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Lisa D. Camarador¹

Rhene A. Camarador²

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^{1,2}College of Human Kinetics, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines



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Lisa D. Camarador¹, Rhene A. Camarador²

^{1,2}College of Human Kinetics, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines

Email:ldcamarador@pup.edu.ph¹, racamarador@pup.edu.ph²

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 crisis greatly affected the educational system around the world. Shifting from traditional face-to-face learning to distance or hybrid learning brings big adjustments for teachers and students. Given the current situation, it is important to develop a greater understanding of teachers' experiences in terms of teaching outdoor and adventure activities during the pandemic. To date, although several studies have been conducted in this area across the globe, the researchers believe that inadequate information is available on the teachers' challenges and opportunities in teaching outdoor and adventure activities and their significance in the new normal setting. Thus, this research intended to fill such a gap. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, findings revealed that teachers strongly agree on the positive benefits of outdoor and adventure activities. Unfortunately, limited or no access to outdoor facilities, the internet, and gadgets are the most common challenges they experience. Despite the challenges, it is also found that teaching the subject provides opportunities for outdoor-related life skills to be applied in real-life applications even during a pandemic, as well as for teachers to be more creative in developing activities for students. Further studies are recommended to explore the experiences of teachers in teaching outdoor and adventure activities in schools. It is hoped that the result of this study will contribute to policy-making, intervention programs, and professional support that will strengthen the implementation of the program.

Keywords:teaching outdoor and adventure activities, COVID-19, significance, challenges, opportunities

INTRODUCTION

It is very evident that outdoor and adventure activities provide several opportunities to promote health and wellness for all ages. To name a few, engaging in outdoor and adventure activities helps to develop physical health (Brown et al., 2022); mental health (Piccininni et al., 2018; Zamzow & Ernst, 2020; Brown et al., 2022); resiliency (Kelly, 2019); psycho-social skills (Coate & Pimlott-Wilson, 2019; Sabet, 2018; Kumpulainen et al., 2020); and a sense of belonging (Refshauge et al., 2015). It also lowers psychological stress (Chang, 2019), makes people feel more connected to nature (Schwass et al., 2021; Pirchio et al., 2021), and boosts creativity (Yilmaz, 2016; Ratcliffe et al., 2022).

As strongly stated by Tremblay et al. (2015), despite risk and safety issues, providing an opportunity for outdoor play is essential for the healthy development of children. They also claim that children should have more chances to play outside on their own in all settings, including the home, the community, places outside that are set up for play, and especially schools.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the educational system was greatly affected. More than 90% of students worldwide have been forced to adapt to new modes of learning (Sharma, & Alvi, 2021). Shifting from traditional face-to-face to online-based teaching and learning (Todd, 2020) has been heavily reliant on technology (Afrilyasanti, & Basthomi, 2022). Indeed, assessments of teachers' readiness reveal the lack of preparedness at the start of the pandemic (Scherer et al., 2021). Due to rapid changes in the school system, limited concrete and clear instructions existed for the implementation of the new mode of teaching (Korcz et al., 2021).

Teachers have been urgently required to create modules, tutorial videos, and other instructional materials to mitigate problems over the lack of teaching materials to be used for both virtual and remote teaching and learning. Furthermore, an additional challenge for physical education teachers is figuring out how to teach outdoor and adventure activities, as well as experiential learning in nature, in the midst of the new mode of learning. Though in other countries, outdoor adventure education is being taught with the support of technology (Karlsson, 2022), it remained a huge challenge for academic institutions in the Philippines to implement the shift in the mode of teaching and learning for outdoor education.

At present, schools worldwide are easing operations back to the traditional in-person set-up, but with an ardent reminder that the COVID-19 virus will be here to stay (Greshko, 2021) and that the same situation might also

happen at any point in time (Maragakis, 2021). The researchers, therefore, believe that further strengthening the program will be a great opportunity for the teachers to be ready for the next possible pandemic. Utilizing the power of the outdoors to promote resiliency (Allan & McKenna, 2019) and self-esteem (Barton et al., 2015; Scarf et al., 2018) will foster better prospects in the delivery of this subject, not only for students but also for teachers.

Though most activities have been put to a halt at the peak of the pandemic, outdoor tourism and nature-based travel such as hiking, camping, biking, trail-running, beachineering, and the like have become more popular (Asian Development Bank, 2022; Letigio, 2021). People are more motivated to go on outdoor adventures to break the impact of community isolation. Even the Philippine government is encouraging children to get out in the midst of the pandemic to enhance their well-being (Carlos, 2021). Thus, engaging in such activities among students is inevitable. Making them more ready, more responsible, and resilient is very important, especially in handling emergency situations. Therefore, it is the teachers' responsibility to provide quality and fun outdoor and adventure activities. Letting them have that real-life hands-on experiences will make them more prepared to face the life's challenges that they might encounter along with their adventure.

The context of outdoor and adventure activities as part of the school curriculum in the Philippines was not yet fully established until the K12 program was implemented (DepEd, 2016) in basic education and Physical Activity Towards Health and Fitness (PATHFit) in tertiary physical education (CHED, 2021) although it was among the content of PE subjects for Grade 9, Junior High School, and Grade 12 in Senior High School (DepEd, 2016). Even prior to the pandemic, teaching outdoor and adventure activities as part of the curriculum is already very challenging here in the Philippines even if there are so many benefits to engaging in outdoor activities as there are rigorous requirements and even policies that prohibit or limit the participation of the students and even the facilitation of teachers (DepEd Order No. 66, 2017 & CHED Memo No. 63, 2017). Teaching the subject focuses more on theories than actual learning experiences.

Moreover, the researchers believe that limited or no existing studies have been done here in the Philippines yet. Thus, the study aims to explore the challenges, significance, and possible opportunities of teaching outdoor and adventure activities as perceived by the teachers. It is hoped that the results of the study may be used as good baseline data in creating programs and school policies that will support teachers and students in implementing outdoor and adventure activities. The findings may contribute to the improvement of policies concerning the teaching of outdoor and adventure education and mitigate possible challenges.

MATERIAL & METHODS

Using a survey questionnaire and FGD, this study utilized the mixed-method approach to answer the research questions. It was used by the researchers to achieve rich findings and deeper understanding that will further provide information on teachers' experiences in teaching outdoor and adventure activities in school.

Participants

Table 1: Participants' Profiles

Variables	Descriptions	Frequency	%
Gender			
Male		109	49.77
Female		98	44.75
LGBT		12	5.48
Age			
20-30 years old		94	42.92
31-40 years old		62	28.31
41-50 years old		49	22.37
51-60 years old		10	4.57
61 years old and above		4	1.83
Years of Teaching Experience			
1 year and below		33	15.07
2 to 5 years		61	27.85
6 to 10 years		40	18.26
11 to 15 years		31	14.16
16 years and above		54	24.66
Type of Academic Institution			
Public		169	77.17
Private		47	21.46
Others		3	1.37

Region (place of institution)		
National Capital Region (NCR)	102	46.58
Ilocos Region (Region I)	12	5.48
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	2	0.91
Cagayan Valley (Region II)	1	0.46
Central Luzon (Region III)	15	6.85
Calabarzon (Region IV-A)	46	21.00
Mimaropa Region (Region IV-B)	10	4.57
Bicol Region (Region V)	5	2.28
Western Visayas (Region VI)	4	1.83
Central Visayas (Region VII)	1	0.46
Eastern Visayas (Region VIII)	7	3.20
Zamboanga Peninsula (Region IX)	1	0.46
Northern Mindanao (Region X)	3	1.37
Davao Region (Region XI)	3	1.37
Soccsksargen (Region XII)	1	0.46
Caraga Region (Region XIII)	4	1.83
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)	2	0.91
N=219		

The respondents of this study are 219 (109 male, 98 female, and 12 LGBTQ) teachers, most of whom are aged 20 to 40 years old. The majority of them (169) teaches in public schools, with 47 from private schools and three are from other types of academic institutions where they had several years of teaching experience. Most of the teachers come from the National Capital Region (102), followed by those from Calabarzon (46), which had the highest number of cases during the pandemic. Nevertheless, each region has respondents who voluntarily answered the questionnaire. Only those individuals who responded with their consent were counted in the research. On the other hand, there are four (4) teachers voluntarily participated in the focus group discussion and two (2) underwent a structured interview.

Instruments

The study collected the data using a survey questionnaire and focused group discussion (FGD). The questionnaire was divided into four sections: a) a profile of the respondents; b) a rating scale section for the significance of outdoor and adventure activities; c) a survey on the challenges and opportunities of teachers teaching in outdoor and adventure activities in the new normal; and d) closed-ended questions. The first section is about the profile of the respondents (gender, age, years of teaching experience, type of academic institution, and region where they are teaching). The second part consists of 10 items, enumerating the significance of outdoor and adventure activities amidst a pandemic. A 4-Likert scale was used (i.e., 4-strongly agree, 3-agree, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree) to rate the items. The third section consists of 14-item questions for the challenges experienced by the teachers and 6 items for the opportunities in teaching outdoor and adventure activities, with an "others, please specify" section to allow the respondents to add possible answers. The respondents may also provide multiple responses. Finally, a closed-ended question on the insights of the teachers on matters pertaining to the offering of outdoor and adventure activities given the proper training and workshops and if the offering of outdoor and adventure-related activities will be enjoyed and participated in by the students. Using the Delphi method, the instrument underwent content and face validation by experienced outdoor educators; a teacher teaching outdoor and adventure activities; and a practitioner in the field of outdoor recreation. The reliability of the tool was also tested with an acceptable result of Cronbach's alpha, $\alpha = 0.82$.

The FGD session was divided into 2 parts: participant's information (age, years of teaching, type of academic institution, and school level); and main questions pertaining to their a) views on the significance of outdoor and adventure activities; b) challenges they experienced; and c) opportunities in teaching the subject. The protocol and interview-guide questions were validated by the same experts.

Data Collection and Analysis

To gather the data needed for this study, the researchers utilized a researcher-made questionnaire, which was distributed online. The questionnaire was completed in about 10-15 minutes and given one month for the collection of responses. For a better and deeper understanding, participants were invited to participate voluntarily in the focus group discussion. The participants received messages requesting them to participate. The session was attended by teachers who are teaching in both Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and Basic Education Institutions (BEI). The

FGD lasted for about 90 minutes, during which participants were allowed to share more insights on the a)significance of outdoor and adventure activities, b) challenges, and c) opportunities in teaching the subject. The interview was conducted via Zoom conferencing at the most convenient time for the participants. However due to the request of other participants, some of them answered on paper and sent it through email. With the participants' permission, the interview was digitally recorded to assure accurate transcription and analysis. In addition, to limit social desirability biases, the purpose of the study was clearly explained, the confidentiality of the identity and responses, and their freedom to ask questions and give views during the whole interview (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). Ethical considerations were strictly followed during the whole data collection procedure. For validity, collected interview transcriptions were returned to participants for revision, addition, and approval.

Frequency and percent distribution, and mean average were used in the analysis of quantitative data and presented in tables. On the other hand, the Kruskal–Wallis H–Test was used for the comparison of the respondent’s assessment on the extent of agreement on the significance of outdoor and adventure activities during the COVID-19 pandemic when grouped according to their profile variables. The quantitative results were analyzed and discussed in comparison with the qualitative data gathered through focus group discussions. To protect the participants' privacy, we have utilized pseudonyms in this study.

RESULTS

1. Significance of Teaching Outdoor and Adventure Activities in the New Normal

Significance	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. help people to stay physically healthy	3.86	0.38	Strongly Agree
2. reduce stress and provide relaxation	3.86	0.38	Strongly Agree
3. lower anxiety	3.84	0.37	Strongly Agree
4. reduce post-traumatic symptoms	3.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
5. improve critical thinking	3.83	0.39	Strongly Agree
6. develop problem solving skill	3.79	0.42	Strongly Agree
7. improve social and emotional skills	3.87	0.35	Strongly Agree
8. develop positive attitude/behavior: (e.g. self-confidence, self-esteem, empathy, teamwork, and trust,)	3.89	0.33	Strongly Agree
9. enhance creativity	3.87	0.35	Strongly Agree
10. improve environmental awareness and sensitivity	3.89	0.32	Strongly Agree
Scale: 3.5- 4 = Strongly Agree; 2.5- 3.49 = Agree, 1.5- 2.49= Disagree; 1-1.49 = Strongly Disagree			

Table 5 features the teachers’ level of agreement with regard to their views on the significance of teaching outdoor and adventure-related activities in the new normal. It is clear that teachers strongly agree on the positive effects of including outdoor and adventure activities in physical education classes. They believe that through these activities they develop positive attitudes or behaviors such as confidence, self-esteem, empathy, teamwork, and trust (3.89) and improve environmental awareness and sensitivity (3.89). Furthermore, teachers also believe that it helps to improve social and emotional skills (3.87) and enhance creativity (3.87).

The replies to the interview questions largely supported the following advantages of teaching outdoor and adventure activities in Philippine schools, as presented in the following excerpts:

“They will become more interested and imaginative.” (T1)

“Students can become more creative and imaginative.” (T2)

“very flexible and creative for the minds of the teachers (T3)

“They can learn a lot of life skills such as decision-making and common sense.” (T1)

“It should be taught in school because it is a life skill.” (T2)

“They can learn life skills more than the theory, which they can learn from the different outdoor skills.” (T3)

“Learners will acquire vital life skills by experiencing adventures.” (T5)

“Outdoor activities offer basic life skills/survival skills.” (T6)

“It’s an ideal place for the students to be introduced to the outside world.” (T4)

“We are also teaching them to have a lifestyle where they can still give back and go back to nature to make them feel grounded, despite the advancement of technology.” (T4)

Interestingly, for Teacher 3 (T3)

“... the challenges are there, but it is very flexible and creative for the minds of the teachers. The teachers came up with different strategies and techniques on how we could educate and help the learners in the field where it’s not only benefiting the students, but also the teachers handling the subject”

2. Challenges in Teaching Outdoor and Adventure Activities in the New Normal

Challenges	f	Rank
1. Limited or poor mastery of the subject matter	54	11
2. Difficulty in providing performance evaluation	68	8
3. Risk management and safety issues	102	5
4. Limited or no gadgets available	107	3
5. Limited internet access/connectivity	135	2
6. Limited online teaching and learning resources	95	6
7. Limited or no access to outdoor facilities due to pandemic	148	1
8. Having a hard time in developing instructional materials e.g. module, instructional videos and alike	70	7
9. Lack of training and workshops related to the subject	106	4
10. Limited or no personal experience in participating and facilitating an outdoor and adventure activities	55	10
11. Insufficient support from the administration in offering the outdoor and adventure activities	63	9
12. Providing performance evaluation	21	14
13. Support from the administration in offering the outdoor and adventure activities	23	12
14. Crafting of instructional materials e.g. module, instructional videos, ppt presentations	22	13
Others	6	15

As shown in Table 3, the top three challenges that teachers face when teaching outdoor and adventure activities are limited or no access to outdoor facilities due to the pandemic (148), limited or no internet access or connectivity (135), and limited or no gadgets (107). In addition, the teachers also believe that they lack training and workshops related to the subject (106) and they have concerns about risk management and safety issues (102) in facilitating the outdoor programs, which are ranked 4 and 5 respectively.

As stated in the interview by teacher 1 (T1), "One of the challenges is the lack of experience on other topics, like biking." Teacher 5 (T5) also added, "The teacher must be ready for the challenges like securing parents' consent prior to the activity, the venue, transportation, and activities to be administered. Not to mention the liability and risks."

Remarkably, a few respondents have cited the following additional challenges:

“In our school, we only conduct PE classes once a week for SHS PE classes. That is why the time is really not enough to learn the hands-on.” (T1)

“Another problem in the curriculum is the time allotment, especially for one hour for PE, since just sharing your experiences in the mountains will take more time.” (T2)

“Still, lack of time is the main problem. One hour is not enough to discuss the essential topics and skills with the students, and that is the most challenging one.” (T3)

“Based on my face-to-face experience, one of the problems is the lack of facilities and equipment.” (T2)

“The schools go back to face-to-face, a possible problem in teaching hands-on activities is the equipment needed, because it is important for them to see it.” (T3)

A strong statement is given by Teacher 4 (T4).

“... it seems that we are restricted in what we can share with those students, maybe because we are investing in our experiences, but some teachers who are just teaching by the book. They strictly follow what is in the book, and just teach what is written in the book. In terms of lesson plans, only limited topics can be tackled because of the time frame provided by the school and the curriculum itself.”

On the other hand, Teacher 6 (T6), in the interview, has shared her experiences concerning the use of equipment in teaching outdoor activities.

“I experienced teaching this subject in a Montessori school, although it was my first-year teaching that time I didn’t had much problems when it comes to turning my discussions into real practice because we have enough materials to use. Every topic there is a provided material like tents, iron pads for fire making, bamboos for tripod, rope/s, cooking materials, compasses, first aid kits, and more.”

She added, “When I went to a different school, I wanted to practice that subject again, but the real challenge was the materials. I was willing to provide, but seeing how many sections I handle in one semester, I cannot cover the budget for materials”.

3. Opportunities in Teaching Outdoor and Adventure Activities

Opportunities	f	Rank
1. To be more creative in developing activities for students	166	2
2. To utilize outdoor related life skills in real life application even at time of pandemic	181	1
3. To equip the students in facing the new normal in the outdoors.	163	3.5
4. To use natural environment as a possible intervention for students suffering different mental and emotional issues	163	3.5
5. To do more researches related outdoor and natural environment as tool for intervention after COVID 19 Pandemic	134	6
6. To collaborate with other experts, advocates, and practitioners in the field to promote outdoors	154	5

Despite the several challenges, another interesting part of the current study explored the respondents' opportunities for teaching outdoor and adventure activities.

Table 4 reveals that teaching outdoor and adventure activities allows teachers to use outdoor-related life skills in real-life applications even during a pandemic (181) and to be more creative in developing activities for students (166), which ranked first and second, respectively.

The following interview statements from the teachers would prove these points:

“It will allow you to take best practices and become versatile in teaching outdoor and adventure activities.” (T5)

“...the opportunity for me here is that I also learn. It contributes to my growth, awareness, and life skill.” (T6)

“Teaching outdoor activities provides us with personal growth because somehow, as we attend professional training and seminars, we do not only enrich our knowledge and skills, but we develop our wisdom that we can apply in our own personal life.” (T2)

“...we develop our creativity in the teaching strategies on how we can deliver the subject.” (T1)

Tied at 3.5 are the items, it also provide an opportunity to use natural environment as a possible intervention for students suffering different mental and emotional issues (163); and to equip the students in facing the new normal in the outdoors (163) were some of the opportunities.

Notably, several respondents also cited the following additional opportunities:

“It may also help us get promoted because schools consider us to be a facilitator or organizer of hands-on activities.” (T1)

“...all the professional learning and experiences that we can have will deepen our understanding and make us unique among teachers in other fields.” (T3)

“Maybe we can say that we are experts or experienced in the field, and were able to somehow touch the lives of other colleagues.” (T3)

“Somehow, it also serves as an avenue to promote the field of outdoor and adventure education not just to our students but at the same time to our friends, colleagues, and even family members.” (T3)

“It gives us an opportunity to integrate technology into how we teach in the outdoors.” (T4)

“Personal feeling of fulfillment from the experience you provided for your students.” (T5)

“It will be an excellent diversion when stressed from work.” (T5)

4. Teachers' Opinion in Teaching Outdoor and Adventure Activities

	Response	f	%
Given the proper training and workshops in facilitating outdoor and adventure activities in the new normal, do you think offering outdoor and adventure activities are possible and recommended?	Yes	188	85.84
	No	26	11.87
	No response	5	2.28
Would you think offering outdoor and adventure related activities will be enjoyed and participated by the students?	Yes	195	89.04
	No	19	8.68

	No response	5	2.28
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Table 5 depicts the teachers' opinions on teaching outdoor and adventure activities in the new normal. Most of the respondents believe that given the right training in facilitating the activities, it is possible and recommended in schools (85.84%) and will be enjoyed by the students (89.04%) in the new normal.

DISCUSSION

The study explored the teachers' perceptions of the significance of teaching outdoor and adventure activities; their challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic; and the opportunities they get from teaching the subject.

The findings revealed that they strongly agree that outdoor and adventure activities provide several positive benefits. With reference to the cited studies (Brown et al., 2022; Keskin et al., 2022; Andre et al., 2017; Wigglesworth & Heintzman, 2020; Coate & Pimlott-Wilson, 2019; Colella & D'arando, 2021; Zamzow & Ernst, 2020; Sabet, 2018; Kumpulainen et al., 2020) the current study has complemented their findings on the psychological, social, and emotional benefits of engaging in outdoor and adventure activities. However, in the study by Leake (2018), it is shown that during the outdoor education course, most of the students as well as the instructors have experienced being sick. Some of whom have remained ill even after the course. It is also mentioned that the greatest determinant for someone to stay physically healthy or fit is a well-balanced diet. In addition, the systematic review of the literature regarding adventure education revealed that adventure-based learning in physical education has less moderate-to-vigorous physical activity than traditional physical education lessons (Lee & Zhang, 2019). It seems that, although there are several benefits that can be obtained from outdoor and adventure activities, there are still negative impacts and risks to manage as they may be encountered along the way. Thus, proper planning and implementation of the program must be done.

It is also found in this present study that being involved in outdoor and adventure activities improves environmental awareness and sensitivity, which was strongly agreed upon by the participants. This result affirms the findings in Wigglesworth & Heintzman's (2020) study where participants adapted to various environmental behaviors such as practicing the "Leave No Trace" policy, appreciating nature, taking care of and being responsible for the environment, protecting water reservoirs, becoming environmental stewards, and the like. Aside from practicing these behaviors, they also teach and instill these behaviors in their learners. Andre et al. (2017) also emphasized that schools with outdoor recreation activities support schools' environmental goals. Outdoor-related activities can change people's perspectives and actions toward the environment.

Regarding the enhancement of creativity, the same result was also observed by the teachers on the effects of outdoor activities on children's development in the study of Akpınar and Kandir (2022). It was found that outdoor play activities increase the students' creativity and develop their problem-solving and observation skills. Likewise, in the literature review by Valentini and Donatiello (2021), outdoor education gives learners the opportunity to independently solve problems and encourages them to be creative. They also concluded that outdoor education has a positive influence on students' creativity and divergent thinking. These skills are important in children's learning experiences, and through outdoor activities, they can learn while they are enjoying themselves. The value of outdoor teaching is difficult to anticipate. It appears that offering outdoor activities in a post-COVID pandemic is promising (Barford, 2022).

Outdoor and adventure activities are indeed enjoyable and educational. Although the teachers generally had positive views on the benefits, there were several challenges experienced teaching the subject. Limited or no access to outdoor facilities due to the pandemic was the greatest challenge. These finding runs parallel to the result of the study by Aguinaldo (2021), which revealed that lack of space for performance tasks was the most difficult experience for PE teachers.

As Raiola and Aliberti (2021) discussed in their study, the reason for low engagement in outdoor exercise is the lack of parks, pedestrian spaces, sports facilities, and areas. Furthermore, even prior to pandemic isolation, one of the major issues is the lack of publicly available parks and other terrain for outdoor activities (Orbos, 2020; Yamsuan, 2019). Public open spaces are essential for children to move freely and develop abilities in a variety of learning areas. If outdoor activities are introduced adequately, including overnight camps on school premises as well as extended stays at residential facilities situated further away, it will provide greater potential benefits at all stages of learning (Christie et al., 2014), such as experiential and self-directed learning skills in a fun and exciting environment (Rivkin, 2014).

Another serious problem that teachers have encountered is technological issues such as the limited or no internet access or connectivity, and limited availability of gadgets. These problems were also seen in the studies from the United States (Centeio, 2017), Singapore (Mettis and Våljataga, 2019), and the Philippines (Aguinaldo, 2021; Tarrayo, 2022), where issues with reliable internet access and limited bandwidth were the common problems that caused learning interruptions. In contrast, Poland, North Macedonia, Croatia, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Kosovo are among the European nations in the study by Korcz et al. (2021) that do have excellent internet connectivity, but there is a lack of training regarding the use of information technology (IT), the use of various online platforms, and a lack of appropriate equipment at home. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to unequal access to reliable high-

speed Internet connections. As emphasized in the studies of Edginton et al. (2016), and Mok et al. (2020) prior to the pandemic, it is important to have technology-competent teachers to support PE classes using technology, and more so in this new normal where hybrid learning has been widely implemented. All teachers, regardless of economic status, locality, and field of specialization, must have strong technological support to deliver quality instruction for the students.

The lack of training and workshops related to the subject was also reported as one of the challenges for the teachers, which was also revealed in Tuuling et al. (2019) and Jeong and So (2020). According to Jidovtseff et al. (2021), teachers underwent training to deal with the outdoor education curriculum but do not know how to handle these subjects in the field. The researchers also believe the claim of Ugalingan et al. (2021) that conventional professional development initiatives for the preparation of teachers are insufficient to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Just like in the Philippines, outdoor and adventure activities were recently included in basic (DepEd Order No. 66, s. 2017) and tertiary (CHED Memo 39, s. 2021) education curricula. But since then, there has been no wide initiative for the teachers to undergo a series of training and workshops for both levels. Therefore, it is really a challenge for the teachers to figure out how the subject, which is considered experiential learning by nature, can be taught in the new normal setting. Another one of the notable findings, that is similar to the study of Hasan et al. (2020), was the insufficient time allocated for physical education classes because school administrators did not place a high focus on PE. On the other hand, students would love to have more time for physical education (Orlanda, 2015).

The present study likewise revealed, that though not an urgent issue compared to other challenges, the need for the school administration's support in promoting and implementing outdoor activities is an important factor for the success of the program. This accords with the previous statement by Remington and Legge (2016) that principals disallowed these kinds of activities as the principals themselves did not lead any such activities at school. Outdoor activities as part of Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE) include non-negotiable elements such as experiential learning, being primarily outside, challenge by choice, and risk management (Williams, A., & Wainwright, N., 2016). Having a perceived or real risk is unavoidable but can be managed. In fact, Woodman et al. (2020) found in their study that risk can be good for self-esteem. He concluded that participation in a high-risk activity showed less difficulty in managing emotions and better self-esteem after the activity. Therefore, the support from the administration for the professional development of teachers as well as support policies must be strengthened to minimize the risk.

All the challenges encountered by the teachers due to the rapid change in mode of teaching brought about by the pandemic, provides an opportunity to further improve their creativity to ensure quality, challenging, and enjoyable activities for the students. This finding supports the study of Konukman et al. (2022) in Turkey, that they become better at learning digital technology during a pandemic. It is also interesting to find out that teachers utilize outdoor-related life skills in real-life application even at the time of a pandemic. This finding is consistent with the studies that reported teachers' improvement in self-efficacy for teaching outdoor education (Hovey et al., 2020) and leadership in teaching outdoor education, which developed amidst the pandemic (Quay et al., 2020). It only confirms that it's not only the students who receive the benefits, but it also provides an opportunity for teachers to grow.

Lastly, it is very evident that the teachers are very positive towards the outdoor activities in schools, and they believe that the students will enjoy these tasks. These findings were backed up by the studies of Cooley et al. (2016) and Fägerstam & Grothéus (2018) where the participants in their have experienced positive and high levels of satisfaction and enjoyment in participating in outdoor and adventure activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of the importance of the teaching outdoor and adventure activities in school as perceived by the teachers. It also tackles the challenges and opportunities of teachers teaching the subject in the Philippines. This study shows that, generally, they strongly affirmed that having outdoor and adventure activities in schools has several positive benefits for the student—physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically. Several challenges were also reported, including limited or no access to outdoor facilities due to the pandemic, technological issues, a lack of professional development programs, and risk management and safety concerns. Given all these challenges, the risk, and the new mode of teaching and learning in the new normal, the full potential of outdoor and adventure activities is yet to come. On the other hand, to get the most out of outdoor learning, classrooms shouldn't just be moved outside. Instead, teachers need to be better prepared to teach outdoor and adventure learning.

Furthermore, this study also reveals that despite all the challenges they experience in teaching the subject, they do so on a positive note. Teaching the different outdoor and adventure activities provides them an opportunity to use their life skills amidst the pandemic and to be more creative in developing activities for students. More so, it also paved the way to using nature as a possible intervention for students suffering from different mental and emotional issues and equipping them to face the new normal in the outdoors. Researchers believe that with full support from the administration, the program will be more effective, safe, and enjoyable for our dear students.

Even though the study only employed an online survey and had a limited sample size, substantial information from the interview data was found, covering the teachers' perspectives and experiences in teaching outdoor and adventure activities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study would provide a deeper understanding of the teachers' challenges in handling outdoor and adventure activities. This could be used in designing professional development and intervention programs that will strengthen the content and pedagogical skills of the teachers. School administrators may also find the findings useful in creating support policies and curriculum to provide quality outdoor and adventure education. This study may also be an eye opener for the government which should acknowledge the potential benefits of outdoor engagement not only for the students but also for the teachers. The researchers hope that the government will provide financial, infrastructure, and policy support to further promote active engagement in the outdoors, both inside and outside of the school grounds. It is recommended to explore the best practices and coping strategies of the teachers in teaching outdoor and adventure activities. We might as well conduct a parallel study to understand the students' experiences in learning the subject and their attitude towards it. As a final point, the pandemic has reshaped the educational system. Understanding and appreciating the contribution of outdoor and adventure activities in schools amidst challenges leads to the opportunity for better alignment of programs and policies that will promote better standards and prepare our students for lifelong learning through physical activities in the outdoors.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflicting interest with respect to the content of this paper.

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