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UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING

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Abstract

Effective teaching has always been considered as the foundation of meaningful learning in every educational setting. However, the elements of effective teaching seem to be mysterious. This study aimed to identify the important elements that make teaching effective as perceived by university students. The findings from the analysis showed that students perceived coming well prepared to class and giving clear explanations as the most important elements of effective teaching. Other important elements include respecting each student as an individual, letting students participate in sharing their knowledge and experiences, summarizing major learning points to students, being energetic and dynamic, being eager to know whether the class understands him/her or not, and teaching to encourage discussion. There was no significant difference in perceived effective teaching in terms of sex and year level. However, there were differences in perceptions in terms of the program of studies. Thus, university students perceived organization and clarity of teaching and relationship with individual students as the most important elements of effective teaching. Hence, it is important that teachers prepare for their classes well and respect each student as an individual to support the highest possible learning environment for university students.

Keywords: *effective teaching, students' perception, teacher-student interaction*

Traditionally, the quality of teaching has been assessed through students' feedback or course evaluation. Students' rating of instruction to gauge the quality of teaching has been practiced in schools for almost a century. However, there has been debate over the clarity of qualities that make teaching effective. Thus, the question, "What makes a teacher effective in his/her teaching?" has been the most intriguing one. Teachers and lecturers are faced with the most crucial question, how are we to teach effectively or how are we to help students learn?

Several studies between the 1970s–2000s (Borich, 2017; Brophy, 1981; Good et al., 1975) showed that effective teachers have some qualities in common and the perceptions of effective teaching contribute to the teaching and learning process. These studies generated lists of basic "effective teacher" characteristics such as: clarity in teaching, organized lesson structure, classroom management that maximizes student attention, active teaching, thought-provoking and engaging questioning, and frequent feedback.

Teachers may gain significant insight into new approaches to engaging students by using students' perceptions to measure instructor success and the quality of their teaching (Chang, 2010). Student surveys can be a useful and reliable data source for evaluating teaching effectiveness (Wahlquist & Bone, 2000).

A study showed that students' perceptions of teachers' characteristics and teaching have a significant impact on students' attitudes towards learning (Etuk, et al., 2013). Students' perceptions have been studied as a method of measuring effective clinical instructor's characteristics (Ismail et al., 2016).

Another study showed that students' perceptions and opinions can be the most valuable source of information measuring the effectiveness of teaching and thus, improving teaching and learning (Ferguson, 2012). A recent study reported that effective teaching is about adapting to changing circumstances (Chew & Cerbin, 2021). Another study showed that effective teaching practices are closely related to both managing and motivating students (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). Thus, teachers should be competent enough to make students' learning a successful one. However, having in-depth knowledge of the subject matter is not sufficient to ensure that teachers will be effective and provide successful learning. Hence, this study investigated and analyzed university students' perceptions of effective teaching.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was descriptive. It aimed at investigating and analyzing university students' perceptions of effective teaching. The researchers selected university students from six programs (faculties) from an international university in Thailand. The university was chosen based on the proximity of the workplace of the researchers.

Instrumentation

Data for this study were collected using a survey questionnaire adapted from Eble's (1988) effective teaching recognition and evaluation format. The questionnaire comprised five subgroups of thirty-five items. The items were scaled as (5) very important, (4) important, (3) somewhat important, (2) not so important, and (1) not important at all. This means that students' perceptions of the practices of teachers are considered as not at all important to very important that demonstrates the effectiveness of teaching.

Data Collection

There were about 600 students in the international program at the selected university. Simple random sampling method was used. The effective teaching survey questionnaires were distributed to all university students. A total of 103 university students from different faculties in the university participated in the study. To avoid exposing any of the individual responses, the data obtained from respondents were examined in a group setting. All ethical concerns, such as data privacy and confidentiality, were effectively addressed.

Data Analysis

A quantitative method was used in the study. The data collected were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and exported into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics, particularly frequency and percentage, was used to explain the distribution of the students' responses. Analysis of variance was utilized to determine if the differences in terms of sex, year level and program of studies were statistically significant.

Results and Discussion

Tables 1- 4 show the respondents' profiles of this study. Distribution was presented using frequency and percentage.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Year Level

	Frequency	Percent
Freshman	40	30.3
Sophomore	24	18.2
Junior	28	21.2
Senior	11	8.3

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by the year level of the students. It shows that the highest number of respondents were freshmen followed by junior and sophomore respectively. Senior students' participation was the least.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents by Sex

	Frequency	Percent
Male	49	37.1
Female	54	40.9

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by sex. There was a little higher number of female respondents (54) compared to male respondents (49).

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents by Programs of Study

	Frequency	Percent
ESL	14	10.6
Education	48	36.4
Business	11	8.3
Theology	10	7.6
Arts & Humanities	12	9.1
Information Tech.	8	6.1

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by programs of study with the highest number of respondents from the Faculty of Education followed by the ESL program, Arts and Humanities, Business, Theology, and students from the faculty of Information Technology.

Table 4 illustrates the perceptions of the respondents on effective teaching based on the 35 teaching effectiveness elements as organized into five major subheadings. These subcategories include analytical/synthetic approach, organization/clarity of teaching, lecturer-group interactions, lecturer-individual student interactions, and dynamism/enthusiasm of the lecturer.

In the analytical/synthetic approach to teaching, all respondents considered lecturers who give references for more interesting and involved points and present facts and concepts from related fields as the most important elements, though of different importance. About 40.8% of the respondents perceived them as very important, 44.7% regarded them as fairly important while 13.6% and 14.6% considered them somewhat important. The least important elements in the analytical/synthetic approach were lecturers who discuss points of view other than their own with 29.1% considered them very important, 37.9% perceived them important, 31.1% considered them somewhat important, while 1% thought they were not such important elements of effective teaching.

Table 4

Respondents' Perceptions on the Elements of Effective Teaching

Elements of Effective Teaching Sub-groups	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not so Important	Not important at all	Total Score	Rank
Analytical/synthetic approach							
Discusses point of view other than his/her own	150 (29.1)	156 (37.9)	96 (31.1)	2 (1)	0	404	33rd
Contrasts implications of various theories	180 (35)	188 (45.6)	57 (18.4)	2 (1)	0	427	26th
Discusses recent developments in the field	220 (42.7)	152 (36.9)	57 (18.4)	2 (1)	0	431	23rd
Presents origins of ideas and concepts	175 (34)	204 (49.5)	48 (15.5)	2 (1)	0	429	25th
Gives references for more interesting and involved points	210 (40.8)	184 (44.7)	42 (13.6)	0	0	436	21st
Presents facts and concepts from related fields	210 (40.8)	184 (44.7)	45 (14.6)	0	0	439	18th
Emphasizes conceptual understanding	195 (37.9)	200 (48.5)	36 (11.7)	4 (1.9)	0	435	22nd
Total						3,001	
Organization/Clarity							
Explains clearly	350 (68)	88 (21.4)	27 (8.7)	4 (1.9)	0	469	2nd
Is well prepared	355 (68.9)	100 (24.3)	21 (6.8)	0	0	476	1st
Gives lectures that are easy to outline	230 (44.7)	120 (29.1)	66 (21.4)	10 (4.9)	0	426	27th
Is careful and precise in answering questions	240 (46.6)	168 (40.8)	33 (10.7)	4 (1.9)	0	445	13th
Summarizes major points	275 (53.4)	140 (34)	39 (12.6)	0	0	454	6th
States objectives for each class session	230 (44.7)	152 (36.9)	51 (16.5)	4 (1.9)	0	437	20th
Identifies what he/she considers important	180 (35)	208 (50.5)	39 (12.6)	4 (1.9)	0	431	23rd
Total						3,138	

{table continues on the next page}

Lecture-group interaction							
Encourage class discussion	290 (56.3)	120 (29.1)	45 (14.6)	0	0	443	16th
Invites students to share their knowledge and experiences	305 (59.2)	136 (33)	24 (7.8)	0	0	465	4th
Clarifies thinking by identifying reasons for questions	210 (40.8)	188 (45.6)	42 (13.6)	0	0	440	17th
Invites criticism of own ideas	125 (24.3)	176 (42.7)	90 (29.1)	6 (2.9)	1 (1)	398	35th
Knows if the class is understanding him/her or not	295 (57.3)	140 (34)	24 (7.8)	2 (1)	0	461	5th
Has interest and concern in the quality of his/her teaching	235 (45.6)	188 (45.6)	27 (8.7)	0	0	450	10th
Has students applied concepts to demonstrate understanding	235 (45.6)	152 (36.9)	45 (14.6)	6 (2.9)	0	438	19th
Total						3,095	
Lecture-individual interaction							
Has genuine interest in students	265 (51.5)	136 (33)	42 (13.6)	2 (1)	0	445	13th
Is friendly towards students	265 (51.5)	132 (32)	51 (16.5)	0	0	448	12th
Relates to students as individuals	190 (36.9)	152 (36.9)	66 (21.4)	10 (4.9)	0	418	31st
Recognizes and greets students out of class	170 (33)	176 (42.7)	63 (20.4)	6 (2.9)	1 (1)	416	32nd
Is accessible to students out of class	185 (35.9)	176 (42.7)	57 (18.4)	6 (2.9)	0	424	29th
Is valued for advice not directly related to the course	135 (26.2)	164 (39.8)	90 (29.1)	10 (4.9)	0	399	34th
Respects students as persons	310 (60.2)	136 (33)	21 (6.8)	0	0	467	3rd
Total						3,017	
Dynamism/enthusiasm							
Is dynamic and energetic	235 (45.6)	168 (40.8)	42 (13.6)	0	0	445	13th
Has an interestingly style of presentation	255 (49.5)	164 (39.8)	33 (10.7)	0	0	452	8th
Seems to enjoy teaching	265 (51.5)	144 (35)	42 (13.6)	0	0	451	9th
Is enthusiastic about the subject	240 (46.6)	176 (42.7)	33 (10.7)	0	0	449	11th
Seems to have self-confidence	275 (53.4)	140 (34)	36 (11.7)	2 (1)	0	453	7th
Varies the speed and tone of his/her voice	195 (37.9)	152 (36.9)	72 (23.3)	2 (1)	1 (1)	422	30th
Has a sense of humor	215 (41.7)	160 (38.8)	45 (14.6)	4 (1.9)	1 (1)	425	28th
Total						3,097	

Regarding the sub-group of organization and clarity in teaching, all elements were considered as highly effective except lecturers who identify what they consider important which was perceived by 44.5 % of respondents as very important. This suggests that students considered lecturers who are highly organized and careful and precise in answering questions, and who explain lessons clearly, give lectures that are easy to outline, summarize major points, and state objectives for each lesson to be highly effective.

As for lecturer-group interactions in teaching and learning, lecturers who invite students to share their knowledge and experiences and know if the class understands the lessons, were considered the most important elements. About 59.2% and 57.6% considered them very important. The third ranking is lecturers who encourage classroom discussion with 56.3% viewed it as very important, 29.1% and 14.6% viewed it as important and somewhat important respectively. This result was supported by a study of Gonzales (2014) in which in effective teaching, lecturers enhance the quality of discussion by allowing students to tap into their curiosity, engage in interpersonal discourse with peers and encourage them to discover information by themselves.

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About 60% of the respondents considered lecturers who respect students as persons as a very important element in the lecturer-individual interactions. Those who have a genuine interest in students and are friendly towards students were considered by many respondents as very important (51.5% each). In the lecturer-individual interactions, not many respondents considered lecturers who give advice not directly related to the course as an important element of effective teaching with 26.2% very important, 39.8% and 29.1% considered it important and somewhat important respectively.

Concerning the elements describing a lecturer's dynamism and enthusiasm for the job, respondents indicated lecturers who seem to have self-confidence as the most important element with 53.4% rated it as very important while lecturers who seem to enjoy teaching as the second most important element with 51.5% considered it as very important followed by lecturers who have an interesting style of presentation with 49.5% regarded it as very important.

When analyzing each element, university students considered lessons that are well prepared as the most important element of effective teaching though of different importance. About 68.9% considered this as very important, 24.3% considered it important, and the rest, 6.8% viewed it as somewhat important. It was followed by lecturers who explain lessons clearly with 68% of respondents considered very important, 21.4% important, while 8.7% and 1.9% considered it as somewhat important and not so important respectively. The least important element is lecturers who invite criticism of their own ideas with 24.3% of respondents considered it as very important, 42.7% important, 29.1% somewhat important, 2.9% not so important, and 1% not at all important.

To understand the preferences of the respondents, a further attempt was made by computing the total score of each element based on the responses ranked in Table 5. The highest ten rated elements of effective teaching by respondents in order of ranks include lecturers who come well prepared to class, give clear explanations, respect students as individuals, invite students to share their knowledge and thoughts, ensure whether the class understands the lesson or not, summarize major points, are self-confident, show an interesting style of presentation, seem to enjoy teaching, and show interest and concern in the quality of teaching.

Among the five major subgroups, the organization/clarity aspect of teaching was considered the most important group of elements of teaching with a total score of 3,138 (out of 3,605). This was followed by dynamism and enthusiasm in teaching (3,097) and lecture-group interaction (3,095) which were considered

as important. The least important as perceived by university students was the analytical/synthetic approach to teaching (3,001). The result was supported by the study of Kaloi et al. (2021) that students expect teachers to respect students' desires and needs.

Further efforts were made to find out the differences in scores among the perceptions of the respondents. Results of the analysis of differences were shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Differences of Perceived Elements of Effective Teaching in Terms of Sex, Year Level, and Programs of Study

Source of Var.	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.016	1	.016	.086	.769
Within Groups	18.529	101	.183		
Total	18.545	102			
Sex					
Between Groups	.016	1	.016	.086	.769
Within Groups	18.529	101	.183		
Total	18.545	102			
Level					
Between Groups	.473	3	.158	.863	.463
Within Groups	18.072	99	.183		
Total	18.545	102			
Program of Studies					
Between Groups	2.022	5	.404	2.374	.045
Within Groups	16.523	97	.170		
Total	18.545	102			

Results show that there were no significant differences in terms of sex and year level. However, there were significant differences in the means in terms of program of studies ($F = 2.374$, $p = .045$).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study investigated and analyzed university students' perceptions of effective teaching. The study explored 35 critical teaching effectiveness elements organized into five major sub-groups including analytical/synthetic approach to teaching, organization/clarity of instruction or teaching, lecturer-group interaction, lecturer-individual interaction, and dynamism and enthusiasm of the lecturer. The findings from the analysis showed that the first ten rated elements of effective teaching by respondents in order of ranks are lecturers who come well prepared to class, give clear explanations, respect students as individuals, invite students to share their knowledge and thoughts, ensure whether the class understands the lesson or not, summarize major points, are self-confident, show an interesting style of presentation, seem to enjoy teaching, and show interest and concern in the quality of teaching.

Generally, organization and clarity in teaching were considered as the most important elements in effective teaching. This was followed by lecturers' dynamism and enthusiasm in teaching and lecture-group interaction in which a learning community exists and lecturer-individual interaction where respondents considered respecting students as individuals was essential. The least important group of elements were the analytical and synthetic approaches to teaching.

There were no observed significant differences in the perceived elements of effective teaching concerning respondents' sex and year level. However, there were significant differences regarding respondents' major

studies. This can be explained that students taking different majors of studies had different perceptions about elements of effective teaching.

From the study, it can be concluded that university students appreciated well-prepared teachers who could clearly explain lessons and invite them to express their knowledge and ideas. On a personal level, university students wanted to be acknowledged and to be respected as individuals. Therefore, this implies that effective teaching requires careful and well-organized lessons and respectful teaching practices.

This study covered only students in the international program of the selected university in Thailand. It is suggested that other research be done on student perceptions from the Thai program and compare the results to see if there are any differences in perceptions of effective teaching. Educators and lecturers should consider the findings of this study in their preparation for teaching in the tertiary education program.

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EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAM ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS AMONG TEACHERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Conflict is a part of human relationships. It exists due to differences in mental aspects, personality, beliefs, points of view, cultural values, needs, interests, and power of individuals interacting with one another. Conflict situations have been the subjects of significant interest among psychologists and education science professionals because of their influence on teachers' performance. These conflicts create an impact on teachers' work-and-life balance. The current study aimed to determine the effects of the professional learning community program on the conflict management skills of teachers to make sure that they can continue performing their roles as motivators of learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It employed a pre-test and post-test research design to determine the effects of the program on the conflict management skills of teachers. The study revealed that the conflict management skills of the respondents improved from the mean score of 2.65 (SD=.477), described as "moderate" in the pre-test to 2.91 (SD=.303) interpreted as "low" in the post-test. Paired t-test results indicated that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. This study concludes that the Professional Learning Community Program had a positive impact on participants' level of conflict management. This will encourage the establishment of professional learning communities in every school as an avenue to promote not only professional collaboration but also mental health and well-being among teachers. The researcher recommends further studies involving different groups in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, ethnicity, life experiences, and the duration of the program to provide a balanced view of how various groups of professionals are oriented to conflict.

Keywords: *conflict management skills, Professional Learning Community Program, teachers' performance*

Conflict is an inherent human condition. It is an inevitable occurrence during normal life. Conflicts emerge due to differences in mental aspects, personality, beliefs, points of view, cultural values, needs, interests, and power of individuals interacting with one another (Rahim, 2001).

In recent years, conflict situations, according to Valente and Lourenco (2020), are subjects of continuous concern for psychologists and education science professionals, primarily because of their impact on the teachers' performance. Accordingly, such conflicts affect the quality of the learning environment and the teachers' performance.

Silva and Dota (2013) stated that conflict is a part of the everyday life of any school. It is at the heart of the educational relationship. School conflicts are caused by disagreements among individuals or groups regarding points of view, interests, principles, and values within the school community, perceiving the parties their interests as excluded, although they may not be (Pérez-Serrano & Pérez-de-Guzmán, 2011). As stated by Hojbotāa et al. (2014), the most frequent school conflicts occur between students–students and students–teachers. Shahmohammadi (2014) identified some of students' conflicting attitudes, including lack of classroom participation, bullying or offending peers, and vandalism or destroying school facilities and equipment.

Göksoy and Argon (2016) also noted the following as causes of teacher-student conflicts: disrespect, indifference, personal judgment, failure in communication or misunderstanding, failure to follow rules, neglect of duty, unnecessary complaints, contempt for different ideas, insistence on personal judgments, high expectations/ambitions, cultural–economic differences, failure to educate, and unfair practices in the distribution of tasks and of giving of grades. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found out that repeated disagreements and conflicts between teachers and students will lead to turnover, stress, and job weariness among teachers.

Conflict may also exist between teachers and school officials. Graves (2005) has observed that some experienced and influential teachers often disagree with school rules set by young school managers, which may lead to creating factions among faculty and staff. If these discrepancies are not resolved in the right way, they would cause a lot of tensions, decrease in job satisfaction, burnout, mental disorders, and the emergence of moral issues (Aliasgari & Farzadnia, 2012).

Graves (2005) and Webster (2011) stressed that the conflict between teachers and parents is the most prevailing challenge which teachers nowadays confront and when left unsolved, could lead to physical, verbal, and psychological violence, and thereby disrupt the educational process (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

The drastic transition in the education system from face-to-face to distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic also posed conflicts among teachers who have been used to the usual classroom setting (Cheng, 2020). The physical space of schools and classrooms has become a necessary condition for school education and teaching activities. However, during the pandemic, neither teachers nor students can come to school, and the physical space for regular education and teaching no longer exists. Thus, the absence of the physical space of the traditional classroom, and social interaction are the greatest challenges for teachers. Moreover, Doghonadze et al. (2020) revealed that some teachers are stressed over their lack of technical skills, students' lack of social interaction, and the constraints of keeping learners engaged, interested, and invested in their education, and the quality of both teaching and learning.

A recent study conducted by Zeeshan et al. (2020) at Peking University in China revealed that most teachers are feeling challenged with the abrupt shift to distance learning as it requires extensive lesson planning, early preparation, online curriculum development, and technical support from IT experts. Teachers who work in isolation due to work-from-home arrangements also experienced 'techno strain' (Salanova et al., 2013) that unveils the hidden vulnerabilities of employees in terms of efficacy related to the use of technology (Pickup, 2020).

In addition, the absence of previous experience working at home, issues with work/life balance, inability to focus on work, and ergonomic issues at home also stressed teachers (Rubin et al., 2020). The work-life balance emphasized by Rubin et al. (2020) characterizes a significant problem for women, with consequent work-family and family-work conflicts. If family responsibilities disrupt the work-life, this

results in family-work conflicts. According to Kinnunen et al. (2006), the presence of conflicts between family and work increases the risk of mental health problems together with an increased risk of burnout syndrome (Cinamon et al., 2007) and poor quality of teacher performance.

Since it is impossible to eliminate conflicts, it is essential and urgent to reduce their intensity, duration, and severity, so that they will not affect teachers' well-being. Dealing with conflict requires learning, that is why teachers need training in conflict management so that they can correctly manage conflicts and be able to educate their students on conflict management, too.

Implementing the professional learning community program (PLCP) during this COVID-19 pandemic is essential to support teachers not only in their professional roles, but also an opportunity for them to express their feelings, fears, frustrations, and personal life changes during the crisis, and gain support from others to appropriately cope with conflict situations (Tucker & Quintero-Ares, 2021).

This study aimed to determine the effects of the professional learning community program on the conflict management skills of public school teachers to make sure that they can continue performing their roles as motivators of learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following research problems:

1. What is the level of family-work-organizational conflict experienced by the respondents?
2. What is the level of conflict management skills of the respondents?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of family-work-organizational conflict experienced by the respondents when the pre-test and post-test results are considered?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of conflict management skills of the participants when the pre-test and post-test results are considered?

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher utilized a pre-test and post-test research design. An intervention program, the Professional Learning Community Program (PLCP) was introduced in between the pre-test and post-test. All participants were subjected to the same intervention program; however, they were not compared with each other. Only the pre-test and post-test data were compared with each other to determine whether there is a significant difference or none.

Population

The participants in the study were secondary school teachers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, conducting face-to-face activities requires strict protocols. Hence, the researcher as a school administrator of a public secondary school opted to carry out the implementation of this research project in Mangingisda National High School, the school he was administering at the time of conducting this research, as it was easier to schedule the virtual sessions and gather the necessary data. The participants were all teachers aged 25 to 59 years old. Most of them were women, married, and had 1 to 25 years of teaching experience. The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique in the selection of participants. The participants were selected based on these set criteria, namely: a) on active service (not on a leave of absence) during the conduct of the research; b) have access to online video conferencing applications, particularly Google Meet; and c) are willing to attend the program.

Out of 41 teachers, 37 passed the criteria. The participants were rightly informed regarding the purpose, benefits, and procedures of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed and the results of data only served the purpose of the study. A link to an online form containing the questionnaire was sent to the respondents' verified email addresses before and after the intervention program. To maintain the integrity of the data, a verified email address was required to access the online form, but it was not visible in the tally sheet to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

Research Instrument

The researchers utilized Conflict Survey Questionnaire, a researcher-made semi-structured questionnaire online. Part I dealt with the respondents' demographic profiles such as age, gender, marital status, employment status, length of years in service, and position.

Part II was all about conflict management strategies. It was composed of 2 Sections. Section I which contains 9 indicator items measured the tendencies respondents are confronted with family-work-and-organizational conflicts, i.e. *I am unable to organize plans; I have misunderstandings with my students; I have misunderstandings with my students' parents/guardians; I find difficulty coping with family-related problems; I find difficulty complying with reportorial requirements, etc.* Section II contains 21 indicators that gathered data on the conflict management level of the participants—*I can think of several different ways to deal with a disagreement; I respond to different disagreements differently; I try to find out why when someone is upset with me; I try to figure out if someone is arguing just because they're in a bad mood; I try to understand if a disagreement is caused by a misunderstanding; and I think about what I should say and do when I'm involved in a disagreement, to name a few.*

Participants rated all 30 indicator items using a 4-point Likert scale where 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, and 4 = always. A paired sample t-test, comparing the mean for each item was conducted on each of the thirty indicators. For verbal interpretations, the mean score for each item is interpreted as follows: 1.00 -1.49 = rarely, 1.50-2.49 = sometimes, 2.50-3.49 = often, and 3.50-4.00 = always. To determine the level of both the family-work-organizational conflicts and the conflict management skills, the following verbal interpretations were used to describe the value of the computed mean score for Section I and II: low=1.00 -1.49; moderate = 1.50-2.49; high = 2.50-3.49; and very high =3.50-4.00.

The instrument was administered twice, the pre-test and post-test surveys. Both pre-test and post-test surveys asked the same questions. The pre-test survey was administered before the intervention program. There was a one-month interval in the administration of the pre-test and post-test.

Experimental Manipulations or Interventions

After securing approval from the Ethics Review Board of the Adventist University of the Philippines, the researcher proceeded to determine the participants of the study following the set criteria. All respondents were then given informed consent before they were given the pre-test. All participants were in the same experimental group. The intervention program known as Professional Learning Community Program (PLCP) was rolled out for a duration of 7 sessions at two hours per day. Invitations and links were sent to the respondents. The topics were: introduction to the professional learning community, self-management, managing priorities, building interpersonal relationships, interpersonal communication, conflict management, and small group dynamics. These sessions were conducted to create a safe space for teachers to promote support, strategies for self-care, and counteract the sudden stressors that a pandemic brings to their roles through online group dynamics and conflict management and resolution training. Participants were given a chance to ask questions and share their experiences, insights, or reflections. All of them took the post-test two weeks after the intervention program was completed.

Data Analysis

For a clearer interpretation of the data gathered from the survey questionnaire, the researcher used the following descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage in describing the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, marital status, employment status, length of service, and position. Mean was used to determine the measure of central tendency of a probability distribution of responses. Paired t-test was used to compare the mean differences between the pre-test and post-test data.

Results and Discussion

Collected data before and after the intervention program was tabulated and analyzed. Table 1 presents the distribution of participants in terms of age, sex, marital status, teaching experience, employment status and position.

Table 1
Demographic Distribution of the Participants

Demographics		N	%
Age	25-29	14	37.8
	30-34	6	16.2
	35-39	7	18.9
	40-44	8	21.6
	50-54	1	2.7
	55-59	1	2.7
Sex	Male	7	18.9
	Female	30	81.1
Marital Status	Single	16	43.2
	Married	21	56.8
Teaching Experience	0-5yrs	23	62.2
	6-10yrs	8	21.6
	11-15 yrs.	4	10.8
	16-20 yrs.	1	2.7
	21-25 yrs.	1	2.7
Employment Status	Contractual	2	5.4
	Provisional	1	2.7
	Regular Permanent	34	91.9
Position	LSB Teacher	2	5.4
	Teacher I	23	62.2
	Teacher II	4	10.8
	Teacher III	8	21.6

The statistical population consists of 7 (18.9%) male and 30 (81.1%) female teachers. Fourteen or 37.8% were between 25-29 years old, 16.2% were in the age bracket of 30-34 years, 18.9% were 35-39 years old, 21.6% were between 40-44 years, and 2.7% for aged 50-54 years and 55-59 years. Sixteen out of 37 (43.2%) were single and 21 (56.8%) were married. Out of the 37 teachers, 23 (62.2%) had less than 6-year-job experience, 8 (21.6%) had job experience between 6-10 years, 4 (10.8%) between 11-15 years, 1 (2.7%) between 16-20 years, and 1 (2.7%) of them had been teaching for more than 20 years. For employment status, 2 (5.4%) were contractual, 1 (2.7%) was provisional, and 34 (91.9%) were regular permanent. Two out of 37 (5.4%) were locally funded teachers, 23 (62.2%) were Teacher I, 4 (10.8%) were Teacher II and 8 (21.6%) were Teacher III.

Table 2 presents the results of the pre-test survey on family-work-organizational conflicts. Results show that the respondents obtained an overall mean score of 1.58 (SD=.387).

Table 2*Pre-test Survey on Family-Work-Organizational Conflicts*

	Mean	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I find difficulty coping with family- related problems.	1.62	.639	Sometimes	Moderate
I am unable to focus on work from home arrangement due to some household chores.	1.65	.633	Sometimes	Moderate
I argue with colleagues.	1.32	.530	Rarely	Low
I am unable to organize plans.	1.43	.555	Rarely	Low
I am stressed over heavy school-related work loads.	1.97	.726	Sometimes	Moderate
I find difficulty complying with reportorial requirements.	1.65	.676	Sometimes	Moderate
I am challenged in keeping learners engaged, interested in the lesson.	2.19	.845	Sometimes	Moderate
I have misunderstandings with my students.	1.27	.508	Rarely	Low
I have misunderstandings with my students' parents/guardians.	1.14	.347	Rarely	Low
Grand Mean	1.58	.387	Rarely	Moderate

Legend: Mean Interval: 1.00 -1.50 = rarely; low, 1.51-2.50 = sometimes; moderate, 2.51-3.50 = often; high, and 3.51-4.00 = always; very high

Results in Table 2 revealed that teachers perceived a “moderate” level of family-work-organizational conflicts during COVID-19 pandemic. At times they were stressed over their heavy school-related workloads ($M=1.97$, $SD=.726$). Although sometimes they were also challenged on keeping their learners engaged and interested in the lesson ($M=2.19$, $SD=.845$), they rarely encountered misunderstandings with them ($M=1.27$, $SD=.508$), even with their parents or guardians ($M=1.14$, $SD=.347$)

Table 3 presents the results of the pre-test survey on level of conflict management skills. Results show that the respondents obtained an overall mean score of 2.65 ($SD=.477$).

Table 3*Pre-test Survey on Level of Conflict Management Skills*

	Mean	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I can think of several different ways to deal with a disagreement	2.59	.896	Often	High
I have thought about how I normally respond to conflicts.	2.97	.833	Often	High
I feel good about how I handle most conflicts or disagreements.	2.89	.758	Often	High
I try to resolve conflicts in ways that usually work for me.	2.86	.887	Often	High
I respond to different disagreements differently.	2.51	.901	Often	High
I try to understand the other person's point of view	3.27	.693	Often	High

{table continues on the next page}

I try to find out why when someone is upset with me	2.81	.845	Often	High
I try to understand both sides when two of my friends are arguing.	3.16	.898	Often	High
I try to figure out if someone is arguing just because they're in a bad mood.	2.89	.809	Often	High
I try to figure out why there's a disagreement, instead of jumping to conclusions.	2.84	.800	Often	High
I try to understand if a disagreement is caused by a misunderstanding.	2.86	.787	Often	High
I avoid talking to a friend when I'm mad at him (N)	2.43	.867	Sometimes	Moderate
I try to find win win solutions to disagreements	2.62	.721	Often	High
I talk about how I feel when I disagree with someone.	2.32	.747	Sometimes	Moderate
I think about what I should say and do when I'm involved in a disagreement.	2.95	.848	Often	High
I try to find a compromise during a disagreement.	2.38	.758	Sometimes	Moderate
I try to stay calm when we're talking if I'm angry with someone	2.86	.751	Often	High
I try to win argument, even if I lose friends over it. (N)	1.54	.730	Sometimes	Moderate
I try to talk it through when I disagree with someone.	2.19	.701	Sometimes	Moderate
I defend my position when I disagree with someone, but I don't put the other person down in the process.	2.70	1.05	Often	High
I say things that I later regret during an argument (N)	1.95	.815	Sometimes	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.65	.477	Often	High

Legend: Mean Interval: 1.00 -1.50 = rarely; low, 1.51-2.50 = sometimes; moderate, 2.51-3.50 = often; high, and 3.51-4.00 = always; very high

Table 3 reveals a high level of conflict management skills among respondents, as they often try to understand the other person's point of view ($M= 3.27$, $SD=.693$); and understand both sides when two of their friends are arguing ($M= 3.16$, $SD=.898$). However, some admitted that sometimes they try to win their argument, even if they lose friends over it ($M=1.54$, $SD=.730$); and say things that they later regret during an argument ($M=1.95$, $SD=.815$).

Conflict management strategies are the different behaviors or practices adopted in conflict situations. Rahim (2002) stated that a strategy can be considered appropriate when its use resulted in effective conflict resolution. The strategies used by parties to deal with conflicts according to Rahim and Bonoma (1979) are classified in terms of how two variables intersect—the desire to satisfy the interests of the counterpart (e.g., concern for others, the individual trying to satisfy the interests of others and preserve a positive relationship with them); and the desire to satisfy one's own interests, showing concern for oneself, and seeking to achieve one's personal goals.

Table 2 presents the results of the post-test survey on family-work-organizational conflicts. Results show that the respondents obtained an overall mean score of 1.22 (SD=.195).

Table 4*Post-test Survey on Family-Work-Organizational Conflicts*

	Mean	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I find difficulty coping with family- related problems.	1.27	.450	Rarely	Low
I am unable to focus on work from home arrangement due to some household chores.	1.19	.397	Rarely	Low
I argue with colleagues.	1.14	.347	Rarely	Low
I am unable to organize plans.	1.22	.417	Rarely	Low
I am stressed over heavy school-related work loads.	1.27	.450	Rarely	Low
I find difficulty complying with reportorial requirements.	1.22	.417	Rarely	Low
I am challenged in keeping learners engaged, interested in the lesson.	1.43	.502	Rarely	Low
I have misunderstandings with my students.	1.19	.397	Rarely	Low
I have misunderstandings with my students' parents/ guardians.	1.08	.277	Rarely	Low
Grand Mean	1.22	.195	Rarely	Low

Legend: Mean Interval: 1.00 -1.50 = rarely; low, 1.51-2.50 = sometimes; moderate, 2.51-3.50 = often; high, and 3.51-4.00 = always; very high

As can be gleaned in Table 4, the mean of all the nine indicators lies between 1.00 – 1.49 described as “rarely”. This signifies a decline in the participants’ level of family-work-organizational conflicts during the post-test.

Table 5 shows the participants’ mean scores for each of the 21 indicator items of the post survey on the level of conflict management skills. The grand mean is 2.91 with a standard deviation of .303.

Table 5*Post-test Survey on the Level of Conflict Management Skills*

	Mean	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I can think of several different ways to deal with a disagreement.	2.95	.575	Often	High
I have thought about how I normally respond to conflicts.	3.32	.530	Often	High
I feel good about how I handle most conflicts or disagreements.	3.51	.507	Always	Very High
I try to resolve conflicts in ways that usually work for me.	2.92	.829	Often	High
I respond to different disagreements differently.	3.08	.493	Often	High
I try to understand the other person's point of view.	3.32	.626	Often	High
I try to find out why when someone is upset with me.	3.11	.567	Often	High
I try to understand both sides when two of my friends are arguing.	3.35	.676	Often	High

{table continues on the next page}

I try to figure out if someone is arguing just because they're in a bad mood.	3.14	.673	Often	High
I try to figure out why there's a disagreement, instead of jumping to conclusions.	3.03	.645	Often	High
I try to understand if a disagreement is caused by a misunderstanding.	3.08	.595	Often	High
I avoid talking to a friend when I'm mad at him. (N)	2.81	.660	Often	High
I try to find win-win solutions to disagreements.	2.86	.585	Often	High
I talk about how I feel when I disagree with someone.	2.84	.553	Often	High
I think about what I should say and do when I'm involved in a disagreement.	3.16	.688	Often	High
I try to find a compromise during a disagreement.	3.16	.602	Often	High
I try to stay calm when we're talking if I'm angry with someone.	3.00	.707	Often	High
I try to win every argument, even if I lose friends over it.(N)	1.57	.555	Sometimes	Moderate
I try to talk it through when I disagree with someone.	2.35	.676	Sometimes	Moderate
I defend my position when I disagree with someone, but I don't put the other person down in the process.	2.86	.918	Often	High
I say things that I later regret during an argument.(N)	1.68	.580	Sometimes	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.91	.303	High	

Legend: Mean Interval: 1.00 -1.50 = rarely; low, 1.51-2.50 = sometimes; moderate, 2.51-3.50 = often; high, and 3.51-4.00 = always; very high

Table 5 reveals that all scores had increased: three indicators fell between the mean scores of 1.50 and 2.50, interpreted as “sometimes”; seventeen indicators ranged from 2.81 to 3.35, described as “often”; and 1 indicator was rated “always” with a mean of 3.51 (SD=.507).

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean differences between the pretest and post-test results in terms of family-work-organizational conflicts. Results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
T-Test of Family-Work-Organizational Conflicts

		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	P-value	Verbal Interpretation
Pair 1	Pre	1.58	.387	0.35	8.152	.000	Significant
	Post	1.22	.196				

Results indicated that there was a significant difference (MD = 0.35, $p = .000$) between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the participants. This rejects the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of family-work-organizational conflict experienced by the respondents when the pre-test and post-test results are considered.

There was a one-month interval between the pre-testing and post-testing. In between pre-test and post-test, the intervention program dubbed as Professional Learning Community Program was introduced through a series of virtual activities, which includes group dynamics and conflict handling and resolution training. The results registered a decrease in the level of conflict experienced by the participants. The results also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. The post-test mean increased significantly.

Another paired t-test was conducted to compare the mean differences of conflict management skills before and after the intervention. Table 7 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 7
T-Test of Level of Conflict Management Skills

		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	P-value	Verbal Interpretation
Pair 1	Pre	2.65	.477	-0.26	-5.598	.000	Significant
	Post	2.91	.303				

The results indicated that there was a significant difference ($MD = 0.26$, $p = .000$) between the pre-test and the post-test levels of conflict management skills. This also rejects the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of conflict management skills among respondents when the pre-test and post-test results are considered.

In the context of this research, PLCP worked towards creating a safe space for teachers to promote support to counteract stressors and sharing and learning strategies for self-care and conflict resolution. The results of the study indicated that the intervention program, the Professional Learning Community, helped the participants deal with conflicts positively.

The concept of the PLC is anchored on sociocultural learning theories and organizational learning theories. Sociocultural theorists claim that learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people working together and arising from the socially and culturally structured world. Vygotsky (1978) states that learning is embedded within social events, and social interaction plays a fundamental role in the improvement of learning. He stresses that learning appears twice: first on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (inter psychology), and then inside the child (intrapyschology).

Wang (2006) cited that while Vygotsky's research was focused on children, the central idea of the interrelationship of the outside and the inside, and the social and cognitive processes, also applies to adult learners. Without social and cultural interaction, "internalization and learning would never occur." Therefore, collaboration serves as a powerful vehicle of socialization in human learning development. Moreover, according to Argyrs and Schon as cited in Knowledge Management Tools (2018), organizational learning theory is a product of organizational inquiry. This means that when the expected outcome differs from the actual outcome, an individual (or group) will be involved in the inquiry to understand and, if necessary, solve this discrepancy.

In the process of organizational inquiry, individuals interact with one another and learning will take place. Therefore, learning is a direct product of this interaction. Positive conflict resolution skills are acquired through this so-called experiential learning (Drew, 1987) which only occurs when there are observed changes in feelings, judgments, knowledge, and skills that result from engagement in activities or events over a period (Deen, 2000).

Tucker and Quintero-Ares (2021) cited that building a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is necessary to create a safe space for teachers to promote support, as strategies for self-care, and counteract the sudden stressors that a pandemic brings to their roles (Gedro et al., 2020). Further, PLC does not only provide venues for professional improvement but also conflict resolution strategies.

Central to every conflict are miscommunications, differing principles, values, needs, and wants. Conflict gives the concerned person the view of the ideal response to the conflict and prescribes how to reach a successful conflict resolution (Bush & Floger, 1994). Thus, conflict can be an opportunity for growth and problem-solving among all those who are concerned (Morrison, et al., 2011).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conflict is inevitable. It is always part of every relationship. Managing conflicts is one of the most important competencies that teachers need to master to help them minimize the family-work-organizational

conflicts they encounter at home, in the community, and at the workplace.

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the Professional Learning Community was effective in enhancing conflict management skills of the participants in the study. Thus, a change in perspective and attitude can take place through the establishment of functional professional learning communities in school through regular conduct of focus group discussions, consultative meetings, group dynamics, team-building activities, problem-solving workshops, conflict resolution training, and developing dispute resolution systems that are appropriate to the cultures and norms of the parties involved.

This paper recommends the establishment of professional learning communities in every school to promote the mental well-being of teachers as they deal with the challenges in their profession in the new normal. Teachers are molders of future generations. Human as they are, they are prone to conflicts that when left unattended, may lead to higher degrees of family, work, and organizational problems. Thus, their health and well-being must be given utmost concern.

Since there are only 37 teachers who participated in the study, the researcher also recommends further studies to be conducted in various groups. Differences in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, ethnicity, life experiences, and the duration of the program can be taken into consideration to provide a more sensible view of how different groups of professionals are oriented to manage conflict and how they can benefit from the intervention program.

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ETHICAL BEHAVIOR AS PREDICTOR OF JOB PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The teacher has always been a crucial component of a student's intellectual, social, and economic growth. Their performance can greatly contribute to prosperity by upholding their behavior in the educational system. This research aimed to investigate ethical behavior as a predictor toward job performance. This study is descriptive-correlational in nature. One-hundred respondents from five Adventist secondary schools in Myanmar within the academic year 2021-2022 willingly participated in the study. Data were gathered via survey questionnaires that were divided into two parts: one part is for teacher ethical behavior and the other part is job performance. The study revealed that there was a high level of teacher ethical behavior on the school campus. The teachers' job performance was rated very high which means that teachers were performing very well. It was also revealed that there was a positive relationship between teachers' ethical behavior and teachers' job performance. Furthermore, the teachers' job performance was also predicted by ethical behavior. Specifically, professional responsibilities significantly predict job performance.

Keywords: *teacher's ethical behavior, teacher's job performance, professional responsibilities*

One of the aims in the practice of school administration and supervision is to improve job performance of the teachers, not only on how they manage their classes but also how this will have impact on the learning of students. Education administrators and supervisors have this question that deals with ethical behavior and job performance of teachers.

In recent studies, education is seen as fundamental for every nation's social, intellectual, and economic development and prosperity. Teachers make a significant contribution to this prosperity by preserving the value of the educational process; thus, educational authorities at all levels must optimize the quality and effectiveness of teachers' work (Eren & Sylemez, 2021). In the study of Guo (2017), he stated that if the goal is to improve the educational process, then instructors and teaching techniques should be improved as well, because the success of any educational process is heavily reliant on the performance and effectiveness of teachers.

Promoting ethical behavior in the classroom is an important ingredient to effective teaching. Akman (2018) mentioned that many researchers are interested in the study of the relationship between teacher's ethical behavior and job performance in general. Teachers' job performance can be seen to affect not only the teachers themselves, but also their students and the quality of the educational process; not just the development of the educational system, but also the well-being of the larger community (Ali et al., 2017).

It is evident that one of the themes addressed in many books and articles is ethics which encompasses a wide range of fields. It includes education, health, and justice, as well as management sciences. Ethics is a subject that explores the foundations and underlying principles of moral conduct and determines the right and wrong bounds of action (Lee, 2020). The idea of correct action is based on what makes human activities ethically good or worthless. Ethics focuses on attitudes and behaviors such as analyzing, deciding, and carrying out desirable actions connected to human rights and obligations towards other people. According to this definition, ethics encompasses all the values and moral principles that decide what is good and wrong and establish universal rules in this regard (Mwanza et al., 2017).

Professional ethics, which pertains to the behavior that a professional must follow, is also crucial in the teaching profession because professional principles and ethics serve as a guide to the instructors' professional practices. All teachers must enhance their understanding of ethics to maintain professional standards in teaching and research, as well as monitor and advise students' ethical activities (Lee, 2020). Teachers' ethical practices are significant because they serve as role models in society.

In general, professional ethics principles govern the essential principles that teachers must follow in their dealings with pupils, parents, coworkers, and other members of society, as well as in performing their obligations to them. Professionalism, responsibility, fairness, equality, honesty, truthfulness, trust, impartiality, respect, professional dedication, constant progress, resource efficiency, maintaining a healthy and safe environment for pupils, and avoiding corruption are the ethical standards to which instructors must adhere within the teaching profession (Guo, 2017).

When these aspects are studied, it can be stated that instructors construct behavioral norms in relation to the conditions they experience. Teachers should be ethical specialists since they are challenged with ethical situations throughout their careers. Teachers who do not know how to respond ethically will not be able to teach ethics and will not set a good example for their pupils. Based on the studies cited above, this research study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How is teacher's ethical behavior in terms of:
 - a. Teacher's behavior in class
 - b. Relationships based on self-interest
 - c. Teacher's professional responsibilities
 - d. Sexual harassment behaviors
 - e. Teacher's behavior outside the class?
2. What is the level of a teacher's job performance?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' ethical behavior and job performance?
4. Does teachers' ethical behavior predict job performance?

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design to determine the extent of the teachers' ethical behavior and job performance. The relationship between these variables was also analyzed. Lastly, teachers' ethical behavior was tested as a predictor of job performance.

Population and Sampling Technique

The respondents for this study were from the five Adventist secondary schools in Myanmar. One hundred secondary teachers expressed their willingness to participate in this study.

Out of the 100 respondents, 36 teachers or 36% were male and 64 teachers or 64% were female. With regards to age, 45.5% of the respondents were 21-25 years old, 32.3% were 26-30 years old, 13.1% were 31-35 years old, 5.1% were 36-40 years old, and 4.0% were 41 years old and above. Additionally, 76.0% of the respondents were college graduates, 23.0% were master's degree graduates, and only 1.0% of the respondents were doctoral graduates. Moreover, 68.0% of the respondents have been teaching for five years and below, 18.0% have been teaching for 6 to 10 years, 9.0% have been teaching for 11 to 15 years, and 5.0% have been teaching for 16 to 20 years.

Instrumentation

For data collection, the instrument has three parts. The first part is the demographic profile of the respondents; the second part is the modified questionnaire on ethical behaviors with five indicators including teachers' behavior in class, relationship based on self-interest, professional responsibilities, sexual harassment behavior, and ethical behavior outside the class. The third part measures teachers' job performance using five indicators including teaching planning, class organization, monitoring and evaluation, class atmosphere, and discipline and teachers' job leadership.

Analysis of Data

The collected data from the survey were analyzed by using the statistical software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of teachers' ethical behavior and job performance. Pearson product moment was applied to determine the relationship between teachers' ethical behavior and their job performance. Linear regression was utilized to find out if teachers' ethical behavior predicts their job performance.

Ethical Considerations

In the conduct of research, the mindset, character, and attitude of the respondents were considered. To ensure the quality and integrity of the research, the researcher requested the participation of the target respondents of the study and the context from where it was supposed to be conducted. They were informed that participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were also strictly observed and ensured.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

The Extent of Teachers' Ethical Behavior

	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Teachers' Behavior in Class	3.65	0.728	Appropriate
Relationships Based on Self-interest	3.79	0.77	Appropriate
Teachers' Professional Responsibilities	4.16	0.697	Appropriate
Sexual Aggravation Behaviors	4.39	0.61	Appropriate
Teachers' Behavior Outside the Class	3.50	0.844	Fairly Appropriate
Grand Mean	3.90	0.531	Appropriate

Scoring system: 1.00 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree/ Very Inappropriate; 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree/Inappropriate; 2.50 – 3.49 Slightly Agree/Fairly Appropriate; 3.50 – 4.49 Agree/Appropriate; 4.50 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very Appropriate

In a detailed account, the highest item was on the variable and sexual aggravation behaviours, which had a mean of 4.39 and standard deviation of .61. This result implies that teachers have created free sexual pestering behaviour and an atmosphere where a student feels safe. On the other hand, behaviours outside class had the lowest mean ($M=3.50$ $SD=.844$) which is considered as slightly appropriate.

Level of Teachers' Job Performance

The second research question assessed the level of teachers' job performance. The respondents' scaled response was strongly agreed which means that the teachers' job performance was very high ($M=4.33$, $SD=0.531$).

Table 2

Level of Teachers' Job Performance

	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Teaching Planning	4.43	0.728	High
Class Organization	4.25	0.77	High
Monitoring and Evaluation	4.22	0.697	High
Classroom Atmosphere and Discipline	4.28	0.610	High
Teacher Leadership	4.47	0.844	High
Grand Mean	4.33	0.531	High

Scoring system: 1.00 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree/ Very Low; 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree/Low ; 2.50 – 3.49 Slightly Agree/ Fair; 3.50 – 4.49 Agree/High; 4.50 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High

According to the results, the job performance of the teachers from the five Adventist secondary schools was very high. In a detailed analysis, the highest measured dimension was *teacher leadership* ($M=4.47$, $SD=.844$). This is a clear indication that their leadership skills are very evident. These skills can lead to excellent class management and drive students toward academic success.

Relationship Between Teachers' Ethical Behavior and Job Performance

Table 3 shows the results of the Pearson-Moment correlation. It demonstrated the relationship between the dimensions of ethical behavior and job performance.

Table 3

Relationship Between Teachers' Ethical Behavior and Job Performance

		Teachers' Behavior in Class	Relationships Based on Self- interest	Teachers' Professional Responsibilities	Sexual Aggravation Behaviors	Behaviors Outside the Class
Teaching Planning	r	0.305	0.173	0.21	0.169	0.161
	p	0.002	0.085	0.036	0.092	0.11
		Significant	Not Significant	Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Class Organization	r	0.252	0.031	0.043	-0.048	0.202
	p	0.011	0.758	0.669	0.636	0.044
		Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Significant

{table continues on the next page}

Monitoring and Evaluation	r	0.328	0.105	0.191	0.079	0.243
	p	<.001	0.299	0.057	0.436	0.015
		Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Significant
Classroom Atmosphere and Discipline	r	-0.008	-0.113	0.301	0.293	-0.171
	p	0.935	0.263	0.002	0.003	0.088
		Not Significant	Not Significant	Significant	Significant	Not Significant
Teacher Leadership	r	0.327	0.077	0.386	0.309	-0.082
	p	<.001	0.444	<.001	0.002	0.416
		Significant	Not Significant	Significant	Significant	Not Significant

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

According to the results, some dimensions of ethical behavior had significant relationship to the dimensions of job performance. Accordingly, the results reveal that teacher behavior in class was significantly related to teaching planning ($r = 0.305$, $p = 0.002$), class organization ($r = 0.252$, $p = 0.011$), monitoring and evaluation ($r = 0.328$, $p < 0.001$), and teacher leadership ($r = 0.327$, $p < 0.001$).

The results also show that teachers' professional responsibilities are significantly related to teaching planning ($r = 0.210$, $p = 0.036$), classroom atmosphere and discipline ($r = 0.301$, $p = 0.002$), and teacher leadership ($r = 0.386$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, sexual aggravation behaviors are significantly linked to classroom atmosphere and discipline ($r = 0.293$, $p = 0.003$) and teacher leadership ($r = 0.309$, $p = 0.002$). Lastly, behaviors outside the class are significantly connected to class organization ($r = 0.202$, $p = 0.044$), and monitoring and evaluation ($r = 0.243$, $p = 0.015$).

The findings were supported by the study of Mugizi, Mujuni, and Dafiewhare (2019) who found out that aspects of ethical leadership namely ethical guidance, power sharing, integrity, fairness, role clarification, and people orientation had a positive and significant relationship with job performance of teachers. The findings of Shehzad, Khan, and Khan (2022) also supported the idea that ethical behavior positively affects job performance. Further, their research showed that ethical leadership has an influential role in boosting performance.

Teachers' Ethical Behavior as Predictor of Job Performance

Lastly, the fourth research question sought to find out whether teachers' ethical behavior predicts job performance. The results presented in Table 4 show that teachers' job performance is predicted by ethical behavior.

Table 4
Predictors of Job Performance

Predictors	R ²	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	.116	3.678	.185		19.914	.000
Teachers Professional Responsibilities		.157	.044	.340	3.579	.001

$R^2 = .116$, $F = 12.808$, $p = .001$

The model presented in Table 4 is significant. However, there is only one dimension of ethical behavior that predicts teachers' job performance which is professional responsibilities ($R^2 = 11.6\%$, $\beta = .340$, $p = .001$). This reveals that other factors that are not included in the study could help explain or predict teachers' job performance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that there is an appropriate level of teacher ethical behaviour in the school. It reveals that teachers are role models to their students, and they help them feel secured.

Teachers' job performance results were high. This explains that secondary school teachers of the five Adventist schools are performing very well. Teacher leadership which was the highest was highly exhibited which is a clear indication that they can manage their classes very well and inspire students to achieve success.

It was also revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher behavior in class and teaching planning, class organization, monitoring and evaluation, as well as teacher leadership. The results also conclude that teachers' professional responsibilities are significantly related to teaching planning, classroom atmosphere and discipline, and teacher leadership. Likewise, sexual aggravation behaviors are substantially correlated to classroom atmosphere and discipline, and teacher leadership. Similarly, behaviors outside the class are notably linked to class organization and monitoring and evaluation. Finally, it was concluded that teachers' performance of professional responsibilities significantly predicts job performance.

Based on the results, it is recommended that teachers' ethical behavior should be considered as an important asset to help and improve school's services. The study further recommends that other factors or variables should be studied to identify more predictors of teachers' job performance.

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CHALLENGES, ADVANTAGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN INCLUSIVE PE CLASSES

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Abstract

Engaging in physical activities could be very challenging to people with disabilities. This phenomenological study explored the challenges, advantages, and opportunities of six students with special needs who were involved in inclusive Physical Education (PE) classes in a faith-based university during the academic year 2018-2019. Answers to interview questions comprised the recorded data which the researchers translated to English before using thematic analysis. Results revealed that the participants with feet deformity, amputated right arm, squint-eyed, right peripheral vision loss, Blount's disease, and muscle dystrophy had difficulty performing regular tasks in the PE classes. Alternative tasks like downloading steps in aerobics, researching a formation in marching, and being the scorer and referee were not easy either. Their challenges included limited movements, low self-esteem, and extreme concerns for safety. On the other hand, their condition helped them to gain self-confidence and determination to finish the tasks despite limitations. It also gave them opportunities to discover their potentials and other skills that helped them create materials for PWDs in PE, enabled them to think of their friends, teachers, and families who encouraged, supported, and cheered for them to finish the given tasks. It is recommended that the university continue to offer PE classes that accept PWDs. Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers develop a module with differentiated instructions and create activities and materials that help students with disabilities.

Keywords: *disabilities, special needs, adaptive physical education, sports*

This study explores the challenges, advantages, and opportunities of students with exceptionalities or Persons with Disabilities (PWD) or students with special needs involved in sports activities, particularly in Physical Education (PE) classes. The implementation of inclusive education has made it possible for PWDs to gain equal education with non-PWD students in a regular classroom setting in many schools all over the world. This situation, however, has created challenges not only to the teacher but also to the students, particularly the PWD, because at the onset, despite access to equal education, they already have a handicap as compared to the normal students.

Maximizing the benefits or advantages of PWDs in an inclusive classroom may be increased or achieved by learning the challenges and opportunities they encounter in a PE class. Fenner et al. (2015) stated that students with disabilities can achieve and prosper within every single school. In addition to this, Watson (2015) said that people with disabilities are no more or less engaged in the training, completion, and enjoyment of sports.

Teachers have great responsibilities with PWDs in providing equal opportunities while participating in sport activities. Educational institutions must therefore ensure that they do not treat children and young people with disabilities less favorably than others (Wearmouth, 2016). Moreover, it is necessary for teachers to evaluate the learner's ability to engage in sports activities. However, Kassaw (2017) viewed it difficult to evaluate these students in practical sessions of P.E. due to insufficiency of materials specially designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities and lack of relevant training of P.E teachers.

Furthermore, according to Gurkan (2016), findings of the study include due to lack of teachers' support and encouragement for students with disability in P.E. practical classes; inadequate training and poor experiences of teachers of Physical Education classes; and lack of relevant curriculum materials like textbooks, teachers' guide for PWD, and lack of professional support from school administration. In primary schools, children's physical education classes are thought to be heavily influenced by the confidence, knowledge and disposition of their respective teachers who are likely to have received little training in the subject, or at least progressed through professional learning experiences which paid attention to their own dispositions towards the subject.

Out of 84.4 million Filipinos, approximately 5.486 million (13%) are individuals with special needs. Around 4.8% are provided with appropriate educational services, but 95.2% of those with exceptionalities are unreserved. It was stressed that impairments associated with disabilities may be physical, mental or sensory motor impairment such as partial or total blindness, low vision, partial or total deafness, oral defect having only one hand/ no hands, one leg/ no legs, mild or severe cerebral palsy, retarded, mentally ill, mental retardation, and multiple impairment (De Vera et al., 2016).

Challenges are present in any case to every individual whether a normal person or with exceptionalities. In addition to this, the tendency may lessen the confidence of those students who have disabilities. According to De Guzman, Gonzalvo, and Fathalyan (2017), a major barrier for young disabled people lies in the skills and capacity of teachers and coaches in dealing with them. Furthermore, they said that there are students who cannot participate in sports because of reasons beyond their own control.

Studies have shown some understanding from the experiences of those students with health issues who have taken P.E. The researchers, however, were not able to find studies directly related to challenges and opportunities of PWD, since not all challenges and opportunities are health-related.

This study sought to investigate the adaptive Physical Education class in Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) among students with physical disabilities who have taken the class. Furthermore, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges confronted by students with physical disabilities who have taken Physical Education in AUP?
2. What are the advantages of students with physical disabilities who have taken Physical Education in AUP?
3. What are the opportunities gained by PWD's in taking Physical Education in AUP?

Methodology

This section details the overview of the methodology and procedures that are important to gather answers to the problems in this study. This covers the research design, population and sampling techniques, demographic profile of respondents, instrumentation, data gathering procedure, analysis of data, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. Specifically, phenomenological approach was utilized to obtain a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities of PWD who have taken physical education related to sport activities.

Participants

The participants of this study were students with disabilities who were enrolled in PE 3 and PE 4 at a faith-based university during school year 2018-2019. They were interviewed to share their experiences in their PE classes.

The sampling technique used in the study was purposive sampling. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on characteristics of a population of interest of the study which helps the researcher to answer the research questions (De Guzman, Gonzalvo, and Fathalyan, 2017).

There were five male participants and one female. One of them was 19 years old, two were 20 years old, one was 21 years old, one was 23 years old, and another one was 26 years old. As for the curriculum program of the participants, two were taking up Business, one AB English, two were Theology majors, and one was Education major. As for the disabilities of the respondents, these are the following: two had deformity of feet, three had hand problems, and one had a skin disease.

Data Gathering Tool

Interview questions were constructed and validated by the experts. The questions were asked to each of the six respondents and the answers were recorded and later translated in English. The interview questions are as follows:

1. What is your physical condition?
2. What academic year did you take PE class?
3. What specific course did you enroll in PE?
4. How do you think PE helped you as a person?
5. Can you tell us about your experiences in taking PE classes?
6. Are there advantages and disadvantages in taking PE classes; if so, what are they?
7. What did you learn in your PE class?
8. What insights have you gained from your PE experiences?

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering is crucial in research, as the data are meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework. It then becomes imperious in selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom the data will be acquired (Etikan et al., 2016). Letters of permission to conduct the study were sent to the PE teachers who provided the researchers with names of PWD that meet the criteria for the respondents.

Analysis of Data

The researchers used thematic analysis in analyzing the data. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is much more than simply summarizing the data; a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it. The answers of the six respondents were interpreted by grouping

them according to similarity of content to arrive at themes that will answer the research questions. Responses that do not have similarities but are also useful in answering the research questions were also analyzed.

Ethical Considerations

This study considered any type of harm and protection to the respondents who were not forced to participate in the study, but were informed instead of their voluntary participation in the study. Interview was done during the free time. They were informed that they had no obligation whatsoever to be part of the study. They had their choice where to do the interview and what time to start. They were assured that the results would be held confidential. Furthermore, the names of the respondents were withheld. Numbers, codes, and pseudonyms were rather used in encoding the responses.

Results and Discussion

This section contains the respondents' answers to the research questions and the discussion of these answers. These questions and answers are presented in tabular form for clearer understanding. Each of the respondents' profile is also in this chapter.

Detailed answers in the participants' native tongue (Tagalog) and English translations are found in the appendix.

Physical Condition of the Participants

Out of the six respondents, there is no common disability despite being enrolled in the same PE classes. Six physical disabilities emerged, and these are Feet Deformity (Participant #1), Amputated Right Arm (Participant #2), Squint-Eyed (Participant #3), Right Peripheral Vision Loss (Participant #4), Blount's Disease (Participant #5) and Muscle Dystrophy (Participant #6).

The participants have different physical disabilities that make it more difficult for them to participate and join regular classes in PE. Their physical disabilities are deformity of feet, amputated right arm, squint-eyed, right peripheral vision loss, Blount's disease and muscle dystrophy. Five of the six participants were able to finish PE 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Feet Deformity

Feet are used to walk and run, however, if they are deformed, normal activities might be affected. Feet deformities may be inborn or caused by external stimulus (Informed Health, 2018). Participant 1 has feet deformity. It was mentioned that his condition was inborn, and he does not know exactly what kind of feet deformity he has. The respondent stated that his right foot was deformed since birth. Unlike polio, his leg muscles and bones do not shrink. His right foot was just deformed.

Structural deformity of the foot brings about functional change and therefore affects the maintenance of balance of the bilateral lower extremities and the trunk; such deformities may trigger abnormal changes in gait patterns and musculoskeletal system pain (Jang, 2015). Hence, it would be difficult for an individual with feet deformity to do the usual activities that involve the use of the lower extremities.

Amputated Right Arm

Amputate means to cut off the part of the body, removed by or as if by cutting. Amputation is the surgical removal of all or part of a limb or extremities such as an arm, leg, foot, hand toe, or finger. The most common reason for amputation is poor circulation because of the damage or narrowing of the arteries, without adequate blood flow, severe injury and serious burn (WebMD, 2018). Participant 2 has amputated arm. The respondent said that it was an accident when he was in first year high school year 2010.

Squint-Eyed

A person who is squint-eyed has one eye that looks in different directions to the other eye, because of a weakness of the eye muscles. A squint, or strabismus, is a condition in which the eyes do not align

properly. This usually occurs because the muscles that control the movement of the eye and eyelid, the extraocular muscles, are not working together. (Felman, 2017). The participant stated that both of his eyes are functioning, but the problem is the location.

Right Peripheral Vision Loss

Loss of vision allows a person to see movement and objects out of the central sight. The loss of side vision leaves central vision intact. Peripheral vision problems mean the absence of a normal side-angle field vision despite a normal central vision or a “tunnel vision” (Haddrill, M. & Heiting, G., 2017). The respondent was diagnosed with leukemia. He stated that his vision has been affected due to chemotherapy.

Blount’s Disease

Blount’s disease is a disorder that affects the bones of the lower leg, causing them to bow outward. It is a growth disorder of the shin bone (tibia) in which the lower leg turns inward, making it look like a bowleg. Blount’s disease occurs in young children and adolescents. The cause is unknown. It is thought to be because of weight on the growth plate. The inner part of the shin bone, just below the knee, fails to develop normally (Blount Disease: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia, 2018). The respondent mentioned that her bones were soft, and it was inborn.

Muscle Dystrophy

Muscular dystrophy is a group of inherited diseases that damage and weaken the muscles over time. These damages and weakness are due to the lack of a protein called dystrophin, which is necessary for normal muscle function. The absence of this protein can cause problems with walking, swallowing, and muscle coordination (Han, 2019). Participant 6 stated that he is not advised to do any physical activity.

Males with muscle dystrophy experience a progressive loss of muscle function resulting in several physical challenges such as a decline in mobility with eventual need for a wheelchair by age 12, sleep apnea, limitations in performing daily activities, and respiratory and/or cardiac complications, all of which can hinder their ability to learn (Han, 2019).

Challenges in PE Classes

Table 1 presents the responses of the respondents to the interview question, “As a result of your disability, what were your experiences in the PE classes?” Generated themes include limited movements, low self-esteem, and extreme concerns for safety.

Table 1

Challenges in PE Classes

Disability	Challenges
Feet Deformity	“I had doubts and fears of not being able to perform properly to get a good grade, and that my classmates would look at me and pity me. I thought of my pride and I wanted to go home to my province, the reason why I did not continue with the first PE class I enrolled in. Therefore, I got an NC or no credit. I felt embarrassed at first even in the next PE class I enrolled in the second semester because I could not wear shorts which is the prescribed PE uniform. I had difficulty with the activities in basketball because I was told to always be careful when I play.”
Amputated Right Arm	“Instead of enrolling outright in the sport that was scheduled even if I wanted to enroll in it, I had to choose the appropriate sport and schedule for me so that I will not get hurt. For the other PE subjects, I had to settle for research and paperwork.”

{table continues on the next page}

Squint-Eyed	“The thought of being different from the others was my struggle. It affected my self-confidence so much in performing activities like getting the ball, as well as getting along with others in team sports such as marching.”
Right Peripheral Vision Loss	“I chose table tennis and basketball because they are indoors, and despite the difficulty, I could somehow manage the sport despite only one eye. Compared to marching, where I may stumble or bump into other people, and softball which is outdoor, wherein I could most likely have an accident. The first two are safer. I just did paper work as an alternative activity for the PE subjects that I could not perform.”
Blount’s Disease	“I have difficulty in standing position in Aerobics PE 1, but I tried to manage. In PE 2 I was exempted in the practical activities but was given paperwork. In PE 3 it was not easy, but I tried to enjoy it because it was only near the table and not so much running in Table Tennis. Then in PE 4 I was asked to do a special project instead of ball games which would put me in danger.”
Muscle Dystrophy	“In PE 1 which was jogging, I enjoyed it so much, unfortunately, it was dangerous for my limbs, so I was transferred to charobics but it would also be dangerous for my muscles, so I was given an alternative requirement of researching different charobic steps. Theory without practice is not really very easy.”

It is extremely a challenge for them to participate in actual activities. Some of them were given alternative tasks by their teachers like downloading steps in Aerobics, research a formation in Marching and one is the scorer and a referee, but even those tasks were not easy for them.

Limited Movements

Based on the responses, all the participants had different physical disabilities that playing sports such as basketball, volleyball, table tennis and even aerobics or marching is difficult. Aside from this, one of the participants almost gave up. The element of difficulty of activities in PE was a common challenge. For individuals with the limitation to engage in a given activity, rather than excluding those with special needs from the gym class, public schools now offer adaptive fitness programs.

Low Self-Esteem

Fear of not performing well and getting low grades contribute to low self-esteem. Embarrassment to play with their classmates, for being different, and being treated with pity because of their peculiar appearance and disability, makes it difficult to work in a group all contribute to lowered self-esteem. All the participants were limited to engage in different kinds of activities that decreased their self-esteem. Any individual who faces hardship in participating in actual activities are thought of to be facing additional barriers which all contribute to low self-esteem, lack of confidence, and feeling badly about oneself. People with low self-esteem feel unhappy or unsatisfied with themselves most of the time (Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). Their disability has a big effect to the participants with regards to their self-esteem because it is considered their hindrance whenever they join physical activities.

Extreme Concerns for Safety

Keeping themselves away from danger and performing PE activities become even more difficult to handle. Even UNESCO advocates that safe opportunities to participate in PE activities should be provided for students/children with special needs (Lidor & Hutzler, 2019). As a result, teachers resort to alternative tasks with less risk such as research, scoring, and searching marching formations, which sometimes are not easy for the students since they cannot perform the practical aspect of the sport.

Advantages in PE Classes

Table 2 shows the respondents' answers to the interview question, "What are the advantages of PWDs in PE classes?" Generated themes include enhanced physical health, achievement of maturity, gained confidence, consideration and enjoyment from alternative activities, and discovery of new skills.

Table 2

Advantages in PE Classes

Disability	Challenges
Feet Deformity	"However, my advantage, if I tell ma'am "ma'am, I am in difficulties", it's a favor from her and if I am late, she understands and gives consideration. I don't tell them to have pity on me, just consideration. And sometimes, I am not asked to do all the activities because I cannot, and they understand it and they know it even if I tell them. And of course, it has alternative paperwork they ask me to do."
Amputated Right Arm	"For the advantage, that's it, you will become healthy because exercise can help you have a good metabolism. Also, you will have more friends because you will be in a team. Another is your shyness will be removed."
Squint -Eyed	"Example, you are not used to mingle with others, and you will talk with your seatmate and you are not the only one enjoying. PE is about fun. And, for me, I really enjoy PE Class. Physically and mentally, all of them will work. It also develops skills for a student. Usually, it will really develop skills."
Right Peripheral Vision Loss	"The advantage to me is having a good cardiovascular where I sweat...and become physically healthy. I was given the chance to research on marching formations as an alternative activity, scoring and referee work."
Blount's Disease	"In PE 4, I am exempted. The advantage of PE 1 to me is I experience to use my cardiovascular, which makes me healthier, somehow... appropriate but there is an instance of difficulty, especially in my situation. In PE 3, that's it, I enjoy and more appropriate in my case and I can do more on table tennis which I enjoy, compared to other sports, and those who are normal do not enjoy their sports."
Muscle Dystrophy	"My teacher gave me another opportunity to increase my knowledge, experiences and my physical side. It caters the need because we all know that exercise is a need, but it must be appropriate to your personal needs. "Charobics" (form of aerobics) is really appropriate to my condition that's why it caters the need in my physical aspect. It helps to make my body active. There is alternative work that the teacher gives to me if I can't really do the practical activities like searching for different "Charobics" steps and we are the ones who will learn about the steps, how to execute then learning the tempo, and the counting of the steps. They don't spoon feed us."

Enhanced Physical Health

Having enhanced physical health means being active and eating right. Your family, friends and co-workers can be a great source of support as you work to adopt a healthier habit (Niddk, 2018). All the participants indicated to have a good physical habit and it helps them to be more active after they engaged in different physical activities.

Achievement of Maturity

People with maturity understand a great truth; they understand that life is difficult. All the participants have developed their maturity despite their limitations and experiences in their P.E. classes.

Gained Confidence

Having confidence is a person's belief that a chosen course of action is the right choice and that they can properly perform that action. As a personality trait, confidence is sometimes referred to as self-confidence. This term describes the attitudes and beliefs people hold regarding their abilities and strengths (Self-esteem: Take steps to feel better about yourself, 2017). All the participants improved their self-confidence by being engaged in various activities in P.E.

Consideration and Enjoyment From Alternative Activities

Because of their condition, teachers readily give PWDs consideration for being late and for not performing skills and activity within standard and they are given alternative activities that they enjoy. According to Lidor and Hutzler (2019), adaptive practices approach in PE features (a) providing multiple representations of content, for example, utilizing visual teaching aids in addition to verbally explaining and physically demonstrating; (b) providing multiple options for expression and control, such as using self-determined goals and performance criteria in addition to normative criteria; and (c) providing multiple modalities for engagement and motivation, such as peer modeling and cooperative play, in addition to competition. While the PWDs enjoy their activity, their classmates are forced into the sports and set schedules, and since PWDs are engaged in research as an alternative activity, they gain advantage in knowledge of the sport or activity more than their classmates.

Discovery of New Skills

While it is understood that a healthy brain can learn these new skills, how the brain changes in order to develop new behaviors is a relative mystery (Medical News Today, 2017). All the participants have improved their social aspect of life.

Opportunities Gained in PE Classes

Table 3 presents the opportunities gained from PE classes. These opportunities emanate from the challenges and advantages students gained from PE activities. These are the answers to the question, "What have you learned from the PE classes and what insights have you gained?"

Table 3
Opportunities Gained

Disability	Challenges
Feet Deformity	"Opportunities to gain friends and rapport with teachers, and strengthen self-esteem and confidence, accepting myself for what I am, which made me more mature in dealing with myself and others; the opportunity to thank my relatives for their encouragement, and God for His grace."
Amputated Right Arm	"Enhancement of metabolism, gained friends, and increase of self-confidence and maturity"
Squint-Eyed	"Strengthen interdisciplinary skills by working and having fun with group mates and practice skills I enjoy doing as well as discovering new skills and helping teachers create PE equipment, so I am thanking God for sustaining me."
Right Peripheral Vision Loss	"Increased cardio-vascular or circulatory functions of the body, and increased knowledge through research. I also gained the opportunity to discover my skill in creating marching formations, and materials... I thank God for his leading in my life."
Blount's Disease	"Increased circulatory functions of the body, and practice while enjoying sports that I choose... opportunities to build self-confidence and a positive outlook in life."
Muscle Dystrophy	"Opportunities to work independently, opportunities to thank those who encourage us to continue despite our condition."

The participants were happy and positive in joining their PE classes. They accepted who they are as well as their situations. They were so thankful about the learnings that they gained from their teachers when participating in PE classes. They realized that no matter what their situation is, they need to continue what they had started. The participants were thankful to their parents, teachers, and friends for the encouragement to continue. They are the reasons why they still have hope to keep going. Their positive outlook in life is because they believe that God is with them.

Strengthen Circulation in the Body.

The respondents found opportunities to strengthen the cardiovascular or circulatory system of the body to gain physical health. The inclusion of students with physical disabilities in a Physical Education class gave them the opportunity to move about, instead of simply watching those who were performing PE activities. One of the greatest opportunities to happen to education has been inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classes when possible.

Increase Knowledge and Creativity

Because of the research, knowledge about and creating materials and equipment for PWDs increase. Teachers need to think outside the box - and chip in to survive and develop the best possible scenarios, work with shop workers to develop lap boards, bean bags and soft balls, and even old broom handle, so many opportunities to create adapted equipment that facilitates inclusion.”

Build Rapport and Gain Friends

There are opportunities to gain friends through group work as well as opportunities to build rapport with their teachers because of the amount of consideration accorded to them. According to Building Rapport With Your Students – University Center for Teaching and Learning (2019), one of the five factors in building rapport between teachers and students is caring--faculty must care about students; they must see and respond to them as individuals. They also need to care about learning and show that they want students to learn.

Develop Spirit of Gratitude

Because of the growing self-confidence, PWDs found opportunities to thank those who encouraged them to continue despite their physical condition which resulted to increased self-confidence and a positive outlook in life. Their sense of fulfillment gives them opportunities to accept themselves and accept God’s leading in their lives.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The researchers conclude that PWDs were challenged to do the tasks in the PE classes whether they were the regular tasks or alternative tasks. They could not even do the same activities together since they had different physical disabilities. Their situation made the PE tasks difficult to perform for each of the respondents of the study. This difficult situation in PE, however, gave them the opportunity to gain self-confidence and determination to finish the tasks despite their limitations. It also gave them the opportunity to discover their potentials. As a result of this new-found success, their insights prompted them to think of their friends, teachers, and families that played a major role in their lives by encouraging them, supporting them and cheering them to finish the given tasks. PWDs took their situations positively and accepted God’s leading in their lives. All participants were thankful because their efforts paid off after joining PE classes.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researchers present the following recommendations: (1) For the PE department to maintain sections for PWDs in PE 1-4 to enhance the students’ self-confidence that is essential to facilitate the teachers’ introduction of the needed tasks, which in turn, gives the PWDs opportunities to discover their potentials; (2) For the faculty of the PE department to develop a module with differentiated instruction and activities that can help students with varied disabilities

for optimum participation and experience; (3) For the faculty of the PE department to continually pray with PWDs and provide witnessing opportunities for them to give testimonies of God's guidance in their lives, especially in worship services and outreach ministries; (4) For researchers to replicate the study interviewing the teachers and administrators instead of the PWDs, to discover the appropriate teaching strategies or approaches for different types of disabilities; and (5) For the University administrators to support and empower PWDs and develop lifelong learning programs for them.

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THE EFFECTS OF PSYCHO-EDUCATION PROGRAM ON THE FEAR OF COVID-19 AMONG WOMEN IN JACANA CHURCH

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Abstract

The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic brought intense fear to everybody. Many people were infected and some even died. There are no proven treatments for the disease yet, and the best way to prevent its spread is to be vaccinated. The present study aimed to assess the fear of COVID-19 among women in Jacana Church. A pre-experimental design study was used to collect data on the fear of COVID-19 scale (FCV-19S). The primary method for measurement used was the pre-test and post-test designed to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. The participants were the members of the women's ministries in Jacana Church, where 10 women participated in the program. The survey was conducted in a face-to-face setting. The mean COVID-19 fear scores significantly decreased after the intervention (pre-test 3.37 – post-test 1.58). The mean difference of 1.79, $p = .000$ is significant. The result of the study shows that there is a significant improvement from the pre-test to post-test scores due to the intervention program. Thus, the psycho-education program was effective in improving knowledge and mitigating fear of COVID-19.

Keywords: *COVID-19, psycho-education program, fear, pandemic*

When Adam and Eve violated the Word of God, not to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), fear entered the heart and the mind of living creatures. Since then, fear has become a part of human nature. Fear is a natural, powerful, and primitive human emotion. Fear alerts human beings to the presence of danger or the threat of harm, whether that danger is physical or psychological in nature (Garcia, 2017). During the pandemic, fear increases, and stress and anxiety levels among healthy individuals worsen the symptoms of those with a pre-existing psychiatric disorder (Shigemura et al., 2020). Fear is one of the symptoms of a mental health condition including panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, phobias, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Fritscher, 2020).

Through the rapid spread of news around the world (e.g. television, radio, print, and social media), the number of infected individuals and deaths due to COVID-19 constantly increased over the past few months which left a negative psychological effect among the populace (Pakpour and Griffins, 2020). Scientific studies have shown that the psychological effects of the pandemic have been noticed among healthcare workers. For example, the results of the study of Karakose and Malkoc (2021) disclosed that medical doctors experienced psychological problems such as personal stress, fear, panic attacks, and sleep disorders during the pandemic.

The governments have enforced strict laws to stop the spread of the virus (Adhikari et al., 2020). The worst affected countries, China, Italy, Spain, and Ecuador have ordered long periods of lockdown which impacted negative outcomes to the living conditions of their populace.

On the other hand, when there is inadequate fear, this may result to danger for individuals and society (e.g., due to people ignoring government protocols to slow the spread of coronavirus or due to reckless policies that ignore the risks). Likewise, fear triggers safety behaviors (e.g., hand washing) that can alleviate clear threats (e.g., contamination), but they may paradoxically also enhance fear (e.g., contamination concerns and health anxiety) (Deacon & Maack, 2008; Engelhard et al., 2020). The previous fact supports the belief that concerns about physical or contact contamination resulting in washing behaviors are closely intertwined with feelings of mental contamination that arise from fear of one's own identity being corrupted (Krause et al., 2020).

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in China in December 2019 and in Europe in February 2020, national polls indicate sharp increases in fear and worries relating to the virus (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020). The fear of COVID-19 intensifies, when a lot of people died, in some parts of China and Europe. Accordingly, women were affected very much because they constitute the largest number among working forces all over the world, both as frontline workers and at home. Women show higher levels of fear of COVID-19, stress, anxiety, and depression than men. Likewise, women reveal a higher level of worry, concern, and fear of contracting COVID-19 in conducted studies in some parts of countries such as Turkey and India (Bakioglu et al., 2020). Otherwise, fear also causes some changes in the cognitive system such as attention levels (Dozois et al., 2019). Therefore, the fear of COVID-19 can be thought to have the potential to affect the positivity level of individuals.

The uncertainty, worry, health anxiety, media exposure, personal health, and risk of loved ones are the predictors of fear (Engelhard et al., 2020). The researcher observed that the predictor of fear of coronavirus has increased, due to misinformation on how to handle the situation. Fear of the coronavirus may also be predicted by perceived coping resources. Coping is a common central mitigating factor in models of health, fear, and pain. (Salkovskis & Warwick, 2000). Moreover, psychological, and sociological factors are also causes of fear as well as genetic factors (Coelho & Purkis, 2009; Asmundson & Taylor, 2020). Ultimately, the fear of COVID-19 pandemic shows a major challenge in the physical, psychological, social, and relational aspects of human beings all over the world (Holmes et al., 2020).

This study aimed to assess the fear of COVID-19 among women in Jacana Church. The researcher wanted to know if the hypothesis which states that the level of fear was alleviated after the implementation of the psycho-educational intervention was true.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the researcher utilized the pre-experimental design: One group was considered for the pretest-posttest design OXO shorthand for one-group pretest-posttest design, in which the researcher observed and measured a single set of participants (O), introduced an intervention (X), and then measured the participants (O) again to determine whether the intervention resulted in any change.

Population and Sampling

The selected study area was Jacana Adventist Church because there was no previous study on the psycho-education program conducted there prior to the study. The availability of the respondents was also taken into consideration as well as the ease of the researcher herself in conducting the study. The participants of the study were 10 members of Women's Ministries Department in Jacana Church.

Research Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire was utilized as the research instrument to gather all the data needed to answer the specific problem of the study. The survey was conducted in a face-to-face setting.

The questionnaire was validated before giving it to the respondents. It contains 25 items and was constructed based on the Fear of COVID-19 Scale. The participants were asked to respond to each item by selecting one of the five responses that reflect how they feel, think, or act toward COVID-19. Answers included strongly disagree, disagree, slightly agree, agree, and strongly agree.

The fear of COVID-19 psycho-education program is composed of 5 sessions on the topics of Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19, Understanding COVID-19 Fear Symptoms, Effects of COVID-19 Fear on Mental Health, Relaxation Strategies for COVID-19 Fear, and Strengthening Spiritual Growth Amidst the COVID-19 Fear.

The program was conducted in a face-to-face setting. The session started from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon and then from 1:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon. The researcher provided snacks and free lunches to the participants and lecturers. During the question-and-answer portion, those who got correct answers received rewards. In every session, the participants were free to ask questions that were not clear to them. After two weeks, the researcher gathered the participants again for the post-test. No control groups were employed in the study. All participants were in the same experimental group.

Ethical Consideration

All the participants were informed about the details of the study. Participation in the study was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study without any consequences at any time during the study. The anonymity of participants was guaranteed. All procedures in this study were in accordance with the ethical standard of the Adventist University of the Philippines Ethics Review Board (AUP-ERB).

Results and Discussion

Level of Fear of COVID-19 Before the Intervention

Table 1 shows the level of fear of COVID-19 before the intervention. The composite mean is 3.37 with a standard deviation of .282.

Table 1

Level of Pre-Test FCV-19

Items	M	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I am worried about Corona Virus.	3.80	.632	Agree	High
It makes me uncomfortable to think about Corona Virus.	3.80	.632	Agree	High

{table continues on the next page}

I am taking precautions to prevent infections.	3.50	.707	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I am afraid of losing my life because of Corona Virus.	3.80	.632	Agree	High
When I watch news and stories about Corona Virus on social media, I become nervous and anxious.	3.80	.632	Agree	High
I cannot sleep because I'm worrying about getting Corona Virus.	3.10	.568	Slightly Agree	Moderate
My heart races or palpitates when I think about Corona Virus.	3.20	.632	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I fear therefore, I shop for more food.	3.10	.994	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I am afraid of going blind because of Corona Virus.	3.20	.632	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I thought of delaying my appointment due to Corona Virus.	3.00	1.054	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I am afraid of the spread of Corona Virus.	3.60	.966	Agree	High
I expect my work life will be disrupted by Corona Virus.	3.30	1.252	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I am afraid to go to work because of the risk of exposure.	3.10	1.101	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I considered not going to an appointment to limit the risk of being infected of Corona Virus.	3.10	1.101	Slightly Agree	Moderate
Before my appointment, I was confident in the respect of hygiene and social distancing measures at the hospital.	3.50	1.269	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I have recently started to avoid watching and reading the news because it made me anxious.	3.50	-1.179	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I have recently avoided/reduced going to prayer places/church.	2.90	1.197	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I have recently avoided/reduced using health care facilities/public health centre.	3.10	1.101	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I have limited my physical contact with people.	3.80	1.033	Agree	High
I feel fake news surfacing the social media regarding Corona Virus is causing panic.	3.60	1.075	Agree	High
I feel under confident with the current infection control measures.	3.40	1.075	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I feel the situation is not as bad as it being portrayed.	3.10	.994	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I have thought of quitting or applying for leave at the workplace because of Corona Virus.	3.10	1.101	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I have pretended to be sick to avoid going to the workplace.	2.70	.823	Slightly Agree	Moderate
I frequently wash my hands.	4.20	.632	Agree	High
Grand Mean	3.37	.282	Slightly Agree	Moderate

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low; 2.51 – 3.50 Slightly Agree/Moderate; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High

In the pre-test, item - 25 *"I frequently wash my hands"* got the highest score which is interpreted as being at a level of high fear of COVID-19. The following statements followed: *"I am worried about Corona Virus"*; *"It makes me uncomfortable to think about Corona Virus"*; *"I am afraid of losing my life because of Corona Virus"*; *"When I watch news and stories about Corona Virus on social media, I become nervous and anxious; and I have limited my physical contact with people"*.

The results of the pre-test demonstrate that the statements were responded as slightly agree to agree by the participants. These responses are categorized from moderate to high degree of fear to COVID-19. Thus, participants were worried about the coronavirus, and they were also afraid of losing their lives because of it. Further, they were also uncomfortable to think about it, and watching news and stories about coronavirus on social media made them nervous and anxious. Additionally, participants avoided going to places and churches and even pretended to be sick to avoid going to the workplace. The overall pre-test score of fear of COVID-19 is 3.37 which demonstrates that the participants had moderate fear of COVID-19 before the intervention program.

Level of Fear of COVID-19 After the Intervention

Table 2 shows the level of fear of COVID-19 after the intervention. The composite mean is 1.58 with a standard deviation of 1.768.

Table 2
Level of Post-Test FCV-19

Items	M	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I am worried about Corona Virus.	1.30	.675	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
It makes me uncomfortable to think about Corona Virus.	1.60	1.075	Disagree	Low
I am taking precautions to prevent infections.	1.30	.675	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I am afraid of losing my life because of Corona Virus.	1.30	.675	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
When I watch news and stories about Corona Virus on social media, I become nervous and anxious.	1.40	.966	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I cannot sleep because I'm worrying about getting Corona Virus.	1.30	.675	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
My heart races or palpitates when I think about Corona Virus.	1.78	.972	Disagree	Low
I fear therefore, I shop for more food.	1.33	.500	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I am afraid of going blind because of Corona Virus.	1.50	.972	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I thought of delaying my appointment due to Corona Virus.	1.40	.699	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I am afraid of the spread of Corona Virus.	1.70	.823	Disagree	Low
I expect my work life will be disrupted by Corona Virus.	1.60	1.075	Disagree	Low
I am afraid to go to work because of the risk of exposure.	1.30	.483	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

{table continues on the next page}

I considered not going to an appointment to limit the risk of being infected of Corona Virus.	1.20	.422	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
Before my appointment, I was confident in the respect of hygiene and social distancing measures at the hospital.	1.30	.483	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I have recently started to avoid watching and reading the news because it made me anxious.	1.50	.707	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I have recently avoided/reduced going to prayer places/ church.	1.60	.699	Disagree	Low
I have recently avoided/reduced using health care facilities/ public health centre.	1.30	.483	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I have limited my physical contact with people.	2.00	.943	Disagree	Low
I feel fake news surfacing the social media regarding Corona Virus is causing panic.	1.80	.789	Disagree	Low
I feel under confident with the current infection control measures.	1.90	.738	Disagree	Low
I feel the situation is not as bad as it is being portrayed.	1.40	.699	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I have thought of quitting or applying for leave at the workplace because of Corona Virus.	1.60	.843	Disagree	Low
I have pretended to be sick to avoid going to the workplace.	1.40	.699	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
I frequently wash my hands.	3.80	1.69	Agree	High
Grand Mean	1.58	1.768	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low; 2.51 – 3.50 Slightly Agree/Moderate; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High

In the post-test, out of 25 items, participants strongly disagree with 15 items and disagree with 10 which are interpreted as very low level and low level of fear. On the other hand, participants still agree with the statement “I frequently wash my hands” yet with a lower mean of 3.80. The composite mean is 1.58 which implies a very low level of fear of COVID-19.

Recall that in the pre-test, statements were responded with slightly agree to agree which means that the level of fear was from moderate to high. Yet, in the post-test most statements were responded with strongly disagree to disagree which implies low to very low level of fear. This means that there is a decrease in the level of fear among the participants after the intervention program.

Comparison of the Fear of COVID-19 Before and After the Psycho-Education Program

Table 3

Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test FCV-19 scores

	M	SD	Mean Difference	df	t	P	Verbal Interpretation
Pre-test	3.37	.282	1.79	24	2.06	.000	Significant
Post-test	1.58	1.768					

The results from the pre-test (M= 3.37, SD = .282) and post-test (M = 1.58, SD = 1.768) scores before and after the intervention programs show a decrease in the fear of COVID-19. This difference is significant, and the null hypothesis which states that “there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test

scores” is rejected, $t(24) = 2.06$, $p = 0.00$ less than 0.05. Thus, the intervention program resulted in an improvement in the test scores of FCV-19.

The results of the present study highlighted the effectiveness of the psycho-educational intervention on fear of COVID-19 with a significant decrease in the mean fear score of every item after the intervention. These findings are in accordance with other studies (Pfefferbaum, et., al, 2020). Therefore, the Fear of COVID-19 Scale (Ahorsu, 2020) is reliable and valid in assessing fear of COVID-19 and is useful in reducing COVID-19 fear among individuals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The impact of psycho-education program gives a significant positive effect on women in Jacana Church after the intervention. Therefore, promoting awareness of the pandemic and responsible behaviour towards oneself and others may help people feel morally sustained when confronting their fears.

The researcher, however, acknowledges some limitations of the study such as the small sample size. Therefore, further studies involving a larger sample size are recommended to confirm the findings of the present study.

Considering the above findings, the researcher recommends the following: 1) form targeted educational and training programs in the community. This helps in keeping people informed about the evidence-based COVID-19 fear and prevention; 2) develop psycho-educational materials that are easily accessible to the community; 3) use multimedia to counteract the rising trend of wrong information toward COVID-19; and 4) widen the psycho-educational intervention application to the community via multimedia.

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I AM VALIANT: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COPING SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH ANXIETY SYMPTOMS

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Abstract

Anxiety among children has increased significantly because of the pandemic and there is a great need to mitigate this problem. One of the feasible mitigations is to teach young minds to cope with anxiety. Studies have revealed that a coping skill training program in school settings has reduced symptoms of anxiety. However, there was no evidence that this program is effective among Filipino children. This study aims to investigate whether the “I Am Valiant: Coping Skills Training Program” can reduce anxiety symptoms among Filipino children. A one-group pretest-posttest pre-experimental research design was used to investigate the effect of the coping skills program on the respondents’ anxiety levels. A child anxiety test scale was given to 21 children to identify their levels of anxiety. This served as their baseline data before they were subjected to the Coping Skills Training Program. A posttest was given to determine whether the levels of anxiety had changed. Paired t-test analysis showed that there is a significant reduction in the overall anxiety levels among the children who had undergone the intervention program. Therefore, the coping skills training program has been effective as a mitigating factor to reduce anxiety symptoms among Filipino children.

Keywords: *Coping Skills Training Program, symptoms of anxiety, Filipino children*

Children are the hope of the future. Healthy mental well-being during childhood is essential to achieving a mentally stable adult. In this critical period of life, numerous biopsychosocial changes and challenges occur. With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, where government restrictions led to confinement, social isolation, closure of school, and other social limitations, children's mental health is at risk. Stress and anxiety are at a high level because coping with the existing situation can be difficult for children. The dissonant circumstances of the developmental task of the children might result in a tremendous impact on mental health.

The most common type of mental health disorder seen among children is anxiety (Kashani et al., 1990). Several studies revealed that the prevalence increased significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic (Racine et al., 2021; De Miranda et al., 2020). In the Philippine setting during the Covid-19 pandemic, the prevalence of anxiety also has increased significantly (Tee et al., 2020).

Studies revealed that anxiety among children is a predictor of a future assortment of psychiatric disorders (Bittner et al., 2007). Among all types of anxiety, separation anxiety disorder is the most common (Cartwright-Hatton et al., 2006). The study by Lewinsohn et al. (2008) cited that separation anxiety disorder was a strong (78.6%) risk factor for the development of mental disorders during young adulthood and the major vulnerabilities were panic disorder and depression (Cole et al., 1998).

In addition, it was seen that depression, impairment in social relation, behavior, attention, poor school performance, and impaired memory functioning is common among children with anxiety (Strauss et al., 1987; Petra et al., 2011). Puskar (2003) also cited that "anxiety symptoms were strongly correlated with both physical complaints and depression. Females had higher scores for total anxiety and the anxiety subtypes of generalized anxiety disorder, separation anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social phobia, and school phobia." Science shows that early exposure to circumstances that produce persistent fear and chronic anxiety can have lifelong consequences by disrupting the brain's developing architecture (Shonkoff et al., 2012).

Another aspect that is significantly associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms is sleep problems (Alfano et al., 2009). Negative coping, poor sleep, and the prevalence of anxiety symptoms are significantly related, whereas a positive coping style decreased the prevalence of anxiety symptoms.

Anxiety disorders certainly affect children and adolescents, and the Covid-19 pandemic has increased its prevalence, mostly in girls (Racine et al., 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to identify childhood anxiety, for this is critical for early prevention and intervention (Kingston et al., 2015). To lower the risk of anxiety symptoms and enhance healthy functioning individuals, effective intervention measures are certainly required.

The CBT-based program is one intervention that appears feasible for use in schools and was created to address anxiety symptoms. The findings suggested that the intervention could be useful in school settings, and it demonstrated efficacy in lowering anxiety symptoms in both general and targeted groups (Briesch et al., 2010). The preventive potential of the coping skills program is presented by assessing epidemiological data on fears and anxieties. The problem is that early prevention and intervention programs for elementary students in the Philippine provinces are almost nonexistent.

Given this context, the researcher proposed an intervention program using the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach for childhood anxiety symptoms. Several kinds of literature have shown this intervention to be effective in managing anxiety among children (Hollon et al., 2006). There has been emergent attention given to CBT-based intervention in psychotherapy research (Clark and Taylor., 2009). CBT-based intervention programs have shown a reduction in anxiety and depressive symptoms, including behavioral and psychosocial impairment in various domains of life.

Furthermore, school-based cognitive behavior prevention programs for childhood anxiety have resulted in reducing anxiety and depressive symptoms (Essau et al., 2012). Another study by Mostert and Loxton (2008) using the same school-based cognitive behavior prevention program for children with anxiety in a different race showed a little statistically significant post-intervention effect. However, it has been shown to have a better effect in the long run.

Despite several studies showing the benefits of anxiety reduction among children worldwide, there are no evaluated effective prevention and early intervention programs for Filipino children. This study sought

to fill this important gap by implementing and empirically evaluating the effectiveness of the “I am Valiant: Coping Skills Training Program (CSTP)” among Filipino children.

Specifically, this study would like to determine whether CSTP can effectively reduce anxiety levels among the participants. Hence, the following research questions were answered by this study.

1. What is the participants’ anxiety level before implementing the CSTP intervention?
2. What is the participants’ anxiety level after implementing the CSTP intervention?
3. Is there a significant difference in the participant’s anxiety level before and after the CSTP intervention?

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher used a quasi-experimental research design with a one-group pretest-posttest to investigate the effect of a CTSP on the respondents’ anxiety levels. In this design, the researcher observed a single case at two-time points. The researcher measured the anxiety level of the respondents before and after the implementation of the CSTP. The changes in the variation of the anxiety level before and after the intervention are presumed to be the result of the intervention conducted by the researcher.

Population and Sampling

This research focused on the effects of coping skill program among Filipino children on their anxiety symptoms. The study involved 21 Filipino school-aged children from Grade 2 to Grade 6. The respondents were from a private elementary school in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, who had volunteered to join the program. Tables 1 – 4 show the distribution of the participants in terms of age, sex, grade level and parental status.

Table 1

Distribution of the Participants in Terms of Age

Age	Frequency	%
8 yrs. old	5	23.8
9 yrs. old	5	23.8
10 yrs. old	4	19.0
11 yrs. old	7	33.3

Table 2

Distribution of the Participants in Terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	%
Male	10	47.6
Female	11	52.4

Table 3

Distribution of the Participants in Terms of Grade Level

Level	Frequency	%
Grade 3	6	28.6
Grade 4	4	19.0
Grade 5	5	23.8
Grade 6	6	28.8

Table 4*Distribution of the Participants in Terms of Parental Status*

Parental Status	Frequency	%
Married and living together	15	71.4
Single parent	1	14.3
Parents are separated/divorced	2	7.1
Parents not married but living together	2	7.1

As seen in Table 1, the participants' ages are between eight years old to eleven years old. Most of the participants are 11 years old. They represent 33.3% of the total population. This is followed by 23.8% of the population, which was represented by 9-year-old students, another 23.8% of the population was represented by 8 years old, and 19% of the population was represented by 10 years old. Most of the participants are females (52.4%), while male participants are 47.6%. The grade levels considered in the study are Grade 3 (28.6%), Grade 4 (19%), Grade 5 (23.8%), and Grade 6 (28.8%). In terms of parental status, most of the participants have parents who are married and are living together (71.4%).

Instrumentation

This study used a researcher-made instrument adopted from the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS) to assess the anxiety level of the participants before and after the CSTP intervention. The survey questionnaire is composed of 41-item self-report statements that assess the severity of several anxiety symptoms present in the participants aged 8 to 11 years old. The participants of the study must respond to each item using a 5-point Likert rating scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (always). The researcher did not use norm-referenced measurement to describe the anxiety level of the respondents. Higher mean scores indicate more severe symptoms. The instrument assesses six constructs of anxiety such as panic attack and agoraphobia, separation anxiety, physical injury fears, social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the intervention, the researcher conducted the needed survey of the targeted students and formulated the title of the research, secured its approval, and prepared the intervention module. The proposal to conduct the study was sent to the school administrators to secure the necessary permits and approval. After approval from the administrators was secured, the researcher distributed the consent form and the parent's consent to the identified respondents. Only those who signed the consent form and the parents' consent were included in the study. The researcher conducted an orientation for the students and their parents or guardians regarding the intervention to be conducted. The participants and their parents were informed about the benefits of the intervention, the flow of the program, the schedule of the intervention, and the confidentiality information gathered. Questions were also entertained during this briefing. They were also informed that participation in this study is voluntary, and it will not affect their school standing. The researcher also administered the researcher-made Child Anxiety Test Scale derived from Spence Children's Anxiety Scale to measure the anxiety level of the participants before the intervention through Google Forms.

Intervention Program

The study used a researcher-made intervention program that incorporates the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-Based (CBT-based) Coping Skills Training Program Theory to reduce the anxiety level of the participants. The researcher conducted consultations and pre-trial to ensure that the program would run smoothly.

The “I am Valiant: Coping Skills Training Program” intervention program was conducted online through Zoom since face-to-face instruction for elementary students is not allowed by the government. The two-week intervention program consists of seven sessions. Topics include: 1) Building Rapport, 2) Understanding Anxiety, 3) Physical Effect of Anxiety, 4) Relaxation Skills, 5) Identifying and Challenging Anxious Self-Talk, 6) Attitudes and Actions, and 7) Results and Rewards. The length of each session is one hour and was conducted for eight sessions. A variety of activities were given during the online intervention program to build coping skills for the participants.

Ethical Considerations

The respondents and their parents or guardians were informed that participation in this study is voluntary and it will not affect their grades in any subject. After identifying the respondents, the researcher distributed the consent form and the parent’s consent form to each respondent. Only those who signed the consent form and the parents’ consent form were included in the study.

Data Analysis

After the intervention program, the researcher administered the Spence Children’s Anxiety Scale to measure their anxiety level after the intervention. The test was conducted through Google forms. After the relevant data were collected, they were organized for analysis.

Using the mean score and standard deviation, the researcher evaluated the anxiety level of the participants before and after the intervention. Paired t-test was used to determine if the difference in the anxiety level before and after the intervention is statistically significant.

Results and Discussion

Anxiety Level Before the Intervention

The researcher administered an online Anxiety Test to the 21 participants to determine their anxiety level before participating in the Coping Skills Training Program. There were six domains of anxiety measured in the given test. Results of the pre-test are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Participants’ Level of Anxiety Before the Intervention

Pre-Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Scale Response	Interpretation
Generalized Anxiety	2.00	0.00	Sometimes	Moderate
Separation Anxiety	3.38	1.12	Always	Very High
Social Anxiety	2.38	0.86	Sometimes	Moderate
Panic/ Agoraphobia	2.14	0.65	Sometimes	Moderate
Fears On Physical Injury	2.48	1.08	Often	High
Obsessive-Compulsive	2.71	0.71	Often	High
Overall Anxiety	2.81	0.51	Often	High

Scoring System: 0.00 – 0.80 Never/Low; 0.81 – 1.60 Rarely/Mild; 1.61 – 2.40 Sometimes/Moderate; 2.41 – 3.20 Often/High; 3.21 – 4.00 Always/Very High

As seen in Table 5, when the six domains of anxiety were measured, it could be observed that participants reported very high levels in terms of Separation Anxiety with a mean score of 3.38 (SD=1.11). Those who fall into this category reported that they experienced the symptoms always.

Moreover, participants also reported a high level of obsessive-compulsiveness with a mean score of 2.71 (SD=0.71) and fears of physical injury with a mean score of 2.48 (SD=1.07). Participants who fall into this category reported having experienced the symptoms often.

In addition, other participants reported having moderate levels in terms of generalized anxiety with a mean score of 2.0(SD=0.00), social anxiety with a mean score of 2.38(SD=0.86), and panic/agoraphobia with a mean score of 2.14(SD=.0.65). These individuals reported having experienced the symptoms sometimes.

A very high result of the participant's separation anxiety level in the study may be attributed to several factors. The first is the participant's age, in which separation anxiety is expected as a part of growing up and is mainly observed. In fact, APA (2000) has cited that separation anxiety is the only anxiety disorder circumscribed to infancy, childhood, or adolescence. Second is the change in the participant's daily routine. A change in daily routine brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic wherein the closure of the school, the limited movement, and confinement can exacerbate it (Dabkowska & Dabkowska-Mika, 2021). Third is parental anxiety. Parental anxiety may also have reinforced the separation anxiety of their child (Dadds et al., 2001), especially at this time of the pandemic where there are many uncertainties a parent could have, and evidence shows its increased prevalence even among the adult population (Kan et al., 2021).

In the overall view, levels of anxiety before the intervention were high, with a mean score of 2.81(SD=.51). These participants reported having experienced anxiety symptoms often. The high anxiety levels of the participants may be harmonized with what Tee et.al (2020) cited that the anxiety levels among children and adolescents in the Philippines have increased during the pandemic. Since anxiety is multifactorial in nature, the high anxiety levels of the participants may be attributed to multiple factors. However, the change of routines due to the closures of schools, government-imposed confinement and limitations, and the possibility to get infected and die had made the pandemic itself an aggravating factor for anxiety among the general population and especially on children.

Anxiety Level After the Intervention

After the Coping Skills Training Program, the researcher administered the anxiety test online to 21 participants who completed the program. Results of the posttest are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Participants' Level of Anxiety after the Intervention

Posttest	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Generalized Anxiety	2.24	0.77	Moderate
Separation Anxiety	2.48	1.03	High
Social Anxiety	2.10	0.77	Moderate
Panic/ Agoraphobia	1.48	0.75	Mild
Fears On Physical Injury	2.33	1.06	Moderate
Overall Anxiety	2.43	0.68	High
Obsessive-Compulsive	2.48	1.03	High

Scoring System: 0.00 – 0.80 Never/Low; 0.81 – 1.60 Rarely/Mild; 1.61 – 2.40 Sometimes/Moderate; 2.41 – 3.20 Often/High; 3.21 – 4.00 Always/Very High

In consideration of the domains that were measured, it can be observed in Table 6 that respondents have high levels in terms of separation anxiety with a mean score of 2.48(SD=1.03) and obsessive-compulsiveness with a mean score of 2.48(SD=1.03), respectively. On the other hand, moderate levels were reported on participants with generalized anxiety with a mean score of 2.23(SD=0.77), social anxiety with a mean score of 2.10(SD=.77), and fears on physical injury with a mean score of 2.33(SD=1.06). However, participants scored mild symptoms in terms of panic/agoraphobia with a mean score of 1.48(SD=.75).

In comparison to the mean score of the pretest of the said domains, the posttest yielded lower mean scores. The separation anxiety that scored a very high level in the pretest decreased to a level of high. That means the participants were less afraid of being alone in their own homes or less afraid of being away from

their parents or worrying less about something awful that may happen to their family etc., than before the intervention program.

The moderate levels of anxiety in terms of panic and agoraphobia decreased to a mild level after the intervention. That means the participants have less experience of feeling scared to sleep in their own room, less afraid of being in crowded places, less experience of being scared for no reason at all, and other symptoms that pertain to the said domain.

Other domains such as social anxiety, fears of physical injury, and obsessive-compulsive disorder also manifested a decrease in the mean score, however, the category level had been retained. That means that there was also lesser experience in the symptoms such as feeling scared of dogs/insects, scared of taking a test or talking in front of the class, and keep checking that things are done right, however, the decrease was not as high as that of separation anxiety and panic/agoraphobia.

In terms of generalized anxiety, there is a slight increase in the post-test. Nevertheless, the level remains moderate. That means there are individuals who had a slight increase in the experience of symptoms such as fearing the dark, feeling afraid, shaky when they have problems, etc.

In the overall view, the participants' posttest yielded a mean score of 2.43(SD=0.68) which was lower than the pretest. However, in the verbal interpretation, the category remains at the same level as that of the pretest. In general, the participants experienced a decrease in anxiety symptoms in all domains after the intervention.

Comparison of the Anxiety Level Before and After the Intervention

Using the paired-sample t-test, the results in Table 7 show that there is a significant difference between the overall anxiety level of the respondents before and after the intervention program, $t(20) = 3.5$, $p .002$ ($< .05$). This indicates that the decrease in the symptoms experienced by the participants is significant.

Table 7
Paired Sample T-Test

	Before	After	df	t	p-value	Interpretation
Fears on physical injury	2.48(1.11)	2.3(1.03)	20	0.77	0.452	Not Significant
Generalized anxiety	2.0(0.00)	2.24(0.77)	20	-1.42	0.171	Not Significant
Obsessive-compulsive	2.71(0.71)	2.5(1.03)	20	1.6	0.135	Not Significant
Panic/agoraphobia	2.14(0.67)	1.48(0.74)	20	4.6	0.00	Significant
Separation anxiety	3.38(1.11)	2.48(1.03)	20	4.3	0.00	Significant
Social anxiety	2.38(0.86)	2.09(0.77)	20	1.5	0.137	Not Significant
Over-all anxiety	2.81(0.51)	2.43(0.67)	20	3.5	0.002	Significant

Table 7 indicates that the overall anxiety mean score of the post-test (2.43/SD=0.68) is lower than the pre-test mean score (2.81/SD=0.51). It can also be observed from the mean scores that after the intervention, there is a downward trend in the levels of anxiety in the five domains such as fear of physical injury, obsessive-compulsive, and social anxiety. However, generalized anxiety increased from 2.0(SD=0.00) pre-test mean score to 2.24(SD=0.77) posttest mean score. That means, most symptoms of anxiety such as being afraid to be alone in their own home, afraid of sleeping alone in their room, afraid of dogs/insects, etc. were experienced to a lesser extent than before the intervention.

When examined closely in terms of the six anxiety domains, four out of six domains which include fears of physical injury, generalized anxiety, obsessive-compulsive, and social anxiety did not indicate a significant change after the intervention, $p > .05$.

On the other hand, two domains such as panic/agoraphobia and separation anxiety indicate a significant difference after the intervention, $p < .05$. There is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of

the participants before and after the intervention in terms of panic/agoraphobia, $t(20) = 4.6$, $p = 0.00$ and separation anxiety, $t(20) = 4.3$, $p = 0.00$.

It is evident that there is a significant decrease in the levels of anxiety among the participants after engaging in the intervention program. This would imply that the participants had a significant decrease in the experience of symptoms of anxiety after the intervention program.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The result suggests that there is a significant reduction in the overall level of anxiety among the participants after the engagement with the “I am Valiant”: Coping Skill Training Program. This leads to rejecting the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the anxiety level of the participants before and after the intervention program. Also, this implies that “I am Valiant”: Coping Skill Training Program has an effect in lowering the anxiety level of the participants. The result yielded similar findings to Briesch et al. (2010) and Lowry-Webster et al. (2001), that a CBT-based coping skill training program in school settings has demonstrated efficacy in lowering anxiety symptoms among the general and targeted population. Although most of the Coping Skills Training programs that produced efficacy are face-to-face, this study conveys that the CBT based-coping skills training program delivered online is feasible to achieve a successful outcome like what Spence et al. (2008) had cited. In addition, it confirms the efficacy of the program for Filipino children. Hence, the Coping Skill Training Program could be one of the mitigations to address the increasing risk of anxiety among children including Filipinos.

The researcher recognizes that there are limitations in the study. First, the sample size is small and the participants are limited to private school children. This limits the generalizability of the study. Second, there is no control group to limit other variables that may affect the result. The online delivery of which the program was being implemented also possesses lots of variables that affect the validity of the result.

As such, the researcher recommends the following: to conduct a similar study in wider aspects as to grade level, age, and population and including the out-of-school children; to use a control group in the study to limit the variables that may affect the validity; to include the intervention as part of the institution’s guidance program, and to increase the number of sessions for the program to accommodate more coping exercises for children.

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“DEAR STRESS, LET’S BREAK UP”: AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADULTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a lot of changes and it affected everyone, especially young adults, who are most affected due to the sudden changes in their environment: forced lockdowns and isolation that also create a great negative effect on their emotional and mental health, bringing up mental stress as one of their main concerns. This study used a pretest-posttest design to determine the effects of an intervention program “*Dear Stress, Let’s Break Up*” in reducing the level of stress among young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 12 young adults from the Avakin Life Online Virtual Community in the Philippines participated in the intervention program. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of stress of the participants before and after the intervention program. Paired sample t-test was used to examine the difference between the pretest and posttest scores. The results revealed that there was a significant difference a slight decrease in the stress level of the participants after the intervention program, yet the difference is not statistically significant. It could be concluded from the findings that the intervention can provide a help to alleviate the stress of the participants of the study, however it is recommended that the study be conducted to a larger scope to address the limitations of the study and to verify the results.

Keywords: *stress, students, intervention, pandemic*

Stress is an unavoidable reality of life. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stress is “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as demanding or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being.” The outbreak of Covid-19 has also caused a lot of stress on the part of young adults due to the sudden changes in their environment. Young adults are not excused from stress or mental problems; in reality, they are the most vulnerable. Among the mental problems that can be seen during the period of adolescence is depression caused by extreme stress, and it is said to be one of the major leading causes of death due to suicide. This emphasizes that the adolescent period is the most vulnerable time (Shah et al., 2020). Consequently, if the stress of young adults is left untreated, it may result in a much more serious mental problem or may cause death.

Stress is a normal biological reaction to a potentially harmful situation. When a person experiences a threat, the mind and the body automatically create responses to that threat, also known as the “fight-or-flight” response. Stress is not always a bad thing, but it can also help prevent a person from getting hurt. However, the body of every person cannot handle much stress, thus stress can create negative effects on the body and the mind (Marks, 2021).

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic began in December 2019. Due to the rapid increase of the human-to-human transmission of the disease in many countries, lockdown in every city was implemented, enforcement of work-from-home and online classes, closure of many establishments, home isolation, and social distancing were also imposed to prevent the disease from spreading. However, these preventive techniques created a great impact not only on the physical but also in the social and mental health of every person, especially vulnerable individuals like young adults (Javed et al., 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic resulted not only in the highest number of deaths from all over the world but also a higher risk of psychological effects such as high levels of stress. Due to the long-term effects of the pandemic, the impact of this on young adults seems to be far greater than the impact on adults because young adults are said to be more vulnerable to the negative effects of stress (Zhang et al., 2020). As such, if the high level of stress of young adults is left unattended, it may result in a much riskier situation. Nevertheless, stress can be effectively managed in many ways. An individual can effectively manage her stress by understanding her stress and by believing that she has the capacity to respond effectively to the challenges of her stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1987).

Despite the higher levels of stress that young adults are now experiencing because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are only a few studies made and are available in the Philippines making it difficult to understand how to address the stress of young adults. This study wanted to answer these generated research questions: (a) What is the level of stress of the participants before and after the intervention? (b) Is there a significant difference in the stress levels of the participants before and after intervention?

Methodology

Research Design

The pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was utilized in this study. A group of participants was examined before and after a series of activities in the “Dear Stress, Let’s Break Up” intervention program.

Population and Sample Selection

Voluntary sampling design was used in this study. There are advertisements made and posted in a private virtual community through the Facebook application, and there were 33 young adults who volunteered to join the study. However, only 12 consisting of 10 females and 2 males whose ages ranging from 17 years old to 30 years old finished the entire program.

Table 1 presents the distribution of age of the participants in the study. As shown in the graph, out of 12 participants, there are 2 participants aged 17-19 with a percentage of 16.67, 8 participants aged 20-24 with a percentage of 66.67, and 2 participants also aged 25-30 with a percentage of 16.67.

Table 1

Demographic Profile by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
17-19	2	16.67
20-24	8	66.67
25-30	2	16.67
Total	12	100

Table 2

Demographic Profile by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	10	83.33
Male	2	16.67
Total	12	100

As presented in Table 2, the participants of the study are 10 females and 2 males which are 83.33% and 16.67%, respectively.

Table 3

Demographic Profile by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Student	6	50
Working	3	25
Unemployed	3	25
Total	12	100

As illustrated in Table 3, there are 6 students among the participants with a percentage of 50, 3 participants who are working with a percentage of 25, and 3 participants who are unemployed with a percentage of 25.

Table 4

Demographic Profile by Location

Location	Frequency	Percent
NCR	3	25
Region X Northern Mindanao	1	8.33
MIMAROPA Region	1	8.33
Western Visayas	1	8.33
Region VII Central Visayas	2	16.67
Central Luzon	1	8.33
Region V Bicol Region	1	8.33
CALABARZON	1	8.33
Region 12	1	8.33
Total	12	100

Table 4 shows the demographic profile by location of the participants: 3 from the National Capital Region or NCR with a percentage of 25, 1 from Region X Northern Mindanao with a percentage of 8.33, 1 from MIMAROPA Region with a percentage of 8.33, 1 from the Western Visayas with the percentage of 8.33, 2 from Region VII Central Visayas with a percentage of 16.67, 1 from the Central Luzon with a percentage of 8.33, 1 from Region V Bicol Region with a percentage of 8.33, 1 from CALABARZON with a percentage of 8.33, and lastly 1 also from Region 12 with a percentage of 8.33.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire that was used for the pretest and posttest is the modified version of the PSS-10 related to Covid-19 (PSS-10-C) that was adopted from the published work of Arias et al., (2020). The questionnaire consists of 10 items of which there were 4 positive statements and 6 negative statements. The participants rated how each statement applied to them as (5) Always; (4) Very Often; (3) Occasionally; (2) Hardly Never; (1) Never.

Experimental Manipulations or Interventions

The positive psychological intervention program was called the “*Dear Stress, Let’s Break Up*”. The program is composed of four webinars that target the topic of stress among young adults during this pandemic: “*Who Are You, Stress?*”, “*What Can I Do for You, Stress?*”, “*Wherever You Are, Stress, I Can Handle You*”, and “*Stress Ka Lang, Ako Na Ito*”. The invitations for the webinars were sent to the participants thru the Messenger Application. Incentives were also given to the attendees. Participants were also given a chance to ask questions after every discussion. Digital posters and infographics regarding the program were posted on Facebook days before the date of the sessions to provide a better understanding of the flow of the program.

Data Gathering Procedure

The pretest and posttest were administered through the Google Form before and after the participants’ exposure to the intervention program. All participants were in the same experimental group. No control groups were employed in the study.

Ethical Considerations

Only volunteers participated in the study. Their responses to the questionnaires were treated with utmost confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Only the responses of the 12 participants who finished the program and answered the pre-test and posttest were included in the analysis. Using the mean score and standard deviation, the researcher evaluated the stress level of the participants before and after the intervention. Paired t-test was used to determine if the difference in the stress levels before and after the intervention is statistically significant.

Results

Stress Level Before the Intervention

Table 5 shows the stress level of the participants before the intervention program.

Table 5

Level of Stress Before the Intervention Program

Items	M	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I have felt as if something serious was going to happen unexpectedly with the pandemic.	3.00	1.04	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt that I am unable to control the important things in my life because of the pandemic.	3.08	0.900	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt nervous or stressed about the pandemic.	3.00	1.13	Occasionally	Moderate
I have been confident about my ability to handle my personal problems related to the pandemic.	3.08	0.900	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt optimistic that things are going well with the epidemic.	2.83	0.835	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt unable to cope with the things I have to do to monitor for a possible infection.	2.83	0.718	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt that I can control the difficulties that could appear in my life because of the pandemic.	3.00	0.853	Occasionally	Low
I have felt that I have everything under control in relation to the pandemic.	2.50	0.674	Hardly Never	Moderate
I have been upset when a problem aroused due to the pandemic and it was out of my control.	3.00	1.040	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt that the more the difficulties are increasing in these days of the pandemic, the more I feel unable to overcome them.	2.58	0.996	Occasionally	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.88	0.212	Occasionally	Moderate

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Never/Very Low; 1.51 – 2.50 Hardly Never/Low; 2.51 – 3.50 Occasionally/Moderate; 3.51 – 4.50 Very Often/High; 4.51 – 5.00 Always/Very High

In the pretest result, statements *"I have felt that I am unable to control the important things in my life because of the pandemic"* and *"I have been confident about my ability to handle my personal problems related to the pandemic"* have the two highest scores which imply that the participants felt that they were not able to control the important things in life due to the sudden changes in their environment brought by the pandemic but despite of that, they were still confident about their capacity and capabilities to handle their personal problems relating to the pandemic.

Statements *"I have felt that I have everything under control in relation to the pandemic"* and *"I have felt that the more the difficulties are increasing in these days of the pandemic, the more I feel unable to overcome them"* got the two lowest scores which explain that the participants felt that they had everything under their control in relation to the pandemic, however, they still felt that the more the difficulties were increasing as the pandemic went by their everyday lives, the more they felt that they were unable to overcome them.

As indicated in Table 5, the pretest presented a result of a 2.88 mean with a standard deviation of 0.212. Therefore, the result states that the level of stress perceived by the participants is counted as moderate.

Table 6*Level of Stress After the Intervention Program*

Items	M	SD	Scale Response	Verbal Interpretation
I have felt as if something serious was going to happen unexpectedly with the pandemic.	2.75	1.14	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt that I am unable to control the important things in my life because of the pandemic.	3.00	0.853	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt nervous or stressed about the pandemic.	2.83	1.34	Occasionally	Moderate
I have been confident about my ability to handle my personal problems related to the pandemic.	2.75	1.22	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt optimistic that things are going well with the epidemic.	3.25	0.866	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt unable to cope with the things I have to do to monitor for a possible infection.	2.33	0.778	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt that I can control the difficulties that could appear in my life because of the pandemic.	3.17	1.19	Occasionally	Low
I have felt that I have everything under control in relation to the pandemic.	2.75	0.965	Occasionally	Low
I have been upset when a problem aroused due to the pandemic and it was out of my control.	3.08	1.08	Occasionally	Moderate
I have felt that the more the difficulties are increasing in these days of the pandemic, the more I feel unable to overcome them.	2.17	0.937	Occasionally	Moderate
Grand Mean	2.81	0.367	Occasionally	Moderate

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Never/Very Low; 1.51 – 2.50 Hardly Never/Low; 2.51 – 3.50 Occasionally/Moderate; 3.51 – 4.50 Very Often/High; 4.51 – 5.00 Always/Very High

In the posttest, statements “*I have felt optimistic that things are going well with the epidemic*” and “*I have felt that I can control the difficulties that could appear in my life because of the pandemic*” got the two highest scores which were interpreted as the participants feeling optimistic that things were going well with the pandemic and that they felt like they could control the difficulties that could appear in their lives as the result of the sudden changes due to the pandemic.

However, statements “*I have felt that the more the difficulties are increasing in these days of the pandemic, the more I feel unable to overcome them*” and “*I have felt unable to cope with the things I have to do to monitor for a possible infection*” got the two lowest scores which shows that the participants felt that despite of them feeling optimistic about handling problems due to the pandemic, they still felt that they were unable to cope with the things they had to do to monitor for possible infection of COVID as well as they feared that if the difficulties they were facing increased more in these days of the pandemic, they felt that they were not able to overcome them.

On the other hand, after the intervention, the posttest results revealed a mean rating of 2.81 with a standard deviation of 0.367 indicating that there is a decrease in the level of stress perceived by the participants after the intervention program was implemented.

Difference in the Stress Level Before and After the Intervention

Table 7

Comparison of Pretest and Posttest

	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t(df)	df	p
Pretest	2.88	0.212				
Posttest	2.81	0.367	-0.06333	-0.448	11	0.66

Based on the result, there was there a little decrease in the stress perceived by the participants after the intervention program was implemented compared to the result before the intervention program was implemented. The mean difference is 0.06 with a p-value of 0.66 which means that even if the stress level was decreased, the difference is not statistically significant.

Discussion

The obtained result indicates there was a slight decrease in the stress level of the participants after the #MentalHealthMatters intervention program. Yet, there was not enough evidence that the difference in the stress level is statistically significant. Therefore, there it cannot be concluded that the intervention was effective enough to help the participants in addressing their stress during this pandemic.

The researcher acknowledges the limitations of the study which may greatly affect the result. First, the survey was only done online, and the intervention program was conducted virtually. There seems to be no assurance as to how the participants engaged in the webinar since some of them did not open their webcam all throughout the program. Second, the time constraints greatly affected the schedule of the program. The researcher had to reschedule the last two sessions due to the changes in the speaker's schedule. The intervention program may also be able to last longer to provide more results if not for the limited time for both the researcher and the participants of the study.

The researcher recommends the following: conduct a similar study on a broader scale of participants, providing more results and understanding of the stress perceived by the participants brought by the new challenges and sudden changes due to the pandemic, and provide an intervention program that could help the young adults address their needs in this current situation.

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A CASE STUDY ON BEING A MILITARY WIFE DEPENDENT

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Abstract

Military wives are a vital part of military members' lives, but the reality of deployment can lead to psychological distress, marital separation, and disputes. This case study explored the experiences of a military wife dependent here in the Philippines. The data were gathered from interviews and validated through psychological test reports and expert analysis which yielded significant findings. Fighting, reconciliation, and negative emotions and thoughts were the pre- and post-deployment experiences of a military wife dependent. Moreover, being cheated by another woman during the deployment of a military spouse on a distant duty station was reported to be the most difficult situation a military wife dependent had experienced. Further, health, educational, and financial assistance were the benefits of a military wife dependent. Finding social support, turning to prayers, going to church, being productive, and becoming occupied at home were the coping strategies of a military wife dependent. This study showed that being a military wife dependent can make one a better person by being more prepared, resourceful, and courageous in life. Finally, the study may be used by counselors, clinicians, educators, community leaders, family advocates, and researchers to improve practices in this population.

Keywords: *military wife dependent, military active-duty personnel and military deployment*

There is a consensus that the marital life of military wives is complicated due to difficult problems. One of the likely reasons for this is that the spouse is far away from his family while doing the line of duty in military service. Deployment is the number one factor that leads to the separation of a military couple. It is not only the long distance that becomes a problem of their relationship. The situation of being away from each other has a big impact as well and creates weak communication and unhealthy relationship in one military family. Most of the time military wives encounter difficulties in life, as they cannot handle the pressure to resolve the issues alone.

According to Rakowitz (2006), the performances of military wives become unstable due to their emotional instability. In addition, situations become worse when the military-dependent wives developed anxiety in most cases. Some of them become hopeless and not seek help at all. The condition of being away from each other creates a burden for military-dependent wives as well as the military personnel and the whole family. In some cases, military dependents find it difficult to cope with the transition, and they tend to loosen up with the tensions of being alone and things not working out very well. Some of them work things out on their own perfectly without any doubt that they can handle small or big situations under any circumstances that may occur. Unfortunately, a dependent who cannot manage her life alone tends to find another man who can give her pleasure and comfort while her spouse is in the middle of deployment. Perhaps a military-dependent wife tends to work hard to do her chores as a military spouse and never did any wrong in her life. Until one day she woke up and realized that she was not enjoying the kind of life of being a military wife. She is married, but she is alone more than ever. Research shows that 84,000 military couples in the U.S. have had to cope with deployment, frequent moves, and the constant struggle of being a military spouse.

For the wife of a military, it can be hard to adjust to her husband coming home as well. It is even harder for the wife than her husband because she is so used to take care of everything by herself that it is hard to give up some of the household duties for him. In the present study, the respondent tried to adjust while her military spouse was away. In a similar study on military wives, the respondents expressed negative and positive experiences and insights on military life (Runge, 2014).

Life is what a person makes it. The military lifestyle is just different; it is not better or worse. People need to see the trade-offs between military versus civilian living. Marnocha (2012) found out that there is an impact on military-dependent wives during and after deployment and they are often found in a state of transition and vulnerability. This explains why wives are vulnerable.

According to Rayala (2014), a military wife does not feel married because the length of deployment of the husband makes her feel not married when her husband is not around. The results of the study indicated that most health-promoting behaviors correlated significantly with an adjustment while spiritual growth, health responsibility, and stress management predicted adjustment (Suarez, 2011). Meanwhile, another study showed that e-mail was the most frequently used method of communication, with 58.4% of spouses using email at least 3-4 times per week, compared to the second most frequent method, which was phone communication (Tolhurst, Hawkins, Borden, 2012).

Social support from family, civilian friends and partners are significant predictors of better psychological health and lower levels of depression among military spouses (Skomorovsky, 2014). In essence, military-dependent wives can function well enough while their husbands are away from them because of the support of their families.

The wife's family can help and support her during difficult situations, or any time troubles may occur. Her family leads her to become stronger and more productive. Regardless of the pain and struggles of being alone without any doubt, she can manage to be alone. No words can express when in terms of sadness the family will be by her side to give her comfort and make things easier for her. With all the support of her husband even though he is out at sea or being deployed, everything is possible to work out as a family. When two hearts are meant for each other, no distance is too far, no time too long and no other love can break them apart. In some cases, military-dependent wives experience big social adjustments, which are reactions and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which are the common forms of stress reaction. Other problems include lingering guilt about moral turpitude and depression (Prakash, 2011). Wives whose husbands experience PTSD have a hard

time helping their husbands to adjust to family life (Prakash, 2011). According to Karney (2012), marriages that are under stress are generally at increased risk of ending in separation and divorce.

Verdeli (2012) says that having multiple and prolonged deployments are associated with increased anxiety and depression in the spouse of the service members. Based on research that has been found, the problem still exists for military-dependent wives. These days, there is still less literature and study conducted on this subject.

Therefore, this qualitative study was designed as a case study to investigate the life of a military-dependent wife. The participant was married to an active military personnel for more than 10 years and experienced being alone due to her husband's deployment. This study was conducted in the military wife setting to find out if the situations existed in the Philippine setting. In addition, a psychological assessment was conducted on the participant for further study. Moreover, this case study tried to find out if there were any gaps in the marital life experiences of a military wife dependent. Furthermore, this study investigated whether the military wife tried to build a bridge between her past and present experiences in order to keep her marriage and to know whether their marital life was strong enough considering her struggles of being married to an active military personnel.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to understand the struggles and experiences of a military-dependent wife. This qualitative study aspired to provide results to the following problems:

1. What are the pre and post-experiences, thoughts, and feelings of a military wife dependent?
2. What is the most difficult situation encountered by a military wife dependent when a spouse is deployed to a distant duty station?
3. What are the benefits of being a military wife dependent?
4. What are the coping strategies used by the participant?
5. What insights can be learned from being a military wife dependent?

This research presented new insights and promoted productive and beneficial implications that would inform and help several military spouses. In addition, this could broaden the knowledge of military personnel to better understand the situation of their spouses when they leave them alone in the house. Moreover, it would help them make better decisions and judgments in life. This study would help the government, particularly the Armed Forces of the Philippines to better understand the situation of military wife dependents. It would also help the Philippine government to implement new policies that would help military wife dependents to have better access to their benefits. Through this study, ladies who are planning to marry active military personnel would understand the life of a military wife dependent. Moreover, they would be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of marrying active military personnel. This study would help in informing the public about the lives of military wives. People who would understand the life of a military wife could emotionally support her in times of her loneliness.

Methodology

This study used the qualitative-case study research design to explore the life of a military wife here in the Philippines. The data gathered from interviews were validated through psychological test reports and expert analysis which yielded significant themes and findings.

Results and Discussion

Six themes were reported to answer research question 1. Pre-deployment showed two significant themes. These were fighting and reconciliation and a mixture of negative emotions and thoughts like sadness, being worried, depression, guilt, and a wrong attitude. In post-deployment experiences, four themes emerged that described the experiences of a military wife. These were excitement, change in routines, negative emotions, and acceptance of the current situation.

Only one theme emerged to answer research question 2. The participant reported that the hardest part of being a military wife was when the spouse was deployed to a distant duty station, and she was being cheated for another woman.

To answer research question 3, free medical treatment or hospitalization on military bases, bonuses, and retirement pension were reported to be the benefits of a military wife.

To answer research question 4, three themes described the coping strategies of the participant. These were seeking social support, turning to religion, and being productive at home doing household chores.

Lastly, to answer research question 5, three significant themes were reported that described the insights or lessons of being a military wife. The participant became more prepared, resourceful in life, and courageous.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Fighting, reconciliation, negative emotions and thoughts were the pre- and post-deployment experiences of a military wife dependent. Moreover, being cheated by the husband having another woman during deployment on distant duty station was reported to be the most difficult situation a military wife dependent had experienced. Further, health, educational, and financial assistance were the benefits of a military wife dependent. On the other hand, finding social support, turning to prayers, going to church, and being productive and occupied at home were the coping strategies of a military wife. This study showed that being a military wife dependent can make oneself be a better person by being more prepared, resourceful, and courageous in life. Finally, the overall findings of the study may serve as a basis for counselors, clinicians, educators, community leaders, family advocates, and researchers to further understand the underlying structures and nature of being a military wife dependent, which may lead to improve practices in this population.

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A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AMONG SINGLE-PARENT AND COHABITING FAMILIES: A BASIS FOR PSYCHO-EDUCATION

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Abstract

Family is regarded as the most basic social unit, which provides love and affection to the children. However, the family continues to be reinvented and transformed which exists in many forms including single-parent and cohabiting families. Anchored on family system theory, this study claimed that each member of the family plays a specific role and must follow certain rules, as an individual affects the other members that can lead to either balance or dysfunction. A qualitative case study was conducted among six (6) modern families. Three (3) were single-parent families and the other three (3) were cohabiting-parent families. The participants were purposively selected from regions in Luzon, Philippines. Participants were asked semi-structured questions through face-to-face interviews, represented by a parent and an adolescent. They were separately asked to identify experienced conflicts with each other and how they resolved them. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that Filipino modern families described their parent-child relationship as ambivalent, secure, and avoidant. Seven themes emerged in the conflicts experienced by modern families, namely, parental absence, parental attention, financial scarcity, guilt, authority, miscommunication, and concern for legitimation. Compromising style resolution, avoiding style resolution, and collaborating style resolution were the themes that emerged regarding how they resolved the conflict. These themes on the parent-child relationship of modern Filipino families, conflict experienced, and their resolutions could be used in psycho-education to be utilized by parents and adolescents in building healthy relationships and in raising awareness among couples preparing to build a family.

Keywords: *parent-child relationship, modern family, conflict resolution*

Family is regarded as the most basic social unit, which provides love and affection to the children preparing them for life (Upali, 2015). Traditionally, a family has been defined as two or more people who are related by blood, marriage, and by last name (Murdock, 1949). However, over the decades, families have changed, and economic transformations have brought new social changes as the concept of the traditional family continues to be reinvented and transformed. Modern families exist in many forms, including single-parent families, adoptive families, cohabiting-parent families, same-sex couples, childfree families, blended families, and many other variations. The study of Benokraitis (2015), discovered that modern families define the word ‘family’ in the forms of commitment, caring, and close emotional ties leaving the family function, formation, and structures as not significant aspects of creating a family. With these, changes in the families affect the parent-child relationship that causes most conflicts that commonly arise during adolescence, with inappropriate interaction between them being one of the most serious issues (Swain, 2016).

In the twentieth century, a dramatic rise in the single-parent family happened. With this, some people call it ‘family breakdown’ causing adverse effects on children, families, and the community (Tarroja, 2010). The increase of sole parenthood over the past few decades has also been shown associated with an increase of divorces and separation (Chapple, 2009). The study by OECD (2011) mentioned that there is an increasing number of children growing up in sole-parent or reconstituted families. The consistency of the upward trend of single parents in the household across these OECD countries is remarkable, with the bulk of projections to 2025-30 suggesting that numbers are likely to increase between 22% and 29%. Because of the growing population, the number of one-person households is expected to grow, given that sole-parent families are of particular concern due to the high incidence of poverty among such households.

In the Philippines, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) reported from their recent survey that there are around 15 million single parents, of whom 95% are women. Although the Philippines had been known as a predominantly conservative country (Senate of the Philippines, 2020), it cannot be denied that the society had been conforming to single-parent conditions.

Eventually, cohabitation, known as an intimate relationship, that includes a common living place and exists without the benefit of legal, cultural, or religious sanction also becomes practiced in this period. Over the last few decades, couples have increasingly chosen to cohabit. Smock et al., (2005) claimed that cohabitation is now the “modal path to marriage”. In the study of Sassler and Lichter (2020) they cited that non-marital cohabitation and marriage are now correlated and that unpredicted changes in the timing, duration, and sequence of intimate residential relationships have made the study of traditional marriage far more complicated today than in the past. Furthermore, according to Nugent and Daugherty (2018) their analysis of US data including 2011-2015 shows that around 16% of people aged 18-44 practiced cohabitation. The postponement of the single into parenthood transition led to premarital cohabitation and had been evident in Japan, Taiwan, China, and the Philippines, and will be progressing in the next decades (Lesthaeghe, 2020).

The parent-child relationship nurtures the physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, and social development of the child. It is a special bond that every child and parent must have. This relationship lays the foundation for the child’s personality, life choices, and overall behavior, which greatly affects the roles and rules of the modern family. Family roles include one or multiple parents such as a non-biological or biological caregiver, who may be the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and two equal partners (married or unmarried). But as Bronfenbrenner emphasized that the interaction between individuals is complex, individuals and the environments reciprocally influence each other and can change over time, affecting health and well-being (Solar & Irwin, 2010), depending on the roles and responsibilities given by the family they belong to. Furthermore, family rules help each member to understand what behaviors are acceptable and not. These rules are important for the family to work well. By doing this, the parent and child would not receive mixed messages that could make the family confused. Changes in the contemporary period did also affect rules in the family today including the implementation of discipline. According to the study of Britannica (2016), by the early 21st century, more than 100 countries had approved banning

the corporal punishment of children's behavior in school and later at home. As physical punishment is not recommendable, parents have been discovering more ways to manage this period (Jaureguizar et al., 2018; Dhiman & Jain, 2016).

Families had been well studied throughout time as to their structure, function, and formation. Parenting styles, dimensions, and features had also been considered. In addition, most studies focused on parenting approaches and their impact on adolescents, as well as ways for parents to manage this period (Jaureguizar, Bernaras, Bully, & Garaigordobil, 2018). Although there is a growing body of research that addresses parent-child conflicts and strategies for resolution, few studies were focused on contemporary families. In addition, there are no clear explanations as to why parents see this period as particularly difficult, what challenges parents and children face, and what are their concerns. There is also a scarcity of research studies that deal with Filipino families in the modern period.

Thus, this study aimed to contribute to the knowledge by discovering the experiences of Filipino single-parent and cohabiting families in the modern period particularly on their parent and child relationships. This study also aimed to identify contemporary families' conflicts and explore their resolution as beneficial in reducing problems. Furthermore, the researchers intended to have a comprehensive understanding of how modern families manage their parent-child relationship to build healthy relationships and be beneficial to couples preparing to build a family.

Research Questions

- How do the participants describe their parent-child relationship?
- What are the conflicts experienced in the parent-child relationship?
- How do Filipino contemporary families resolve conflicts?
- What psycho-education programs can be developed based on the result of the study?

Methodology

Research Design

This was phenomenological study that aimed to describe the experiences of modern families. The conflicts between parents and children were considered in this study. Resolutions made to resolve conflicts were also discussed. The results were used as basis for the development of a psychoeducation program.

Population and Sampling

The participants were selected through the following criteria: (1) the parent and child belong in either a single-parent or cohabiting-parent family; (2) the parent, can either be the mother or the father; (3) the child is between 10-19 years old; and (4) the parent and child area certified Filipino citizens living in Luzon Region of the Philippines. Six contemporary families were purposely chosen through referrals to participate in the study. Three were single-parent families and the other three were cohabiting-parent families. Five of the families resided in Region 3, of which four were from Bulacan and one from Nueva Ecija. The remaining one family lived in the National Capital Region.

Data Gathering Procedure

The following is the step-by-step data collection procedures for this study. First, the researcher prepared an interview guide for the participants. Second, the researcher purposively looked for participants that would meet the set criteria. Third, the researcher gave informed consent to the adult participants, as well as informed assent for the minor participants, and conducted audio recorded one-on-one interviews. These interviews for the parents and adults were conducted separately to avoid conflict and the participants could openly express themselves. Then, the researcher transcribed the interviews and translated them into English language. Lastly, the researcher analyzed the data.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The following analytical stages suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) were followed to answer the research questions. The researchers managed and organized the data by preparing files and units, ensuring ongoing secure storage of files and selecting the mode of analysis. The researcher also read and write notes on emergent ideas while reading, sketching reflective thinking, and summarizing field notes. They then described and classified codes into themes such as working with words, identifying codes, applying codes, and reducing codes to themes. They also ensured that they developed and assessed interpretations involving relating categories/themes/families to an analytic framework in literature. And lastly, they ensured that they represented and visualized the data by creating a point of view and displaying and reporting the data.

Ensuring Rigor and Trustworthiness

To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, the researchers did data triangulation and member checking. Data triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data in an investigation to verify the findings and result in a rich-detailed and balanced picture of the phenomenon studied (Altrichter et al., 2005) and ensure the results by using the various data sets that emerged throughout the analysis process such as raw materials, codes, concepts, and theoretical saturation. In addition, data triangulation is beneficial in enhancing validity, creating a more in-depth picture of the research problem, and interrogating different ways of understanding the research problem (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this case, the data triangulation was done using interviews of participant's extended family who are living with them. Critical observation was done while doing the interview.

Member checking was used to acquire the credibility of the data results. To search for consistency and resonance with their experiences, the data were returned to the participants for clarification (Birt et. al., 2016). In this study, member checking was done by sending the transcript of the interview with initial coding and interpretation to the participants through the Messenger app and asking them for feedback if the initial interpretation agreed with what they meant. Pandemic and quarantine protocols limited the access of the researcher to meet the participants physically, but intentional visits were done for others who live close to the researcher.

Ethical Consideration: Confidentiality and Informed Consent

Ethical considerations were observed during the process of data gathering and reporting of findings. The participants were protected from any harm or loss, and their psychological well-being and dignity were greatly valued and preserved. Before collecting the data, the researcher secured the approval of the AUP Ethical Review Board to conduct the study. Letters of consent and assent were made to inform the participants about the research procedures, their role, their contribution, and their agreement of participation. The participants were given the freedom to withdraw from the study anytime they choose to. After the data collection, participants were informed of the preliminary results of the study, and they were given the privilege to confirm the data collected. Pseudonyms were used and any information about the participants was maintained in complete confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

Themes were drawn from the condensed interview data. The primary aim of this study was to understand the parent-child relationship of modern families, their conflicts experienced, and how they resolved them. In addition, psychoeducation program was proposed based on the results of the study.

Description of the Parent-Child Relationship

Three themes emerged in answering Research Question 1, these themes were ambivalent relationship, secured relationship, and avoidant relationship

Ambivalent Relationship. The first description of parent-child relationship that emerged from the collected data is the ambivalent relationship. It is a relationship where needs are sometimes met and

sometimes not. Thus, it is a relationship that is not being completely sure of something. Two single-parent families claimed that their parent-child relationship was inconsistent and on a discord. In addition, Nanay Day and her daughter Kakay from a cohabiting-parent family, also claimed that these inconsistency and discord were indicated by usual arguments.

In the study of Walker and Hennig (1997), both children and parents in single-parent families were found to be somewhat ambivalent in their relationships having both greater intimacy and heightened conflict than evidenced in two-parent families. Their study also indicated that single-parent families showed less adequate ego functioning when dealing with conflicts.

Secured Relationship. The second theme that emerged was secured relationship. It is the relationship formed when the parents are consistently responsive to their children's needs. Children in this kind of relationship feel safe and believe that they will be taken care of by their parents.

Nanay Bilay and her son Domz were included in a cohabiting-parent family and even without the sacred blessing through a wedding, their parent-child relationship has been described to be good. The openness of Nanay Bilay to her children about her struggles and sacrifices had a great effect on their relationship's cooperation and consistency. Same reason for openness, Nanay Eva and her daughter Gen also described their relationship as something you can depend on and rely on. They also said that even though their family is not legally bound they knew and considered that they are still one family.

The study by Myers and Myers (2015) presented that married parent families are better off in many areas than cohabiting-parent families. However, there is also a bulk of evidence that the cohabiting parent families could be like married couples in interacting with their children. These are results of stronger parental involvement and engagement. The two cohabiting parent families above have been described to exhibit superior parental involvement which appears to be the main reason as to why their parent-child relationship is said to be secured.

Avoidant Relationship. The last theme that emerged from the data was the avoidant relationship. It is the type of relationship where children feel insecure because parents are not responsive to their needs. Children in this relationship are forced to become independent and take care of themselves.

Nanay Cel and her daughter Mich had suffered from the separation incident in the family. During the early years of Mich, she needed to be independent for herself and the family. Nanay Cel was so helpless in their situation that she admitted that she cannot provide for the needs of her children. Not having enough resources to support her children and needing to rely on other people were one of the challenges in this single-parent family. The participants described their relationship as helpless.

Single parenthood in an unexpected situation could affect the whole household and their ability to provide care, love, resources, and attention. These inabilities due to these circumstances are evident to be associated with health conditions and psychosocial stress for both the parent and child that needs to be addressed (Pearce, Dundas, Whitehead & Taylor, 2019).

Parent-Child Conflicts Experienced by the Modern Families

Seven themes emerged in answering Research Question 2. These themes were parental absence, parental attention, financial scarcity, guilt, authority, miscommunication, and concern for legitimization.

Parental absence. Parental absence represents a temporary or extended absence of one or more parents. All three single-parent families had experienced this conflict, seeking, or finding one's presence because of the need to be attended to or be filled, just like Joy in the first single-parent family, who longed for the presence of her father whom she could rely upon and approach when she needed someone. Just like the first single-parent family, Nanay Len and Lyn, as well as Nanay Cel and Mich experience the conflict of parental absence. Since they were separated from the other parent, they usually sought its presence and longed for it.

The absence of another parent leaves a void in the lives of all the adolescent participants of single-parent families that also gave an effect on their parents. All three single families were under paternal absence and in the study of East, Jackson, and O'brien (2006), the father's absence is significantly related to the self-

esteem of both male and female adolescents with males as more likely to be affected, while children and adolescents who live with both biological parents tend to have a more stable level of well-being (Fatima et al, 2021).

Parental Attention. The second conflict, parental attention comprises of the lack of connectedness through time spent with their family members. This theme was evident in two single-parent families, wherein due to their multiple responsibilities and eagerness to provide for the needs of their children they forgot to spend quality time with them, which was one of their developmental needs (Chaudron et al., 2015). The two modern families even claimed that the parents were usually in the workplace or focused on jobs, while their children were waiting for them for the important tasks they already planned, yet in the end, it was just forgotten.

Quality time with the children is giving them undivided attention while doing tasks or activities that the children like to do. The study by Jones (2017), shows that it is vital for parents to spend recurring quality time with their children as simple as taking a few minutes each day without any distractions. Children who spend quality time with their parents are less likely to participate in risky behaviors, which could keep them mentally and emotionally stable, and more likely to become physically healthy (Rider, 2018).

Financial Scarcity. Another conflict that was identified is financial scarcity. It is the inability to sustain the means that can be used by the family to cope with difficult situations. According to the developmental needs all single parents due to one man income sources, experience hardship in finances indicated by the struggle to provide food, pay bills, and meet the basic needs of the family according to the developmental need.

The poverty rate for single-mother families in 2019 had reached 31%, nearly five times more than the rate of 5% for married couples' families. In addition, among children living with mothers only, 33.6% lived in poverty, in contrast, 7.9% of children counted as poor have two parents in the family (Fins, 2020).

Moreover, financial scarcity has been evident also in cohabiting-parent families. However, it is not due to one man's income source but mainly because of their complicated income flow which means that their income is not equal to the needs of the whole family. Furthermore, they have a lack of requirements needed in job hiring. Financial hardship is evident to everyone even in families with married parents, however, cohabiting parent families showed higher poverty rates (Nam, 2021). In relation, the study mentioned above says that married parents are more educated and older, enabling them to be higher earners. With this, married couples can fare better to provide for the needs of their children (Manning & Brown, 2006).

Guilt. Another conflict experienced by modern families is guilt. This is the feeling of shame and regret for failing to do something on their responsibilities. According to Nanay Cel, the single-parent #1, she felt guilty about not being able to provide for her daughter Mich and felt more helpless when her daughter was the one providing for the household needs. Similarly, even though Nanay Bilay and Nanay Day could provide for their children's needs, they could not still get away with the feeling of guilt that they knew to themselves that they could provide more and be stable with their children. Due to the feeling of guilt, the two parents in this family described that they accepted multiple jobs in a day or side jobs that were ready to be done just to provide for the family's needs and felt that they did their best for the family.

Parental guilt is a human trait that parents could feel upon looking at everything that they have done, especially the things that they could have done better. This guilt is often seen in cohabiting-parent families looking at whether they could have done better education and found high-paying jobs for them to provide more for the family (Donatelli et al., 2007).

Authority. The power or the right to give orders and make decisions in the family indicates authority. Nanay Cel, the single parent #1, said that in their household she was no longer asked by her daughter especially if it was all about the needs of the family. Mich usually bought what was needed in their house and provided everything without asking Nanay Cel, because she knew the needs to be provided for.

Two cohabiting-parent families also experienced a conflict of authority because they take part in their responsibility to provide for the family. They wanted the house to be taken care of by their children.

Exhaustion due to their multiple jobs should be rewarded with a clean house and obedient children that would not argue with them.

Similarly, Nanay Eva experienced this conflict in authority with her daughter Gen. They usually argued with the household rules of the family.

Authority in a parent-child relationship is a common notion. However, due to structural changes in family authority became unspecified, and who will oversee the house roles and rules became unclear. Families lacked consistency and power, and the recognition of adolescents also changed (Kumar & Reiter, 2013).

Miscommunication. The failure to communicate or express ideas, opinions, and thoughts in the family results to miscommunication. According to Nanay Day and Kakay, because of not being able to understand each other's point, quarrels or disagreements happened that resulted to distancing from each other.

Concern in legitimation. The last theme that emerged as conflict is the fear of not being accepted legally in society because of not having legal papers. Children born without a valid parent's marriage are considered illegitimate (PSA, 2022).

Children in this scenario had trouble processing their legal papers as part of the school requirements. Two cohabiting-parent families became alarmed by this situation because their children needed the documents for them to reach the highest education they wanted for their children.

Conflicts are present to all the families and may appear in the form of behavioral opposition and arguments. These conflicts can provide means for expressing concern and dissatisfaction that could be pointed out for a change and bringing up opportunities for individual development. However, throughout time, conflicts transformed and presented new forms than before. Understanding the family structures, roles, rules, and formation changes is associated with unraveling new conflicts that families must understand also. On the other hand, parent-child conflict consists of mutual negative behaviors of both the parent and child (Burt et al., 2003), which if the conflict is prolonged or unsettled will cause stress and damage to the relationship. Thus, identifying the conflict and understanding its origin is a wise step to prevent the future worst consequences.

Conflict Resolution of the Modern Families

Three themes emerged under conflict resolution of modern families. These include: (1) compromising style resolution; (2) avoiding style resolution; and (3) collaborating style resolution.

Compromising style resolution. The first emerging theme of conflict resolution in modern families is compromising style resolution. This style attempts to resolve the issue by finding a solution that is partially satisfactory or accepted by both parties.

This style of resolution was utilized by Nanay Neng and Joy. They chose to put an issue into prayers for them to feel better before fixing the conflict. Usually Nanay Neng would say sorry to make the atmosphere better. Afterwards, they would come up with a solution that involved compromising but would be better for the two of them.

In addition, Nanay Len and Lyn also used a compromising style in their conflict resolution. They hold on to the principle of understanding and giving way to each other's view. Also, Nanay Day and Kakay usually choose to talk over the conflict and make the points known, however, they both claimed that at the end of the conversation the father of the family would give the final decision.

As a conflict resolution technique, compromising can be effective. It could let the person feel listened to, they would feel a sense of victory, and it could end the conflict momentarily. However, compromising is not always possible, because there are times when a concrete solution must be pointed out to end a long-term and recurring conflict (Edinyang, 2012).

Avoiding style resolution. The second conflict resolution style that emerged from the collected data is the "avoiding style resolution". This style does not pay attention to the conflict. It entails ignoring the situation and consciously choosing not to take action to remedy the situation. With these, three modern families often used avoiding style resolution. Family members who were involved with the conflict chose

not to talk about the problem. They just waited until each side cooled down. To do this, Nanay Neng and Joy took this into taking some rest, believing that everything will be all right when the person woke up. In the case of Nanay Len and Lyn, they chose to visit some places to cool down and by the time they returned home, the conflict they had subsided. Some, like Nanay Cel and Mich, avoided arguments by sleeping or going somewhere, or being silent, believing that by not saying anything would solve the conflict.

Avoiding style resolution is one of the common resolutions that every family chooses to use. It is a very simple way of ignoring the conflict to ensure that peace reigns in the family (Ojiji, 2011). Yet, avoiding the conflict and behaving as if the conflict does not exist has its disadvantages. Delaying the time of resolving the conflict could waste time being good together, could recur the reason for the conflict, and could give us frustration in the long run (Lu & Wang, 2017).

Collaborating style resolution. The last theme that emerged in the conflict resolution of modern families is collaborating style resolution. It is about working with the other person to find a mutually beneficial solution by taking time to understand the other person's concerns. This resolution style is usually called the win-win strategy, that most often should be used. Two of six families managed to use this resolution; they prioritized openness for both to openly understand where they stand and why they behave like that. Nanay Bilay and Domz benefited from their setting of being open as they got to know both situations; as per Nanay Bilay she wanted her child to understand that she was tired from all her jobs, and she wanted to be understood. Whereas Nanay Eva and Gen encourage themselves to be open to each other for them to work for the best of their family. Even for Gen, understanding each other made collaborating possible.

Resolving the conflict through collaboration is helping each other to solve the problem or to lessen the effect of stress. Both sides are trying to find a solution that truly satisfies the needs of each other. It is also an excellent way to gather insights from people with different perspectives on a problem that involve like the parent-child conflicts. The results of collaboration can encourage a strong commitment to implement the solution. In addition, collaboration requires close attention to the concerns and the emotional state of both sides (Bondenmann, 2008).

Each person has a different style or approach to managing conflicts. It could stem from their values, feelings, self-concept, and perceived needs. This might also be related to the social skills an individual has learned and practiced, as well as the feedback they received in life. However, according to the theory of Phelps and Austin (1974), constructive handling of conflicts can enhance and solidify family relationships amidst the differences of the individual. This approach may not always work, but it avoids many negative effects produced by other approaches to resolving conflicts. Furthermore, resolving family conflicts effectively can help bring people together once an issue is put to rest. It allows the parent and the child to negotiate, understand, and set them up for strong relationships throughout life. Nevertheless, failing to resolve the conflict could result in stress and damage the relationships.

Proposed Psycho-education Program

Based on the results, two psycho-education programs are proposed. These are the conflict awareness for modern families in building healthy relationships and family structure consideration of the couples who are preparing to build a family.

Family conflict awareness psycho-education program can be developed to raise awareness about the emerging conflict experienced by modern families particularly for single-parent and cohabiting-parent families. Different solutions to manage conflicts can be presented to the participants of the program.

Family structure consideration program can help couples who are contemplating to build a family. This will enlighten them to consider the family structure they want and the life they will be having in the future. This program could benefit the youth to visualize the family structure that would yield best results.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study found out that modern families described their parent-child relationship as ambivalent, secured, and avoidant. In addition, results of the study also showed that conflicts experienced by modern

families were parental absence, parental attention, financial scarcity, guilt, authority, miscommunication, and concern for legitimation due to the interchange of roles and responsibilities of father and mother, parent, and child behaviors, and even expectations, family structures and formation. Results of the study also confirmed that modern Filipino families resolve conflicts through these three resolution styles: compromising style resolution, avoiding style resolution, and collaborating style resolution.

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that communities or barangays in Luzon should conduct psycho-education programs and discuss the condition of modern families, their experienced family conflicts, and how they should resolve them especially in areas where there is a high number of single-parent and cohabiting families.

Results of this study also suggest that psycho-education programs must be conducted among the youth and couples who are planning to establish a family. Communities or small organizations could hold psychoeducation programs informing the youth about the situation of families in this modern generation. This psychoeducation program would encourage the youth to choose their life partner wisely and lessen the rate of broken and complicated homes. This could also prevent early marital engagement and promote considering ample preparations before building a family.

Government organization can hold vocational job training and offer community search jobs to provide stable source of income to meet family needs. Furthermore, another study is recommended to include other modern family structures such as blended families, same-sex, adoptive families, child-free families, and many other existing variations of families. Results of these studies can provide clearer information about the existing modern family structures.

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“COVID-19, BABANGON AKO!”: A SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS-BASED TRAINING FOR ALLIED HEALTHCARE STUDENTS

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Abstract

COVID-19 caused financial, emotional, and psychological distress to people worldwide. A needs assessment survey was conducted on a group of allied healthcare students using the four basic needs as variables. The needs assessment result shows that the financial, emotional, and psychological aspects of their well-being were most affected. Further, this study identified the level of social-emotional learning skills of the participants that may affect how they coped with their distress during this COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making skills. An intervention program, “COVID-19, Babangon Ako!: A Socio-Emotional Skills-Based Training was conducted using a pre-test and post-test design to determine the level of their social-emotional skills before and after the intervention program. A paired sample t-test that was conducted to determine the difference between the performance of the participants before and after the intervention program shows that there was a significant increase in the mean score from the pre-test ($M=4.18$, $SD=0.34$) to the post-test results ($M=4.39$, $SD=0.378$, $p(0.001) < 0.05$). These results show that there was enough evidence to claim that the “Covid-19, Babangon Ako! program was effective. The improved level of socio-emotional skills of the participants implies that the intervention program was helpful among the participants in facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: *socio-emotional skills, Covid-19, Babangon Ako, allied healthcare*

COVID-19 is a deadly virus that affected the whole world. The World Health Organization (WHO) defined Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as an infectious disease caused by coronavirus which is said to have originated in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 (Bawingan, et al., 2020).

Countries around the world were alarmed by this pandemic because it killed hundreds of thousands of people. The Philippine Department of Health reported the first case of COVID-19 in the Philippines on January 29, 2020, with a 39-year-old female Chinese national as the first patient diagnosed with it upon confirmation by the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine through a confirmatory test using rt-PCR (Edrada et al. 2020). From then on, reported cases greatly increased day after day. By the third week of March, COVID-19 greatly spread throughout the country. Hence, the President of the Philippines, Rodrigo R. Duterte issued Proclamation No. 929 on March 16, 2020, declaring a state of calamity throughout the country. Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) was imposed to mitigate the spread of the virus. Home quarantine, suspension of classes, deferral of mass public transport facilities, restricted mass gatherings, and controlled land, sea, and air travel were imposed. Therefore, work from home for public and private offices was advised, and only private establishments providing necessities, like food and medicines were allowed to operate.

With the disruption of businesses and other economic activities, the livelihood of people was greatly affected. The island of Palawan in the Philippines is one of the most beautiful tourist destinations in the country. However, closure of resorts, hotels, restaurants, spas, and other industries because of the COVID-19 pandemic, has affected the source of livelihood for many people and many lost their jobs.

According to Davis and Mantler (2004), "Financial stress is the subjective, unpleasant feeling that one is unable to meet financial demands, afford the necessities of life, and have sufficient funds to make ends meet (e.g., have to reduce the standard of living), often as a result of job loss or unemployment." Accordingly, financial stress is associated with lowered self-esteem, an increasingly pessimistic outlook on life, and reduced mental health, particularly an increase in depression and hostility. They discussed further that financial stress is also associated with declining physical health such as an increase in headaches, stomach aches, and insomnia, that people with a great deal of financial stress experience high levels of depression and it is depression that is most directly associated with worsening physical health.

This study focused on the level of social-emotional learning skills of the participants that might affect how they coped with their financial distress during this COVID-19 pandemic. Ee and Wong (2014) defined social-emotional learning (SEL) as the process of developing knowledge and skills in understanding and managing emotions, empathizing, and caring for others, building, and maintaining positive relationships, making responsible decisions, as well as dealing with challenging issues in an effective manner. Furthermore, Weissberg and Cascarino, (2013) said that "social and emotional learning involves the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set, and achieve positive goals feel, and show empathy for others, establish, and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Çelik (2016) cited the definition of Goleman (2006) of social awareness as being aware of what others feel and think. According to Celik (2016), social awareness might positively influence social behaviors and the quality of interpersonal relationships, and it might also assist individuals in coping with challenges in establishing and maintaining relationships. He also cited Perlman (2007) that interpersonal relationships have been found to be linked with good mental and physical health and life satisfaction, but lack of interpersonal connections is linked negatively to outcomes including depression. According to Doctoroff et al. (2006) which Çelik (2016) cited further, social awareness may positively affect the development of social behaviors, which are defined as the physical and verbal acts that individuals exhibit while interacting with others, and it helps manage emotions (Mayer et. al., 2004; Parrott, 2002). Also, Celik (2016) quoted Doğan (2006) that individuals who have higher social awareness have lower depression symptoms. Furthermore, social awareness may be a factor influencing life satisfaction positively and decreases individuals' depression symptoms like fatigue and decreased energy, feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism, and it facilitates social interaction with others, critical thinking skills and the ability to manage the negative emotions.

Goleman (1998) as cited by McCarthy and Garavan (1999) implies that an individual who is self-aware has a deep understanding of his/her emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and drives. Steverink et al. (2005) as cited by Martina et al. (2012) said that as people improve their self-management abilities, they can manage their resources and even their losses in such a way that their overall well-being is maintained or even improved.

According to Meier (1995), "the world is increasingly driven by high technology, and it continues to be influenced and managed by high spirits - by emotion, energy, drive, persistence, and relationships that develop slowly over time between companies and individuals. Ironically, the more high-tech the world gets, the more important relationship management becomes for creating and keeping competitive advantage."

This study conducted a needs assessment survey on a group of allied healthcare students as respondents, using the four basic needs as variables. The needs assessment results show that, of the four basic needs, the financial, emotional, and psychological aspects of their well-being were most affected. Thus, this study aimed to alleviate the effect of financial crisis among allied healthcare students. Specifically, this study was intended to explore whether the conduct of an intervention program, COVID-19, Babangon Ako!: A Socio-Emotional Skills-based Training Program, for the respondents will help improve the social-emotional skills of the participants to combat the anxiety brought about by COVID-19. The following are the specific questions that this research pursued to answer:

1. What is the level of the socio-emotional skills of the participants before and after the intervention in terms of:
 - a. Self-awareness
 - b. Social awareness
 - c. Self-Management
 - d. Relationship Management
 - e. Responsible Decision-making
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of the socio-emotional skills of the participants considering their pre- and post-test results?

Methodology

Research Design

The general goal of the study was to determine whether the developed intervention program will help to improve the social-emotional skills of the participants. A quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test research design was employed. An intervention program was conducted between the pre-test and the post-test. The conditions between the tests and intervention program were not controlled. All participants were subjected to the same intervention program. The participants were not compared with each other. Only the pre-test and the post-test data of the same participants were compared.

Population and Sampling

The 39 participants of this study were allied healthcare students of one of the Technical-Vocational Institutes in Palawan. The respondents were composed of 37 females (94.9%) and 2 males (5.1%). Of the 39 participants, 1 was between 17-20 years old, which was 2.6%; 8 were aged between 21-25 years old, which was 20.5%; 7 were aged between 26-30 years old, which was 17.9%; 10 were aged between 31-35 years old, which was 25.6%; 7 were aged between 36-40 years old, which was 17.9%; 5 were aged between 41-45 years old, which was 12.8%, and 1 was aged 46 years old –above, which was 2.6%.

Research Instrument

Social-Emotional Skills Competence Questionnaire was used for the pre-test and post-test. This 30-item questionnaire was adapted and improved from The International Journal of Emotional Education, Volume 4, Number 2, November 2012 pp. 27-42, which was developed to measure the social-emotional skills of

the participants. The questionnaire was divided into five (5) aspects, Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Management, and Decision-Making, wherein the respondents rated how each statement applied to them using the following scale: 5 – Strongly Agree; 4 – Agree; 3 – Moderately Agree; 2 – Disagree; 1 – Strongly Disagree.

Experimental Manipulations or Interventions

The intervention program was entitled, “COVID-19, BABANGON AKO!”: A SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS-BASED TRAINING FOR ALLIED HEALTHCARE STUDENTS. The program was composed of five topics: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Management, and Responsible Decision-making. Sessions were all conducted through face-to-face meetings. Participants were given activities related to the topic discussed and were also given a chance to ask questions on areas in which they needed clarification. Before the succeeding topics were presented, a short oral quiz was given and participants who were able to answer were given incentives. All participants were in the same experimental group. No control groups were employed in the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The pre-test and post-test were administered to the participants in Google form, for easy access, before and after the intervention program, respectively. A series of activities was conducted during the intervention program.

Ethical Considerations

Permission was granted by the school authorities for the study to be conducted to the students. The respondents were asked to accomplish an Informed Consent form and were assured that their participation in the study was voluntary. The nature, purpose, and process of the project were explained to the participants, and they agreed and consented to participate. The respondents were also assured that their identities and the information they provided would be held with confidentiality and would be used for no other reason but this study only. It was also made clear to the participants that should they feel that their privacy was violated, or they found this study as violative of their principles, they were free to back out from participating in this study.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics particularly mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of socio-emotional skills of the participants before and after the intervention. Paired t-test was conducted to analyze if there was a significant difference in the level of socio-emotional skills before and after the intervention.

Results and Discussion

Level of Socio-Emotional Skills

The socio-emotional skills of the respondents were measured before the intervention program. The following are the results of the analyses conducted.

Level of Socio-Emotional Skills in Terms of Self-Awareness

Tables 1 and 2 show the levels of self-awareness of participants before and after the intervention program, respectively. In Table 1, the pre-test result shows that the participants' level of awareness was highest when it comes to being aware when they are not feeling ok ($M = 4.56$, $SD = .68$) and in their ability to observe the expressions on people's faces when they are angry ($M = 4.59$, $SD = .55$).

Table 1
Level of Self-Awareness Before the Intervention Program

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
I am aware of my thoughts.	4.46	.56	Agree	High Awareness
I am aware of the reasons for my actions.	4.33	.66	Agree	High Awareness
I am conscious of my emotions.	4.15	.78	Agree	High Awareness
I am aware when I am not feeling ok.	4.56	.68	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
I can observe the expressions on people's faces when they are angry.	4.59	.55	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
I believe I am capable of comprehending others' points of view and opinions, even when I disagree.	4.15	.71	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.37	.41	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

The post-test result in Table 2 shows that the level of Self-Awareness of the participants improved. Their awareness toward themselves increased as two statements directed to themselves were rated with very high awareness: “*I am aware of my thoughts*” (M = 4.54 SD = .82); “*I am aware of the reasons for my actions*” (M = 4.67, SD = .53); and “*I am aware when I am not feeling ok*” (M = 4.62, SD = .75). On the other hand, there was a decrease in their ability to observe the expressions on people's faces when they are angry (M = 4.31, SD = .61).

Table 2
Level of Self-Awareness After the Intervention Program

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
I am aware of my thoughts.	4.54	.82	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
I am aware of the reasons for my actions.	4.67	.53	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
I am conscious of my emotions.	4.33	.81	Agree	High Awareness
I am aware when I am not feeling ok.	4.62	.75	Strongly Agree	High Awareness
I can observe the expressions on people's faces when they are angry.	4.08	.66	Agree	High Awareness
I believe I am capable of comprehending others' points of view and opinions, even when I disagree.	4.31	.61	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.42	.53	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

The pre-test and post-test results in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the participants had high self-awareness before and after the intervention program. Noticeably, there was an increase in the grand mean from 4.37 to 4.42.

Level of Socio-Emotional Skills in Terms of Social Awareness

Tables 3 and 4 show the levels of social awareness of the participants before and after the intervention program. Results in Table 3 show that the participants had high level of awareness before the intervention program with a grand mean of 4.01 and standard deviation of .48.

Table 3*Level of Social Awareness Before the Intervention Program*

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
By observing people's facial expressions, I can recognize how they feel.	4.23	.81	Agree	High Awareness
It's natural for me to empathize with others' feelings.	4.05	.72	Agree	High Awareness
I understand why someone is sad or happy.	4.21	.80	Agree	High Awareness
I can empathize with others.	4.10	.68	Agree	High Awareness
I have an idea why a friend is upset.	3.67	.81	Agree	High Awareness
When I believe I am not communicating effectively, I communicate more fervently.	3.82	.88	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.01	.48	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

Results in Table 4 show that the level of social awareness after the intervention program remained high with a grand mean of 4.30 and standard deviation of .51. Apparently, there was an increase in the mean of all the indicators of social awareness.

Table 4*Level of Social Awareness After the Intervention Program*

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
By observing people's facial expressions, I can recognize how they feel.	4.26	.72	Agree	High Awareness
It's natural for me to empathize with others' feelings.	4.43	.55	Agree	High Awareness
I understand why someone is sad or happy.	4.33	.84	Agree	High Awareness
I can empathize with others.	4.49	.56	Agree	High Awareness
I have an idea why a friend is upset.	4.15	.78	Agree	High Awareness
When I believe I am not communicating effectively, I communicate more fervently.	4.18	.60	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.30	.51	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

Level of Socio-Emotional Skills in Terms of Self-Management

Tables 5 and 6 show the level of self-management of participants before and after the intervention program. The level of awareness in self-management of the participants was high both in the pretest and posttest.

Table 5
Level of Self-Management Before the Intervention Program

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
In general, I maintain a sense of calm and confidence in the face of adversity.	4.13	.83	Agree	High Awareness
I maintain my calmness in new situations.	4.15	.78	Agree	High Awareness
Even though those around me are stressed, I know how to maintain a positive attitude.	4.10	.68	Agree	High Awareness
I have control over how I feel when something negative occurs.	4.10	.68	Agree	High Awareness
When I am angry with someone, I refrain from discussing the matter until I have cooled down.	3.90	.88	Agree	High Awareness
When those around me are stressed, I know how to maintain a positive attitude.	4.13	.66	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.09	.57	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

Table 6
Level of Self-Management After the Intervention Program

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
In general, I maintain a sense of calm and confidence in the face of adversity.	4.38	.59	Agree	High Awareness
I maintain my calmness in new situations.	4.21	.73	Agree	High Awareness
Even though those around me are stressed, I know how to maintain a positive attitude.	4.44	.55	Agree	High Awareness
I have control over how I feel when something negative occurs.	4.36	.49	Agree	High Awareness
When I am angry with someone, I refrain from discussing the matter until I have cooled down.	4.18	.88	Agree	High Awareness
When those around me are stressed, I know how to maintain a positive attitude.	4.38	.54	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.32	.45	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

Results indicated that even if the level of awareness in the post-test remained to be high, there was increase from the mean of 4.09 during the pretest to 4.32 in the posttest. Also, there was an improvement in the post-test scores in all the indicators of self-management.

Level of Socio-Emotional Skills in Terms of Relationship Management

Tables 7 and 8 show the level of relationship management of participants before and after the intervention program. The level of awareness in relationship management of the participants was high both in the pretest and posttest. Yet, the numerical means of all the indicators of self-management improved. Furthermore, the grand mean increased from 4.09 to 4.36.

Table 7*Level of Relationship Management Before the Intervention Program*

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
I apologize when I unintentionally hurt a friend.	4.54	.60	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
When my friends are sad, I comfort them.	4.51	.72	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
When we disagree, I make a conscious effort not to criticize my friend.	4.21	.66	Agree	High Awareness
When my friends commit mistakes, I am considerate.	3.54	.99	Agree	High Awareness
I advocate for myself without hurting others.	4.15	.78	Agree	High Awareness
I find dealing with conflict extremely stressful.	3.62	.78	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.09	.43	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

Table 8*Level of Relationship Management After the Intervention Program*

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
I apologize when I unintentionally hurt a friend.	4.64	.49	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
When my friends are sad, I comfort them.	4.56	.55	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
When we disagree, I make a conscious effort not to criticize my friend.	4.41	.55	Agree	High Awareness
When my friends commit mistakes, I am considerate.	4.23	.81	Agree	High Awareness
I advocate for myself without hurting others.	4.54	.51	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
I find dealing with conflict extremely stressful.	3.82	.91	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.36	.45	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

The participants had very high regard to the statements, “I apologize when I unintentionally hurt a friend” and “When my friends are sad, I comfort them” as indicated in the pre-test and post-test results. Additionally, there was a noticeable improvement in the participants’ advocacy for themselves without hurting others, which was high during the pre-test to very high in the post-test.

Level of Socio-Emotional Skills in Terms of Responsible Decision Making

Tables 8 and 9 show the level of awareness in decision-making of participants before and after the intervention program. The numerical means of all the indicators of decision-making improved from pre-test to post-test. Furthermore, the grand mean increased from 4.31 to 4.50, yet these are both categorized as high awareness.

Table 9

Level of Responsible Decision Making Before the Intervention Program

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
When I make decisions, I consider the consequences of my actions.	4.46	.64	Agree	High Awareness
When I make a choice, I ensure that there are more positive outcomes.	4.56	.55	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
I weigh the situation's advantages and disadvantages before deciding on my course of action.	4.28	.60	Agree	High Awareness
Before making a recommendation, I consider the criteria that was chosen.	4.28	.65	Agree	High Awareness
I weigh the risks associated with the strategy before deciding to use it.	4.26	.59	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.31	.50	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

Table 10

Level of Responsible Decision Making After the Intervention Program

	Mean	SD	Response Scale	Verbal Interpretation
When I make decisions, I consider the consequences of my actions.	4.64	.54	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
When I make a choice, I ensure that there are more positive outcomes.	4.62	.49	Strongly Agree	Very High Awareness
I weigh the situation's advantages and disadvantages before deciding on my course of action.	4.36	.78	Agree	High Awareness
Before making a recommendation, I consider the criteria that was chosen.	4.46	.51	Agree	High Awareness
I weigh the risks associated with the strategy before deciding to use it.	4.44	.551	Agree	High Awareness
Grand Mean	4.50	.43	Agree	High Awareness

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Awareness; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree/Low Awareness; 2.51 – 3.50 Moderately Agree/Moderate Awareness; 3.51 – 4.50 Agree/High Awareness; 4.51 – 5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Awareness

Comparison of the Socio-Emotional Skills Before and After the Intervention Program

The comparative data in Table 10 and 11 show that there is a significant difference in the level of the socio-emotional skills of the participants before and after the Intervention Program. The result implies that the level of summative level of socio-emotional skills as measured by self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision-making of the participants significantly improved after the intervention program.

Table 10*Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of SEL - Pre-test and Post-test*

	<u>Pre-Test</u>		<u>Post-Test</u>	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Self-awareness	4.37	.41	4.42	.53
Social awareness	4.01	.48	4.30	.51
Self-management	4.09	.43	4.36	.45
Relationship management	4.09	.43	4.36	.45
Responsible decision-making	4.31	.50	4.50	.43

The quantitative data in Table 10 shows that the scores of the participants increased after the intervention program. Among the five areas, Responsible Decision Making got the highest score with a mean of 4.50. Self-awareness came next with a mean score of 4.42 and Relationship Management got the third highest score with a mean of 4.36.

Table 11*Paired T-Test Results*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>t</i>	<u>Paired t-test</u>		<i>df</i>
					<i>p</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	
Pre-test	4.18	0.336	-0.209	-3.587	0.001	-0.327 - -0.091	38
Post-test	4.39	0.378					

As seen in Table 11, a paired sample t-test was conducted to determine the difference between the performance of the group at the beginning and the end after the given intervention. The data determined that there is a significant increase in the mean score from the result of the pre-test ($M=4.18$, $SD=0.34$) compared with the post-test result ($M=4.39$, $SD=0.378$), $t = -3.587$, $p (0.001) < 0.05$ (one-tailed).

The result of the study confirms what Ee and Wong (2014) cited that scores of the four other areas are predictive of responsible decision-making, meaning, those who are more aware of and able to take control of their own emotions and abilities, perceive others' perspectives as well as relate well with people, would have the ability to make more responsible decisions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the study identified the level of awareness in the socio-emotional skills of the participants before the intervention program was already high. Furthermore, the level of awareness remained to be high after the intervention program. Yet, there was noticeable increase in the numerical values, thus the paired t-test results indicate that this improvement yielded significant progress in the summative level of social awareness. Hence, it was concluded that the "Covid-19, Babangon Ako!" socio-emotional skills training program was effective.

This study has some limitations. It was conducted at a time when the allied healthcare students were already in the last phase of their training which was their clinical internship wherein they already had different schedules, so it was hard to gather them to attend the intervention program. Moreover, there was another challenge during the conduct of this study. The students had many stressors such as accomplishing deficiencies, meeting deadlines for their case study presentations, and preparing for the institutional and TESDA assessments that it was hard for them to focus. Hence, some of them were not able to attend all the sessions. Furthermore, the post-test was conducted right after the presentation of the last topic of the intervention program. Thus, the participants were not given time to digest and practice the intervention skills they learned. But despite these limitations, the results of the study show that the intervention program was still effective as evidenced by the result of the post-test compared with the pre-test.

It is recommended that the intervention program, COVID-19, Babangon Ako! should be adopted and conducted not only for allied health care trainees but also for the people in the community. This training program may be of help for people to cope with the financial, emotional, and psychological challenges not only when the country is in a state of calamity such as the COVID-19 pandemic, but also during their everyday life.

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EXPLORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' CHALLENGES COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The study focused on the pre-service teachers' challenges in their participation in the community education program during the pandemic. Using qualitative-case study research design, the following research questions were addressed: 1) What are the challenges you encountered as an implementer of the Community Education Program? 2) How does active participation in the Community Education Program prepare you for your future work as a teacher? A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 20 pre-service teachers who participated in the program. The data were gathered through facilitating a survey questionnaire via Google forms, and 5 participants were interviewed online via zoom application. The study generated themes to translate the challenges of the pre-service teacher participants. Their challenges included: 1) limited access to online resources, 2) strategies in facilitating online teaching, 3) managing student behavior, and 4) assessing students' learning. Despite these obstacles, their participation in the Community Education Program assisted them to 1) develop self-confidence, 2) discover adaptable and flexible teaching strategies, and 3) experience the joys of teaching.

Keywords: *re-service teachers, challenges, community participation, online learning*

The importance of education cannot be underestimated because it plays a vital role in the transformation of the individual and the society in general. Education is an agent for change in an unending battle of constant change. Hence, the government educational sectors are in an endless venture of developing programs for teachers both locally and internationally. Without any hesitation, behind the success of any educational reform is a teacher (Tuli & File, 2010). Well prepared and well qualified teachers will lead to an education of the highest quality and have a multiplying effect (Ibid). The need for a well-planned curriculum must have its highest priority in the preparation of a teacher.

In most developing contexts, the Pre-service community program is regulated by the governments and implemented by institutions accredited by the ministries of education for licensing and certification of teachers. Because teacher certification policies vary from one country to the next, Pre-service community programs also vary in duration and content, as well as in the nature of practice teaching. Learning to teach is an unending process spread over one's entire teaching career through continuing professional development (CPD). Pre-service community program is under immense pressure in developing countries due to a strengthened global commitment to extend the reach of quality education to all children. (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Verspoor, 1988).

Community education programs provided by Teacher Education Institutions were designed to help the Philippine government's Department of Education's Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), which was created to meet the unprecedented problems given by the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim states "to guarantee that teaching and learning continue while ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of students, instructors, and other workers involved in the delivery of basic education services" (Llego, 2021 cited in Capinding 2022). Basic education institutions, both public and private, have been required to conform with government regulations (Ancheta & Ancheta, 2020).

Pre-service teaching is also a part of the field study subject course requirements, specifically participation and assistantship which is designed to help students make a smooth transition to a more structured internship program while also increasing their confidence. In fact, pre-service training and program efficacy show a high level of agreement (Harvey, et al., 2010). Teachers' self-efficacy and confidence have been demonstrated to be influenced by pre-service training (Jung, 2007).

Pre-service community program is the initial stage of professional preparation for anyone wishing to pursue a career as a teacher. These programs usually include a combination of theoretical teaching knowledge and field-based practical experience (called a practicum). "The quality of Pre-service community program training has an impact on teachers' practice, effectiveness, and career commitment" (Eren & Tezel, 2010; Liang, Ebenezer, & Yost, 2010; Roness, 2010). "As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom is dependent on and reflects the quality of the Pre-service community program." Because the quality of teachers has a major impact on student accomplishment," (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

Field placements, as previously stated, are designed to help preservice teachers learn about the profession by immersing them in educational settings and engaging in activities important to the profession, such as observing, assisting, and teaching alongside practitioners. However, just placing preservice teachers in classrooms does not guarantee that their preparation, pedagogy, or practice would improve (Grossman and McDonald, 2008; Valencia et al., 2009; McDonald et al., 2014). Despite its relevance, Pre-service community program in poor countries has been criticized for failing to adequately address the large difficulty of delivering quality beginning teacher preparation to pre-service teachers (Akyeampong, 2006; Kanu, 2005, 2007; Schwille, Dembélé, Schubert, & Planning, 2007).

A study on the value of pre-service teaching claimed that learning to teach is a complex and ongoing process in which preservice teachers have multiple opportunities to learn as well as examine theory and pedagogy, which is accomplished when engaging in field experiences within formal and informal educational settings, such as community-based ones (Hallman and Rodriguez, 2015). This is also what Mergler and Spooner-Lane (2012) pointed out in their research that Pre-service training is important because it allows students to participate in a realistic situation in which they can apply theories and principles, as well as

question it in light of issues raised while on field. Moreover, preservice teachers must participate in field experiences in settings other than their own if they want to enhance their understanding of teaching and learning beyond “traditional” classroom settings, which Lortie (1975) referred to as “apprenticeships of observation” (Brayko, 2013).

This study explored the challenges of pre-service teachers and how participation in community education programs helped pre-service teachers in their preparation as teachers. This study answered the following research problems:

1. What are the challenges the participants encountered as an implementer of the Education Community Program?
2. How does active participation in the Education Community Program prepare the participants in their future work as a teacher?

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized qualitative case research design, which involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to help researchers understand concepts, opinions, or experiences of the participants involved. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative case research design, helps the researchers to thoroughly investigate a program, event, activity, process, or one or more people by collecting comprehensive data. As a result, data collection took place in just one phase. An interview questionnaire was used to collect data supplemented by an open-ended interview questionnaire.

Population and Sampling Technique

The study included 20 third year education students who are pre-service teachers at ABC Teacher Education Institution who are currently involved and teaching in the community program. Five pre-service teachers were chosen to participate in an online interview via Zoom application and 15 pre-service teachers were chosen to answer the open-ended interview survey questionnaire via google form.

Instrumentation

This study utilized an open-ended interview survey questionnaire via google form survey and an in-depth interview via zoom application. In the interview via zoom, open-ended questions were followed by probing questions to help the respondents express their opinions and gather more information that would be beneficial to the study.

The following questions were used to determine the challenges and impact of participating pre-service teachers in the community program: 1. What are the challenges you have encountered as an implementer of the Education Community Program?; 2 How does active participation in the Education Community Program prepare you for your future work as a teacher? The survey questionnaire via google form took at least 5 minutes to complete while the interview held in the zoom application lasts 15 minutes. The zoom interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the respondents and verbatim transcription was made.

Analysis of Data

The researchers utilized thematic data coding to categorize the gathered data. Thematic coding or thematic analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that finds themes in texts by analyzing the responses received (Medelyan, 2018). The thematic analysis gives the researchers a more interpretative way to provide illuminating description of any possible related phenomena. (Smith, et al 2011). The researchers followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) in order to make analysis more valid due to its accessibility, transparency, and flexibility. Specifically, the following steps were implemented to analyze the data:

1. Transcribing data: the researchers familiarized themselves with the gathered data by listening, reading, discussing and noting down the answers from the participants.

2. Coding: Using thematic data coding and collating data relevant to each other, interesting features of the data are coded.
3. Themes: Next, the researchers looked for themes, compiling codes into potential.
4. Reviewing themes: Themes are reviewed to see if they work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set.
5. Defining and naming themes: The researchers then analyze the specifics of each theme as well as the overall story that the analysis tells
6. Creating the result/report: final analysis of the extracts in relation to the research questions, study purpose, and supporting literature for discussion, conclusion, and recommendations.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers secured permission from the person-in-charged to proceed in the data gathering. The researchers contacted the respondents via Facebook Messenger Application. Due to the current situation caused by the pandemic, instead of conducting the survey face to face, the researchers utilized google survey form and the Zoom application as an online survey platform.

The participants were assured that their answers will only be used for research purposes. The respondents' identities have been protected, and their responses have been kept private. To protect the confidentiality of the data, the researchers used codes or pseudonyms instead of the respondents' real names.

Results and Discussion

This portion contains the presentation of results, discussion, conclusion and recommendation. The findings are presented under the following themes. These themes are viewed as essential in knowing the challenges and impacts of all participants. The thematic analysis process that was applied was to bring out the key concepts of the data that have been gathered.

Challenges Encountered as an Implementer of the Education Community Program

The study generated four themes including limited access to online resources, facilitating online teaching strategies, managing student behavior, and assessing students' learning. These challenges, such as classroom management, teaching confidence, and a shortage of teaching tools is similar to the finding of Ulla, 2016 but it is equally benefiting the participants as well as they gained from participating in the program (Dwivedi & Singh, 2012); it affects the teacher's interest in the task of teaching, and it maintains a high self-esteem of being successful (Colson et al., 2017)

Limited Access to Online Resources

The first theme generated was the limited access to online resources. According to the responses that have been gathered, one of the challenges that most pre-service teachers encountered is related to internet connection. 16 out of 20 participants shared that they had difficulties in accessing online resources. These are some of the responses out of 16 who shared their sentiments (point of view) with regards Internet connection:

Participant 1 shared *"The internet connection is not that strong where I am located. Most of the time the connection is not that good and this leads me to get tense." Internet connection became a stressor for the pre-service teachers thus resulting in panic, anxiety, or may even paranoia of an ineffective performance and therefore affecting the delivery.*

Participant 4- *"Internet Connection - not only for the teacher but also for the students."*

Participant 19 also said that *"...it's hard to have a good interaction with your students during online classes because of some challenges like internet connection and good signal during class session."*

Participant 2 shares that, *"there are times that students will not be able to attend the class*

because of their poor internet connection, and sometimes, three hay will not be able to continue the class session due to a sudden internet connection being cut off.”

Participant 16 said when interviewed, that participants shared that *“Most of the students are having internet data issues that lead to a poor and slow internet connection, this also resulted in poor attendance of students.*

Not only teachers but importantly the students had been severely affected especially those living in marginalized levels. Because of slow or lack of internet connection, the delivery of lessons might be affected. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the internet became a necessity in the majority of teaching modality. Internet connection became more useful as a means of communication between teacher-students, teacher-teachers, and teacher-parents... as a medium for sharing information about materials and tasks that must be completed at home” (Pertiwi, Saud, & Saffitri (2021). Hence, the internet plays an important role in the learning process and child development particularly during lockdown.

This finding is similar to the study of (Mamun et al.,2020; Naciri, 2020) which found that the critical challenge of reliable internet connection serves as the main causes for non-participation in online learning by majority students. Also, Chang and Fang (2020), discovered in their studies that 60% - 70% of teachers agree that “network speed and stability are poor”, leading to challenges with accessing online learning tools. This literature evidence suggests that reliable network infrastructure, availability of internet data and availability of digital learning devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops to students is important to ensure smooth online teaching and learning.

Strategies in Facilitating Online Teaching

The second theme generated for RQ1 is the challenge in facilitating online teaching strategies. The extent and quality of learning for all pupils is influenced by the school and teachers. For understanding and enhancing educational processes, the beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of the teachers are crucial. These attributes of the teachers are intertwined with the ways they deal with the issues in the classroom. That is why having a strategy in teaching is crucial and necessary to aid the pupils’ learning process. The study conducted by Yuying (2020) about the implementation strategy of the College English Online Blended Teaching Model, found that there was a significant positive influence in teaching in a hybrid setting. As quoted “...interaction between teachers and students had been strengthened due to the online and offline cooperative teaching activities.” However, this contradicts the data that the researchers gathered where pre-service teachers find it challenging to implement the lessons due to the mode of learning. 5 out of 20 stated their concerns about using their teaching strategies when teaching online.

Participant 3 shared, *“I made every effort to plan creative activities and games that are relevant to my teaching in order to keep their interests, faster positive interactions with my students.”*

Participant 4 also struggled with making sure students are engaged in learning, especially in reading, *“... How to engage students in reading programs and there are students that are shy and some are challenged when it comes to reading”.*

Participant 5 also shared, *“I have a challenge in creating a strategy to best suit our lesson. For one, I cannot use computer generated games like Kahoot, Menti, quizzes because it’s difficult for them to follow without their parents assisting them”.*

Participant 6 said that *“Diversity and different ways of adopting lessons of the students.”*

Participant 7 also shared that *“it is harder to make students participate in the online learning setting. Furthermore, I am teaching elementary students when I’m more used to older students, so it is hard for me to connect with them.”*

As cited by Will 2020, "... during school-building closures, they have taught live, virtual classes at specific, predesignated times where students can interact with each other and with the teacher. That can give students a sense of normalcy and connection." However, much effort is needed to keep students engaged and do the task in an unfamiliar environment.

Managing Student Behavior

The third theme generated is the Managing of students behaviour. Due to the pandemic, all schools from all levels were forced to do online classes, and everyone had to adjust. One of the challenges that both teachers and students faced was conducting an online class, and learning in an online environment. According to Will, 2020, there are countless distractions while learning at home, as quoted "a cat walking across the keyboard, a goofy sibling in the background, a comfy bed to lounge on, and a pantry full of tempting food snacks." Teachers find it hard to set rules because students tend to feel as though they are just at home listening to someone talking thus, making the students also feel "isolated and disconnected" according to Ganesan (2021) . This is also the same challenge that the participants encountered. 5 out of 20 Participants experienced different behavior such as

Participant 2 shared "...there are some students who are not able to focus in the class sometimes they would. I have 2 students and they were twins, they would always do something else while in class.

Participant 3- "There are times that students will switch on their microphone and speak which will disrupt the online class".

Participant 4 shared, "I need to get my students' attention and keep them focused on our lessons." This is also the same challenge that Participant 20 encountered. He shared, "My pupils have uncontrolled unnecessary behavior like dancing, playing or watching TV while attending classes."

Participant 9 also shared that one of the struggles faced in managing students behaviour is the inconsistency of attendance. As stated by the participant "Students' attendance is inconsistent."

Assessing Student's Learning

The fourth and last theme that was generated is Assessing the student's learning. Assessment is used to determine learning process and achievement, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of an educational program over a period of time (NSW Government, 2020). Because of the pandemic, educational institutions abruptly turned into remote learning that affects students' learning activities. Assessing learning, a crucial educational process, poses challenges to the teachers. According to Arnold (2020), getting reliable assessment measures in an online, synchronous class, where the students and instructor do not meet face to face, is more difficult than a traditional face-to-face course. LaPointe-McEwan et al. (2021) expressed that, online assessment threatens the validity of assessing the students learning since you don't really know if the students are doing it alone or they are receiving help. In this same vein, pre-service teachers in the community program are facing a lot of challenges. 3 out of the 20 participants expressed their challenge in assessing student's learning.

Participant 2 said, "I don't know if they really understood, or they really know how to read, or their parents were just dictating them, so that's also one part, and rather than letting them discover it themselves, their parents will just say the answer, as if it's graded po." This is also the challenge that the other participants faced.

Participant 4 said "When students are asked to read, it is the parents who are reading in behalf of their child" The same concern was expressed by **Participant 5** "For one, their parents are usually beside them coaching them whenever I tried to assess their capability of reading and recognizing sounds. I cannot really assess them in reading, I can only teach them the reading of every word which seems to be effective in the long run."

Assessment becomes a tough challenge for the participants, they cannot determine how well students are growing and learning. Consequently, they cannot evaluate whether the lessons and instructions are effective. Here, the participants expressed their concerns, that it is the parents, and not the students who are answering the questions. Hence, assessing the student's learning is not reliable.

Impact of Participating in the Education Community Program

Through the responses the researchers generated three themes. These include developed self-confidence, discovered adaptable and flexible teaching strategies, and experienced the joys of teaching.

Developed Self-Confidence

"Given that professional experience presents authentic opportunities for experiencing the rewards and challenges of teaching, this is an important time where initial teacher education can contribute to supporting and preparing pre-service teachers to build confidence and capacity for resilience" (Mansfield & Beltman, 2020).

One of the goals of the education community program was to ensure that pre-service teachers would be prepared for the teaching work. Five out of 20 participants expressed that they developed self-confidence.

According to **Participant 19**, *"It helps to develop my confidence in dealing with other people with different personalities."*

Participant 16 also said *"By actively participating in community education programs, it helps me build confidence." This result shows the positive impact this program gave to the pre-service teachers as confidence is just one of the many qualifications that each student teacher should develop.*

Participant 1 said *"It helps me to have confidence and to have a good teaching experience in preparation for my future career as a teacher...It helps me understand the possible challenges that I may encounter in the actual teaching. Since, you have already encountered some of those challenges in the past, like for now we experience some problems using internet connections, it will help you more prepare and be creative in your teaching."*

Participant 11 expressed *"It really helped me to become equipped and ready enough and have confidence to face the real world of being a teacher."*

Participant 12-*"It makes me more comfortable and confident in what I am doing. Cause I believe experience is the best way to success, cause along the way it will teach me everything that I need to prepare myself as a future educator."*

A study conducted by Huston (2017) and Okhremtchouk et al. (2009) found out that pre-service training helped teachers exhibit more self-confidence in planning, instructions and assessments. Teachers can improve not only on their confidence level in their teaching performance but also it affects the learning of students. The more training teachers can get, the more teacher skill and content knowledge they can have which can be translated into increased student achievement" (Shumack, K. A., & Forde, C. M. 2011).

Discovered Adaptable and Flexible Teaching Strategies

Change, novelty, and uncertainty are common experiences for all humans, and it was common for teachers when the pandemic struck, forcing education and teachers to find new ways to teach the students. To ensure effective teaching during the pandemic, it was crucial to be flexible and able to adapt to the environment. Teachers must therefore develop their flexibility and adaptability. 12 out of 20 participants expressed their happiness at learning the value of flexibility and adaptability as they moved through the program.

Participant 5 shared that, *"as an implementer in the reading tutorial, it taught me the importance of flexibility, that as teachers we need to be flexible in dealing with the students demands and responses in learning. I cannot learn flexibility in teaching alone through the lectures from our instructors in my College"*

Participant 6 remarked that, *"It prepares me to be interactive and adjust what is the reality in the field of teaching."*

Participant 9 said *"I learned how to deal with real students in a virtual classroom setting."*

Participant 11 said *"It really helps me to become equipped and ready enough to face the real world of being a teacher. I am able to utilize and apply all my learnings and observations coming from our resource teacher. Also, I am able to learn and discover effective strategies of teaching and learning for the learners."*

Participant 14 stated, *"First, is how to manage an online classroom. It is very difficult for me as a first timer because I don't have a gadget that is in a good condition, but as the days goes by I learned how to adopt it and do my best to meet my student every Friday....Another one is that I learned a lot on how to teach using different strategies and methods to make the class enjoyable and the students easily catching up the lesson."*

Participant 3 - *"It helps this program really helped me and prepared me to be a good teacher, by practicing and imparting all the lessons that i grasps to my students will surely mold me as better educator someday, and by engaging to my fellow learners, will surely help me to **learn and grow more**, by sharing my piece and accepting their piece, we will produce a new piece that would benefit from all of us."*

This is also what **Participant 16** expressed, *"It helps me to be prepared in the future and see the actual scene of teaching. It gives me knowledge and experience on what and how to handle classes with different students."*

Participant 13 mentioned that, *"...this pre-service community program was helpful since he struggles with public speaking. Also, it prepared me to be more equipped in my future teaching work."*

According to **Participant 7**, *"It helped me face and understand how to solve the difficulties in delivering the lessons that I may face in the future."*

Participant 9 also said, *"This program prepared me to be flexible in my use of teaching strategies."* The participant developed flexibility and adaptability when unexpected situations occur during his conduct on online teaching.

Participant 18 added that, *"It helps me prepare that in the future I must not stutter when teaching in the class and I hope I can participate in teaching the students so in the future I am well prepared."* Moreover, **Participant 20** said during the interview. *"It helped me in knowing how to manage different situations in teaching."*

As this program provides opportunities for pre-interns, it also helps them to establish good communication skills and public speaking as teaching requires talking. Richards (2010) as cited in Low, Chong & Ellis (2014) emphasized that it is important to ensure that student-teachers are able to carry out specific linguistic tasks especially if English is the medium of instruction in school thus, pre-service and in-service teachers need to have proficiency in the language to be able to teach effectively.

These answers are considered positive as Bob (2010) describes activities that improve self-awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, increase human capital and employability, improve quality of life, and help people achieve their goals are development of personal qualities that teachers need (Brehm, 2021.)

Experienced the Joys of Teaching

Teaching entails a great deal of responsibility in terms of ensuring that students learn; however, seeing them progress throughout the learning process is undoubtedly rewarding for a teacher. Pre-service teachers are no exception when it comes to experiencing the joys of teaching. Five out of the 20 participants expressed their experience.

Participant 2- *I realized that I'm teaching these students because I want these students to learn, and I was really happy when I saw my students smiling at the end of the class and they were really enjoying the atmosphere and the class, the whole class, especially in grade 2. all the teachers in grade 2. I also realized that I really want to be a teacher; specifically, a reading specialist. This program really opened my eyes, and made me fall in love with teaching.*

Participant 3- *It helps this program really helped me and prepared me to be a good teacher, by practicing and imparting all the lessons that I grasp to my students will surely mold me as a better educator someday, and by engaging to my fellow learners, will surely help me to learn and grow more, by sharing my piece and accepting their piece, we will produce a new piece that would benefit from all of us.*

Participant 5- *actively participating in this program gives us not only the experience but also the feeling of being a teacher where our competency and capability to teach is being ultimately challenged.*

Teaching is a lifelong learning, and the experiences of teachers in terms of going from failure to success is what gives the opportunity to experience joy. One of the many experiences teachers have had while teaching is failure before success, and that experience makes them feel content and fulfilled. When they experience success, teachers find joy in their work, according to Peter Maden (1977), who examined teachers' experiences in the classroom for his book "Childhood education." Participants in the study agreed with this statement, saying that they had failed before succeeding and had gained important knowledge as a result.

Participant 14 said - *"It is very difficult for me as a first timer because I don't have a gadget that is in a good condition, but as the days go by I adopted it and do my best to meet my student every Friday, that made me feel happy knowing that I was able to adapt."*

Participant 15 also expressed - *"I'm happy to experience this as it prepared me to be smart in my decisions and I can learn from my mistakes while I am still a student. It helps me to enhance what I am lacking as an educator."*

According to Sutton, R., and Seifert, K. (2023), there is a chapter in their book "Exploring education" that talks about why people choose to be teachers, and one of the reasons why, in chapter 1:1, there is joy in teaching because they keep on growing as a person, keep connecting with others, and keep learning new ideas. And this is also what the participants of the study expressed.

Conclusion

According to the findings, pre-service teachers who are implementing online classes have faced challenges in the classroom, including issues with their internet connection, the struggle to implement effective online strategies, managing students' behavior in an online classroom, and assessing students' learning. Despite the numerous problems that these pre-service teachers faced, it is undeniably true that these education community programs had a tremendous impact on their lives, not just as future implementers but also as individuals, as this program helped them gain more confidence in teaching, it helped them to be more flexible as problems arise, and it prepares them for the future events as an implementer.

Teaching entails a great deal of responsibility, whether you are a seasoned teacher or a pre-service teacher. Pre-service education places future teachers in charge of their students' learning while they attempt to apply and remember what they have learned theoretically while also adapting to what is happening on the field. This study gave researchers insight into the perspectives of these pre-service teachers who are struggling to make ends meet in the pandemic era. Despite the difficulties they have faced, they have maintained their optimism and willingness to assist, which has contributed to their development as people

and future teachers. The pre-service community program, according to the findings, was successful and gave these aspiring teachers excellent training. The study's conclusions indicate that since it will prepare them to acquire skills, community participation training is indeed necessary for those pre-service teachers as part of their education. This study recommends continuing to encourage all pre-service teachers to participate in community education programs in order to put theory into practice. This will also assist them in becoming more resilient to future classroom challenges. Provide a more generous budget for internet load to support the pre-service teachers in teaching online.

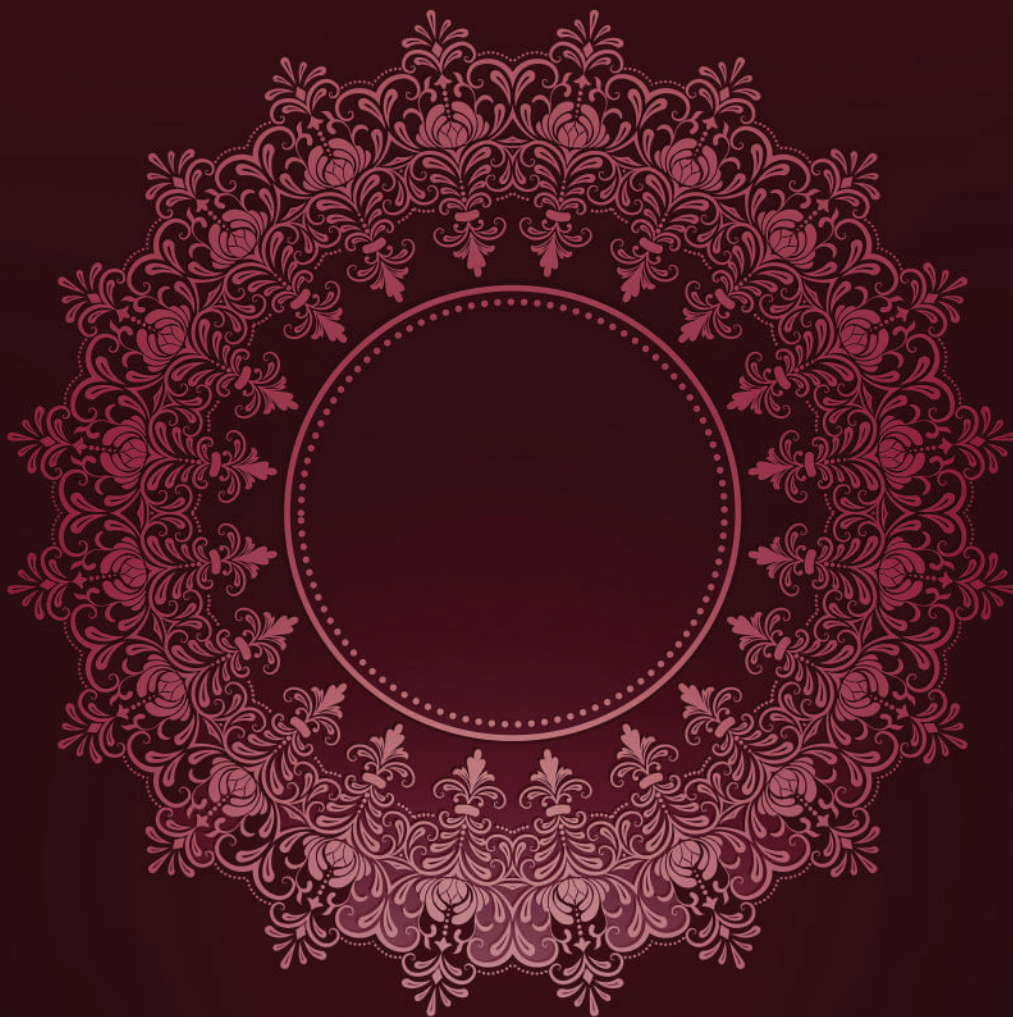
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