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Marie Candy L. Celeste¹

Ronel B. Amorin²

Joahna F. Tibus³

Magdalena Cataluna⁴

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¹Ph.D. English Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus

²Ph.D Math and Science Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus

³Ed.D. Math and Science Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus

⁴Math and Science Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus



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Marie Candy L. Celeste¹, Ronel B. Amorin², Joahna F. Tibus³, Magdalena Cataluna⁴

¹Ph.D. English Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus,

Email: mariecandy.celeste@wvsu.edu.ph

²Ph.D Math and Science Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus,

Email: ronel.amorin@wvsu.edu.ph

³Ed.D. Math and Science Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus,

Email: joahna.tibus@wvsu.edu.ph

⁴Math and Science Department West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus,

Email: magdalena.cataluna@wvsu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

The most recent pandemic has brought great disruption and threat in the face of education. The abrupt shift to remote learning such as online and modular has caused challenges and difficulties most especially among the learners. This descriptive-correlational study determined the challenges, difficulties and coping mechanisms utilized by the students in the conduct of modular instruction. The respondents of this investigation were the 865 purposively selected undergraduate students in a state university. After careful analysis and interpretation, the results revealed that the students experienced “moderate” level of challenges and difficulties and had “high” level of coping mechanisms in modular instruction. Furthermore, significant differences were noted in the level of challenges and difficulties and mean assessment on coping mechanisms of the respondents when classified based on campus affiliation and sex. A significant difference existed in the level of challenges and difficulties among the respondents when categorized as to year level. However, no significant differences were noted in the level of challenges and difficulties and mean assessment on coping mechanisms of the respondents when classified according to monthly family income. Further, no significant difference in the mean assessment on coping mechanism among the respondents when classified based on their year level existed. Lastly, there was a significant relationship existed the challenges and difficulties and coping mechanisms of the respondents. This investigation provides a valid and reliable assessment of students’ challenges, difficulties and coping mechanisms in the modular instruction which may contribute in the development of tailored interventions in promoting students’ wellness.

Keywords: Modular Instruction, Challenges, Difficulties, Coping Mechanisms, Students

INTRODUCTION

Modular instruction has become an emerging educational trend highlighting the paradigm change from the conventional in person to remote teaching and learning. It has become one of the foremost modes of remote learning (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020) with learning taking place amongst the instructor and students using a module as instructional material developed for a specific course. It is a type of individualized educational modality which enables the learners to utilize a self-contained set of educational materials where the students are given control over their learning through a module which contains a collection of learning opportunities organized around clearly defined topics (Nardo, 2017). Recent studies focused on modular distance learning found that students who receive this type of instruction achieve better results (Khalil and Yousuf, 2020). Similarly, Ambayon’s (2020) investigation into the modular-based college students who employed the modular instruction reported improvements in their literary ability, going from poor to extraordinary.

Despite the emergence of distance education to continue with the learners’ educational process, it has caused challenges and difficulties among students and academic institutions (Bustillo and Aguilos, 2022) most especially during the pandemic. This COVID-19 has caused one of the greatest disruptions in education in all levels. The uncertainties it has brought have caused most significant long-term impact, affecting not only higher education but also society as a whole (Jung, Horta and Postiglione, 2021). However, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) ensured learning continuity in universities and colleges in the Philippines despite the growing limitations and challenges brought by the pandemic. Universities in the country were compelled to embrace the new trends in education by shifting in the instructional delivery from the conventional in person

classes to remote teaching and learning modalities such as online and modular distance instruction. For universities where internet connectivity is an issue, online learning has become the least option. According to UNESCO (2019), just 55% of households globally have internet access. 87% of people who live in countries with developed economies, in comparison to 47% to those developing nations and only 19% countries that are least developed. When there is a poor internet connection or a limited number of students who can access the internet, modular learning is implemented (Dangle&Sumaang, 2020; Anzaldo, 2021). This current situation puts most universities in the provinces of the Philippines to adopt the modular instruction since majority of the students did not have internet connections and/or facilities for online classes.

While it is simple to comprehend the benefits of modular remote education, such as improved adaptability, cost-effectiveness, and accessibility, it is equally important to recognize the inherent obstacles and difficulties that students may face (National University, 2022). With the adoption of modular instruction, many students have expressed their concerns, issues and complains about their experiences in this remote learning modality. Learners of all levels must be able to overcome obstacles and challenges that are dominant in modular instruction. Although learners also experience some challenges which are also present in face-to-face classes such as distracting learning environments and overwhelming academic activities, these can be amplified during modular instruction.

This investigation aimed to identify the challenges and difficulties faced by Filipino university students during the modular instruction and determine their coping mechanism to be able to propose interventions to address their problems. Specifically, this research endeavors sought to achieve these objectives: (a) assess the level of challenges and difficulties experienced by WVSU students in modular instruction when taken as an entire group and when classified according to campus affiliation, year level, sex, and monthly family income; (b) determine the mean assessment of the students on their coping mechanisms in the modular instruction when taken as an entire group and when classified according to campus affiliation, year level, sex, and monthly family income; and (c) determine the connection between the challenges and difficulties encountered by WVSU students and their coping mechanisms in the use of modular instruction.

The findings of this investigation will be of great significance for educational institutions in the Philippines and other universities in the world to be aware of the perceived severity of challenges and difficulties faced by students and the coping strategies they employ in their context of learning. This will support organizations in building strong student orientation programs and taking proactive initiatives to create effective systems for providing counseling services to students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The methodological approach employed in this investigation is a descriptive-correlational research design. As described by Fraenkel et al. (2011), this research approach enables the researcher to gather information about the current conditions and establish significant relationships between various variables. Furthermore, it offers the capacity to investigate a multitude of variables within the same study, as articulated by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003).

Participants

The study involved 865 students enrolled at a State University in the Philippines who had experienced module-based learning during the academic year 2020-2022. The selection of respondents in this research was accomplished through purposive sampling.

Google Forms was employed as the survey administration tool. Pen-and-paper administration was not used in order to prevent direct interaction with the respondents due to health protocols and current regulation aligned with COVID 19 conditions.

All ethical protocols in this study were meticulously adhered to, and every participant voluntarily consented by agreeing to an informed agreement online before the study's commencement. A thorough explanation of the survey's objectives and the significance of their participation was provided to the respondents. Furthermore, their permission was obtained before proceeding to the questionnaire section, and they were granted the option to decline or complete the survey at their discretion. Throughout the entire process, which encompassed pre-survey, survey administration, and post-survey stages, the researchers ensured that any queries or concerns were promptly addressed. The participants were further assured that all data collected would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used exclusively for academic research purposes. Inclusion criteria for this analysis were: 1) undergraduate students who are officially enrolled 2) at least 18 years of age during the conduct of this study, and 3) willing to take part in the survey.

The distribution of respondents in different categories such as campus affiliation, year level, sex and monthly family income is shown in Table 1. It is depicted that 87 (10.10%) of the respondents came from the Campus A, 242 (28.00%) from Campus B, 293 (33.90%) from Campus C, 51 (5.90%) from Campus D, 68 (7.90%) from Campus E and 124 (14.30%) from Campus F.

There were 363 (41.80%) first year, 248 (28.70%) second year, 121 (14.99%) third year and 134 (15.50%) fourth year students as respondents. Further, 351 (40.60%) are males and 514 (59.40%) are females involved in this study. Lastly, 232 (26.80%) among them have monthly family income of Php 15,000 and above and 633 (73.20%) of them have monthly family income of below Php 15,000.

Table 1: The Profile of the Respondents

Category	f	%
Entire Group	865	100.00
Campus Affiliation		
Campus A	87	10.10
Campus B	242	28.00
Campus C	293	33.90
Campus D	51	5.90
Campus E	68	7.90
Campus F	124	14.30
Year Level		
1st Year	362	41.80
2nd Year	248	28.70
3rd Year	121	14.00
4th Year	134	15.50
Gender		
Male	351	40.60
Female	514	59.40
Monthly Family Income		
Php 15,000 and above	232	26.80
Below Php 15,000	633	73.20

Data Collection Tools

The data collection instruments, developed by the researcher, consisted of two components. The first part featured a descriptive questionnaire designed to capture respondents' details, including their campus affiliation, gender, year level, and monthly family income. The second part comprised two 5-point Likert scales, one for assessing the level of challenges and difficulties encountered (consisting of 25 items) and the other for evaluating the coping mechanisms employed by respondents during modular instruction (also consisting of 25 items).

To ensure the instruments' validity and reliability, experts in the field conducted face and content validity assessments. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted at another state university in Panay, yielding general Cronbach alpha coefficients of .94 for challenges and difficulties and .91 for coping mechanisms.

Data Analysis

The data collected via a Google Form was then retrieved and then analyzed with SPSS version 23. The data gathered were subjected to the following statistical analyses: (a) frequency counts; (b) percentages; (c) mean; (c) standard deviation; (d) rank; (e) Mann-Whitney U Test; (f) Kruskal-Wallis H Test; and (g) Spearman's rho. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data, and the level of significance was set at 0.05.

RESULTS

The Challenges and Difficulties Encountered by the Students in Modular Instruction

Table 2 illustrates the challenges and difficulties experienced by the students in modular instruction. The statement "I easily get distracted and disturbed at home due to my learning environment." got the highest weighted mean ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.05$) among all the statements describing the challenges and difficulties encountered by the respondents.

The overall weighted mean of 3.22 and a standard deviation of 0.64 indicate that the respondents have experienced "moderate" level of the challenges and difficulties experienced in the conduct of modular instruction. Table 2 next page shows the details.

Table 2: The Challenges and Difficulties Encountered by WVSU Students in Modular Instruction

No.	Indicator	Mean	SD	Description	Rank
1	The instructions in the modules are difficult to understand and follow.	3.21	0.94	Moderate	11
2	There are too many and bulky learning activities for me to answer.	3.46	0.95	Moderate	5
3	I find the modules' lesson content difficult to read and understand.	3.02	0.94	Moderate	22
4	I have difficulty accessing the modules and other learning materials in the university's learning management system.	3.06	0.97	Moderate	19.5
5	I have difficulty answering the learning assessment activities because some of them are not aligned with the outcomes and activities.	3.09	1.01	Moderate	18
6	I have difficulty accomplishing and complying with the tasks test on time.	3.35	1.01	Moderate	7.5
7	I have limited or sometimes no access to printed learning materials at home such as books, journals and others.	3.52	1.02	High	4
8	I have difficulty searching for related online resources using the internet.	3.35	0.98	Moderate	7.5
9	The learning activities are less engaging and interactive.	3.17	0.95	Moderate	13
10	I have weak and intermittent internet connectivity at home.	3.64	1.05	High	2
11	I easily get distracted and disturbed at home due to my learning environment.	3.68	1.05	High	1
12	I do not receive immediate feedback from my professors.	3.04	0.99	Moderate	21
13	I have no available gadgets such as laptop, cellular phones, computer and the like.	3.06	1.05	Moderate	19.5
14	I have irregular and unhealthy eating habits at home due to the new learning modality.	3.13	1.06	Moderate	14.5
15	I have difficulty sleeping due to overwhelming modular activities.	3.54	1.05	High	3
16	I suffer from different health problems.	2.98	1.07	Moderate	23
17	I manage my time poorly at home.	3.25	1.08	Moderate	9.5
18	I have difficulty concentrating and sometimes anxious in answering modular activities.	3.19	1.05	Moderate	12
19	I do not receive enough financial support from my parents and other family members.	2.90	1.04	Moderate	25
20	I feel the pressure from my peers and family to religiously comply with the requirements for my module.	3.11	1.03	Moderate	16.5
21	I am not satisfied of the modular instruction as delivery mode of learning.	3.39	1.09	Moderate	6
22	I have difficulty reaching my teachers for some module – related concerns.	3.11	1.00	Moderate	16.5
23	I lack self – motivation in answering modular activities.	3.13	1.02	Moderate	14.5
24	I lack moral and emotional support and guidance from my parents and other family members.	2.91	1.01	Moderate	24
25	I am not satisfied of the modular instruction as delivery mode of learning.	3.25	1.06	Moderate	9.5
	Over All	3.22	.64	Moderate	

Note: The challenges and difficulties were measured and interpreted using the following scales and verbal interpretations: Extreme (4.51 – 5.00); High (3.51 – 4.50); Moderate (2.51 – 3.50); Slight (1.51 – 2.50); and Not at All (1.00 – 1.50).

The Level of Challenges and Difficulties Encountered by WVSU Students in Modular Instruction Classified According to Certain Variables

Table 3 shows that as an entire group ($M = 3.22$; $SD = .64$), the respondents have encountered “moderate” level of challenges and difficulties in the use of modules as a delivery mode of learning. Specifically, respondents from the Campus A ($M = 3.23$; $SD = .69$), Campus B ($M = 3.18$; $SD = .64$), Campus C ($M = 3.30$; $SD = .63$), Campus D ($M = 3.33$; $SD = .67$), Campus E ($M = 3.20$; $SD = .68$), and Campus F ($M = 3.07$; $SD = .58$) have experienced “moderate” level of challenges and difficulties in the use of modular instruction in the university.

The table further shows that when they are classified as to their year level the, first year students (M = 3.15; SD = .63), second year students (M = 3.22; SD = .59), third year students (M = 3.29; SD = .69) and fourth year students (M = 3.36; SD = .72) have encountered” moderate” level of challenges and difficulties in the use of modular instruction. Both male students (M = 3.28; SD = .67) and female students (M = 3.18; SD = .62) have experienced” moderate” level of challenges and difficulties in the use of modular instruction. Likewise, those students with monthly family income of Php 15,000 and above (M = 3.24; SD = .70) and below Php 15,000 above (M = 3.21; SD = .62) have also experienced “moderate” level of challenges and difficulties while utilizing this delivery mode of learning. This was revealed by the mean scores of the students which fell within the range of 2.51 – 3.50 scale.

The standard deviations obtained for the entire group (SD = .64) showed a narrow dispersion of the means, indicating that students were homogeneous in their level of challenges and difficulties experienced in modular instruction. The standard deviations ranging from .58 to .72 indicated narrow dispersion of the means for each group, further revealing that the students in each group were homogeneous in terms of their terms of their level of challenges and difficulties experience in this particular learning mode.

Table 3 next page shows the details.

Table 3: The Level of Challenges and Difficulties Encountered by WVSU Students in Modular Instruction When Taken as an Entire Group and When Classified According to Campus Affiliation, Year Level, Sex, and Monthly Family Income

Category	Mean	Description	SD
Entire Group	3.22	Moderate	.64
Campus Affiliation			
Campus A	3.23	Moderate	.69
Campus B	3.18	Moderate	.64
Campus C	3.30	Moderate	.63
Campus D	3.33	Moderate	.67
Campus E	3.20	Moderate	.68
Campus F	3.07	Moderate	.58
Year Level			
1st Year	3.15	Moderate	.63
2nd Year	3.22	Moderate	.59
3rd Year	3.29	Moderate	.69
4th Year	3.36	Moderate	.72
Sex			
Male	3.28	Moderate	.67
Female	3.18	Moderate	.62
Monthly Family Income			
Php 15,000 and above	3.24	Moderate	.70
Below Php 15,000	3.21	Moderate	.62

Note: The challenges and difficulties were measured and interpreted using the following scales and verbal interpretations: Extreme (4.51 – 5.00); High (3.51 – 4.50); Moderate (2.51 – 3.50); Slight (1.51 – 2.50); and Not at All (1.00 – 1.50).

The Coping Mechanisms of WVSU Students in Modular Instruction

As shown in Table 4, the statement "When I am feeling depressed and overwhelmed due to hard academic work, I pray for courage, strength and direction" had the highest weighted mean of 4.26 with standard deviation of 1.00.

To sum up, the overall weighted mean of 3.55 and an overall standard deviation of 0.62 indicates that the respondents have “high” mean assessment level on their coping mechanism. This result may indicate that the respondents generally were able to manage and deal with stress.

Table 4 next page shows the details.

Table 4: The Coping Mechanism of the WVSU Students in Modular Instruction

No.	Indicator	Mean	SD	Description	Rank
1	I walk many kilometers to another barrio or village merely to obtain consistent internet connection to study lessons in the module.	3.06	1.10	Moderate	24

2	I seek for a location where I can access a stronger internet service because I do my coursework and study outside my residence.	3.62	1.11	High	11
3	I complete assignments and perform research around midnight since it is the only time, we have an uninterrupted connection to the internet	3.58	1.15	High	13
4	When I need a device that doesn't have the necessary app on my phone, I borrow my brother's or sister's.	3.11	1.11	Moderate	23
5	When I don't comprehend a lecture or an instruction, I inquire about it to my classmates.	3.66	1.05	High	9
6	When I am not notified, I check the website to see if there are any events, or I ask one of my classmates.	3.84	1.06	High	3
7	My classmates and I engage online to acquire innovative concepts and to support one other so that nobody gets left behind.	3.56	1.07	High	14
8	I contact my instructors about the issues I'm experiencing because I have no control over my access to the internet.	3.25	1.07	Moderate	21.5
9	I benefit from the wellness break to replenish myself, get enough rest, and unwind.	3.63	1.13	High	10
10	I deal with my instructors with humility and express the issues at hand.	3.59	1.07	High	12
11	I have a timeline of everything that I need to accomplish so that I'm able to arrange all I need to do.	3.53	1.09	High	16.5
12	I write down all of my chores so that I am able to view them and decide which ones to do first.	3.04	1.05	Moderate	25
13	Since I have plenty of tasks to complete in the morning, I complete my instructional materials at night time.	3.68	1.14	High	8
14	I send the required materials ahead of time so that the instructors may verify them and request another if something is incorrect.	3.25	1.08	Moderate	21.5
15	I spend up the whole night reading the courses over and again to make sure that I comprehend them.	3.26	1.06	Moderate	19.5
16	I put in some extra time to meet all of my requirements before the scheduled time.	3.55	1.08	High	15
17	I devote precious moments with my loved ones to alleviate the tension caused by learning in modules.	3.53	1.10	High	16.5
18	Growing vegetation, hydrating our gardens, enjoying with our dogs, viewing films, and other pastimes make me filled with happiness.	3.74	1.08	High	7
19	When I am too exhausted, I take a moment to breathe of no less than fifteen minutes at a time.	3.78	1.03	High	4.5
20	I bear in mind that if I are interested in acquiring knowledge, no area of study should be impossible to accomplish.	3.78	1.07	High	4.5
21	I educate myself to restore attention whenever I feel like losing it to ensure I stay from getting behind.	3.75	1.05	High	6
22	I educate myself to restore attention whenever I feel like losing it to ensure I stay from getting behind.	3.94	1.05	High	2
23	I take an extra task or work for the sake of internet access or financial benefits.	3.26	1.11	Moderate	19.5
24	I cry in some certain moments because I have no idea what assignment to do and comply with immediately.	3.49	1.19	Moderate	18
25	When I am feeling depressed and overwhelmed due to hard academic work, I pray for courage, strength and direction.	4.26	1.00	High	1
	Over All	3.55	.62	High	

Note: The mean assessment level of coping mechanisms were measured and interpreted using the following scales and verbal interpretations: Very High (4.51 – 5.00); High (3.51 – 4.50); Moderate (2.51 – 3.50); Low (1.51 – 2.50); and Very Low (1.00 – 1.50).

The Mean Assessment of the WVSU Students on Coping Mechanism in Modular Instruction Classified According to Certain Variables

Table 5 shows that as an entire group (M = 3.55; SD = .62), the respondents have “high” level of assessment on their coping mechanism in the use of modular instruction.

Specifically, student-respondents from the Campus A (M = 3.66; SD = .47), Campus B (M = 3.61; SD = .61), Campus D (M = 3.62; SD = .76), and Campus F (M = 3.60; SD = .49) have ” high” level of assessment while Campus C (M = 3.46; SD = .67) and Campus E (M =3.47; SD = .60) have ”moderate” level of assessment on their coping mechanism in the use of modular instruction.

When classified according to their year level, the first year (M = 3.54; SD = .60), third year (M = 3.59; SD = .62) and fourth year students (M = 3.65; SD = .55) have “high” level of assessment on their coping mechanism while second year students (M = 3.49; SD = .61) have “moderate” level of assessment on their coping mechanism upon utilizing modules during the time of pandemic. As to their sex, female students (M = 3.62; SD = .55) have “high” level while male students (M = 3.45; SD = .69) have “moderate” level of assessment on their coping mechanism. Lastly, when classified as to their monthly family income, both students with monthly family income of Php 15,000 and above and below Php 15,000 (M = 3.55; SD = .62) have “high” level of assessment on their coping mechanism.

The standard deviations obtained for the entire group (SD = .62) showed a narrow dispersion of the means, indicating that students were homogeneous in terms of their level of assessment on their coping mechanism in utilizing modular instruction. The standard deviations ranging from .47 to .76 indicated a narrow dispersion of the means for each group, further revealing that the students in each group were homogeneous in terms of their level of assessment on their coping mechanism.

Table 5 next page shows the details.

Table 5: The Mean Assessment on Coping Mechanism of the WVSU Students in Modular Instruction When Classified According to Campus Affiliation, Year Level, Sex, and Monthly Family Income

Category	Mean	Description	SD
Entire Group	3.55	High	.62
Campus Affiliation			
Campus A	3.66	High	.47
Campus B	3.61	High	.61
Campus C	3.46	Moderate	.67
Campus D	3.62	High	.76
Campus E	3.47	Moderate	.60
Campus F	3.60	High	.49
Year Level			
1st Year	3.54	High	.60
2nd Year	3.49	Moderate	.61
3rd Year	3.59	High	.62
4th Year	3.65	High	.67
Sex			
Male	3.45	Moderate	.69
Female	3.62	High	.55
Monthly Family Income			
Php 15,000 and above	3.55	High	.62
Below Php 15,000	3.55	High	.62

Note: The mean assessment level of coping mechanisms were measured and interpreted using the following scales and verbal interpretations: Very High (4.51 – 5.00); High (3.51 – 4.50); Moderate (2.51 – 3.50); Low (1.51 – 2.50); and Very Low (1.00 – 1.50).

The Relationships between the Level of Challenges and Difficulties and the Mean Assessment on Coping Mechanisms of WVSU Students

The result of the Spearman’s rho test in Table 12 reveals a positive and significant relationship between the respondents’ the challenges and difficulties encountered by the respondents and the mean assessment on their

coping mechanisms ($r = 0.446$; $p = 0.000$). The p -value is less than 0.05, indicating that the respondents' challenges and difficulties encountered is a direct function of their coping mechanisms in facing pandemic situations while utilizing modular instruction. Thus, the challenges and difficulties encountered by the respondents significantly influence their coping mechanisms and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis in this regard is rejected.

Table 6: Spearman's rho Results for Testing the Significance of the Relationships between the Level of Challenges and Difficulties and the Mean Assessment on Coping Mechanisms of WVSU Students

Correlated Variables	N	r-value	Sig.
Challenges Encountered			
	865	.446***	.000
Coping Mechanisms			

*** $p < .001$

DISCUSSIONS

COVID-19 posed a threat to lives globally, and its repercussions extended to various facets of society. Education was not exempt from the harsh effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippine educational environment, like that of the rest of the world, introduced a modular distance learning mode to ensure that education was not hampered. A state university in the Philippines as one of the government owned universities, introduced remote modular instruction during the pandemic. In this case, the students were confronted with inescapable hardships and problems and utilized coping techniques to deal with them which this study focused on.

Despite the challenges and difficulties experienced by the learners during the conduct of modular instruction, the study however revealed a moderate level among the participants. There is a considerable number of published researches that conform with this result. This is affirmed by Barrot et al (2021) that students encountered the most prominent problems in remote distance learning to a moderate level. Furthermore, the learning environment of the learners largely caused affected their modular learning. The findings of the study carried out by Brachtel, Ipsier, and KeserAschenberger (2023) found that perceived enthusiasm and motivation is more closely connected with learning environment quality. This means that an encouraging learning environment may positively affect the students. Additionally, the findings of the study by Barrot, Llenares, del Rosario (2021) confirm that the learners' most difficult challenges were home distractions, restrictions on finishing their school requirements for some subjects, and choosing their learning environments and following schedule. Furthermore, the students' monthly family income has not influenced the challenges they have encountered. This implies that regardless of students' monthly family income, they have still experienced the same level of challenges and difficulties encountered in modular instruction. Similarly, Bacomo et al. (2022) confirmed that family income has nothing to do with the students' attitude towards their self - learning modules. However, the findings contradict Andrew et al. (2020), who found that age and family income have an impact on the learner's attitude during the pandemic. It is further different from Barrot et al (2021) that COVID19 made some students' financial problems worse, which impacted how well they were able to learn online.

On the other hand, students' resilience and adaptability are demonstrated by their capacity to exhibit a high coping mechanism in the face of problems faced throughout modular instruction. Despite the numerous challenges faced by this learning mode, students have demonstrated great adaptability and success in the remote educational setting. Significant factors have positively influenced the resiliency and high coping mechanisms of the learners. This is affirmed by Roberto, Sellon, Cherry, Jones and Winslow (2020) whose research findings revealed that spirituality has a favorable impact on resiliency, optimism, calm, hope and comfort, implying that a strong sense of spirituality may be an essential coping mechanism as the pandemic spread over the world. Similarly, according to Comendador, Encarnacion, Molleno, Espaldon and Francisco (2021) students also reportedly cope with by praying and crying. The rapid transition to remote study requires emotional adjustment from the students. It is critical to discover significant techniques of coping during the pandemic (Finlay, et al, 2021). Furthermore, the same researchers agreed that meditation, exercising mindfulness, endurance, patience, and breathing techniques were effective stress management and relaxation ways.

It is also evident in this study that the challenges and difficulties encountered by the respondents significantly influence their coping mechanisms and vice versa. Students' strong coping methods in the face of problems in modular instruction demonstrate their flexibility and their adaptability, resiliency, and dedication to learning. Their capacity to thrive in this educational modality highlights the necessity of developing self-directed learning abilities and offering support mechanisms to assist students in navigating and excelling in remote learning environments.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation provides an empirical, valid and reliable assessment of students' challenges, difficulties and coping mechanisms in the modular instruction which may provide an exciting opportunity to contribute in the development of tailored interventions in promoting students' wellness.

Despite the unexpected transition to remote learning during the pandemic, students encountered a moderate level of challenges and difficulties in the modular instruction. Notably, distractions in their learning environment posed a significant hurdle. This underscores the detrimental impact that a disruptive educational setting can have on learners in remote contexts. While these challenges and difficulties may have had repercussions on students' overall well-being, they demonstrated remarkable strength and resilience in effectively managing uncertainties.

On the other hand, the participants' collective experience in overcoming the challenges and difficulties gives them assurance to deal with things that come their way. This is revealed by their high coping mechanism. This research has proven that in times of struggle and difficulty students may resort to prayer and spirituality for strength and healing. Furthermore, keeping a positive outlook and growth mindset also became a strong coping strategy among the students. Despite the academic challenges and difficulties that the respondents had to deal with during the pandemic, it is encouraging to note that they were able to do so with the aid of their spiritual support from God, a positive outlook on life, and the assistance and cooperation of their peers, all of which had helped to lessen their burden. This finding suggests that education continues whatever the circumstances will hold. Even though students expressed scholastic difficulties during the pandemic, they were nonetheless able to survive by using their coping techniques.

Furthermore, the problems and obstacles they face are inextricably linked to their coping techniques. That suggests that the respondents' coping techniques are highly influenced by the obstacles and difficulties they face, and vice versa. This merely demonstrated that the students are more capable of employing suitable coping mechanisms in dealing with the stressful situations or experiences brought about by the pandemic while engaging in modular education activities. As a result, they are more equipped to deal with any situation that threatens their mental, emotional, and psychological well-being. This study strongly suggests that all students be reminded of the importance of having positive relationships with their family and friends. They are our backbone in all of our undertakings.

It appears essential that the university president and campus officials pay close attention to the findings of this study and integrate them as a framework for their implementing evidence - based practice and other programs in context. Specifically, this investigation has gathered significant findings that can become basis for the university to address the student's challenges and difficulties even after the learning instruction has slowly gone back to face-to-face mode. The university can strengthen the students' wellness break by not only providing a week of "academic break" but by providing emotional, mental and spiritual programs that will help students deal with the challenging demands of education even after the pandemic.

It is also necessary to improve students' access to guidance support services geared towards creating good coping mechanisms during the current crisis. There is also a need for a continuous collaborative support among parents, teachers, guidance counselors and other stakeholders of the university.

Finally, students' strong coping methods in the face of problems in modular instruction demonstrate their flexibility and their adaptability, resiliency, and dedication to learning. Their capacity to thrive in this educational format highlights the necessity of developing self-directed learning abilities and offering support mechanisms to assist students in navigating and excelling in remote learning environments.

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