by Kabito (2020) among public secondary school teachers in Gondar, northwest Ethiopia. Data was gathered via a self-administered questionnaire. The data was input into Epi-info version 7.1 and analyzed using SPSS version 20. A multivariate binary logistic regression analysis based on the adjusted odds ratio (AOR) with 95% confidence intervals (CI) and p value 0.05 was used to investigate the connections between dependent and independent factors. The overall response rate was 96.4%. The prevalence of perceived work-related stress was 58.2% overall (Kabito, 2020). Work-related stress was strongly linked with 5 years of teaching experience (AOR 2.03, 95% CI (1.10, 3.73), BSC/BED education level (AOR 1.66, 95% CI (1.07, 3.17), high job demand (AOR 1.61, 95% CI (1.29, 3.74), and bad relationships (AOR 1.88, 95% CI (1.07, 3.31). Finally, the data revealed a significant proportion of stress among individuals. As a result, the study proposed that action be taken to balance employment demand and teaching experience, offering the chance to improve their educational level and develop strong connections to alleviate the load of work-related stress factors (Kabito, 2020).

In another study by Ssenyonga and Hecker (2021), the researchers argued that teachers' personal and hard-working conditions represent the reality of the teaching profession, which can lead to increased stress and undesirable repercussions such as negative emotions. The study also recognized that teacher stress correlates to increased student aggression. Little is known, however, about the personal and school-related

aspects that contribute to teachers' stress. The study further investigated whether, in addition to school-related factors, job perceptions, such as job stress, perceived school atmosphere, and teaching challenges, contribute to teachers' stress (Ssenyonga & Hecker, 2021). The study utilized self-administered questionnaire which was completed by 291 teachers from 12 public secondary schools in southern Uganda. The study found that teachers' opinions of their working circumstances were related to their levels of stress. As a result, additional efforts were recommended to be made to improve teachers' working circumstances in order to reduce stress (Ssenyonga & Hecker, 2021).

Additionally, lengthy work hours and teacher mental health issues are problems in Japan, claims Matshushita (2022). There have been reports that junior high school teachers routinely put in extra time. The working hours of junior high school teachers in public schools were evaluated in this study, as was the relationship between extra work and stress reactions across job categories. From June to December 2018, 54,772 public junior high school teachers conducted a web-based countrywide survey on occupational stress and self-evaluated working hours each day for the preceding month. The Brief Job Stress Questionnaire was used to examine psychological and physical stress reactions. According to the findings, 59.6% of the participants worked 11 hours or more every day. Working hours of 10 to 11 h, 11 to 12 h, 12 to 13 h, and 13 h or more were substantially related with high stress among tenured instructors, as compared to those who worked less than nine (9) hours per day. Furthermore, among fixed-term teachers, sex (female), age, and working hours of 9 to 10 hours, 10 to 11 hours, 11 to 12 hours, 12 to 13 hours, and 13 hours or more were associated with greater stress than those who worked less than 9 hours per day. It was confirmed in this study that junior high school teachers in Japan work lengthy hours (Matsushita, 2022).

Sarabia (2020) claimed that the predictor of teaching performance among the components of work-related stress was found in the study of 210 chosen primary and secondary public teachers in Angeles City. It described the participants' socio-demographic features, degree of work-related stress, and teaching performance, as well as comparing the participants' work-related stress. Descriptive-correlational methodology was utilized in the study, utilizing various statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, independent T-Tests, and multiple linear regressions. The study found that selected primary and secondary teachers in Angeles City had moderate work-related stress, with subcomponent demand being a major factor to the stress. Gender and position were both favorable indicators of teaching performance, with female instructors and teachers in higher teaching positions having greater teaching performance. Seminar attendance relative to stress and demand, which is a sub-component of work-related stress, on the other hand, is a negative significant predictor of teaching performance. This means that instructors who attended stress management workshops performed better in the classroom than those who did not. This finding also demonstrated that a higher degree of demand, which is a component of stress, might lead to worse teaching effectiveness.

Stress Coping Mechanism of Teachers

In the study of Yu (2022), which was based on the job demands-resources model and the conservation of resources theory, the study found that resilience performed a partial mediating function between occupational stress and emotional outcomes (emotional exhaustion, positive affect, and negative affect). Furthermore, a moderated mediation study revealed that stress mentality regulated the association between job stress and resilience, as well as the mediating impact of resilience between work stress and emotional outcomes (emotional exhaustion, positive affect, and negative affect). Work stress, in particular, had a significant negative predictive effect on resilience when the stress mindset was low ($= 0.54$, p 0.001);

work stress could also negatively predict resilience when the stress mindset was high (= 0.47, p 0.001), but its effect was diminished, and stress mindset negatively moderated the path between work stress and resilience. The study looked into the work stress, stress mentality, resilience, emotional exhaustion, positive affect, and negative affect of 456 college professors in China.

In addition, Song (2020) found that stress is growing more widespread within teacher groups, which is detrimental to education. Mindfulness training (MT) is a well-supported method for assisting diverse groups in coping with and reducing stress. In this study, a 4-day intensive MT program focused at improving teachers' emotional health was created and integrated into existing post-service education for teachers in eastern China. A total of 161 instructors willingly participated in the course and were allocated to one of two groups: mindfulness or waitlist. Before and after the training, participants completed measures of mindfulness, positive affect, negative affect, and perceived stress. The findings revealed that mindfulness training had statistically significant favorable impacts on mindfulness, negative affect, and stress. According to the current data, a 4-day intensive MT program is a potential technique to reduce teachers' stress and enhance their mental health. The short-term intense MT program for teachers is addressed in detail. Teachers may find it simpler to participate in a short-term training program since it has more acceptability and practicality than an 8-week training program in some places (Song et al., 2020).

According to an article from Childhope Philippines (2021), the Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented internet- and technology-based distance learning modalities to guarantee learning continuity. In this approach, students can continue their education remotely via TV, radio, printed modules, and online and offline venues. They have access to these resources in a variety of settings, including blended learning and home education. Any of these modalities are integrated in blended learning to leverage their advantages and produce high-quality learning. Students who receive their education at home benefit from a caregiver serving as their teacher. The strength of this idea favored only those who can afford to have their own caregiver; this is not advantageous in the part of low-incomed families. But, this is something that always gives the opportunities to every student to strive harder in studies.

Montemayor (2020) made an article about the continuity of education amid COVID-19 thru DepEd's plan. It was mentioned in the article that DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones said that the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) is the Department of Education's response and commitment to safeguarding the learners', teachers', and staff's health, safety, and well-being as the impact of modular distance learning delivery modalities during the school year 2020–2021 takes hold. According to DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones, education must proceed in accordance with the health standards established by the Department of Health and the World Health Organization. However, despite all that were mentioned, there is an apparent condition manifesting that the wellbeing of teachers is being neglected as the remote teaching mode is forcing teachers to do more. While schools put a lot of effort into promoting students' wellness, efforts to promote and treat teachers' welfare seem mislaid. The education system also encompasses the teachers. Thus, they must be given a value as well. Health standards should not only be placed among students but also to the educators.

Hence, the new normal set-up of education in the Philippines demands many adjustments since when the pandemic struck, teachers lacked the necessary tools and training for emergency remote instruction (e.g., school funding for the creation and delivery of modules, lack of computer literacy, and lack of experience with distance learning) (Agayon, et.al. 2022). The new normal may seem to bring a lot of challenges; however, being able to cope with this will also make every student stronger and resilient amid struggles that came.

Considering the aforementioned literatures, it is evident that there is a negligible number of studies conducted in relation to the topic. And while the reviewed studies relate to the present study in terms of stress and coping mechanisms, there were limited studies that discussed the stress of teachers which emanates from the transition of instructional approaches. More so, no studies were conducted within the Leyte Division which tackle the issues and challenges encountered by public school teachers in the context of stress related to the shift from MDL to in-person learning. Therefore, the study is unique and not in any way a duplication of studies conducted in the past.

Chapter 3
METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design, research locale, participants of the study, validation of research instrument, data gathering procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The study utilized qualitative approach to achieve its objectives. Qualitative research provides an understanding of a situation or phenomenon that tells the story rather than determining cause and effect (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Specifically, this study utilized transcendental phenomenology as its design. Transcendental phenomenology, as developed by Husserl, is a philosophical approach to quanlitative research that seeks to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental Phenomenology is appropriate in this study since it provides logical, systematic, and coherent design elements that lead to a thorough description of the teachers' experience.

The study focused on investigating the root cause of stress among secondary public school teachers in the research locale. Also, it explored the coping strategies that these teachers are doing to manage their ordeal as teachers. This research allowed the study participants to reveal openly feelings about their experiences during the transition period of instruction in public high schools.

The data of this study was derived from semi-structured in-depth interviews of the participants.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in one of the schools within the Division of Leyte. It is an integrated school with curricular class of Junior High School with Senior High School. The school was also selected based on its number of teachers and master teachers. The selected big school has one or two master teachers in each subject area. There are additional five or more mentees in each master teachers. It was selected due to its sufficient number of teachers that ensured diverse group of participants.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were selected using non-probability sampling technique known as purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling whose main objective is to produce a sample that can be assumed to be logically representative of the target population (Lavrakas, 2008).

Aside from the sampling technique, the sample size of the case was also considered. According to Vasileiou et.al. (2018), qualitative studies require a minimum sample size of at least 12 to 50 to reach data saturation. Therefore, a sample of 15 was deemed sufficient for the qualitative analysis and scale of this study. Nonetheless, since the overall population where the samples were taken was 4,233 teachers, hence, for this study, 15 or more teachers were targeted to be interviewed. However, this was determined by data

saturation, which occurs when no new information is discovered during data analysis, signaling to researchers that data collecting may be cease. Saturation occurs when a researcher can reasonably expect identical results from more data gathering, confirming emerging themes and conclusions (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017).

Therefore, the researcher was able to interviewed ten (10) participants due to data saturation during the conducted interview.

Validation of Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide for the in-depth interview with the participants. It was conducted through one-on-one or face-to-face interview to gain detailed information There were three (3) interview questions formulated to obtain rich descriptive data. These questions served to determine the stress that confronted the DepEd teachers, and their coping strategies.

Moreover, the answers of the participants were recorded and transcribed. The interview guide questions for the study focused on work-related experiences that triggered teachers' stress and their coping mechanisms and eliciting possible suggestions from the teacher-participants to alleviate their stress. The interview guide questions for the study are presented in Appendix D.

Before the data gathering process, the instrument was thoroughly validated through a dry-run and content validation to make sure that the questions included would gather the needed data and to remove or improve questions that are ambiguous. In order to validate the content, the researcher enlisted the aid of three experts in qualitative research and three-degree holders of Master in English (ME). After revising the instrument based on the results of content validation, the research instrument was pilot tested in one of the secondary schools in MacArthur, Leyte, which was not included in the study. The purpose of pilot testing was to identify potential problems before the data gathering was fully implemented. Also, pilot testing examined the validity of the questions used and was concerned with capturing the type of information desired by the study (Cleave, 2021). An expert checked the responses of the participants for clarity and relevance.

The validity of the research instrument was conducted during the pilot-testing phase of instrument. Some of the factors or questions considered during the pilot run were the following: (1) How long does it take for the respondent to fill out the questionnaire? (2) Were the participants able to understand the directions clearly? (3) Were there any problems reported by those who used the questionnaire? *(See Appendix E for the Content Validation Instrument).* The validity of the research instrument was conducted with the guidance of peers who checked the research instrument.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of data gathering, a permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent by writing a letter of intent requesting for the proponent to conduct the study in the target school within the Division. When the approval was granted and the consent from the participants were acquired, the researcher proceeded to the conduct of the interviews.

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were scheduled and conducted based on the participant's availability and convenience. The in-depth interviews were conducted using the developed research instruments as the researcher's guide *(See Appendix D for the Research Instrument).*

The interviews lasted for an average of 30 minutes through Google Meet video communications. The conversations were recorded upon the participants approval. To ensure the validity of data, the researcher obtained feedback and validation from the participants as recommended by Creswell and Miller (2000).

The validation was achieved by summarizing the main ideas of the participants every after section. Group validation and explanation are critical to enhance intersubjective understanding, rigor of data and soundness of analysis and its results (Flick, 2018).

The data gathering was conducted within one month. Constant follow-up was done by the researcher to yield a good number of accomplished interviews.

Data Analysis

Using Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis, the researcher applies the seven steps to analyze the data collected from the interview. To fully comprehend the content, the researcher first read the recorded interview three to four times and attempted to comprehend the participants' mental processes and sentiments. Second, the researcher extracted from the transcript the key phrases and sentences that together established the overall meaning of the experience. After rereading and analyzing each transcript to discover key statements, each participant's statements were written separately and tagged by transcript page and line number. This was handed to a peer group member to verify for clarity of idea and integrate feedback. Third, for each major sentence in the text, the researcher strived to create more general restatements or meanings. The meanings of the relevant statements were formulated and discussed with the same peer group member. These formulated meanings were then coded and categorized before being provided to an experienced researcher to ensure that the procedures and meanings are correct. Fourth, the researcher organized the formulated meanings from significant sentences into clusters of themes. All these themes are internally convergent but externally divergent, implying that each "formulated meaning" came from a single topic cluster. These clusters of topics, as well as the final themes, will then be given to a peer group member and an expert researcher for review. The researcher incorporated all the ideas generated in the fifth stage of analysis into a comprehensive account of the phenomena. This was accomplished by creating an overall structure by merging all the theme clusters, emergent themes, and formulated meanings into a description. It was then provided to professionals for verification of its accuracy and reflection. The researcher enlisted the help of an impartial colleague with a Master's degree who is competent in qualitative research procedures to assess the transcripts, methodology and findings of the study. This is done to probe the process, establish credibility of the study and detect problems that the researcher might have missed. Findings were minimized in the sixth step to eliminate repeats and to create a clear and short description of the phenomena. Finally, the findings were sent back to the participants for validation to confirm the results' validity and accuracy (Praveena, 2021).
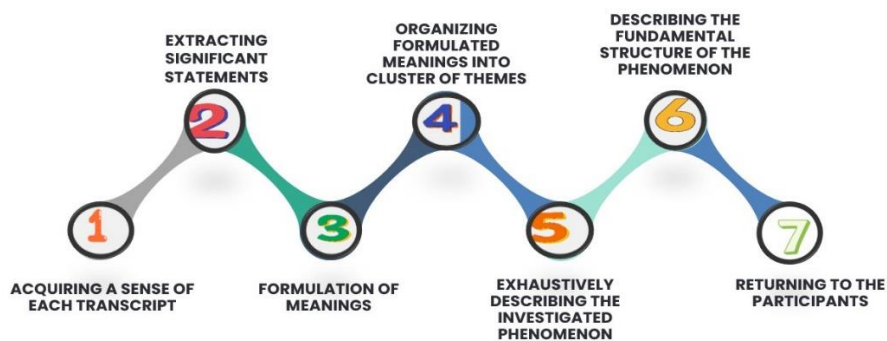
Fig. 1 Colaizzi's method of analysis

Trustworthiness of the Study

This section of the study presents how measures to ensure trustworthiness were observed.

Member Checking: To improve the credibility and validity (statistics) of a qualitative study, member checking was done during the interview process, at the end of the study, or both. To achieve honest and open replies, the interviewer sought to establish rapport with the interviewee. The researcher restated or summarized facts and then asked the participants to assess correctness during an interview. Member checks were done following the completion of a research by communicating all of the findings with the people involved. This allowed them to critically assess and comment on the findings. The participants either agreed (or disagreed) that the summaries accurately reflected their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The study was regarded to have credibility as the participants confirmed its correctness and thoroughness. These member checks were not without flaws, but they served to reduce the occurrence of wrong data and incorrect data interpretation. The main purpose of this method was to deliver findings that are genuine, unique, and trustworthy.

Triangulation: In this research, triangulation refers to the use of various datasets, methodologies, theories, and/or investigators to answer a research topic. It is a research strategy that can assist the researcher improve the study's validity and trustworthiness. In this study, the researcher triangulated data using three sources: transcribed responses, documents, and observation notes. In qualitative research, triangulation refers to the use of various methodologies or data sources to build a thorough knowledge of phenomena (Carter et al., 2014). Triangulation has also been seen as a qualitative research approach for testing validity by bringing together data from disparate sources.

Reflexivity: The purpose of this study, as a researcher, was to provide relevant information regarding the stress that DepEd teachers experience, as well as their coping strategies as a significant step towards implementing effective technical assistance to our teachers in the transition of instruction. The researcher anticipated that by conducting this study, participants would be able to share their experiences, which can be used by DepEd officials in crafting an intervention program to alleviate the stress of teachers as well as to strengthen their stress coping strategies, developing Technical Assistance (TA) for teachers facing stress, as well as preventing fatal situations in the Department. It is also worth noting that the researcher is a DepEd teacher, which could have an impact on how the data was handled.

Peer Debriefing: Peer debriefing was done by inviting other researchers outside this research endeavor to critic the validity and accuracy of the data gathered from the participants. This method produces useful and detailed information about people's motivations, concerns, and behaviors. As one might expect, the validity of the information gathered is critical to the entire process. Incorrect or misinterpreted data could jeopardize the hard work of the researchers.

Audit Trail: An audit trail was a qualitative approach employed by the researcher for confirming the outcomes of the research investigation. Confirmability entails demonstrating that the conclusions were based on the replies of participants rather than the researcher's own prejudices and biases. Further, it was an in-depth technique to demonstrating that the findings were based on the participants' narratives and entail transparently documenting how you collected and processed the data.

Ethical Considerations

The goal of this research was to create authentic and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. To assure the research's quality and integrity, the researcher objectively acquired, examined, and interpreted the participants' data. Before the participants took part in the study interview, the researcher obtained informed consent from them. Participation of the participants were voluntary. The participants were

informed that they may withdraw from the study at any point during the data gathering process if they wish to. In order to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participa... the researcher informed them about how the data would be gathered, treated, and kept. The participant's personal information were kept private both throughout and after the study. In addition, the names of the schools where the participants were affiliated were kept anonymous.

Chapter 4
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings along with explanations of the analysis, interpretations, and conclusions drawn from the study's data, particularly the truths amidst the transition of instructional practices in public high schools.

Based on the responses of the participants, six themes were generated describing the challenges of teachers due to the transition of instructional practices. Four themes were generated to describe how they cope with stress, while four emergent themes were also generated to improve the conditions of teachers in public schools. Colaizzi's (1978) method of data analysis was used to interpret the data collected.

SoP 1: What are the challenges caused by the transition of instructional practices in public high schools that contribute largely to the stress of teachers?

The first problem determined the challenges encountered by public school teachers during instructional transition, which contributed to the stresses they experienced. The first problem statement generated three emergent themes from the transcriptions. These emergent themes are as follows: *Readiness to Accept the Transition, Relearning Teaching Skills and Uplifting of Learners Condition.*

Theme 1. Readiness to Accept the Transition

The transition from modular distance learning to in-person learning in public high schools presents several challenges for teachers, which can contribute to their stress levels. The sudden shift of learning modalities compounded the findings of Kemunto (2021) stating that teaching is the second most demanding job in the world. The sudden shift of transition of instructional practices in public high schools from modular distance learning to in-person learning brought stress and challenges to public school teachers mainly because of lack of preparation and the shift from two modalities was sudden. The transition from modular happened in 2.5 months only. In November of 2022, public schools were already in full swing face-to-face mode of learning. The sudden change of modality came as a shock to the teachers as well as to the learners.

Sub-Theme 1.1 Change of Teaching Process

Teachers had to adjust their curriculum to ensure that students have covered all the necessary material during the time they were in modular distance learning. They also had to assess the students' knowledge gaps and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. The teachers also had to adjust to the new environment of in-person learning, which requires managing a physical classroom with students present. This can be challenging after having taught in a modular distance learning setting, where they had to rely on modules, technology and digital tools to keep students engaged.

"Na shock lang ako. An syahan sympere dire ka na sanay hit face to face. An shahan pala nakuan ak hadto kay mayda na nam students, dire nak hiara pag communicate gud ha mga students." [I was shocked. At first, of course I was not used to teaching face to face. In the beginning, it felt different because there were already students. I was no longer used to communicating with students]-*P1*

"Na schock liwat an teachers ky bagan from two years nga modules, so bagan na used na an teachers hadto na mode of learning." [The teachers were shocked because with two years of using modules, the teachers got used to that mode of learning.] *-P2*

Sub-Theme 1.2 Lack of Preparation

While the teachers were readjusting to their new environment and to having students and teachers around, their stress largely stemmed from the fact that there was not enough time to prepare for the transition. Although there was a period of transition, this period was only two months. It was not enough for the teachers to prepare themselves for the transition, including on how they are going to prepare the lessons. Because of the transition, the study found that majority of the participants felt anxious with the shifting of modalities.

"Mayda kita nag shi-shifting, half of the class will come this week and half of the class will come next week for another group nanaman. Na de-delay ang lesson we have to repeat the lesson what you have taken up from the previous lesson, then if another group will be given another module most of them are not answering their module religiously, nahihirapan siya don sa discussion nanaman hindi na sila sumasagot and then when they have to answers this module diri mga tuhay an answer." [We have shifting, half of the class will come this week and half of the class will come next week. The lessons were delayed, we had to repeat the lesson we have already taken up. Then the other group who were given with modules would not answer their modules religiously. They would have difficulties in the discussion, they would not respond and when they are given modules, they would not answer properly.] *-P8*

Sub-theme 1.3 Interaction Pattern

Although there was a period of transition in an attempt to smoothen the shifting of teaching approaches, it was too short and it caused confusion and delays in lesson, more harm, so to speak, instead of helping the teachers and the learners. Also, teachers had a hard time connecting with their students and the students among each other.

Theme 2. Relearning Teaching Skills

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the traditional classroom setting, and teachers were forced to adapt to online and modular distance learning to ensure that students continued to receive education. The shift from face-to-face learning to distance learning required teachers to learn new technologies, adopt new teaching strategies, and adjust to a new environment.

Relearning skills and teaching capacities could mean teachers may need to relearn how to build rapport with students, provide emotional support, and motivate them through personal interaction. They may also need to relearn how to differentiate their instruction to cater to the diverse learning needs of their students in a face-to-face setting. They may need to adjust their teaching methods to meet the needs of different learning styles and abilities. In addition, teachers may need to relearn how to assess and evaluate students in a traditional classroom setting, which may differ from modular assessment strategies. They may also need to adjust their grading criteria to reflect the change in the learning environment.

"So it's like I'm starting again from scratch. So really, it's a big, um, challenge for me as a teacher maam."-P3

Sub-Theme 2.1 Teaching Skills Reinforcement

Since the resumption of face-to-face learning, teachers have faced challenges in adjusting back to traditional teaching methods. They have to relearn their skills to create an effective learning environment in a classroom setting. Because the teachers have become used to doing modular distance learning, they have almost forgotten how to conduct in-person teaching. The transition from MDL to in-person learning

compelled them to relearn the teaching skills they have used for face-to-face learning. This finding corroborates with the study of Agayon et al. (2022), which found that teachers lacked the necessary tools and training for emergency remote instruction and for overall variation of teaching approaches.

"Minsan kasi nalilimutan mo na yung content ng lesson mo, yung process ng pagtuturo dahil, di ba 2 years na pandemic. ..paano mo sya I interpret yung lesson mo, paano mo sya I ka carry out yung lesson mo kasi parang na stuck up ka for two years. So hindi ko alam kung paano, ano yung mga strategies na pwede mong magamit para sa isang problema." [Sometimes, it seems like I have already forgotten the content of my lessons, the process of teaching because of the two-year pandemic…how will you interpret the lesson, how will you carry out the lesson when you were stuck for two years. So you no longer know how, the strategies that you can use for a particular problem.] -*P4*

Sub-Theme 2.2 Managing Classrooms

Managing an overcrowded classroom can have significant implications for both teachers and students. For one, overcrowded classrooms can result in reduced individual attention. In an overcrowded classroom, teachers may not be able to give individual attention to each student. Students who need extra help or have questions may not get the support they need, which can hinder their learning and academic progress. It can also be hard for the teachers to discipline and manage their students due to their number. Aside from adding stress to the teacher, this can disrupt the learning environment and create a negative classroom culture.

Given that public schools in the Philippines have limited resources, over-crowded classrooms can lead to limited resources, such as textbooks, classroom materials, and technology. This can hinder the ability of teachers to provide an engaging and effective learning environment for students. Thus, students may be less engaged and motivated to learn, as they may feel ignored or left behind. This can result in lower academic achievement and a lack of interest in learning.

Another implication of overcrowded classrooms is health and safety concerns. While the Philippine government was able to put COVID-19 risks at bay, the country is not yet totally off the hook, considering that there are other factors that could make a person susceptible to COVID-19 and other infections. Overcrowded classrooms can therefore, present health and safety concerns. It can be difficult to maintain social distancing and adhere to safety protocols when classrooms are overcrowded.

"Kung 30 lang sa isang section, maaring kayang kaya mo. So pwede ka pang mag one-on-one. So kung ang isang ito, kailangan ng attention so pwede kasi 30 lang naman sila. Pero kung 50, mahirap, hindi mo kayang i entertain yan sa isang oras. mag se sermon ka pa, mag attendance ka pa, ilang oras na lang ang ilalan mo jan." [If there are only 30 in a section, you can probably do it. So you can still do one-on-one. Like if there's one who needs attention, you can give it as there are only 30 of them. But if there are 50, its difficult, you can't entertain all of them in one hour, you would reprimand them, check the attendance, you are only left with few time for it.] -*P4*

All in all, with a large number of students, teachers can no longer focus on the needs of each learner resulting in learning gaps and uneven provision of learning attention to the varied needs of students. The increase in number of students after the resumption of face-to-face classes was attributed to the re-enrollment of regular students and reintegration or reenrollment of Alternative Learning System (ALS) students to regular classes.

Sub-Theme 2.3 Performing Extra Tasks

Another challenge encountered by public school teachers that became a source of stress is paper works and overwhelming ancillary tasks. Some examples of ancillary tasks include coordinatorship of teachers

in Gender and Development (GAD), Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM), Boy Scout, School-Based Management (SBM), Brigada Eskwela, and others. Paperwork and ancillary tasks can become a source of stress to teachers for a variety of reasons. For one, it consumes so much of their time. Teachers are often required to complete a lot of paperwork and ancillary tasks within a limited amount of time. This can be stressful, especially when there are multiple tasks to be completed at the same time.

At some point, it was no longer clear to the participants as to what was required of them when it comes to paperwork and ancillary tasks. This can lead to confusion and stress as they tried to figure out what they needed to do.

In addition, ancillary tasks are an administrative burden. Teachers are often expected to perform administrative tasks such as keeping records, filling out forms, making School Improvement Plan (SIP), Office Performance Commitment and Review Form, School Monitoring, Evaluation and Adjustment (SMEA) and tracking student progress, among others. This administrative burden can be overwhelming and stressful, especially when it takes away from time that could be spent on actual teaching. To make matters worse, teachers may not always have access to the resources they need to complete paperwork and ancillary tasks efficiently. This can lead to frustration and stress as they struggle to complete tasks with limited resources. Requirements for paperwork and ancillary tasks can change frequently, and teachers may not always be informed of these changes in a timely manner. This can lead to stress as they try to keep up with changing requirements while also keeping up with their other responsibilities.

"I am overthinking myself especially. That I cannot, I cannot do no intervention most of the time because I also have a lot of ancillary, ancillary job." -P3

All of these factors can contribute to stress for teachers when it comes to paperwork and ancillary tasks. It is important for schools and administrators to recognize these challenges and work to minimize them as much as possible in order to support their teachers and ensure that they are able to focus on what they do best: teaching.

Sub-Theme 2.4 Sustaining Teachers Well-Being

Based on the results of this study, teachers experienced mental, emotional, and physical challenges with the transition and it became stressful for them to sustain their mental and emotional and overall well-being. This correlates with the results of a study by Ojeka (2018), which observed that stresses have psychological, behavioral, and physiological repercussions to teachers. Also, there was a notable high prevalence of obesity and low physical activity associated with post-work fatigue and very late work hours, high rates of musculoskeletal disorders, burnout syndrome, depression, and anxiety (Erick, 2011) among teachers who are experiencing high levels of stress at work.

"Mag wo-worry ka tas sunod na liwat na day what will you do, ano na liwat na strategy tak gagamiton para macater tanan an mga kabataan. So, nag overthink nanaman kun ano it maupay buhaton para ma accomplish mo an mga trabahoon kay daro damo an mga trabahoon na gin hatag han skwelahan na mga reports kay face to face na manggud." [You will worry on what to do the next day, what strategy are you going to use in order to cater to all learners. So you tend to overthink again on what you should do to accomplish your tasks because there are more tasks and reports given to us now that we are doing face-to-face.] *-P5*

"I feel like I am not a competent teacher. There are times that I feel like I, I'm not doing my job okay. Because, you know, my ego with that, with the results that we had, um, at the beginning of the school year. Um, natatanong ko sa sarili ko saan kami nagkulang bilang teachers? So, nagiging ano sya sa amin, nagigign stress sya sa amin, at the same time, pressured kami bilang teachers, because we have to make

sure that by end of the school year, yung mga problems na na identify namin at the beginning of the school year, dapat ay ma ano namin sya, mabigyan namin ng solusyon." [I feel like I am not a competent teacher. There are times that I feel like I, I'm not doing my job okay. Because, you know, my ego with that, with the results that we had, um, at the beginning of the school year. I would ask myself, where did I fall short as a teacher? So, it becomes a source of stress for us, at the same time, we are pressured as teachers, because we have to make sure that by end of the school year, the problems that we identified at the beginning of the school year should be addressed.] -P3

Theme 3. Uplifting Learners Condition

In the context of education, "uplifting learners' condition" could be understood as creating an environment or implementing strategies that foster a positive and motivational atmosphere for students to enhance their learning experience. In this study, the participants are challenged in providing a more conducive learning environment to students due to transition adjustments. Based on the interviews, the instructional transition had an impact on the academic performance and learning behavior of students.

Sub-Theme 3.1 Academic Performance

The poor academic performance of students was also a cause of stress to the participants as it seemed to reflect how they are as teachers and their capability to teach. At the same time, they worried about how they were going to improve the numeracy and literacy of their students.

This finding is congruent to the findings of Jackaria (2022) in his study entitled, "Elementary teachers' experiences and instructional challenges during the return to school after the COVID-19 closure in the Philippines." It was discovered that as for the challenges experienced with regard to instruction, the teachers expressed concern about the alarming number of non-readers and students who are mentally and socially unprepared.

Sub-theme 3.2 Learning Behavior

Based on the gathered data, the students' bad behavior in class, such as excessive use of mobile phones, bullying and engaging in petty fights are a source of stress for teachers. In the study of Ssenyonga (2021), it was found that student aggression highly correlates to increased stress among teachers. Bad student behavior was also found to have undesirable repercussions, such as negative emotions.

Students' poor behavior and academic performance can be a significant source of stress to teachers for several reasons. One of these is increased workload. Teachers often find themselves having to put in more effort to manage and support students who exhibit poor behavior and struggle academically. This can result in an increased workload, which can be stressful and overwhelming, particularly if the teacher does not receive adequate support.

When students are poorly behaved or struggling academically, it can create a disruptive classroom environment. This can be stressful for teachers as it can interfere with their ability to teach and can make it difficult for other students to learn. In addition, it can also lead for teachers to feel emotionally drained when dealing with students who exhibit poor behavior or academic struggles. This can be particularly challenging when teachers feel like they are not making progress with these students despite their best efforts. They may also feel the pressure to perform. Teachers may feel pressure to improve the academic performance of struggling students, which can create stress. This pressure can be compounded if the teacher is evaluated based on student performance, as is the practice at the Department of Education. Lastly, poor student behavior can sometimes escalate to the point of posing a safety risk to both students and teachers. This can create a stressful and potentially dangerous situation.

"Ang behavior ng bata kasi, parang nag wild talaga sila…. for example yung cellphone nila, number 1 na hadlang, pagkatapos mong magklase or during klase, magse cellphone, kahit pinagsabihan mo na in one, two or three, hindi pa yan." [The behavior of the learner, they have seemed to have become wild…For example, their cell phone, that's the number one barrier. After class, during class, they would use their cell phone, even if you have already reprimanded them once, twice, three times, they would still not listen.] *-P4*

SoP 2: How do teachers cope with their stress?

The second problem statement aimed to determine the coping mechanisms or strategies of teachers in relation to the stress they experienced due to the transition of instructional approach. Alson (2019) underpinned that stress transcends gender and age, each individual developed their unique cognitive (thinking-centered) stress coping techniques.

The second problem generated four emergent themes from the participants. These emergent themes include: *Quality Time with Family and Friends, Support System in the Workplace, Alleviating Stress Through Rest and Recreation and Embracing Realities towards Positive mindset.*

Theme 1. Quality Time with Family and Friends

Having family and friends is an essential way for teachers to cope with stress. For one, family and friends provide emotional support when teachers are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. They can offer encouragement, empathy, and a listening ear, which can help one to process emotions and to feel better. Spending time with loved ones can provide a welcome distraction from the stresses of work or other sources of stress.

Sub-Theme 1.1 Engaging in Leisurely Activities

Engaging in fun activities or simply enjoying each other's company can momentarily take the mind off worries and help the teachers relax. Family and friends can also provide a different perspective on problems, helping the teachers see things from a fresh point of view. This can help the teachers identify solutions or ways to cope with stress that they may not have considered before. At the same time, being part of a supportive social network can provide a sense of belonging and connectedness. This can help the teachers feel more secure and less alone during stressful times.

All in all, spending time with family and friends can improve one's overall well-being, which can help teachers manage stress more effectively. This can include benefits such as improved mood, increased resilience, and better physical health, which are crucial to the optimum functioning of teachers. Having family and friends is an important way to cope with stress. They can provide emotional support, distraction, a different perspective, a sense of belonging, and improved overall well-being. The study of Rabago-Mingoa (2017) concurs that seeking outside help when needed and learning stress management techniques are effective stress coping mechanisms. It is important to prioritize spending time with loved ones outside of work or other stressors to maintain a healthy work-life balance and improve the teacher's ability to cope with stress.

"It iba na mga teachers ano, they tend to go to their circle, their friends. Ako gihap I do that na gin ve-vent out ko it akon mga frustrations ha classroom ngadto hit akon mga friends na mga teachers pati ha akon mga friends." [Other teachers, they tend to go to their circle, their friends. Me too, I do that. I vent-out all my frustrations in my classroom on my friends and teachers, including my friends.] *-P5*

"I play with my pets with my children, go bonding with my family and then kumain sa labas." [I play with my pets with my children, go bonding with my family and then we eat out.] -P8

Theme 2. Support System in the Workplace

Based on the interviews, teachers cope with stress with the help of their co-teachers. Having co-teachers can be an important way for teachers to cope with stress in several ways. One way is for emotional support. Co-teachers can provide emotional support when a teacher is feeling stressed or overwhelmed. They can offer encouragement, empathy, and a listening ear, which can help the teacher process their emotions and feel better. From the data, teachers shared that they would go to their colleagues for guidance, discussion, and sometimes, even for comfort knowing that they shared the same plight or experiences.

Sub-theme 2.1 Co-teachers as Collaborators for Classroom Management

Collaborating with co-teachers can help distribute workload, share ideas, and offer feedback on teaching strategies. This can help teachers feel more supported and less isolated, which can reduce stress. Also, working with co-teachers can provide opportunities for professional development and learning new teaching strategies. This can help teachers feel more competent and confident. It also allows teachers to share the responsibility of managing a classroom, which can reduce stress and workload.

Sub-theme 2.2 Co-teachers as Emotional Supporters

In addition, teachers can work together to manage behavior, support students academically, and address any issues that arise in the classroom. When talking with co-teachers, it promotes improved student outcomes since the teacher is already more confident and emotionally supported. By working together, co-teachers can provide more individualized support for students, differentiate instruction, and provide a more inclusive classroom environment.

"Naka cope up ako with the help of my colleague ngadi ha amon level and friends at works also with the help of my mentors and our senior teachers na maka adjust ha mga yana na amon teachings. So, burubligay sugad kun yana may mga reports na iparasa nasend ha amon group chats hira naman. Sugad hiton nag buburublig kami ha amon grade level. Tapos we talk about it kun meada kami mga kakurian when it comes to pag deal hit bata ano iton, tas kun may problems liwat regarding hit teacher ha usa na teacher kakaistoryahon." [I get to cope up with the help of my colleagues in our level and my friends at work and also with the help of my mentors and senior teachers to adjust in our teachings. So, we help each other, like if we have reports that need to be sent, we have group chats. We help each other in our grade level. Then we talk about it if we have difficulties in dealing with a particular learner, or if we have issues on a certain teacher, we talk with the person.] -P5

Theme 3. Alleviating Stress through Rest and Recreation

Rest and recreation are two related but distinct concepts that involve taking time off from work or daily activities to rejuvenate and engage in enjoyable and leisurely pursuits. While they share similarities, they serve different purposes.

Rest refers to the act of ceasing or taking a break from exertion, work, or any physically or mentally demanding activities. It is a period of relaxation and recovery intended to restore energy, reduce fatigue, and promote overall well-being. Rest allows the body and mind to recuperate and recharge, facilitating better physical and mental performance. It can involve activities such as sleeping, napping, meditating, or simply engaging in calming and soothing experiences that provide a sense of tranquility.

On the other hand, recreation encompasses activities that are undertaken for enjoyment, amusement, and personal satisfaction. It involves participating in hobbies, sports, entertainment, or any leisure pursuits that provide a break from routine responsibilities and engage individuals in pleasurable experiences. Recreation helps to relieve stress, enhance creativity, promote social interactions, and improve overall

quality of life. Examples of recreational activities include playing sports, engaging in artistic pursuits, going for walks or hikes, watching movies, reading, traveling, or spending time with friends and family. While rest primarily focuses on relaxation and recovery, recreation emphasizes engaging in enjoyable activities that bring pleasure and fulfillment. Both rest and recreation are important for maintaining a healthy work-life balance, managing stress, and nurturing personal well-being. They contribute to physical, mental, and emotional rejuvenation, ultimately enhancing productivity, happiness, and overall quality of life. Rest and recreation are some of the things the participants resorted to in order to cope with stress. Rest and recreation can be effective ways to alleviate stress among public school teachers.

Sub-Theme 3.1 The Use of Gadgets and Social Media for Destressing

As teachers work in a demanding environment where they have to meet the needs of their students, they are at risk of experiencing burnout, which can lead to stress and exhaustion.

Below are some of the significant statements of participants which reflect the things they engaged in when they were stressed at work.

"Nag re relax anay maam. Danay nag se cellphone, nagkikita hin mga videos. Naglalakat lakat ghap. Nakadto la ha Tacloban kay mas na relax lugod ako kun na travel kadali." [I would relax for a while, ma'am. Sometimes I would do cellphone, watch videos. I go somewhere too. I would go to Tacloban because I feel more relaxed when I travel for a while.] *-P1*

"I used to watch animes ky amo talaga iton it akon stress reliever. Movies, any movies, but i prefer sci-fi movies." [I used to watch anime because that is really my stress reliever. Movies, any movies, but I prefer sci-fi movies.] *-P2*

"Kapag mayron akong free time, minsan, inaaliw ko lang yung sarili ko, minsan, tumitingin ako sa mga FB, pero hindi naman ako masyadong nag i scroll kasi gusto ko lang ma relieve, tumitingin ako sa mga tiktok, sa social media, gusto ko lang ma entertain yung sarili ko. manood, o di kaya minsan kasi nanonood ako ng TV sa bahay." [If I have free time, sometimes, I will entertain myself. Sometimes, I would check FB, but I don't scroll much, I just want to be relieved. I watch Tiktok on social media. I just want to entertain myself, watch or sometimes watch TV at home.] *- P3*

Theme 4. Embracing Realities towards Positive Mindset

Having a positive mindset is essential for teachers in dealing with stress for several reasons. One is resilience. A positive mindset can increase resilience, which is the ability to cope with stress and overcome challenges. According to Piaget (1936) and his Theory of Development, where this study is theoretically anchored, learning is adjusting to an ever-changing human environment and that people can develop new behaviors that help them deal with change by adapting. Teachers with a positive mindset are more likely to bounce back from setbacks and maintain a sense of optimism in the face of stress.

Sub-Theme 4.1 Opening Oneself to Changes

A positive mindset can also help teachers maintain a healthy perspective on their work and their students. They can focus on the positive aspects of their job, such as the impact they are making on their students' lives, rather than solely on the stressors. In addition, a positive mindset can improve overall well-being, including mental and physical health. Teachers with a positive mindset are more likely to engage in self-care practices, such as exercise, healthy eating, and mindfulness, which can help reduce stress. Ultimately, having a positive mindset paves the way for better relationships. A positive mindset can improve relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. Teachers who approach their work with positivity and optimism are more likely to create a positive classroom environment, build strong relationships with students, and collaborate effectively with colleagues. This can result in increased job satisfaction and

reduce burnout. Teachers who approach their work with a positive attitude are more likely to find meaning and purpose in their job, which can help them stay motivated and engaged despite the challenges.

"I manage my time, kon ano it pinaka easy nga work himuon ko anay. Third is I have to accept that there are things that I can't control so diri ako masyado nag idealistic nag realistic na gihapon ako, kon dikona kaya let it go, so be it." [I manage my time. Whatever is the easiest, I do it first. Third is I have accepted that there are things that I can't control, so I am not being too idealistic, I have become more realistic. If I can't do it, I let go. So be it.] *-P6*

SoP 3: What recommendations can be proposed to improve the plight of the teachers based on the findings of the study?

There were four emergent themes identified for the third problem statement, these includes: *Enhanced Administrative Support, Reduced Number of Students in Classrooms and Revisit Teachers Roles.*

sSoP 3 aims to determine the recommendations of public school teachers to improve their conditions as teachers.

Theme 1: Enhanced Administrative Support

One of the recommendation that emerged from the interviews was to implement certain administrative reforms to uplift the working and personal conditions of teachers. A change in policies would make the transition from MDL to face-to-face modalities more bearable for teachers and they would experience lesser stress and better working conditions. Additional efforts must be made to improve teachers' working circumstances in order to reduce stress (Ssenyonga, 2021).

There are several ways to implement administrative reforms. Some of them include identifying areas that require changes, and this can be done through thorough assessment and evaluation of the conditions of teachers on the ground. A participant shared the following idea:

"Yes, all around. Hindi na siya versatile very versatile na talaga kita. So hopefully marinig sa higher offices iton na mga favours kay actually iton nga mga nag po-policy makers I believe they are not…it did not come from the classroom teacher an mga nag schooling gud talaga ito hira, why not na experience gud talaga nira dida talaga ha…an usa nga ordinary nga teacher nga nadaan ha river, na cross hin mountain even though the Filipino are resilience pero kutob man san-o?" [Yes (teachers) are all around. We are no longer versatile, but very, very versatile. So hopefully, the higher offices hear us and these pleas, because those who become policy makers, I believe that they were not classroom teachers, they only did schooling. Why not experience the things experienced by ordinary teachers who cross rivers, cross mountains? Filipinos are resilient, but for how long?] *-P6*

Sub-Theme 1.1 Mental Health Support

Based on the interviews, one of the things that the teachers requested was additional administrative support in the form of support group for teachers, counselling for their mental health, and a committee that would resolve internal issues. Instructors who attended stress management workshops performed better in the classroom than those who did not (Sarabia, 2020).

"Maiibanan gihap iton it iya stress kay meada gihap kita mga emotional problems towards other co-workers na iton ngani dapat gin dedeal if its inside the school, the school head should be the father dire kay gin papadako pa. So kun meada mga problems na nakaka affect personally, the school should have a committee to solve it in a professional manner." [The stress would be lessened because there are emotional problems towards other co-workers that should be dealt with inside the school. The school should be the father, he should not worsen things. So if there are problems that affects teachers personally, the school should have a committee to solve it in a professional manner.] *-P5*

"Support group for the teachers, for example mayda naton napapagyaknan kon mayda kita inaabat nga maraot for example for a day diri maupay yong experience mo mayroon lang namang taong mamamati haimo." [Support group for teachers, for example, we will have somebody to talk to if we have bad feelings or bad experience, there will be somebody who will listen to you.] -*P9*

Sub-Theme 1.2 Off-work Vacation and Mental Break

An off-work vacation and mental break both refer to taking time off from work to disconnect from work-related stressors and responsibilities, relax, and rejuvenate. An off-work vacation is a period during which an employee takes a break from work and typically travels or engages in leisure activities. It is an opportunity to disconnect from work and recharge mentally and physically. During an off-work vacation, teachers can enjoy time with family and friends, explore new places, try new activities, or simply relax.

A mental break, on the other hand, can refer to a shorter period of time, such as a few hours or a day, during which an employee takes a break from work-related tasks to relax and recharge. A mental break can involve activities such as taking a walk, reading a book, or engaging in a hobby. The goal is to reduce stress levels and increase focus and productivity upon returning to work.

Both an off-work vacation and a mental break are important for maintaining good mental health and preventing burnout. Taking time off from work allows individuals to recharge, reduce stress levels, and increase motivation and creativity. It can also improve work-life balance and overall well-being.

"A health break, that is appropriate because teachers actually can easily get tired, for us to have time to breath to reflect on our actions hit aton mga pinan hihimo maupay talaga every grading mayda kita sinisiring nga health break kahit namanla 2 days or 3 days para ma renew it aton vigour matutdo naliwat. The support group, actually that is very helpful specially hit mga teachers nga bag-o pa para mahibaro hira nga they are not alone that somebody listens haira mga hinaing so that kon mayda man nira problema, work related problem mayda namanla man mamati haira dako na gihap ito nga bulig para haira." [A health break, that is appropriate because teachers actually can easily get tired, for us to have time to breath to reflect on our actions, on what we do. It would be good if in every grading period, we would have a health break even for two days or three days to renew our vigor in teaching. The support group, actually that is very helpful especially for new teachers, for them to know that they are not alone, that somebody listens to their grievances, so that if they have problems, work-related problems, there will be somebody who will listen to them. That is already a big help for them.] -*P9*

"Kahit manlang sa isang taon magkaruon ang teachers ng time para makapag travel, during teachers day we are only allowed to conduct the teachers day inside the campus palagi nalang kahit manlang outside sa school, kahit half of the expenses ma spend ng admin MOOE, once a year manlang yan to travel and unwind, and then nahirapan tayo mag travel kasi kailangan pa nating kumuha ng permit." [Even just once in a year teachers would have time to travel. During Teacher's Day, we are only allowed to conduct the Teacher's Day inside the campus all the time. I hope we do it outside of school, we can shoulder half of the expenses, half from MOOE. It's only once a year to travel and unwind, and then we have difficulty travelling because we need to get a permit.] -*P8*

"Give time to the teachers, vacation, bisan guti la, 1 week, para dire hra ma stress. sugad sem break, dapat sem break talaga, waray paperworks na ada. Basta vacation, waray na additional na paperworks." [Give time to teachers to go on vacation, even for a short while so they won't be stressed. Like during sem break, it should be a real sem break, no paper works. If it's a vacation, there should be no additional paper works.] -*P1*

"Then hatagan ghapon hin kuan, chance it mga teachers nga magka ada ghap hin get-together ghap. nga bagan ma divert it ira liwat attention from the papers and the work that they have ngadto liwat hit enjoyable. like for example mga team-building, sugad hiton. dire la kasi iton iya stress it mare releave." [Then provide teachers a chance to have get-together to divert their attention from the paper and the work that they must enjoy. For example, team building or something like that, because it's not only stress that would be relieved.] *-P2*

According to the participants, they recommend teachers to have a periodic vacation for them to rejuvenate and relax from work. What they specifically requested was for their vacations, such as summer, semester, Christmas breaks and holidays to be a truly relaxing time free from work and school-related assignments. Weekends should also be honored by giving the teachers the time off to spend time with their loved ones and to do personal things. For what is the purpose of having a break or vacation if they would still be doing reports and administrative tasks?

This finding is reinforced by the study of Matshushita (2022) in Japan, wherein he found out that lengthy work hours and teacher mental health issues are problems in Japan, and that working hours of 10 to 11 hours, 11 to 12 hours, 12 to 13 hours, and 13 hours or more were substantially related with high stress among tenured instructors, as compared to those who worked less than 9 hours per day.

Sub-Theme 1.3 Salary Increase and Paid Overtime

Another salient recommendation from teachers is for their salaries to be increased and for their overtime to be compensated accordingly. They also requested for additional benefits, such as hazard pay for teachers assigned in remote areas that puts their life and health at risk just to deliver their teaching services.

"More compensation aside from that honor our weekends, vacation and holidays. Talagang mas kukuanan kita hiton tas kun kutob la alas singko sige after that no more na." [More compensation. Aside from that honor our weekends, vacation, and holidays. We would be energized with that, and we should only work until 5 and after that, no more.] *-P5*

Sub-Theme 1.4 Additional Instructional Materials

Furthermore, the participants also recommended that they be supported in terms of instructional materials that would make it easier for them to teach students, such as TV and other visual aid. Moreover, the participants shared that if the government wants to produce quality students, they should invest on teachers. Teachers should be trained and be provided with ample capacities to function and perform their duties as teachers. Sandilos (2018) highlighted in his study that it is plausible that teachers' increased knowledge and worry about the need for professional development made them more receptive to an intervention meant to enhance practice.

"Mas maganda yata kung lahat ng mga classroom , may mga TV or instructional materials na pwedeng magamit kasi yung trabaho nila ng teachers, focused talaga sa pagtuturo. meron ng mga ready-made na mga lesson, yung trabaho lang pag execute, panno mo sya ma inculcate sa mga isipan ng mga bata, focus ka lang dun." [It would be good if all classrooms will have their own TV or instructional materials that they can use, because their work as teachers, should be focused on teaching. There should be ready-made lessons, so their only job is to execute; how are you going to inculcate that to the minds of learners? You should only focus on that.] *-P4*

Theme 2. Reduced Number of Students in Classrooms

Ideally, a classroom should only have 35 students for teachers to effectively deliver lessons and to cater to the varied needs of its students (Mendoza, 2023). However, a typical Philippine classroom nowadays holds from around 60 to 80 students or an average of 43.9; a far cry to the class size of countries nearby,

such as Malaysia with 31.7 and Thailand with 22.9 average (House of Representatives, 2018). With these statistics, it is evident that classroom size is overwhelming big for a teacher. Thus, the teachers recommended for policy makers to mandate the reduction of learners for each classroom. According to the participants, 50 or more students was just too much for them, considering that the teacher was alone, and the students were too many. The number of students was compounded with the new normal and their unruly behavior, resulting further to the stress of teachers. This recommendation is reinforced by the study of Kabito (2020) as he proposed that action be taken to balance employment demand and teaching experience, offering the chance to improve their educational level and develop strong connections to alleviate the load of work-related stress factors.

Theme 3: Revisit Teachers Roles

Teachers play a crucial role and responsibility of nurturing and guiding the intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of their students. They have a profound impact on shaping young minds, instilling a love for learning, and preparing students for future challenges and opportunities. The role of teachers extends far beyond the classroom, as they contribute to building a knowledgeable, skilled, and responsible citizenry.

However, these important roles and responsibilities are overshadowed by additional non-teaching functions bestowed on the teachers' shoulders. Thus, it is important for the decision-makers to revisit the core functions of teachers and determine if their current activities are still aligned with what is expected from them.

Sub-Theme 3.1 Lessen Non-teaching Tasks.

Majority of the participants shared that they could no longer focus on teaching because there were too many ancillary works, administrative tasks, and reports that they needed to accomplish. Some of the participants shared that sometimes, they were no longer sure what the reports were for and why they were asked for reports that should be submitted right away or with very limited time. Teachers are already overworked, mentally exhausted, overburdened with large number of students in a classroom, their personal time are already taken up by work and to top it all, they are bound to submit voluminous reports that for some, consider these reports as nonsensical.

"They ask for data. Again and again, like we already have given that data, then they ask that data again. Okay? Mm-hmm. ? Yes. Should we focus? I will tell to the, one of the, how do you call that? Policy maker, policy maker to please let us focus on teaching. To focus on teaching. Mm-hmm. focus on teaching because that's what teachers are meant for. Not to do a lot of paperwork. Sometimes I feel like the papers that they need are useless."- P3

"Available yung mga instructional materials na provided ng DepEd, maganda yun di ba. all you have to do is learn, paano sya gamitin. pag facilitate na lang kasi anjan na yung mga instructional materials, nanjan na ang lesson plan, pagtingin mo, madali na. so yung process madali kasi focussed ka na lang sa isang bagay di ba? naka focus ka na lang sa learning process ng bata. sa dami ng asap, yung pinaka principal mo na gawain, napapabayaan." [The materials provided by DepEd are available, that would be nice, right? All you have to do is learn how to use it, how to facilitate because the instructional materials are already there, including the lesson plan. When you look at it, things would be easier. So, the process is faster because you are focused on one thing, right? You are only focused on the learning process of students. With so many ASAP, the primary thing that you should be doing is neglected.] *-P4*

"Let's really focus on the teaching then tanggalin natin ang mga ansilyari na not really for teachers, let us say for example kadamo damuan nga coordinatorship tapos waray manla ngay an ka use so kon focus

kita ha teaching we have to focus on the literacy..numeracy.'' [Let's really focus on teaching then let's remove ancillary tasks that are not really for teachers. Let's say, for example, there are so many coordinatorship, only to find out that there were not used. So, if we are focused on teaching, we can focus on literacy and numeracy.] -*P6*

"I would really like to suggest to them that they should lessen the paper works for the teachers and the admin work because that alone takes a lot of our time and speaking from my experience it causes more stress than the stress of teaching. Also, the ancillary works and the deadlines are very unrealistic most of the time." -P7

"I have to suggest, to lessen this paper works kasi hindi na tuloy nakakapag focus yong teachers sa teaching… mga ancillary na kailangan nating magsulat sulat ng mga accomplishment report rather than to focus on the things inside the classroom. on time element, instead of we will be accomplishing more paper works hindi naman masyadong nagagamit sa teaching, ang time nagagamitin mo doon gagamitin nalang natin sa teaching to make our lesson plans, prepare our instructional materials, to record the students test result and performance tasks, to talk to our students, to talk to the parents of our students ganon, to monitor our learner." [I have to suggest, to lessen this paper works because teachers can no longer focus on teaching. These ancillary works that require us to write accomplishment reports rather than focus on the things inside the classroom. On time element, instead of accomplishing more paper works that are not so useful in teaching, the time used on them can be used in teaching, in making lesson plans, prepare our instructional materials, to record the students test result and performance tasks, to talk to our students, to talk to the parents of our students, like that, to monitor our learners.] -*P8*

Sub-Theme 3.2 Hire Administrative Staff for Ancillary Tasks

Another recommendation of the participants was to hire administrative staff who would focus on ancillary and administrative reports so for teachers to be unloaded with work and focus on teaching. The participants shared their thoughts and said that there was something wrong with the system and it must be changed. For instance, DepEd should have a system of its own that will focus on their retirement benefits. The office should be separate from Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) as there are too many government employees handled by GSIS, in the same way that there are too many teachers. The tendency is to sometimes overlook the concerns of teachers at GSIS.

"Mag hire ang DepEd ng mga ano, mag hire ng employee na sila ang gagawa ng report, mga non-teaching staff. para mabawasan ang trabaho ng teachers. kung gusto nila ng quality education, why not ipa focus ang teacher sa pagtuturo. kasi pag bombarded ka ng report, ang tendency is, napapabayaan ang mga bata." [DepEd should hire employees who will do the reports, the non-teaching staff, to lessen the workload of teachers. If they want quality education, why not allow teachers to focus on teaching? Because if you are bombarded with reports, the tendency is to neglect the students.] -*P4*

"If the policy maker, school heads are aware of the hinaing it would be a chance to change other rules na makakabulig ha mga teachers na ay dire la ngean ako makarawat tak sweldo, I can do better kay if the teachers are happy hit ira work maca-cater nira an needs han mga kabataan. Not sacrificing themselves kay makuri it nag sisinakripisyo kita para haiba tas tat mga pamilya dire ngani maaram mag basa tim anak mga sugad." [If the policy maker, school heads are aware of the grievances, it would be a chance to change the rules that will actually help the teachers and realize that we not only up to receiving salaries. I can do better because if teachers are happy, we can cater to the needs of the learners and not sacrifice themselves because its hard if we are sacrificing for others while our own children cannot read or something like that.] -*P5*

"We need a representative, I guess. Mm-hmm. because I think we need a representative or a voice mm-hmm. that can, you know, um, speak up with our problems and our rights as a teacher, because I believe kulang lang talaga tayo ng isang tao na ipaglalaban ang gusto nating ipaglaban, ang ating mga hinaing." [We need a representative, I guess, because I think we need a representative or a voice that can speak up about our problems and our rights as teachers, because I believe we don't have that one person who will really fight what we want to fight for and our grievances.] -*P3*

"We have to change the system, so that we can produce quality teachers we have to invest to our Filipino teachers. Ang nangyayari actually just to…ahmm nagagawa ng iba na countries so kaya rin natin dito, masyado kasi bagan haggard iton Filipino teachers." [We have to change the system, so that we can produce quality teachers we have to invest to our Filipino teachers. We can actually do what other countries are doing because Filipino teachers are haggard.] -*P6*

Summary of Themes

Fig. 2 Summary of Themes
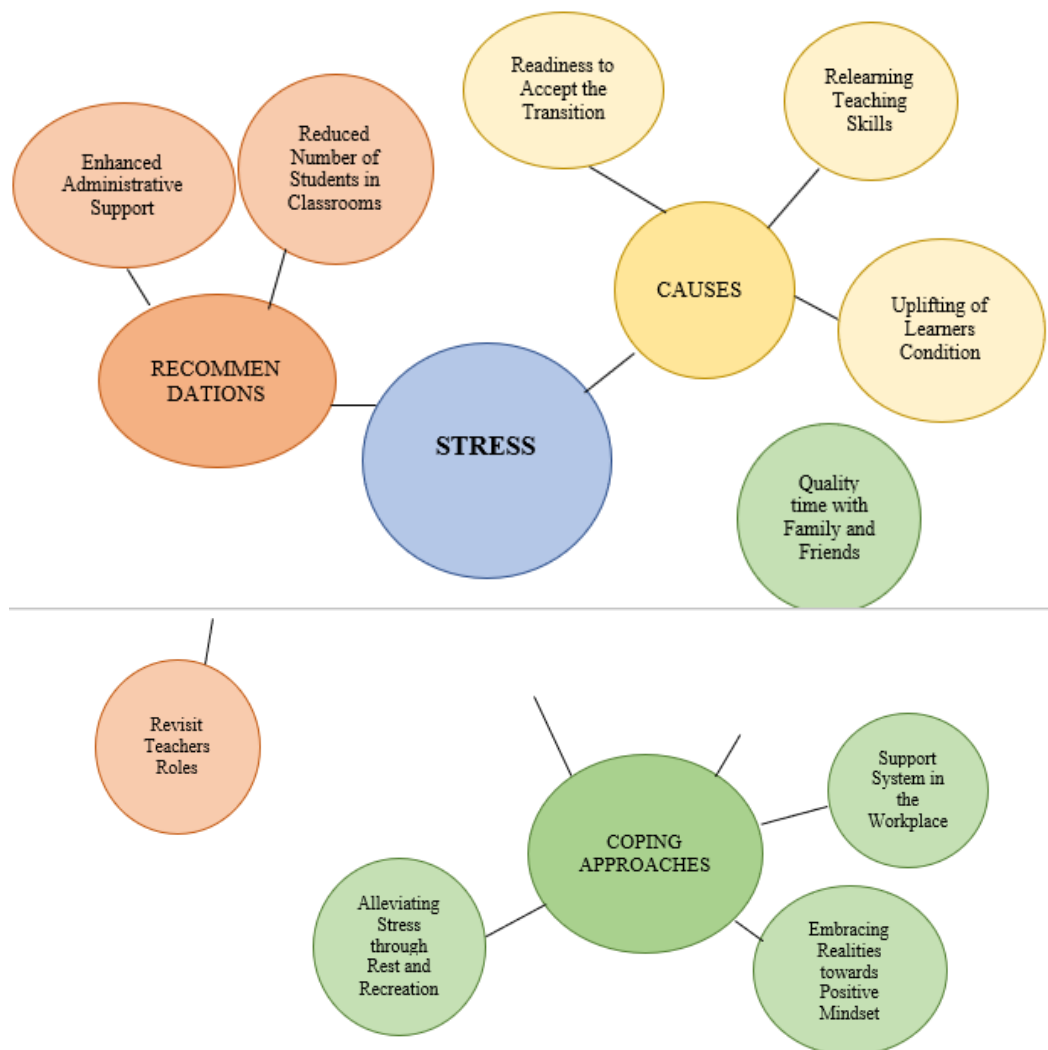
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, the conclusions obtained based on the findings, and the recommendations formulated in accordance with the findings and conclusions.

Summary of Findings

Based on the results and discussion, summary of the findings are as follows:

1. The transition from modular distance learning to in-person learning in public high schools presented several challenges for teachers, which contributed to their stress levels. This includes the sudden shift of transition of instructional practices in public high schools, relearning teaching skills, overwhelming ancillary tasks and poor academic performance of learners.

2. Teachers learned to cope with the stress they have experienced during the transition of instruction. They spent quality time with their family and friends, engaged in leisurely activities, collaborated with co-teachers for classroom management and emotional support, and being optimistic despite the challenges they had encountered.

3. To improve the plight of secondary public school teachers, the participants recommended that there would be an enhanced administrative support (such as mental health support, off-work vacation and mental break, salary increase and paid overtime, and additional instructional materials), reduced number of students in classrooms, and to let teachers focus on teaching.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The public secondary school teachers are stressed due the transition from MDL to in-person learning. The teachers are having a hard time adjusting to instructional transition, more so with lack of preparation and re-training.

2. The teachers find ways to effectively cope with stress and the approaches include spending quality time with family, friends, and colleagues; engaging in recreational activities; and having a positive mindset.

3. The teachers require more time for vacation and mental break; mental support and counselling; additional administrative support in the form of increased salaries and benefits, instructional materials, and lesser paper works, and administrative reforms, such as hiring of additional staff for administrative or non-teaching tasks, and assigning teachers to teach within their filed of expertise, instead of assigning them to subjects that they were not trained for.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were put forward to DepEd through Leyte Division:

1. Provide upskilling, retraining and professional development opportunities to teachers. Providing opportunities for professional development can help teachers stay current with the latest teaching methods and technologies. This can also help teachers feel more confident and effective in their roles, particularly as they transition from one instruction to another.

2. Implement mental health support. Teaching can be a stressful job, and providing mental health support can help teachers manage stress and avoid burnout. This can include access to counseling services, stress management training, and regular check-ins with a mental health professional.

3. Reduce administrative workload. Teachers in the Philippines are often burdened with a significant administrative workload, including enrolling learners, various coordinatorship such as Brigada,

DRRM, Gulayan sa Paaralan and among others. Providing additional support staff or simplifying administrative processes can help reduce this workload.

4. Encourage work-life balance for the teachers. Teachers need time to recharge and take care of their personal lives. Encouraging work-life balance can help teachers manage their stress levels and prevent burnout. This can include flexible schedules, time off, and opportunities for self-care.

5. Further studies of bigger scope and more in-depth treatment of the topic may be conducted

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