
PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC**PROFESSORES DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA**Ariel T. Gutierrez,¹ Adrian R. Tabora,¹ and Jaymark L. Gama¹¹Angeles University Foundation, Angeles City, Philippines.**RESUMO**

Este artigo investigou as experiências de 25 professores de educação física (EF) de escolas públicas e privadas em Angeles City, Filipinas, durante a pandemia de COVID-19. O estudo constatou que muitos professores de educação física enfrentaram vários desafios, hesitaram e ficaram inseguros em ensinar educação física durante a pandemia. Além disso, muitos professores de educação física receberam atribuições e responsabilidades não pedagógicas, o que aumentou sua carga de trabalho. O estudo destaca a importância de equipar os professores com as habilidades e conhecimentos necessários para se adaptar às novas modalidades de ensino e aprendizagem durante a pandemia e fornecer suporte aos professores de EF durante esse período desafiador. O artigo conclui sugerindo que pesquisas futuras poderiam investigar as estratégias e abordagens específicas que têm sido mais eficazes para ajudar os professores de educação física a superar os desafios que enfrentam no ensino durante a pandemia e os efeitos de longo prazo da pandemia no ensino e aprendizagem de atividades físicas

Palavras-chave: Educação física, pandemia, professor, escola**ABSTRACT**

This paper reports on a study that investigated the experiences of 25 physical education (PE) teachers from public and private schools in Angeles City, Philippines, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that many PE teachers encountered various challenges and were hesitant and unconfident about teaching PE during the pandemic. Additionally, many PE teachers were given non-teaching assignments and responsibilities, which added to their workload. The study highlights the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the new teaching and learning modalities during the pandemic and providing support for PE teachers during this challenging time. The paper concludes by suggesting that future research could investigate the specific strategies and approaches that have been most effective in helping PE teachers overcome the challenges they face in teaching during the pandemic and the long-term effects of the pandemic on the teaching and learning of physical education.

Keywords: Physical education, pandemic, teacher, school**Introduction**

The impact brought about by COVID-19 on the world cannot be underestimated, and the Philippines are not exempted from the damages it has caused. The Department of Health in the country reported its first case on the 30th of January 2020.¹ The virus, which suspiciously began in Wuhan, China in December 2019, resulted in millions of infected individuals and caused death to thousands of people through the widespread human-to-human transmission. As of April 14, 2021, there were 138,044,204 confirmed cases and 2,972,576 deaths counted by Worldometer.² Due to the unexpected and rapid rise of the virus in the Philippines, the entire Luzon Island of the country was placed under Community Quarantine, where classes in all levels were suspended; mass gathering was prohibited; strict home quarantine was observed; work from home arrangements were implemented; mass public transport facilities were suspended; land, air, and sea travels were restricted.³

Being aware of the negative effect of COVID-19 on individual health and the importance of having a healthy cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, bone health, and reducing the risk of depression, the World Health Organization (WHO) suggested the following activities: walking, dancing, gardening, swimming, household chores, play, games, sports, or planned exercise while staying at home.⁴ To reduce stress and anxiety, on the other hand, it was recommended to take a walk or participate in indoor physical activities such as stretching at home.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and universities suspended their operations, and all classes shifted to remote instruction, including physical education classes. Some students reportedly felt stressed and anxious while stuck at home.⁵ Isolating students and teachers at home with their families will lead to lessening activities and affect physical activity behaviors, causing them to spend more time sitting and watching screens, ultimately impacting physical health, well-being, sleeping patterns, and quality of life.⁶ These nationwide closures of schools and universities have impacted almost 70% of the world's student population, with some other countries imposing localized closures that impact millions of additional learners.⁷

For a while, gymnasiums that were full of students taking PE classes, playgrounds usually occupied by toddlers running, skipping, jumping, and playing dodgeball, hopscotch, and hide and seek, and school open fields where kids tag around with their playmates will all temporarily be at rest. However, this will not stop Physical Education teachers from promoting health and wellness among students.⁸

There was a survey conducted to physical education teachers in European countries between May and September 2020 to evaluate their opinions on online teaching during the pandemic. Results showed that teachers had varying evaluations of online teaching, with differences in ratings of advantages, disadvantages, and difficulties between primary and secondary schools. The study identified the lack of proper equipment, IT training, and use of different online platforms as the main difficulties. The study also highlighted areas where PE teachers should receive support, such as pupils' safety, intellectual property of resources, and quality of curriculum delivery.⁹

Another study which examines how the pedagogical practice and the subject of Physical Education (PE) are influenced among a group of students in initial teacher training. The research aims to explore the impact of teaching PE virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic on future teachers' emotions, identify the advantages and disadvantages of virtual PE teaching, and investigate the pandemic's effect on their passion for teaching and perception of PE.¹⁰

In addition, some scholars discussed the changes in Ecuador's educational system, which have forced a shift from face-to-face to virtual learning. The study focuses on three educational units in Quito, Ecuador, and aims to identify the occupational stress experienced by physical education teachers during the pandemic. The research methodology used in the study is exploratory and descriptive.¹¹

More so, some paper discussed that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a shift to online learning for students and teachers, requiring changes in teaching practices. Participants identified successful strategies, challenges, and recommendations for the future. They feel optimistic about providing quality physical education through distance learning with necessary support and recognize their critical role in supporting student health during the pandemic.¹²

Pia Cayetano, one of the senators in the country, delivered in her privilege speech in the senate, reiterated, "the importance of physical health and well-being is something we cannot simply leave behind, especially at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to keep promoting physical education and regular exercise among our children".¹³ Physical Education, as interpreted by many as being more than just games and exercises, has a bigger chance of going back to basics and might be focused on helping students improve their movements vocabulary. The realities of physical distancing and not being able to share equipment during PE classes after the COVID-19 Pandemic mean more students are inclined to move towards individualised learning in safe and sound spaces. As we consider the future of physical education classes during the post-COVID-19, it is a fact that PE will not return to 'normal' for some time, and distance learning or physical distancing might be in operation in schools.⁸

The new normal for Physical Education is not just about operating an environment that secures the health and wellness of students; it is as well about using technology. While home schooling and online learning are one of the proposed solutions by the Department of Education

in the Philippines, access to technology and the internet remains a big challenge.¹⁴ The new normal for physical education requires us to unlearn what we have known in the past: practicum exercises, rows of desks, quizzes, heavy bags, lectures, major exams, and face-to-face parent-teacher consultation. Unlearn those, and we can establish the new normal of education.¹⁵

Physical Education (PE) teachers are essential agents in promoting physical activity, healthy habits, and overall well-being among students in the Philippines and globally.¹⁶ In the Philippine context, PE is a mandatory subject in both primary and secondary schools, where students receive 40 and 80 minutes of instruction per week, respectively. The responsibility of PE teachers in the Philippines is to develop and implement age-appropriate physical activity programs that promote fitness, health, and wellness. Moreover, they organize and supervise sports events, such as intramurals and inter-school competitions, and provide coaching and training to student-athletes.¹⁷

On the global scale, the role of physical education teachers varies, depending on the country and educational system. While some countries mandate PE as a core subject, others may not offer it at all. Despite these differences, many countries recognize the crucial role of PE teachers in promoting physical activity and healthy habits outside of the classroom. This may include organizing extracurricular activities, such as sports clubs or fitness programs, or working with community organizations to promote physical activity.¹⁸

Academic research underscores the importance of PE teachers in promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary behavior among students. Given the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity and related health problems worldwide, there has been a growing emphasis on the role of PE teachers in promoting physical activity.¹⁹ Numerous studies demonstrate that PE teachers can have a significant impact on students' physical activity levels, self-efficacy, and overall health outcomes. PE teachers can also positively influence students' attitudes toward physical activity, sportsmanship, teamwork, and fair play, which can translate into lifelong healthy habits.

The role of physical education teachers in promoting physical activity, healthy habits, and overall well-being among students is critical in both the Philippine and global contexts. PE teachers' contributions to ensuring students develop the necessary skills and knowledge to lead active, healthy lives are invaluable. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue to recognize and support the critical role of PE teachers in promoting physical activity and healthy habits among students. For the aforementioned reasons, the Physical Education program at home, following the Department of Education's learning competencies during the post-COVID-19 pandemic, must be given utmost attention. The pandemic, which has been extended from months to years due to the fear of contagion waves, might increase the physiological and psychological impact of sedentary behaviors on students and teachers.

Methods

Participants:

The study's participants comprised of 25 secondary school Physical Education (PE) teachers from public and private schools in Angeles City (figure 1), one of the highly urbanized city in the province of Pampanga, Central Luzon, Philippines. Eligibility criteria included having at least two years of experience in teaching, with participants being randomly selected from the eligible pool of candidates. This sample represents a diverse range of educators, providing a comprehensive view of the experiences of secondary school PE teachers in the city. Such a participant selection strategy helps to ensure the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of PE teachers in the area. The inclusion of both public and private schools further enhances the representativeness of the sample, providing valuable insights into the experiences of educators from both types of institutions.

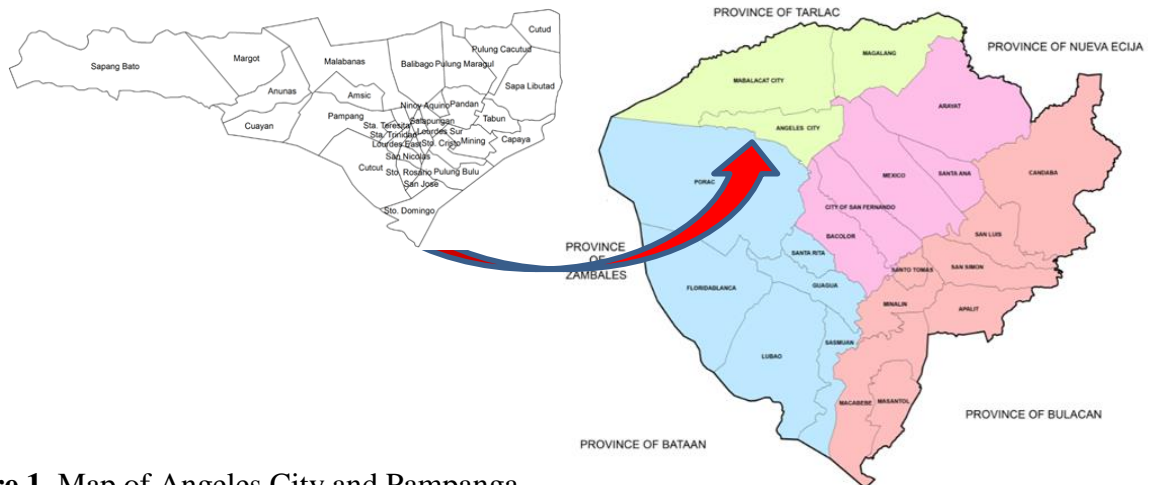


Figure 1. Map of Angeles City and Pampanga

Source: Provincial Planning & Development Office

Tool

The tool has been specifically designed to assess the challenges faced by Physical Education teachers during the pandemic. The tool comprises three key components, namely, teachers' confidence levels and adjustments, reasons for having additional assignments, and problems encountered while teaching during the pandemic.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the tool, it underwent rigorous evaluation by experts in the field of teaching, including individuals holding a Ph.D. in Educational Management, psychologists, and guidance counselors. This step was crucial in guaranteeing that the tool accurately captures the current situation faced by physical education teachers during the pandemic.

Furthermore, the tool underwent pilot testing and subsequent revisions to enhance its effectiveness in measuring the experiences of physical education teachers. This meticulous process of tool development and validation ensures that the resulting instrument is robust, reliable, and can serve as a valuable resource in understanding the unique challenges faced by physical education teachers during the pandemic.

Data Gathering

In light of the lockdown restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic, alternative measures were implemented to facilitate the data gathering process. The research team opted to conduct interviews virtually, and participants were requested to schedule appointments via electronic means. In preparation for the interviews, the research tool was disseminated electronically, allowing participants ample time to review the questions and gather their thoughts.

To conduct the interviews, the research team utilized various online platforms, including Gmeet, Zoom, and Messenger, which provided a secure and convenient means of conferencing. This approach not only adhered to safety protocols but also allowed for broader geographic coverage, enabling the inclusion of participants who may have otherwise been unable to participate due to logistical barriers.

Ethical Considerations

The present study was underpinned by a strong commitment to ethical considerations, which were carefully observed throughout the research process. Prior to commencing data

collection, the research team sought and obtained approval from the respective school heads of the participants. This measure was crucial in ensuring that the research adhered to the ethical standards of informed consent and safeguarding the welfare of the participants.

Moreover, the research team provided assurances to the participants regarding their anonymity and confidentiality. This was done to minimize any potential risks to the participants and to protect their privacy. Participants were given the assurance that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Data and Document Analysis

Data was gathered through surveys and interviews, with the aim of capturing in-depth insights into the challenges faced by teachers and the ways in which they have adapted their teaching methods. The data collected from the surveys and interviews were subjected to a rigorous process of analysis, which involved the interpretation of the responses provided by the participants. The researcher effectively organized and summarized the responses in a systematic manner, facilitating the identification of patterns and trends in the data. Additionally, the researcher looked for significant differences or similarities based on demographic factors or other relevant variables to provide a nuanced understanding of the experiences of the participants.

To analyze the data, the researcher employed various techniques such as thematic analysis or content analysis to identify key themes and patterns in the responses. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the data and enabled the researcher to derive meaningful insights into the experiences of the participants.

Document analysis approach was utilized to examine pertinent materials related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the research team analyzed a range of official documents, including memoranda, advisories, orders, and other relevant materials issued by various government agencies. The analyzed documents were obtained from five key agencies, namely the Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health, National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRRMC), Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF), and the Office of the President. Through this systematic review of official documents, the study aimed to identify the policies, guidelines, and protocols implemented by the government in response to the pandemic.

This document analysis approach provides a comprehensive and objective means of examining official policies and directives. It allows for the identification of patterns and themes across multiple sources of information, providing a nuanced understanding of the policy landscape surrounding the pandemic. By utilizing this method, the study contributes to a more robust and informed analysis of the government's response to the pandemic, providing insights into the policies and practices that have been implemented to mitigate the effects of the crisis.

Results

Based on the interview conducted by the researchers regarding the feelings of the respondents towards teaching PE during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was found that most of them are hesitant to teach, some are unsure and unconfident as to how they will deliver their instructions, and there were also those who found difficulty in transitional adjustments. Students and teachers have a hard time due to a lack of resources, encountered internet connection problems, and other classroom management concerns. Additionally, it was reflected in the study that many of the respondents felt worried and anxious, caused by the feeling of being unsure if their learners really understood the lesson.

Table 1 presents PE teachers' confidence in teaching online, modular, and mixed methods, specifically their confidence in developing a module, and the amount of adjustments they encountered during the pandemic.

Through the use of gathered data from the survey, 64% of the respondents are personally prepared to teach in a virtual learning modality. It was also found in the study that various webinars and workshops purposefully equipped some teachers to teach in virtual settings. Thus, webinars and workshops made it possible to conduct online-seminars to reinforce teachers' and educators' skills in embracing the challenges in the new teaching and learning modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The utilization of webinars has multiple benefits for instruction but not trouble-free.²⁰ On the other hand, 36% of the respondents showed that they are not personally prepared to teach virtually due to different constraints like internet connection problems, scarce teaching resources, and digital skills in the aforementioned teaching modality.

Virtual teaching is one of the methods used by teachers in teaching online, through the use of media such as computers, mobile phones, laptops, and other gadgets. Teaching in a virtual mode of delivery requires teachers to have enough confidence and sufficient digital skills in teaching mobile learners.²¹ Based on the results of the interview, 8% of the respondents are not confident, having poor and below-average responses of the respondents. There is a significant number of respondents whose confidence in teaching virtually is average, with a total of 36%. Meanwhile, 40% of the respondents showed that their confidence is above average, with a value of 16% of them classifying themselves as excellently confident in virtual teaching.

Teaching in the middle of a pandemic potentially poses constraints and challenges to new practices for both students and teachers. A conducted study in 2020 shown that teachers faced difficulties in teaching modular, and it was also stated that several approaches have been taken by teachers as they regarded it as effective.²² In the current education setting in the Philippines context, many public and private schools have opted to use a modular mode of delivery to ensure teaching and learning continuity. The research had shown that 60% of the respondents' confidence in teaching modular is average, a significant number of respondents whose confidence in teaching modular is above average, with 20%, while another 20% of the response on the results from the interview had shown excellently confident in modular teaching.

Mixed modalities or blended learning is a style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching. Based on the interview made by the researchers regarding the confidence of the respondents in teaching mixed modalities or blended learning, it shows that 52% of them are confident in teaching this method.

Based on the results above regarding the adjustments in using technologies of the participants, 8% of the respondents are poor when it comes to technology, and 48% of them know how to navigate and use technology properly.

Developing a module is not easy as of this pandemic, but based on the interview conducted by the researchers regarding the development of a module, 60% of the participants know how to develop the module that they are giving to the students.

The study aimed to gather information about the experiences of Physical Education (PE) teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of teaching methods and adjustments made. The findings revealed that many of the respondents felt hesitant, unsure, and unconfident about teaching PE during the pandemic. They encountered various challenges such as lack of resources, internet connection problems, and classroom management concerns. In terms of teaching methods, the study showed that 64% of the respondents were personally prepared to teach in a virtual learning modality while 36% were not. A significant number of respondents (40%) showed confidence in virtual teaching, while 52% were confident in teaching through mixed modalities or blended learning. Regarding adjustments in using technology, 48% of the respondents knew how to navigate and use technology properly, while 60% knew how to develop the module that they are giving to the students. Overall, the study highlights the

importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the new teaching and learning modalities during the pandemic.

Table 1. Confidence and adjustments in teaching

	Poor		Below Average		Average		Above Average		Excellent		N.A		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Online teaching	1	4	1	4	9	36	10	40	4	16	0	0	25	100
Modular teaching mixed Modalities	0	0	0	0	15	60	5	20	5	20	0	0	25	100
Adjustments in the new teaching environment	2	8	1	4	12	48	6	24	4	16	0	0	25	100
Module Development	0	0	1	4	15	60	6	24	3	12	0	0	25	100

Source: authors

Aside from teaching PE subject, there are other assignment not related to teaching but school functions which were given to the PE teachers in times of pandemic, limited face-to-face work set-up and other work scheme was implemented to maintain the safety of every school staff and personnel. Figure 2 presents the results of the survey showing that aside from teaching Physical Education at the time of Covid-19 pandemic, there were other assignments given to teachers as additional functions. As shown in the study, 4% of the respondents served as researchers; there were also teachers who were assigned as administrators of school official accounts such as Facebook Pages, Twiter, Google Drive, and others, which consist of a total of 12%. Likewise, most of the respondents served as administrators of students' accounts which has a significant value of 16%; also some of the respondents were appointed to take part in printing modules, which has 8%. Meanwhile, as reflected in the results, 12% of PE teachers served as Disaster and Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) coordinators. Boy Scout of the Philippines (BSP) coordinator in their respective schools, grade level chairman, adviser, and even taught other subjects like Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC). The teacher's role has shifted to alternative tasks as a result of dynamic changes and consequences of the pandemic; it unfolds demands and difficulties as learning takes place.²³

In another point of view, it was concluded in the result of the survey that 28% among the respondents were given additional non-professional assignment, such as personnel in-charge in sending learning pockets, delivering instructional materials, and disseminating modules to students at their homes. In lieu of the job functions, additional duties and responsibilities of teachers, they may perform supplemental functions associated with the instructional process and may vary to the needs and teaching and learning context assigned by the respective school head.²⁴

The study found that in addition to teaching PE during the Covid-19 pandemic, PE teachers were given various non-teaching assignments as part of their school functions. Figure 2 showed that 4% of the respondents served as researchers, 12% were administrators of school official accounts, 16% served as administrators of students' accounts, and 8% were involved in printing modules. Additionally, 12% of PE teachers served as Disaster and Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) coordinators, Boy Scout of the Philippines (BSP) coordinators, grade level chairmen, or advisers, and some even taught other subjects like Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC). The study also revealed that 28% of the respondents were given additional non-professional assignments, such as delivering instructional materials and modules to students at their homes. These additional duties and responsibilities may vary depending on the needs and teaching and learning context assigned by the school head. The shift in the role of PE

teachers towards alternative tasks highlights the demands and difficulties of the pandemic in the learning process.

Table 2. Other Roles

Roles	n	%
Researcher	1	4
Administrator of school official accounts such as FB, Tweeter, Google Drive, and others.	3	12
clerical:		
Administrator of students' accounts	4	16
Personnel for printing modules.	2	8
others, please specify:		
DRRM Coordinator, BSP Coordinator, Grade Level Chairman, Adviser, Teaching other subjects .	3	12
Personnel in-charge in sending/delivering/disseminating modules to students	7	28
No other clerical role	5	20
TOTAL	25	100

Source: authors

The survey aimed to gather insights into the factors influencing the allocation of non-teaching assignments to physical education (PE) teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that several reasons accounted for the distribution of additional duties among PE teachers. The majority of respondents were given non-teaching assignments due to their possession of a personal computer or laptop (36%) and/or access to a vehicle (20%). Respondents who possessed the "know-how" or knowledge in technology were also allocated additional duties (16%). Meanwhile, newly hired PE teachers accounted for 4% of the reasons for receiving non-teaching assignments. A small proportion of respondents (4%) did not receive any non-teaching assignment, while 20% did not provide a reason for being assigned other tasks. The findings of this study suggest that factors such as technological competency, access to resources, and transportation are key considerations in the distribution of non-teaching assignments among PE teachers during the pandemic.

Table 3. Reason/s why you were given other assignment/s

	n	%
Have a vehicle	5	20
Have a personal computer/laptop.	9	36
Doesn't have a personal computer/laptop.	1	4

Have the “know how”/knowledge in technology	4	16
Newly hired.	1	4
No assignment	5	20
TOTAL	25	100

Source: authors

There are many varying concerns brought by the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide. It has challenged many people, tested their resiliency and adaptability, and demanded new practices for living in the New Normal era. Based on the results of the study (Figure 3), the respondents encountered problems in teaching during the pandemic, with the majority (56%) having internet connection problems with their respective network providers. The study also showed that 12% of the respondents had trouble using their devices, while power interruption caused conflicts for another 8%. Similarly, in the study conducted by,²⁵ related issues on internet connection and adequate access to digital resources and devices were observed in many countries.

Table 4. Problems encountered in teaching during this pandemic

Problems	n	%
Internet connection	14	56
power interruption	2	8
Use of device	3	12
TOTAL	25	100

Source: authors

When teachers were asked about the most difficult part of teaching during the pandemic, they responded with the following: internet connection, proper execution of lessons (especially dance steps), recording students' output, distributing and retrieving modules and answer sheets, no face-to-face class, power interruptions and internet connection problems, safety concerns due to exposure to students/parents/teachers, more preparations than in a normal setting, late submission of activities, ensuring that students are really learning, non-compliance, and when students do not submit or complete their activities and exams on time.

The most rewarding part of teaching PE during the pandemic, as stated by PE teachers, were: having more time with family, more time at home, saving money due to not having to go to school, not being infected with the coronavirus, when students appreciate teachers' efforts, sacrificing for the children just to impart knowledge to them, imparting knowledge and touching the lives of students despite the pandemic, seeing how students exert effort in answering and doing their activities during checking of outputs, and when students appreciate all the efforts of the teacher by making videos for their activities and exams as a guide. According to the researchers' interviews, the most rewarding part is when the students appreciate all the efforts of the teacher and when the teacher imparted knowledge and felt that they touched the lives of their students.

When asked to share their thoughts on their pandemic experience in teaching PE, the teachers' responses were as follows: being flexible is very important; it is hard to teach during

this pandemic, especially physical education, because there is no face-to-face interaction, and teachers cannot correct necessary skills needed to be learned by students instantly and directly; teaching PE during the pandemic is twice as hard as in a face-to-face class due to more preparation needed; PE teachers should prove that being healthy is one of the most convenient ways to overcome the pandemic, and some teachers were able to use their influence to encourage students to exercise at home and make their time more valuable; performance tasks, especially in PE, are quite difficult in the pandemic since not all students have the capabilities to work alone, and not all have gadgets they can use to record and submit their performances; teaching PE in the pandemic is challenging, especially in teaching actual performances, but the experience taught the teachers how to adjust and learn a lot of things, and as a PE teacher, they need to do and give their best to impart knowledge to the students, especially in actual performances.

Teaching PE during the pandemic has both positive and negative results. Some teachers are facing difficulties, but others are doing their best to teach the subject properly and impart knowledge to the learners. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented numerous challenges for teachers worldwide, including those teaching physical education. According to survey results, some of the difficulties faced by PE teachers during this time include problems with internet connection, execution of lessons (especially dance steps), recording student output, and distributing/retrieving modules and answer sheets. However, the experience has also had rewarding aspects, such as more time with family and the satisfaction of imparting knowledge to students. PE teachers also emphasized the importance of flexibility and promoting health during the pandemic. Overall, teaching PE during the pandemic has been both difficult and rewarding, with teachers facing challenges but also finding ways to adjust and provide quality instruction to their students.

Discussion

The study provides valuable insights into the experiences of physical education (PE) teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the challenges they faced, the adjustments they made in their teaching methods, and the non-teaching assignments they were given as part of their school functions. The findings suggest that many PE teachers were hesitant and unconfident about teaching during the pandemic, which is understandable given the sudden shift to virtual and blended learning modalities. The lack of resources, internet connection problems, and classroom management concerns only added to their difficulties.

On the positive side, the study also revealed that many PE teachers were able to adapt to the new teaching and learning modalities, with 64% of the respondents feeling personally prepared to teach in a virtual learning modality. In terms of teaching methods, a significant number of respondents showed confidence in virtual teaching and blended learning. However, the study also highlighted the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate and use technology properly and to develop modules that are suitable for online and blended learning.

It is also worth noting that the pandemic has placed additional non-teaching assignments and responsibilities on PE teachers, such as serving as Disaster and Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) coordinators, Boy Scout of the Philippines (BSP) coordinators, grade level chairmen or advisers, and even teaching other subjects like Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC). Moreover, many PE teachers were given the task of delivering instructional materials and modules to students at their homes, which added to their workload and responsibilities.

In Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Sections 1 and 2 state that "The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all." In accordance with the cited constitutional provisions, as well as Executive Order 292 or the Administrative

Code of 1987, Republic Act (RA) 9155 or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, and RA 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, the DepEd is mandated to protect and promote the right of access to quality education despite the pandemic.

All pronouncements to impose, lift, or extend community quarantine depend on the IATF. However, local authorities may impose enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in the existence of their regional inter-agency task groups.

The Department Secretary announced the opening of classes on August 24, 2020, which was already delayed for around two months compared to usual practice due to the implications brought by Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ) in other parts of Luzon Island, specifically Metro Manila and the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal. The opening of classes was moved to October 05, 2020. However, private schools or non-DepEd schools that started their classes on August 24 or earlier than October 05 were allowed to continue classes provided that the use of distance learning modalities was strictly implemented and no face-to-face classes were conducted.²⁶

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, both private and public schools in the Philippines have been committed to finding ways to provide learning opportunities for all learners. Enrolment has become more flexible, entrance examinations in most colleges and universities have been waived, and some private schools are now accepting online payments and money transfers, which was not common in the past.

DepEd supports UNESCO's statement in their Strategic Framework for Education in Emergencies in the Arab Region (2018-2021) that "access, quality, and system strengthening cannot be compromised in times of crisis" (UNESCO, 2017). The department is committed to delivering 21st Century skills in basic education among Filipinos, which is why MELCs were created to ensure education continuity and to address the challenges faced by Filipino learners due to the pandemic. MELCs aim to develop practical and lifelong skills learning in times of crisis, like pandemics.

Essential Learning and Desirable Competencies were created to explain the curriculum, where Essential refers to what students need, considered indispensable in the teaching-learning process to build skills for lifelong learning, while 'desirable' refers to what may enhance education but may not be necessary in building foundation skills. Schools are directed to comply with the MELCs content and to refrain from creating lists of learning competencies for different subjects or learning areas.

DepEd announced its Basic-Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), emphasizing multiple learning modalities such as blended learning, distance learning, and home schooling, following IATF quarantine provisions to reduce exposure of learners to COVID-19 and replace face-to-face learning modality. All of the aforementioned modalities were implemented as strategies for preventing the spread of the virus, and physical activities were set aside.

However, isolating students at home with their families may lead to a reduction in physical activity behaviors, increase in screen time, and subsequent impact on physical health, well-being, sleeping patterns, and quality of life.⁶ Therefore, Physical Education subject must not be disregarded, and students must learn the importance of good health while at home.¹³ The current crisis presents physical educators across the world with a unique opportunity to introduce a child-centered approach.⁸

The study underscores the importance of supporting and equipping teachers with the necessary skills, resources, and support to adapt to the new teaching and learning modalities during the pandemic. It also highlights the need for school administrators to recognize and appreciate the additional responsibilities and duties placed on PE teachers during this challenging time. While the pandemic has presented numerous challenges for PE teachers, it

has also provided opportunities for growth and learning, as they find ways to adjust and provide quality instruction to their students.

Conclusions

The present study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities encountered by physical education (PE) teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results indicate that the pandemic has had a significant impact on PE teachers, who have faced a multitude of challenges and uncertainties in adapting to new teaching methods and adjustments. Notably, a majority of the respondents encountered various challenges such as lack of resources, internet connection problems, and classroom management concerns. While some PE teachers were confident in teaching virtually, others struggled with the transition to online learning.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the new teaching and learning modalities during the pandemic. The findings underscore the need for ongoing support and professional development for PE teachers as they continue to navigate the challenges of teaching in the "New Normal" era.

The study also reveals that many PE teachers were given various non-teaching assignments as part of their school functions during the pandemic, such as serving as researchers, administrators of school official accounts, and printing modules. Additionally, some PE teachers served as Disaster and Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) coordinators, Boy Scout of the Philippines (BSP) coordinators, grade level chairmen, or advisers, and even taught other subjects like Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC). These additional duties and responsibilities highlight the demands and difficulties of the pandemic in the learning process.

Practical implications of the findings suggest that schools and educational institutions should provide adequate training and support for PE teachers to adapt to new teaching and learning modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, schools should consider the additional duties and responsibilities given to PE teachers during the pandemic and provide appropriate compensation and support.

However, the study is limited by self-reported data and a focus on PE teachers only. Thus, the findings may not necessarily generalize to other subjects or educational contexts. Further research is needed to deepen our understanding of the experiences of PE teachers during this unprecedented time. Future research could investigate the specific strategies and approaches that have been most effective in helping PE teachers overcome the challenges they face in teaching during the pandemic. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate the impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental well-being of PE teachers, as well as the effects of the pandemic on the physical activity levels and health outcomes of students. Furthermore, exploring the long-term effects of the pandemic on the teaching and learning of physical education, including potential changes in pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment practices, would be insightful. Finally, examining the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as students and parents, on the challenges and opportunities of teaching and learning physical education during the pandemic, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand.

References

- 1 World Health Organization, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the Philippines. [cited on March 12, 2021]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/philippines/emergencies/covid-19-in-the-philippines>.
- 2 COVID-19 Coronavirus / Death Toll. 2021. [cited on April 14, 2021]. Available from: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-death-toll/>.

- 3 Memorandum from the Executive Secretary, Manila, Philippines: Malacanang: Office of the President of the Philippines, 2020. [cited on April 14, 2021]. Available from: <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2020/03mar/20200316-MEMORANDUM-FROM-ES-RRD.pdf>
- 4 World Health Organization. Physical Activity and Adults [internet]. [cited on April 14, 2021]. Available from: https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_adults/en/.
- 5 Harvey G. Physical Education teachers adjust to remote instruction during COVID-19. Spirit System: Interactive Health Technologies. 2020. Available from: http://ihtusa.com/physical-education-teachers-adjust-to-remote-instruction-during-covid-19/?fbclid=IwAR0Ht8r5N_VhN5pj9z8krXA1SW18Ojwguf-y2_JQK8PtzrHzu98CDdB95fk.
- 6 Hammami A, Harrabi B, Mohr M, Krusturup P. Physical activity and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): specific recommendations for home-based physical training. *MSL* 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1757494>
- 7 UNESCO. COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. [cited on Apr 14, 2021]. Available from: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>.
- 8 Keens L. PE & Sport: The Next 'New Normal.' Age of Awareness [internet]. 2020[cited on Apr 14, 2021]. Available from: <https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/pe-sport-the-next-new-normal-882824a59740>.
- 9 Korcz A, Krzysztozek J, Łopatka M, Popeska B, Podnar H, Filiz B. Physical Education Teachers' Opinion about Online Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic—Comparative Study of European Countries." *Sustainability*. 2021;13(21). DOI:<https://doi.org/10.3390/su132111730>
- 10 Calvo GG, Barba-Martín RA, Alcalá DH. The (virtual) teaching of physical education in times of pandemic. *EPER* 2021. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X211031533>
- 11 Morocho E, Sevilla JO, Molina J, Velasquez J, Sangurima V. Incidence of Work Stress in Physical Education Teachers in Times of Pandemic. *TURCOMAT* 2021; 12 (7): 2837-2844. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17762/turcomat.v12i7.3874>
- 12 Vilchez JA, Krus J, Puffer M, Dudovitz RN. Teachers and School Health Leaders' Perspectives on Distance Learning Physical Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JSH* 2021; 91(7): 541-549. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13030>
- 13 Torregoza H. Include PE in 'New Normal' Curriculum' – Sen. Cayetano [internet] 2020. [cited on Apr 14, 2021]. Available from: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/15/include-pe-in-new-normal-curriculum-sen-cayetano/?fbclid=IwAR38wdx4U9SQ3NDmlz23drREVo2r0nOooTZcwlBUvRuTe6OnCvDDw1AvNqY>.
- 14 Ching J. PH education and the new normal [internet]. 2020[cited on Apr. <https://opinion.inquirer.net/129286/ph-education-and-the-new-normal>.
- 15 Kamalludeen RM. Transitioning to the new normal in education [internet]. 2020 [cited on Feb 12, 2021]. Available from: <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/letters/2020/04/28/transitioning-to-the-new-normal-in-education?fbclid=IwAR0fFosp7Ta3uhM71wgEjr65nX6dTDPnVB1ZUGKtLKfbTICiyxiYmXmSxZA>.
- 16 Lynch T, Soukup GJ, Usher W. Physical education, Health and Physical Education, Physical literacy, and Health Literacy: Global nomenclature confusion. *CE*. 2016;3(1). DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1217820>
- 17 Madrigal N, Reyes JJ, Pagaduan J. Exercise Science Academic Programs and Research in the Philippines. *IJES*. 2010; 3 (4):157–164. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4738868/>
- 18 Olivares PR, Bolaños MAC, Campos RG, Almonacid-Fierro A, Garcia-Rubio J. Influence of parents and physical education teachers in adolescent physical activity. *IJCHP*. 2015; 15 (2):113-120. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2015.01.002>
- 19 Romar JE, Enqvist I, Kulmalnota J, Kallio J, Tammelin T. Physical activity and sedentary behaviour during outdoor learning and traditional indoor school days among Finnish primary school students. *JAEOL*. 2019; 19 (1): 28-42. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2018.1488594>
- 20 White AR. Reflections on the Use of Webinar Technology for Teaching. *Hal Archives-Ouvertes*[internet]. 2019. [cited on Apr 14, 2021]. Available from: <https://hal.science/hal-01976364/document>
- 21 Gonzales KK. Teachers' Confidence and Preparedness for Teaching Mobile [internet]. *The Aquila Digital Community*. 2018: 4. <https://repository.nie.edu.sg/bitstream/10497/23211/1/APSCE-2021-153.pdf>
- 22 Barton DC. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on field instruction and remote teaching alternatives: Results from a survey of instructors. *EE*. 2020: 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.6628>
- 23 Barron M, Cobo C, Najar A, Ciarrusta I. The changing role of teachers and technologies amidst the COVID 19 pandemic: key findings from a cross-country study. *EGD*. 2021. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/changing-role-teachers-and-technologies-amidst-covid-19-pandemic-key-findings-cross>
- 24 Briones LM. DepEd Order no. 032, 2020. Guidelines on the engagement of services of learning support aides to reinforce the implementation of the basic education learning continuity plan in the time of COVID-19

- pandemic [Internet]. Philippines: Department of Education; 2020 [cited Mar 8, 2023]. Available from: https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/DO_s2020_032-1-1.pdf.
- 25 Pokhrel S, Chhetri R. A Literature Review on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Teaching and Learning. SAGE Journals. 2021; 8 (1): 3-5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347631120983481>
- 26 Advisory on Opening of Classes for Private Schools. 2020 [cited on April 14, 2021]. [internet] Available from: <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2020/08/15/advisory-on-opening-of-classes-for-private-schools/>.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like acknowledge the participants in the conduct of the study.

ORCID:

Ariel T. Gutierrez: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4532-8109>

Adrian R. Tabora: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9528-9120>

Jaymark L. Gama: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6919-5676>

Editor: Carlos Herold Junior

Received on Jun 21, 2022.

Reviewed on Feb 25, 2023.

Accepted on Feb 25, 2023.

Correspondence Address: Ariel T. Gutierrez, 8-8 Don Carlos Drive Santa Clara Subdivision, Sapang Maisac Mexico, Pampanga, Philippines, email: arieltgutierrez1979@gmail.com