# Travails pf Non-Major Social Studies Teachers In Modular Distance: Lessons and Pedagogical Implications

## Jessa Grace R. Alagase[1], Rhey Mark H. Diaz[2]

[1]MAED, Student Researcher
[2]PHD, Professor, University of Mindanao, Davao, Professional Schools Davao City

## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the lived experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of non-major social studies teachers within the framework of the Lupon East District, Schools Division of Davao Oriental, which implements modular distance learning (MDL). The COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary to move from face-to-face modality to MDL, resulting in a learning environment where numerous teachers were allocated subjects beyond their areas of expertise. Utilizing a qualitative, phenomenological methodology, data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with twelve (12) non-major social studies teachers. The findings identified multiple interrelated concerns, including insufficient material knowledge, difficulties maintaining student involvement, and issues with evaluation procedures and resource constraints. To address these challenges, teachers implemented strategies like collaboration with colleagues, utilizing online resources, modifying educational materials, and enhancing communication with students and parents. The study emphasizes the significance of continuous professional development tailored to non-major teachers, establishing supportive mentorship frameworks, and providing accessible resources to strengthen instructional proficiency. The resilience and commitment of teachers are pivotal to the success of MDL, underscoring the broader implications for educational policy, curriculum planning, and teacher deployment. Ultimately, this research recommends systemic improvements in teacher training and support to sustain the quality of social studies education and optimize student learning outcomes despite role misalignments.

**Keywords:** Non-Major Teachers, Social Studies Education, Modular Distance Learning, Teacher Challenges, Instructional Strategies, Professional Development, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

In shaping the lives of students, education will play a vital role. Teachers are among the necessary tools in the process of delivering high-quality education. Due to the emergence of COVID-19 in the Philippines, many changes happened in the educational landscape (Felicisimo, 2021). Educational institutions transitioned to modular distance learning from the usual face-to-face teaching, which put teachers and students less prepared, if not totally unprepared (Cabardo et al., 2022). However, the sudden spread of institutions turning to modular distance learning offers learners greater opportunities and brings forward setbacks. This include difficulty in assessing the understanding of the learners using the modules, teachers find it a challenge to contact the learners due to lack of resources to check their progress, and gain access and

produce materials that may help serve as intervention materials to topics to learners who were not able to achieve complete mastery with (Carreon, 2021).

In the United States of America, there were several issues with integrating modular materials. It has been said that instructional time constraints are particularly difficult for elementary social studies teachers, and are also felt at the secondary level. Teachers in basic education, particularly elementary social studies teachers, reported difficulty engaging students and transitioning to inquiry-based modules due to a lack of pedagogical and content knowledge. Further discussion reveals that this issue may be due to the teacher's lack of preparation for the new teaching method that has been implemented (Thacker & Friedman, 2021). Furthermore, the need for well-trained teachers to teach Social Studies has been emphasized by Social Studies educators, including Aggarwal (2019), who made it abundantly clear that Social Studies requires well-trained teachers more than any other subject. In addition, Boholano et.al (2022) stated that non-major teachers had to deal with problems including managing their time, preparing modules, and giving feedback while implementing modular distance.

In the Philippines, educational institutions utilized modular distance learning to bridge the gap between teaching and learning despite the pandemic. However, this new kind of teaching and learning environment poses significant problems among non-major social studies teachers. Alvarez (2020) revealed that this new mode of educational environment challenges the teachers to have specific skills, knowledge, professional development, and training in teaching subjects utilizing modular distance learning, as this is a novel phenomenon. This added constraints to the underlying problem presented by Pacaña et al. (2019) that non-major social studies teachers encounter several issues in preparing and administering their lessons. It has also been observed that several teachers have taught social studies subjects without specializing in it during their university days. He added that this scenario has created a dismal effect on learners because of teachers' lack of procedural content knowledge of Social Studies, resulting in low academic performance.

In the locality of Lupon, East District of the Schools Division of Davao Oriental, teachers are having difficulties utilizing modular distance learning, particularly those who do not specialize in social studies. The researcher noticed that some were given assignments to teach outside their areas of expertise when deployed to the school or station in the district above. They must deal with this difficulty and other issues, such as utilizing modular distance learning. There are non-major social studies teachers who claim that during the first quarter of the modular distance learning, they encounter difficulties such as using the new mode of teaching and learning environment in a sense that they have lack of knowledge and skills on its utilization as well as the lack of teaching strategies to use during the implementation.

The condition of non-major social studies teachers in utilizing modular distance learning merits an investigation to explore the general issues of their lived experiences, including their travails and how these teachers address the challenges they faced in such learning modality. To give consideration to the learners where the internet is inaccessible for online learning, most of the public schools in rural areas in the Philippines use a modular distance learning modality. Modular learning is a form of distance learning that uses Self-Learning Modules (SLM) and is highly convenient for most typical Filipino students. It is also the most preferred learning system chosen by most parents/guardians for their children.

Furthermore, based on the prevailing issues and problems presented, there is an urgency to conduct this study to explore and understand the lived experiences of non-major social studies teachers in utilizing modular distance learning during the pandemic through qualitative research, specifically in a phenomenological approach. Although various research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the utilization of

modular distance learning, few research has been conducted on teachers' experiences, especially non-major social studies teachers, in qualitative research during the pandemic. In addition, the participants of this study will be the non-major social studies teachers teaching social studies subject utilizing modular distance learning in Lupon East District, Schools Division of Davao Oriental. The in-depth interview and focus group discussion will be used to collect participant data. Hence, there is a lack of information in the experiences, challenges, and insights of non-major social studies teachers in regards to modular distance learning. Thus, the researcher is prompted to pursue this study.

This theory anchored by Moore (2013) on The Theory of Transactional Distance this theory posits that distance education is not solely a physical separation, but also a psychological communicative gap between learners and teachers. As a result, the non-major teachers encounter difficulties in delivering content effectively, engaging the learners meaningfully, and providing timely feedback.

Furthermore, this phenomenological research highlights for educational authorities and curriculum planners the need for ongoing pedagogical improvements to enhance teaching performance in Social Studies through modular distance learning. It supports developing programs, seminars, and workshops to improve teaching strategies, especially for non-major Social Studies teachers. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of equipping educators to effectively implement the current curriculum.

Meanwhile, this study is guided by the hermeneutical philosophical paradigm, which emphasizes the dynamic relationship between the teacher, students, and environment. As Agrey (2014) described, hermeneutics involves a teacher's responsibility for self-awareness and openness to reinterpretation. This ongoing process fosters both personal growth and transformation, making teaching and learning a simultaneous, reflective, and interactive act.

This study is focus on comprehending a humanistic or idealistic perspective further aligns it with the phenomenological investigation. A qualitative research strategy called phenomenology describes how people interpret certain occurrences. In phenomenological research, an effort is made to set aside preconceived notions and prejudices regarding human experiences, emotions, and responses to a particular situation.

Furthermore, this study is mainly anchored on the philosophical paradigm and theory of Gadamer's (1975) Fusion of Horizons Theory. The theory suggested that an individual will be looking for a way to be engaged in understanding a certain situation about a newly designated line of experience and establishing a new set of actions based on their experience. In teaching without adequate experiences, as per the proposition of Gadamer's Theory, it postulates that non-social studies teachers may not be detached from their teaching to their past experiences. Moreover, in teaching, they can create a new set of relevant and timely actions for their current undertakings. At such, the theory focuses on what is to be understood in the experiences of non-major social studies teachers given on the advent of modular distance learning.

In the context of this study, this study frames the teaching travails of non-major Social Studies teachers through Gadamer's (1975) concept of "fusion of horizons", where personal beliefs and understandings shift through encounters with new environments and experiences. Such encounters promote horizon expansion, as teachers interpret new teaching contexts. The interpretive inquirer, rooted in hermeneutics, shows openness, humility, and genuine concern for participants (Agrey, 2014). The conversational nature of research captures the lived experience, including emotions, assumptions, and paradoxes (Manen, 1977). These help teachers construct meaning from their professional experiences and relate it to broader social contexts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Ultimately, this leads to an authentic mosaic of the teachers' inner and outer worlds.

Furthermore, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory from 1994 corroborates this. The theory posits that individuals possess capabilities, including surmounting challenges and accomplishing objectives. The theory posits that self-efficacy pertains primarily to "doing" (e.g., feeling capable of confronting challenges) and adjusting behavior to attain goals. Research indicates that teacher self-efficacy enhances teaching and learning (Al-Shukri 2016).

Moreover, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory posits that environmental alterations inherently influence individuals. It also considers how individuals acquire and sustain specific behaviors and their surroundings. The theory posits that past experiences shape behavior. Previous experiences influence, reinforcements, expectations, and expectancies, which dictate an individual's likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior and its rationale (Lamorte, 2018). Research indicates that teacher self-efficacy enhances various instructional and learning processes. According to the Person-Environment Fit Theory proposed by Edwards, Caplan, and Van Harrison, non-major social studies educators will exhibit enhanced productivity when their training and competencies align with their professional responsibilities (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

In the context of this study, the self-efficacy theory is pertinent to non-major social studies educators, as their confidence in managing professional responsibilities and challenges influences significant academic outcomes, such as student achievement and motivation, as well as their workplace well-being. The willingness of teachers to embrace change enhanced their effectiveness (Barni et al., 2019). Social cognitive theory examines how individuals acquire and sustain specific behaviors within their contextual framework an individual's past experiences influence their propensity to act.

Furthermore, some relevant literature to enhance students' democratic thinking, social studies education, and social studies teachers have a crucial role to play (Fitchett & Heafner, 2018). Political socialization and civic skills are related in social studies education (Ontas & Koc, 2020). The qualities of social studies instructors, who play a crucial role in forming civic virtues, might also be examined. Applications like inquiry, discussion, and resource analysis that favorably impact the social studies teaching process can help students develop their skills (Fitchett & Heafner, 2018).

According to studies, subject-specific teacher training results in more proficient students through more effective instruction, especially in social studies (Porsch & Whannell, 2019). Thus, the phenomenon must be seen as a significant problem in teacher education, encompassing both the initial teacher education phase and the period following entry into the teaching profession, which offers opportunities for teachers' formal professional development (PD) and ongoing professional learning (PL) in teaching social studies (Hobbs & Porsche, 2021).

In addition, systematic teacher shortages, unequal distribution of teachers, scheduling challenges in schools, and the teacher education systems in several nations where teachers are trained as specialists and not as generalists are all contributing factors to teaching subjects without adequate knowledge and mastery (Hobbs, 2020). With such phenomena, teachers who are unqualified to teach Social Studies must be assigned to many classrooms due to a lack of Social Studies education graduates filling this need. This adds to the additional hardships of non-social studies teachers teaching Social Studies who are unfamiliar with the new normal mode of teaching (Thacker, 2021).

According to a study, it is also emphasized that there are several root causes for teachers being assigned to teach non-specialized subjects, including a conflict between the requirements for a teacher's qualification and their assignment, demands from the teacher union, and a lack of qualified teachers in a particular field (Bugwak, 2020). The academic background of the teacher has an impact on their ability to teach. In-

field teaching is the term used to refer to work in the field. The differences between the graduation and employment fields bring the ideas of out-of-field employment and education to light. In social studies education, there is not much study on out-of-field teaching (Pacaña et al., 2019; Savage, 2019). Although scholars disagree on how teachers affect students' achievement, few studies look at how social studies teachers might help students succeed (Fitchett & Heafner, 2018; Savage, 2019).

Moreover, several steps go into educating teachers by ensuring they have the necessary competencies and abilities before beginning their careers. At the beginning of their careers, teachers undergo a professional preparation process that includes internalized professional experience. However, failure to internalize the process might harm one's professional progress (Girgin & Sahin, 2019). However, it is not always feasible to have the correct combination of teachers to offer the required lessons, especially in small schools, where financing for schools is effectively bound by the ratio of teachers to learners. Therefore, it is regarded as a normal element of teachers' professional life, or at the very least, tolerated. Given these limitations, the question becomes what a person is "competent" and "willing" to teach rather than what they are certified/approved to teach or what their area of expertise is (Hobbs, 2020).

Non-social studies teachers who teach history said they have a hard time understanding some concepts and explaining historical events, despite history being the main focus of the social studies curriculum. As a result, every social studies teacher should be well-versed in history topics, as it significantly impacts the entire world, particularly the political and social movements. Accordingly, non-social studies teachers must have the historical knowledge necessary for a successful social studies teacher in order to have pedagogical competency in teaching social studies (Aggarwal, 2019). Due to the demands of the new learning modality, the non-social studies teachers encountered considerable difficulties. As stated by Alfanta and Abarquez (2023), teachers faced challenges when planning and preparing modules, assessing students' outputs, and providing timely feedback.

A study presented that three requirements must be met for a teacher to be considered highly qualified: the teacher must have a bachelor's degree in the subject matter they teach, hold the necessary teaching credentials, and demonstrate subject matter expertise. This in no way implies that non-specialist teachers lack qualifications. It can be characterized as an employment incompatibility (Simsek & Ontas, 2021). Many previous studies have found that various factors, such as teacher supply and school organizational issues, contribute to the continued practice of this phenomenon in teaching (Cascio, 2019).

How non-social studies teachers develop their professional identities has drawn criticism in teaching social studies. Teachers' professional qualifications are influenced by various variables, including their personal traits, professional demands, institutions, perspectives, professional stakeholders, situations, society, and values (Soydaş, 2020). However, some academics contend that qualifications are merely a confounding factor. As such, how non-social studies teachers are impacted is crucial in professional identity perception and professional identity considerations. This issue is exacerbated by how schools organize their subjects. Most educators only use what they remember and understand about the subject area, particularly the topics they learned in elementary school (Ball & McDiarmid, 2019).

Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face learning was discontinued for the 2020-2021 school year. Lack of school funds, students' struggle with self-study and parents' lack of academic knowledge were the main challenges of this modality (Garbe et al., 2020). The Department of Education (DepEd) uses Modular Distance Learning to keep students engaged during the Covid-19 pandemic (Gonzales, 2021). As a result, the Philippine Educational Curriculum's Social studies subject has begun to integrate the use of modules to ensure that learning continues even in the event of a global pandemic.

The problem with continuing educational advancement in one country is then addressed by various countries around the world introducing various solutions to the problem despite the pandemic (Schleicher, 2021). It has been stated that this solution includes the use of various media including technological advancements. To reach a wider audience, education ministries worldwide broadcast live transmissions of lessons on various subjects across the country's TV channels. The modular distance learning approach was implemented abruptly at the national level in response to the coronavirus pandemic's dramatic changes. On the other hand, the requirements for this national project have not been assessed. Today's challenge is comprehending and managing processes and rules regulating information in real time (Elfirdoussi, 2020). Social science learning has demonstrated that students' learning performance has decreased due to ineffective learning due to COVID-19's impact on the world's life (Sunoto et al., 2021). Furthermore, it has been discovered that students' academic performance is likely to decline in classes held for both year-end and internal examinations due to reduced contact hours for learners and a lack of consultation with teachers when learning and understanding difficulties due to the integration of a distance modular learning approach (Pokhrel, 2021).

More families are relying on technology and digital solutions to keep their children engaged in learning, entertained and connected to the outside world as a result of school closures and strict containment measures but not all children have the necessary knowledge, skills or resources to keep themselves abridged to the gap of the integration of a new way to learn (Pokhrel, 2021). Self-learning modalities (such as radio, television, paper-based learning kits, and even online platforms and mobile apps) are unlikely to be effective in ensuring learning continuity unless teacher-guided modalities supplement them. Teachers should remain involved during school closures to guide their students and support parents/caregivers. As a result, a combination of self-learning and teacher-led modalities is required. When multiple learning modalities are being implemented it is critical to integrate them into a larger education strategy that is anchored to the curriculum (Lainchaur, 2020).

Furthermore, in the Philippine context, Magdaraog and Benavides (2019) reported that the 2017 National Achievement Test (NAT) results revealed low performance essential skills such as problem solving (40.31%), information literacy (41.44%), and critical thinking (39.02%) across five subjects' areas: Filipino, Mathematics, English, Science, and Hekasi. These scores are significantly below the target performance level of 75%. The poor performance may be linked to the issue of out-of-field teachers, as supported by Patalinghug (2018), who have knowledge and appropriate teaching strategies in subjects for which they were not trained.

However, according to a results of a study, it has been presented that highly effective teachers have a deep understanding of the subject matter they will teach, and teacher qualifications play only a minor role. As a result, the subject matter and the students involved are valued at a much higher level. Furthermore, they discovered that lower student achievement scores may have been caused by ineffective and more traditional teaching methods, such as the exclusive use of textbooks in teaching the subject area (Hobbs, 2020).

It is equally important for teachers to maintain contact with their students. Connecting with students regularly gives them a sense of routine and purpose and a way to keep their professional identities intact in the face of uncertainty. Once schools reopen, these connections will help students and teachers re-establish relationships and give teachers a better sense of how much their students have learned while away from school. Teachers should also be involved in adapting and delivering the curriculum and lessons for home/distance learning as well as supporting student and parent adoption of these modalities (Lainchaur, 2020).

Meanwhile, this phenomenological research aims to explore and understand the teaching travails of non-major social studies teachers in the utilization of modular distance learning, specifically in the teachers of Lupon East District, Schools Division of Davao Oriental. This study will utilize qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. This phenomenological study will determine how the participants responded to the challenges and problems in their teaching when utilizing a modular distance learning and analyze collective reflections on those challenges. In addition, the data will be collected through in-depth interviews and discussions in the focus group. Further, a thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data collected and gathered. Moreover, the study can be a paradigm in the Department of Education as well as for School Administrators to provide a basis for developing and crafting extensive seminars and workshops for teachers to give teaching with the use of modular distance learning, making it more meaningful to the teachers as well as to the students. This study sought to answer the following research questions: What are the experiences of non-major Social Studies teachers in teaching Social Studies in Modular Distance Learning approach?, How do non-major Social Studies teachers cope with the challenges in teaching Modular Distance Learning?, and What insights can the study participants share to the academic community about their experiences?

Meanwhile, this study aims to produce insights about the lived experiences of non-major Social Studies teachers in relation to modular distance learning to guarantee students' fair access to high-quality education and encourage community involvement. According to the Social Constructivist Approach, the primary learning ideas in education are autonomy, problem-solving, collaborative learning, discussion and debate, and scaffolding to enhance meaningful learning achievement. (Mishra, 2023).

Globally, the challenges of modular distance learning (MDL), such as time-consuming module preparation, difficulty in monitoring student progress, lack of timely feedback, limited parental support, and the need for teacher upskilling highlight the mental and practical burdens on teachers. Lagrio and SanJose (2023), emphasized that addressing these issues offers valuable insights and strategies to inform international teaching practices. Additionally, the experiences of non-major Social Studies teachers in MDL provide important pedagogical implications and evidence-based practices to improve education worldwide.

Similarly, non-major Social Studies teachers will also learn more about and be more aware of using better teaching approaches, methods, strategies, and procedures that are adapted to the students' capacities and skills to learn the topic through modular distance learning. Additionally, they will understand that teaching Social Studies is a challenging endeavor, allowing them to recognize their ongoing assistance and viable solutions better to support the implementation of the modular remote learning mode.

Lastly, to future researchers, this study will provide data that will serve as a foundation for further study. This study would contribute to the corpus of information and literature about the struggles of non-major social studies teachers on implementing modular distance learning. Additionally, this study will underscore the necessity of additional research in this field, which would motivate other scholars to thoroughly examine the phenomena and their impact on the academic community.

The challenges encountered by non-major Social Studies teachers in modular distance learning underscore significant pedagogical implications and issues, following Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. The lived experiences of teachers assigned to teach subjects outside of their areas of expertise who found themes like unfamiliar material, a dependence on extensive reading and online resources, and adaptive coping strategies like self-directed learning and peer support (Del Pilar and Militante Jr. 2020).

On the other hand, the focus of this study was the experiences of non-major Social Studies teachers while teaching under a modular distance learning modality. A phenomenological methodology was used for this qualitative research. The study was conducted during the school year 2024–2025 in the Lupon East District, Schools Division of Davao Oriental. The study was conducted with twelve (12) non-major Social Studies teachers as participants. Specifically, six (6) participants were chosen to participate in individual in-depth interviews, and another six (6) participants were selected to participate in a focus group discussion. Thus, the number of participants did not statistically represent the entire group of non-major Social Studies teachers, as the study only collected data from the statements, experiences, coping strategies, and insights shared by the teacher-participants regarding their teaching challenges in modular distance learning. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data gathered through the interviews.

## METHOD

This section presents the methodology employed in carrying out the research, including the study participants, materials and instruments, design, procedure, and ethical considerations. This portion guided the readers on where and how the study was conducted.

### Study Participants

As for the participants of the study, the researcher selected teachers under the Lupon East District, Division of Davao Oriental, who were teaching non-major social studies subjects in Junior High School during the school year 2019-2020 and 2021-2022. Each school under Lupon East District had a representative to attain more diverse participants, which is the main focus of the purposive sampling technique (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). These participants came from the six schools in the Lupon East District, namely Tagboa Agricultural Vocational High School, Calapagan National High School, Don Mariano Marcos National High School, Tiombocan National High School, Marayag National High School, and Macangao Agricultural Vocational High School. Thus, the number of participants does not statistically represent the whole group of non-major social studies teachers since it only collected the responses from the teacher-participants' statements, experiences, coping, and insights with regards to their teaching travails on modular distance learning. The researcher will use thematic analysis to analyze the data that will be gathered through interviews.

Likewise, in this study, the researcher utilized a purposive sampling technique with six participants for IDI and another six for FGD. A total of 12 participants is enough because, according to Moser and Korstjens (2018), phenomenological research requires only fewer than 10 participants. In support, Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022) clarified that it is not about the number of participants but rather about the intensity and diversity of participation. Nevertheless, participants should not be too large to extract thick and rich data efficiently and not too small, which makes it challenging to achieve saturation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2015). A range from 1 to 20 (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022) or between 16-20 participants is enough for qualitative-phenomenological research (Ellis, 2016).

For IDI, the researcher selected one participant from Tagboa Agricultural Vocational High School, another from Tiombocan National High School, three from Macangao Agricultural Vocational High School, and one from Don Mariano Marcos National High School. The selection of participants for IDI is based on the suggestion of Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022) that phenomenological research can be within the range of one to twenty, focusing more on diversity and intensity of participation rather than on the larger quantity of participants.

Furthermore, FGD will comprise six to eight participants, involving homogeneous participants with similar experiences and knowledge of the studied phenomenon (Busetto et al., 2020). In this study, the researcher selected six participants. One came from Tiombocan National High School, another three from Marayag National High School, and two from Calapagan National High School.

Consideration was given to the inclusion, exclusion, and withdrawal criteria when choosing study participants. Their participation was voluntary; a week before, the participants signed the informed consent form. The researcher provided an orientation and explained the purpose of the study before conducting it. The following are the inclusion criteria in selecting participants: non-major social studies teachers in Junior High School from Lupon East District; must have at least three years of teaching experience; and should be teaching the subject from school year 2019-2020 up to school year 2021-2022. Moreover, those teachers who were not actively involved in implementing MDL and who were not teachers, such as administrative staff and school heads, were excluded from the study.

Participants can stop taking part in the study at any time if they feel threatened without any consequences (Gordon & Prohaska, 2006). For the withdrawal criteria, the participants had the right to revoke their consent at any time, either in writing, verbally, or by terminating their participation altogether. They also had the right to refuse to participate or withdraw without penalty, even if they had already signed the consent form, since their participation was voluntary. In that case, the researcher found other participants to undergo the study and respect the participants' decision.

**Materials and Instrument**

Qualitative studies usually utilize self-made research questionnaires and are often validated locally (Ranganathan et al., 2024). A framework of themes with a balance between primary questions, follow-ups, and probes must be included in the questionnaire used during the semi-structured interview (Ruslin et al., 2022). Likewise, the research questionnaire utilized during the semi-structured interview was self-made for IDI and FGD. It comprised the preliminary phase, core questions, and concluding statements.

The introductory phase contained greetings, the purpose of the study and its importance, the length and structure of the interview, and assigning codes to each participant. Part of the script was to remind the participants about the voluntary nature of their involvement and the right to withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty. This phase also explained the Data Privacy Act, including the reiteration of anonymity and confidentiality of data, proper keeping of the information shared, data storage in password-protected devices, and data disposal. This part also explained the purpose of audio recordings. It assures them that the recorders were used solely for research purposes, that the recordings were stored privately, and that they were immediately deleted after serving the intended purpose.

Similarly, three core questions with probing questions comprised the second phase. The challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of non-major social studies during MDL implementation were examined using these open-ended questions. This section allowed participants to discuss their challenges, how they overcame them, and lessons learned while implementing the modality. The closing statement thanked the participants for their voluntary participation and contributions to the research, allowed them to clarify the points, and reiterated data confidentiality and security.

The questionnaire was validated before being used. The validation process allows experts to review and amend the data to increase credibility (Sousa, 2014). This phase assures that the tool is adaptive and will generate a robust understanding of the particular questions in the context being studied (Ranganathan et al., 2024). Similarly, the interview guide tool used in this study was validated by four internal validators

who came from the University of Mindanao (connected to the University of Mindanao), and the one external validator came from Davao Oriental State University (College Dean of Davao Oriental State University) prior to the conduct of the study. The validators were highly qualified individuals with doctoral degrees in the field of social studies and proven track records. The overall validation rate was 8.6.

**Design and Procedure**

This qualitative research utilized a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of non-major social studies teachers in implementing the MDL. A qualitative study was gathered through the words of one or more people or groups of people to understand better the participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2015). It focuses on understanding observed phenomena in specific contexts by selecting individuals rather than formulating generalizations from the sample to the population (Johnson et al., 2020). The researcher believed this approach could help understand the lived experiences of non-major social studies in Lupon East District, Schools Division of Davao Oriental.

A phenomenological approach describes how people interpret specific occurrences, which enables researchers to analyze people's perspectives, comprehensions, and emotions who have experienced the event or situation under investigation firsthand (Giorgi, 2012) using an in-depth interview with single subjects or small groups of participants (Arnett, 2017). It focuses on exploring lived experiences of individuals about the phenomenon (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Badil et al., 2023; Bliss, 2016; Creswell, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019; Smith & Osborn, 2015), which can be approached as both descriptive or transcendental and interpretative or hermeneutic (Neubauer et al., 2019; Rodriguez & Smith, 2018).

Descriptive phenomenology places more emphasis on consciousness as a direct experience and is helpful when evaluating lived experiences (Shorey & Ng, 2022; Sundler et al., 2019). Conversely, hermeneutic phenomenology asserts that in order to interpret a message, a researcher must first comprehend the mindset and language of the subject, as these factors affect the subject's experiences and emphasize that lived experience is an interpretive process rooted in a person's lifeworld (Neubauer et al., 2019; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Regardless, a person's experiences can be approached through both descriptive and hermeneutic phenomenology (Finlay, 2014). What is important is the data collection method. Instead of forcing the phenomenon to fit the design, the data collection design should fit the phenomenon (Englander & Morley, 2023).

In this study, data were collected through IDI and FGD, involving purposefully selected participants. However, before the implementation of the actual interviews, the researcher sought the necessary clearances from the College Dean of the University of Mindanao, the division superintendent of the Schools Division of Davao Oriental, the district supervisor of Lupon East District, and the school heads.

Informed consent was signed before participation as evidence of their willingness to participate in the study and to ensure their participation was voluntary. One week before the interview, the researcher met them face-to-face so they could sign the consent form. Before they signed the consent form, the researcher discussed with the participants the possible harm or risk that the participants may face while participating in the research, which, according to Gençten (2021), includes physical, psychological or emotional, financial or economic, reputational, and legal, as well as how to mitigate them. Only those who signed their informed consent form were included in the study. Their individually signed informed consent forms were included in the appendices, with their names blurred to protect their privacy.

Once all approvals were obtained, the researcher conducted the IDI and FGD face-to-face. The data gathering commenced by strictly adhering to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. During the IDI and FGD, the

researcher utilized field notes and audio recordings. During the recording, the participants will be called based on their given code names to safeguard their privacy, and informed consent should be obtained prior to recording (Badil et al., 2023). Field notes will help capture behavior, environmental aspects, and non-verbal cues, while recordings will capture the necessary information for the data analysis (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

For IDI, the researcher utilized the guidelines by Taherdoost (2022) in conducting interviews. First, the researcher contacted those willing to participate before conducting the IDI and asked for their commitment. Second, the researcher provided a short introduction about the research purpose and the interview flow, and a brief orientation of their different rights. In this part, the researcher aimed to build trust and establish a connection with the interviewees. Finally, with the participants' consent to record their responses, the researcher asked the core questions.

For FGD, the researcher utilized the method by Van Eeuwijk (2017). The discussion first started with the introduction of the participants and be followed by the introduction of the main topic and the research questions, the asking of questions listed in the guide, and the concluding statement. During the discussion, the researcher acted as the moderator to ensure that the relevant questions were covered while maintaining the smooth flow of the discussion.

During the data collection, it is essential to prioritize building rapport with participants, acknowledge their emotions, maintain open communication for follow-up, and minimize interruptions (Taherdoost, 2022). With this, the researcher acted as a moderator, reminding the participants to refrain from speaking once someone was sharing, while not refusing those who wanted to share more information.

After the interview, the data from the FGD and IDI were transcribed verbatim. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), in data transcribing, after transcribing everything, the researcher must listen to the recorded version of the interview, go over the completed transcript, and make any necessary corrections to spelling or grammar. Likewise, the researcher accurately encoded and transcribed the responses meticulously to avoid errors and check grammatical issues. Furthermore, their personal information was secured and was not altered or modified for personal advantage. Additionally, the transcript should be anonymized to prevent participant identity from being exposed (Badil et al., 2023; Sutton & Austin, 2015).

After the data had been transcribed, the researcher proceeded with data analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the participants' responses. This descriptive method included identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. Using this approach proved helpful, allowing flexibility and deeper interpretation, resulting in complex, substantial, and rich accounts of participant experiences (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The researcher acted as the analyst and examined the collected data. Concepts, expressions, or assertions were grouped into key ideas and categorized according to the study's research objectives, as the data analysis applied a thematic approach. To ensure the issue was not solely interpreted from the researcher's perspective, the assistance of an experienced analyst was sought. The researcher ensured that all data processing was conducted securely and safely, both during and after the research, including storing, archiving, and eventually deleting materials.

Moreover, the researcher utilized Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method as recommended by Morrow et al. (2015), which involved a distinct seven-step process for rigorous analysis, staying close to the data at every stage. First, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data by repeatedly reading the participants' accounts. Second, all statements directly relevant to the phenomenon were identified. Third, meaningful units that emerged from the significant statements were extracted through reflective analysis, while preconceptions were bracketed. Fourth, these meanings were clustered into common

themes across all narratives. Again, bracketing was emphasized to avoid the influence of existing theories. Fifth, a complete, inclusive description of the phenomenon was developed, incorporating all emergent themes. Sixth, this exhaustive description was condensed into a concise statement capturing the core structure of the experience. Lastly, this fundamental structure statement was returned to the participants for validation and confirmation, and revisions were made as needed based on their feedback.

For the presentation of results and discussion, the researcher followed the suggestions of Sutton and Austin (2015). The data presentation was structured like a narrative, prioritizing clarity and conciseness while giving weight to participants' responses. Quotations from individual interviews and focus group discussions were included, with responses triangulated and supported by related theories and literature. The researcher's assumptions were grounded in the participants' responses to ensure a coherent and meaningful discussion.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research was upheld and strengthened through triangulation (Badil et al., 2023). Trustworthiness involved the validity of results, interpretations, and procedures to ensure the research's quality (Polit & Beck, 2014). This study applied quality standards such as triangulation, interpretative consistency, self-evidential quality, testimonial validation, usefulness for change, and consensus among researchers. Data and preliminary findings were presented to participants for validation and verification (Lindheim, 2022).

Reliability was essential for confirming trustworthiness, demonstrating the consistency and repeatability of the findings (Patton, 2002). The study utilized both individual interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. Detailed procedures were documented to facilitate future replication. A comprehensive account of fieldwork was provided, covering data collection, method effectiveness, and reporting of results. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability is achieved when data clearly supports the findings, ensuring researcher neutrality. This study maintained an audit trail, detailing each step of the data analysis to reflect participant responses accurately. Raw data, such as written documents, voice recordings, and handwritten notes, were analyzed and retained for third-party verification of the study's findings.

Furthermore, transferability referred to the applicability of the findings across different contexts, settings, or populations (Crotty, 2020). As Bassey (1981) stated, researchers may apply findings when their contexts closely align with those in the study. Sufficient contextual information about fieldwork sites and research processes was provided to support transferability. All collected data were later deleted and disposed of by ethical practices, ensuring proper handling of sensitive materials.

The participants in this study were selected for their strong moral and ethical values. The researcher ensured their privacy and protection. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) under UMERC Protocol No. UMERC-2024-311 before conducting the study. Several ethical standards were observed. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time. The researcher safeguarded the participants' privacy by not disclosing any identifying information. Participation did not interfere with the teachers' classroom schedules. Participants were informed that the study might benefit them and the education sector by contributing to future modular distance learning (MDL) modality improvements. As a gesture of gratitude, a small token of appreciation was given to the participants after the study concluded.

Informed consent was another essential aspect. Before the study, participants were oriented correctly and informed about the nature and purpose of the research. Consent forms were signed, indicating their agree-

ment to participate. For focus group discussions, identification and participation only proceeded after obtaining formal consent. With permission, a voice recorder was used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data collection process. Experts validated the interview questions. The researcher guaranteed that no participant was placed at risk during the study.

Lastly, the findings of this research were intended to benefit teachers, schools, and the broader teaching profession. They were expected to foster collaboration and contribute to more effective implementation of the MDL modality, ultimately enhancing instructional performance. A purposive sampling approach was employed, with voluntary participation. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, benefits, and risks. Before conducting interviews, the researcher secured and presented all necessary documentation, including an endorsement letter from the Professional School, an approval letter from the Division Office, and clearance from the District Office.

The study was subjected to a Turnitin plagiarism check at the University of Mindanao to ensure no plagiarism occurred during the entire study. The study was subjected to the normal research protocol set by the University of Mindanao's Professional Schools. There was no hint or proof of deliberate misrepresentation, no fabrication of data or outcomes, and no deliberate presentation of incorrect conclusions. The information in the manuscript contained no inconsistencies with the currently available literature.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured that all authors and mentioned sources were recognized in the paper to avoid plagiarism. While doing so, the researcher undertook accurate transcription to ensure that the data was analyzed objectively and without bias. Falsification, on the other hand, was reassured by the researcher that all information supplied in the study precisely reflected how it was acquired. A conflict of interest (COI) existed when a study was conducted because it was pertinent to particular organizations and people rather than because the researcher was interested in doing it. The researcher ensured that no situation presents a chance for the participants' comments to be compromised or used in the service of their own interests or any other individual or group. The University of Mindanao Professional School required completion of this course to grant a master's degree in education majoring in Teaching Social Studies.

The study contained no false information, and all that was written and reflected was accurate and verified by numerous experts in their field. Lastly, a formal letter was issued to the Professional Schools, Schools Division of Davao Oriental, Lupon East Public Schools District Supervisor, and School Heads to inform them that authorization from the organization/location of the research was given formally, following ethical standards. The study could only be carried out after receiving approval from the appropriate parties. However, the study ensured that the information and findings were genuine.

The research was amended based on the suggestions provided by the adviser and panelists. The project strictly adhered to the ethical standards set by the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee. Throughout the study, the ethical norms of the review committee were upheld, ensuring that all procedures met the university's requirements for responsible and ethical research conduct.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and analysis from qualitative interviews conducted with non-major social studies teachers who facilitated modular distance learning. The results highlight on the challenges they encountered, the strategies they adopted, and the valuable insights they gained throughout the process. In addition, these findings provide lessons and implications for improving teaching practices and institutional support in similar contexts.

**Experience of Non-major Social Studies in Modular Distance Learning**

Table 1 shows the emerging themes among non-major social studies educators in the realm of modular distance learning**.** The gathered responses were carefully examined and revealing the following key themes: *Challenges in Teaching Social Studies, Student Engagement Issues, Assessment Difficulties, Modular Distance Learning Constraints, and Emotional and Professional Impact on Teachers*

**Table 1**
**Experiences of Non-Major Social Studies Teachers in Teaching Social Studies
in Modular Distance Learning Approach**

| Emerging Themes | Core Ideas |
|---|---|
| Challenges in Teaching Social Studies | Limited subject knowledge |
| | Difficulty in explaining complex topics |
| | Struggle with unfamiliar terminologies |
| Student Engagement Issues | Lack of interaction and participation |
| | Challenges in motivating students |
| | Students copying answers without learning |
| Assessment Difficulties | Difficulty in evaluating students' learning |
| | Delayed feedback due to lack of interaction |
| | Difficulty in assessing higher-order thinking skills |
| Modular Distance Learning Constraints | Lack of resources and materials |
| | Difficulty in adapting to a non-face-to-face setup |
| | Limited real-time interaction with students |
| Emotional and Professional Impact on Teachers | Increased stress and workload |
| | Lack of confidence in teaching Social Studies |
| | Need for self-learning and additional preparation |

*Challenges in Teaching Social Studies*. As the first theme, non-social studies teachers in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions expressed their concerns regarding limited subject. This finding aligns with the study by Boholan et al. (2022), which explored the personal experiences of public-school teachers across Cebu Province during the implementation of modular distance learning. Additionally, teachers highlighted difficulties in explaining complex topics, which hindered their ability to deliver content effectively because of unfamiliar terminology and multifaceted subjects (Enrique, 2022).

One participant expressed uncertainty about his level of understanding, demonstrating self-awareness as he humbly said,

*"Karamihan ng oras ko, medyo kulang ang pag-unawa, 'noh."* (IDI01)

I usually have a somewhat limited understanding.

Meanwhile, one participant expressed her frustration on the challenges posed by the complex topic,

*"Ang mga problema o ang mga hamon ay ang mga complex topics, iyong mga limited na kulang ang expertise ko doon..."* (IDI05)

The problems or challenges are those complex topics, and my limited expertise as a teacher regarding that. In addition, during interview, one participant shared how she struggled with unfamiliar terms in teaching social studies subject,

*"Difficulties...yung ano Maam terminologies."* (IDI03)

The difficulties, Ma'am, are the terminologies.

*Student Engagement Issues.* The transition to alternative learning modalities amid the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for both students and educators. Non-major social studies teachers encountered difficulties on how to formulate varied instructional activities aimed at fostering student engagement. This similarly supported in the study of Rajan et al. 2024, explored how the shift to alternative learning modalities during the pandemic affected student engagement and motivation. Similarly, Anderson and Rivera (2023) highlighted that teachers struggled to adapt their instructional approaches to the context of remote learning, resulting in lessons that were often monotonous and less interactive. These studies underscore the need for targeted teacher support and innovative strategies to maintain student engagement, especially for educators teaching subjects outside their area of specialization.

One participant sincerely expressed his concern about the significant lack of interaction in the learning environment, highlighting how this issue has affected both their teaching experience and the students' engagement,

Lack of interaction. That is what we usually encounter.*(IDI01)*

Moreover, another participant empathetically expressed as she

acknowledged and understand the struggles of students.

Ensuring students engagement was difficult as many struggled to read and understand the modules independently. (FGD4)

One participant expressed feelings of worry for students copying answer without learning, stating:

The reason that hindered me to teach the subject effectively is that the fact that the learners are focused only in completing the task, even it if it means copying everything from online sources. (FGD2)

*Assessment Difficulties.* Assessment is a crucial aspect in learning, serving as feedback tool for teachers by providing rich and valuable insights into students' progress and identifying areas for growth (Sadler, 1989). During the interview phase, participants specifically highlighted their struggles in evaluating students' outputs, including delays in providing feedback caused by limited interaction and the challenges of assessing higher-order thinking skills. This aligns with the findings of Gallardo et al. (2023), which emphasize significant challenges in learning assessment practices during the pandemic, such as time-consuming feedback processes and the negative impact of reduced face-to-face interaction on assessment quality.

In this interview, one participant expressed his desire for guidance or clarity on how to effectively assess students in this learning modality, emphasizing the need for support and resources as she stated,

The difficulty I encountered in utilizing modular distance learning in teaching social studies is how to evaluate whether the student truly understood the lesson.(IDI05)

On the other hand, one participant felt a sense of guilt for not being able to support her students adequately.

I find it difficult to give timely feedback affecting students' progress and understanding. (FGD5)

Then, one participant thoughtfully reflected,

Depth of understanding is really a challenge for me.(IDI01)

*Modular Distance Learning Constraints.* Many educators have faced significant challenges in implementing effective teaching strategies during the transition to module-based distance learning, particularly

amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (Gallardo et al. 2022). Non major social studies teachers have had to confront significant challenges in modular distance learning, including a lack of resources and materials, difficulties in adapting to a non-face-to-face setup, and limited real-time interaction with students. This is further supported by findings showing that teachers encountered numerous barriers such as inadequate resources, time-consuming processes, and difficulties in adapting to the modular format, which ultimately affect their ability to deliver content effectively and assess student understanding (Cabardo, 2022). Below were the responses of the participants:

One participant expressed,

The real difficult, Ma'am, is the lack of learning materials.IDI03)

With a sense of apprehension, one participant noted

Ahmm, yes, it is challenging, there are challenges that I encountered as a teacher during modular distance learning(IDI06)

Recalling the past, one participant nostalgically remarked,

It was really different. Teaching social studies in school in person is far easier than using modular distance learning. (FGD1)

*Emotional and Professional Impact on Teachers.* Emotional and professional challenges greatly impact teachers' effectiveness and well-being, particularly as they navigate the complexities of modular distance learning (Alfanta & Abarquez,2022). Non-major social studies teachers often find themselves overwhelmed by increased stress and heavy workloads. Many teachers struggle with their ability to effectively deliver the subject while also feeling the pressure to engage in self-learning and undertake additional preparation. These factors highlight their real struggles in adapting to a modular distance learning setup. This is supported by the study of Hidalgo (2022), which emphasizes that teachers are experiencing heightened stress and workload due to new responsibilities. They often feel uncertain about adapting to this new teaching modality and recognize the need for ongoing self-learning and preparation to meet its demands. Through this, participants expressed a range of emotions, as reflected in their responses during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

As participant overwhelmingly expressed,

As a teacher, it affects my mental health because I need to extend beyond working hours to researching and preparing modules... (FGD3)

While one of the participants expressed her insecurity regarding their ability to teach effectively, stemming from a lack of confidence in their content knowledge, as she noted,

As a non-major social studies teacher in modular distance learning, I struggled and feel not confident with limited content knowledge... (FGD4)

Then, one participant highlighted a sense of inadequacy in their ability to teach social studies effectively, stating,

Non-major social studies teachers that teach social studies during the modular distance learning experience quite a challenge due to less preparation... (FGD2)

Non-major Social Studies teachers encountered significant challenges in modular distance learning due to limited subject knowledge, which affected their ability to explain complex topics and engage students effectively. In addition, they also struggled with assessing student learning because of delayed feedback and low interaction. These difficulties, combined with lack of resources and increased workload, exacerbated stress and reduced confidence. This aligns with studies by Boholan et al. (2022) and Hidalgo (2022). From the perspective of Cognitive Theory, teachers experienced overwhelming cognitive demands from

managing unfamiliar content and new teaching demands, highlighting the need for targeted training and mental health support.

**Table 2**

**Coping Mechanisms of Non-Major Social Studies Teachers in Teaching Modular Distance Learning**

| Emerging Themes | Core Ideas |
|---|---|
| Seeking Support and Collaboration | Consulting colleagues and mentors for guidance |
| | Attending seminars and training for to learn and consult with professional experts |
| | Using a buddy system among teachers for mutual support |
| Utilizing Online and Multimedia Resources | Searching the internet for additional resources |
| | Using YouTube and online videos to enhance lessons |
| | Sending educational videos to students |
| Enhancing Student Engagement and Communication | Creating group chats for students to ask questions |
| | Collaborating with parents and students through messaging apps |
| | Using social media for communication and learning |
| Developing Effective Teaching Strategies | Simplifying complex topics for better student understanding |
| | Allocating additional study time for unfamiliar topics |
| | Modifying teaching materials to make them more accessible |
| Implementing Efficient Module Management | Setting up drop boxes for module distribution and retrieval |
| | Keeping track of module submissions and follow-ups with parents |
| | Ensuring students comply by monitoring their submissions closely |

**Coping Mechanisms of Non-major Social Studies in Modular Distance Learning**

As presented in Table 2, the emerging themes highlight the coping mechanisms employed by non-major social studies teachers in navigating the challenges of modular distance learning. Participants' insights were thoroughly observed and examined; several major themes were identified; *Seeking Support and Collaboration, Utilizing Online and Multimedia Resources, Enhancing Student Engagement and Communication, Developing Effective Teaching Strategies, Implementing Efficient Module Management.*

*Seeking Support and Collaboration.* Non-major social studies teachers in modular distance learning often face unique challenges due to limited content knowledge. Seeking support and collaboration becomes vital

for these educators as it provides opportunities to enhance their skills, share resources, and combat feelings of inadequacy, ultimately improving their effectiveness and well-being. This incorporated on the self-efficacy theory where people learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1994). Conversely, participants in the modular distance learning environment exhibited a range of emotions that reflected their dedication to their students' success. They engaged in various strategies to enhance their effectiveness, such as consulting colleagues and mentors for guidance, attending seminars and training for professional development, and utilizing a buddy system among teachers for mutual support. Below are some of their actual responses:

One participant expressed a blend of vulnerability in seeking help and determination to overcome challenges for professional growth,

I ask AP major teachers for help with the challenges.(IDI3)

One participant exhibited proactiveness and commitment by seeking help from social studies teachers, as she remarked,

I attend seminars and training sessions and ask AP teachers for guidance.(IDI4)

Further, one participant agreeably noted,

We have a buddy system among teachers so we can help each other.*(IDI2)*

*Utilizing Online and Multimedia Resources*. In the context of the growing opportunities presented by technology in education, it becomes crucial to adopt innovative approaches that address the challenges of modular distance learning to enhance learning outcomes. The study supports this (Choiriyah et. al, 2022), which emphasizes the necessity of incorporating online and multimedia resources to facilitate knowledge and skill acquisition despite the challenges emerging from modular distance learning. The following sections present the responses gathered from the participant during the in-depth interview.

As expressed by one of the participants, she demonstrated being resourceful when he/she stated,

I search the internet because the book is not enough.(IDI2)

Another participant similarly shared,

I watch YouTube and other online resources to expand my knowledge..*"* (IDI2)

Another participant likewise shared her care for student understanding when she noted,

I send video materials to students so they can better understand the lesson.*(IDI5)*

*Enhancing Student Engagement and Communication*. Fostering student engagement and effective communication is essential to overcome the challenges associated with modular distance learning. These elements are critical for ensuring that students stay motivated, connected, and actively involved in their learning process. During the interviews, participants highlighted the importance of addressing students' needs for interaction, emphasizing the significance of connecting with them throughout the learning process. This is supported by studies such as those by Kokoc (2019) and Tang & Hew (2022), which underscore the importance of collaborative learning, emotional engagement, and technology tools to promote interaction and reflection. These strategies enhance student participation, cultivate a sense of belonging, and improve overall learning outcomes.

One participant added, showcasing her supportiveness and responsibility, as she remarked,

I created a group chat so students can ask questions if they don't understand something.(IDI4)

In addition, one participant conveyed a strong sense of duty in reaching out to the parents of the students, as she elaborated in detail:

I collaborated with parents and students through Messenger.(IDI6)

Also, one participant concurrently stated,

I used technology and social media like Facebook and Messenger.*(FGD1)*

*Developing Effective Teaching Strategies.* Innovative teaching strategies are vital for overcoming the challenges faced by educators teaching social studies outside their area of expertise in modular distance learning. These strategies allow educators to adapt to the specific demands of remote instruction while maintaining student engagement and promoting active student participation (Pating et al. 2023). The participants in this study demonstrate a strong commitment to enhancing student learning through thoughtful and adaptive teaching practices. This is evident in their efforts to simplify complex topics for better student understanding, allocate additional study time for unfamiliar topics, and modify teaching materials to make them more accessible.

Furthermore, it is consistent with Gadamer's Fusion of Horizons Theory. (1975), which posits that individuals seek to understand new situations by integrating their existing experiences with new ones. By applying this concept, educators can develop teaching strategies that connect personal experiences with new information, making their approaches more adaptive and responsive. Below are the following responses for reference.

As one of the participants in Focus group discussions responsibly expressed,

I simplify complex lessons so students can understand them better.*(FGD4)*

Moreover, another participant narrated,

I spend extra time to better understand my topics.(FGD2)

One participant further added,

Non social studies major teachers usually modify and simplify teaching materials.(FGD5)

*Implementing Efficient Module Management.* Efficient module management plays crucial role in addressing the challenges encountered by non-major social studies teachers in modular distance learning. Research has shown that well-structured and organized instructional materials greatly enhance student engagement and significantly improve academic performance (Tanucan et al. 2023). By ensuring that modules are accessible, clear, and aligned with learning objectives, teachers and students can better navigate the demands of distance education.

Insights from the interviews revealed several effective practices that participants use to manage modules efficiently. A key strategy involves setting up drop boxes managing module distribution and retrieval, which streamline the processes and ensures students have consistent and reliable access to their learning materials. Participants also emphasized the importance of tracking module submissions and following up with parents to maintain accountability. Additionally, they highlighted the need for closely monitoring student compliance with submission deadlines to ensure that learners stay on track. A recent study (Borabo,2024) supports these practices, highlighting that efficient module management systems help reduce delays in submission and improve overall student performance in distance learning environments. By adopting these strategies, educators can create a more organized and supportive framework that enhances student learning outcomes in modular distance education. The subsequent responses from participants provide insights into how these strategies are implemented in practice.

While this participant displayed practicality and consideration as he stated,

We set up a drop box to make it easier to distribute and collect the modules.*(IDI1)*

In her statement, participant exhibited responsibility and commitment as she expressed,

I regularly communicate with students and parents to remind them of deadlines.*(FGD4)*

Ultimately, this participant demonstrated his dedication to student progress,

I constantly check on the students to monitor their progress.*(FGD3)*

Non-major Social Studies teachers adopted a range of coping mechanisms to navigate the challenges of modular distance learning. These included seeking support from colleagues and mentors, leveraging online and digital resources, fostering student engagement through consistent communication, developing adaptive teaching strategies, and managing modules efficiently. Such strategies enabled them overcome limited content knowledge and resource constraints while sustaining student motivation and academic progress. This aligns with studies by Choiriyah et al. (2022) and Pating et al. (2023), which emphasize the critical role of collaborative support and innovative teaching in distance education. Grounded in Bandura's self-efficacy theory, these coping mechanisms demonstrate how teachers increase their confidence and professional competence through social learning, modeling, and proactive problem-solving, which ultimately improves their teaching effectiveness, even within the demanding context of modular learning environment.

**Insights of Non-major Social Studies in Modular Distance Learning**

Table 2 outlines the emerging themes concerning the coping mechanisms employed by non-major social studies teachers in modular distance learning. Participants' responses were meticulously analyzed and systematically categorized, resulting in the identification of four major themes; *Strengthening Support Systems, Need for Professional Development, Enhancing Instructional Strategies, and Need for Passion and Dedication.*

**Table 3**
**Insights of Non-Major Social Studies Teachers Teaching Modular Distance Learning**

| Themes | Core Ideas |
|---|---|
| Strengthening Support Systems | Maximizing digital tools and online resources |
| | Seeking guidance from colleagues |
| | Building parent-teacher partnership |
| Need for Professional Development | Seminars and training for content mastery |
| | Demand for more structured support from DepEd |
| | Teachers' willingness to learn and improve |
| Enhancing Instructional Strategies | Use of effective strategies to engage students |
| | Simplifying complex topics for better comprehension |
| | Promoting self-directed learning |
| Need for Passion and Dedication | Commitment to overcoming challenges despite difficulties |
| | Dedication to fulfilling the role of a teacher for students' learning |
| | Teaching with love and a sense of purpose |

*Strengthening Support Systems.* To overcome the challenges associated with modular distance learning, the need for collaboration among school heads, colleagues and parents are essential factors. The participants of this study emphasized that having access professional and emotional support enabled them to share resources, exchange teaching strategies, and address common struggles effectively. Through these networks educators receiving support which helped combat their feelings of loneliness while providing skills needed to address the instructional requirements of remote learning. Through building connected-

ness between teachers, the networks helped improve teaching practices and students' educational achievements. The research of Dizon et al. (2023) supports these findings because they recognized how stakeholder support improves teachers' education delivery capabilities in modular distance learning environments.

In relation to this theme, the following are the detailed responses provided by participants during the qualitative interview:

The participant displayed a proactive attitude toward maximizing digital tools and online resources as she stated,

You really have to be resourceful so that your teaching strategy will be more effective.. (IDI5)

Echoing this sentiment, the participant said,

It gave me access to lot of digital tools like online textbooks, multimedia context and interactive simulations. (FGD3)

While this participant demonstrated a strong sense of solidarity among educators by emphasizing the importance of seeking guidance and support from colleagues, as she mentioned,

Collaborate and share resources to lighten the load and improve your teaching strategies……. I've learned that building strong support systems, with colleagues….is key to overcoming challenges and ensuring effective learning. (FGD4)

In agreement, this participant stated,

Connect with colleagues if you find it difficult—especially if you have a mentor, ask questions, don't be afraid to ask for help. That's it, I guess. You can effectively teach Social Studies in the modular distance learning modality.*(IDI1)*

In addition, IDI6 participant expressed a profound realization and appreciation about building parent-teacher partnership as she remarked,

There is really a need to collaborate with parents... because before, we didn't really notice their role, but when the pandemic happened, we realized their importance.(IDI106)

Added to the above statement, one participant also stated,

When it comes to the distribution of modules, you have to communicate with the students and the parents.(IDI05)

*Need for Professional Development.* Non-major social studies teachers identified the necessity of professional development as the primary requirement for addressing modular distance learning challenges. Participants stressed that teachers need ongoing training because remote instruction environment requires different teaching skills. Participants expressed advancement training opportunities focusing on effective teaching methods and digital platform tools applied to modular teaching. In addition, participants shared that professional development strengthens their professional abilities and increases their teaching competence. According to Alfanta and Abarquez (2022), teachers who received professional development demonstrate increased preparation for addressing modular learning challenges. To prioritize continuous growth, the institutions can empower teaching personnel to improve the effectiveness in teaching, particularly by fostering students' engagement and learning outcomes.

During the interview, IDI3 recommended that,

they should conduct trainings and seminars for non-Social Studies majors so that they can still effectively teach even if it is not their major.(IDI103)

Further, one participant also suggested,

DepEd should provide specialized professional development programs aimed at non-major social studies teachers. These programs could cover enhancing content knowledge, teaching strategies specific to social studies and effective approaches for delivering lesson in a modular learning setting. (FGD5)

IDI5 shared similar statement,

Of course, DepEd should provide training... especially for non-major teachers because it is really different if it is your major subject.(IDI5)

Meanwhile, one participant expressed a strong sense of encouragement and determination, stating,

Just keep on striving as teachers and always attend training for professional and personal development. (IDI6)

Concurrently, one participant noted,

Continuous learning can enable teachers to deliver effective instruction. By embracing professional development, leveraging technology and maintaining open communication with students, non-major (social studies) teachers can overcome obstacles and create meaningful learning experiences in social studies. (FGD6)

*Enhancing Instructional Strategies.* The participants encountered difficulties with teaching their lessons successfully in modular structures because traditional methods did not align well with the new instructional approach that is adaptive to the needs of the time. The participants explored modern instructional methods involving practical examples combined with visual aids and emphasized the need for training in modular teaching strategies to meet the educational demands. Pating et al. (2023) researchers emphasized that targeted professional development should focus on creating lessons that meet students varied educational requirements.

One participant expressed,

It is really a very challenging job as a teacher, so in that case, I always tell myself that I really have to exert effort and find strategies to effectively deliver the lesson, because it is modular, and that makes it difficult.*(IDI4)*

On other hand, FGD4 proposed, as she stated,

Simplify lessons by breaking down complex topics into smaller, more understandable parts to help students grasp the material better. (FGD4)

Moreover, another participant felt joyfully shared,

I've also seen how crucial clear communication and well-prepared modules are in helping students learn independently. (FGD4)

*Need for Passion and Dedication.* Teaching professionals who commit themselves wholeheartedly to their work see this as the key to handling challenges that lead to better student achievements. Participants highlighted their deep commitment, enabling them to develop innovative educational approaches and adapt varied teaching strategies to cater the diverse learning needs of the students. Teachers noted that their devotion leads to better pedagogical approaches while creating a diverse environment where students value the material in depth. The research work of Grubaugh and Levitt (2023) confirms that teachers driven by passion are more adept which enable better motivation management among students alongside creating enriched educational settings.

Educational psychologist Deci and Ryan (1985) established through Self-Determination Theory that passionate dedication and intrinsic motivation aid teachers to become effective while keeping students active in their studies. The educational practice supports improvement in student outcomes by fulfilling students'

psychological needs of autonomy competence and relatedness through environments that teachers build (Ryan & Deci, 2000). One participant passionately conveyed her commitment, stating,

"No matter how difficult things are, there is nothing you cannot do if you are determined. Even if you are not a Social Studies major, as long as you are willing to learn and willing to teach with love for the work, you can do it."(IDI3)

Then, this participant acknowledged that *"it will not be always easy, but it will always worth it"* expressing his dedicating as she expressed,

Just do all the things that you could do. It will not be always easy but it will always worth it. Live with a deep edge mantra: para sa bata, para sa bayan. (FGD1)

Finally, one participant remarked,

And then, we need to do everything for God's glory and always put our heart into the things that we are doing because if you love what you are doing, everything will just come so easy.*(IDI6)*

The insights from non-major Social Studies teachers underscore the importance on the crucial role of strengthening support systems, ongoing professional development, enhancing instructional strategies, and maintaining passion and dedication in navigating modular distance learning challenges. These educators highlighted the value of collaboration with colleagues and parents, access to digital tools, and continuous learning opportunities as essential for strengthening their competence and effectiveness. This perspective aligns with Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes knowledge acquisition and skill development through active engagement and social interaction. Moreover, teachers adapted teaching methods by simplifying content and fostering student autonomy, demonstrating cognitive processes of scaffolding and meaningful learning. These findings corroborate existing literature (e.g., Dizon et al., 2023; Alfanta & Abarquez, 2022; Grubaugh & Levitt, 2023) that highlights the significance of professional growth, support networks, and dedication in effective modular teaching, reinforcing Cognitive Theory's premise that learning and teaching are dynamic processes shaped by both internal motivation and external resources.

## IMPLICATION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This portion discusses the implications drawn from the findings of the study. Interviews and focus groups were facilitated to explore the challenges encountered, and how the coping mechanism of the participants successfully managed it. In addition, participants shared their personal insights and reflections through their detailed concluding remarks.

**Implication for Practice**

As we navigate the complexities of modular distance learning, it becomes evident that challenges are an integral part of our educational journey. However, by embracing these challenges and leveraging them as a potential opportunity for growth, educators can cultivate a resilient and adaptable learning environment. This study highlights the crucial role of instructional innovation and teacher support in overcoming the travails faced by non-major social studies teachers, ultimately enhancing student engagement and academic achievement.

The Department of Education emphasizes the importance of innovation in teaching that aligns with modern educational demands. Non-major social studies teachers face specific challenges, such as managing module content, distribution, and retrieval, and assessing student progress in a self-directed learning environment. Schools can cultivate a more adaptable and inclusive environment that addresses diverse student needs by integrating technology-enhanced learning tools and fostering collaboration among educa-

tors. This means embracing flexible strategies and continuous professional development for teaching practice to improve student engagement and achievement. School supervision calls for proactive leadership that delivers targeted training, supports effective module management, promotes peer collaboration, and strengthens partnerships with parents. Ultimately, such efforts empower teachers and optimize educational outcomes in modular distance learning contexts.

**Implications for Future Research**

The lived experiences of non-specialist social studies teachers navigating modular distance learning reveal a crucial area for future research to enhance and support educational practices. A key recommendation is conducting longitudinal studies to track how these teachers' strategies and coping mechanisms evolve. This could provide valuable insights into whether their approaches lead to sustained improvements in content delivery and student engagement, shaping more effective pedagogical strategies.

Future researchers can enrich their findings by broadening the participant pool to include educators from various school contexts, such as urban and rural, public, and private institutions. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of how different environments impact the teaching experiences of non-major social studies teachers. Understanding these contexts could help identify challenges and effective strategies suited to various educational settings.

Moreover, assessing the impact of targeted professional development programs is vital. Research should focus on training that enhances content mastery, digital skills, and adaptive teaching methods tailored to their needs. A combination of qualitative insights and quantitative data can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how these programs influence teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Another valuable study area involves exploring the emotional and psychological effects of modular distance learning on non-major social studies teachers. Investigating their stress levels, motivation, and professional identity can provide crucial insights that inform the development of more effective support systems and mental health resources for educators.

Moreover, future research could explore specific areas such as the effectiveness of mentoring programs for non-major social studies teachers, the role of parental involvement in modular distance learning, and the integration of emerging educational technologies to enhance student engagement and comprehension. Investigating these topics would build on the current study's findings and provide actionable insights to improve teaching practices and policy development.

By pursuing these areas of research, future scholars can contribute to the development of more effective teacher training programs, refine educational policies, and ensure that non-major social studies teachers are better equipped to manage evolving teaching challenges with confidence and skill, and increased adaptability, ensuring they are better prepared to respond to future demands.

**Concluding Remarks**

As I conducted this research, I gained a deeper understanding of the resilience and dedication of non-major social studies teachers navigating the complexities of modular distance learning. Despite challenges such as limited content knowledge and technological barriers, they demonstrated adaptability, creativity, and an unwavering drive to support student learning. Notably, their collaborative efforts, innovative adaptations to instructional materials, and openness to new teaching strategies highlighted their determination to overcome challenges and ensure effective learning outcomes. The journey of non-major social studies teachers in modular distance learning is a testament to their resilience, flexibility, and unwavering commitment to education. Thrust into a challenging and unfamiliar teaching landscape, these educators proved that passion and determination can indeed surpass subject expertise. As they navigated uncharted

territory alongside their students, they not only transformed into more than just facilitators of knowledge but also evolved into pillars of support, creative content curators, and empathetic mentors guiding learners through new obstacles.

This study sheds light on the fundamental truth: the strength of an educator lies not solely in their academic specialization but in their ability to connect, inspire, and persevere in the face of adversity. The challenges they confront, from mastering unfamiliar content to managing the emotional strain of isolation and disconnection, reflect a profound dedication that merits recognition and, more importantly, systemic support. Moving forward, educational institutions must acknowledge and address the unique struggles faced by non-major social studies teachers. By providing continuous professional development and institutional support, creating accessible instructional resources, and fostering collaborative environments can transform these challenges into opportunities for growth. Moreover, recognizing the lived experiences of these educators as valuable contributions to the evolving educational landscape reinforces the idea that all educators, regardless of specialization, play a vital role in shaping informed, critical-thinking citizens.

Let this study serve as a call to action, a reminder that every teacher's voice matters. By embracing the lessons learned from non-major social studies teachers, we can pave the way for a more inclusive, supportive, and resilient education system that honors the heart, grit, and humanity of those who teach, no matter the subject they were initially trained for. It is crucial to recognize that beyond subject mastery, the heart of effective teaching lies in empathy, creativity, and determination, qualities that non-major Social Studies teachers consistently embody. By celebrating their achievements and providing continuous support, we can foster an educational landscape where passion and adaptability are valued just as much as content expertise. Let this study serve as a reflection of their struggles and a call to action for more inclusive, compassionate, and empowering educational practices.

## REFERENCES

1. Abarquez, C., & Alfanta, K. M. J. B. (2023). Challenges to Teachers in Modular Distance Learning Modality. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *7*(11), 1-1.
2. Aggarwal, M. (2019). 6 Problems Faced by History Teacher in Teaching History. Retrieved from http://www.historydiscussion.net/teaching/6-problems-faced-by-history-teacher-in-teaching-history/495
3. Agrey, L. (2014). Opportunities and Possibilities: Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Educational Researcher. Universal Journal of Educational Research 2(4): 396-402, 2014. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2014.020408
4. Alfanta, K. M. J. B., & Abarquez, C. (2023). Challenges to Teachers in Modular Distance Learning Modality. Retrieved from: https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=21052
5. Alhazmi, A. A., & Kaufmann, A. (2022). Phenomenological qualitative methods applied to the analysis of cross-cultural experience in novel educational social contexts. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*(785134), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.785134
6. Al-Shukri, A. (2016). From belief to action: Omani EFL teachers' self-efficacy in relation to their teaching of english as a foreign language (Order No. 10247952). Available from ProQuest Central. (1885003407). Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/docview/1885003407?accountid=31259
7. Alvarez, A. (2020). Learning from the problems and challenges in blended learning: Basis for faculty development and program enhancement. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1285361.pdf

8. Anderson, N. & Kim, D. (2020). Sample Sizes: Choosing "The Right" Number of Research Participants. Retrieved from https://dscout.com/people-nerds/sample-size

9. Anderson, M., & Rivera, L. (2023). Teaching in transition: Educator adaptations to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of Educational Change, 24(1), 34–52.

10. Arnett, R. (2017). Phenomenology. Wiley Online Library. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0186

11. Bandura A. (1994). "Bandura self-efficacy defined," in Encyclopedia of human behavior. New York, NY: Academic Press

12. Ball & McDiarmid. (2019). THE SUBJECT MATTER PREPARATION OF TEACHERS. Retrived from https://www.educ.msu.edu/NCRTL/PDFs/NCRTL/IssuePapers/ip894.pdf

13. Badil, Muhammad, D., Aslam, Z., Khan, K., Ashiq, A., & Bibi, U. (2023). Phenomenology Qualitative Research Inquiry: A Review Paper. *Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences*, *4*(3), 9–13. https://doi.org/10.54393/pjhs.v4i03.626

14. Barni, D., Danioni, F., & Benevene, P. (2019). Teachers' Self-Efficacy: The Role of Personal Values and Motivations for Teaching. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6640028/#:~:text=Teachers'%20self%2Defficacy%2C%20namely,being%20in%20the%20working%20environment.

15. Bassey, M. (1981). Pedagogic research: On the relative merits of the search for generalization and study of single events. Oxford Review of Education, 7(1), 73-94.

16. Bliss, L. A. (2016). Phenomenological Research: Inquiry to Understand the Meanings of People's Experiences. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology*, *7*(3), 14–26. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijavet.2016070102

17. Boholano, H. B., Jamon, B. E. V., & Cabanes-Jamon, M. G. M. (2022). Modular-Distance Learning Experiences of Public School Teachers in the Philippines: A Phenomenology. Retrieved from: chromeextension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://journalspress.com/LJRHSS_Volume22/Modular-Distance-Learning-Experiences-of-Public-School-Teachers-in-the-Philippines-A-Phenomenology.pdf

18. Borabo, J. G., Diño, I. E., Gueta, J. A., Espela, D. F., Garcia, L. H., Espinosa, M. L., & Digo, G. S. (2023). Impact of the Utilization of Learning Management System in the Implementation of Distance Learning in Secondary Schools in the Philippines from 2019 to 2023. Retrieved from: https://www.journal.nu.ac.th/JCDR/article/view/Vol-17-No-2-2024-1-13

19. Bugwak, E. 2020. '' Travails of Out-of-Field Teachers: A Qualitative Inquiry.'' Journal of World Englishes and Educational Practices (JWEEP). Retrieved from https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/351814-travails-of-out-of-field-teachers-a-qual-ad00f624.pdf

20. Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, *2*(14), 1–10. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z

21. Bustillo, E., & Aguilos, M. (2022). The Challenges of Modular Learning in the Wake of COVID-19: A Digital Divide in the Philippine Countryside Revealed. Retrieved from: https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/12/7/449

22. Cabardo, JR., Cabardo, CJ., & Mabida, SJ. (2022). Challenges and mechanisms of teachers in the implementation of modular distance learning in the Philippines: a phenomenological study. Education studies and Action Research. Vol. 3. No. 1

23. Carreon, DB. (2021). Teachers' Readiness and Challenges in Modular Distance Learning. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3944096 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3944096

24. Castleberry, A. & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic analysis of qualitative research data: Is it as easy as it sounds? Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877129717300606

25. Choiriyah, C., Mayuni, I., & Dhieni, N. (2022). The Effectiveness of Multimedia Learning for Distance Education Toward Early Childhood Critical Thinking During the COVID-19 Pandemic

26. Retrieved from: https://www.eu-jer.com/the-effectiveness-of-multimedia-learning-for-distance-education-toward-early-childhood-critical-thinking-during-the-covid-19-pandemic

27. Creswell, J. W. (2007). Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry. In *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five Approaches* (pp. 53–84). Thousands Okas: Sage Publiscations. http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Creswell_2007.pdf

28. Creswell, J. (2015). Essential skills for the qualitative researcher. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.

29. Crotty, M. (2020). The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process. Routledge.

30. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. Springer Science & Business Media. Retrieved from: chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://selfdeterminationtheory.org/SDT/documents/2000_RyanDeci_SDT.pdf

31. Dee, Thomas & Cohodes, Sarah. (2018). Out-of-Field Teachers and Student Achievement. Public Finance Review 36(1):7-32

32. Del Pilar, E. G., & Militante Jr, B. T. (2020). Teaching Non-Major Subjects: Lived Experiences of DepEd SHS Teachers. Solid State Technology, 3390-3399.

33. Dizon, J. B., Leoveras, M. E. C., David, E. S., & Dela Rosa, R. I. (2023) Modular Distance Education: The Role of Socio Demographic Profile, Family Structure, and Parental Involvement on the Student's Final Grade in Science Retrieved from: https://www.gssrr.org/index.php/JournalOfBasicAndApplied/article/view/15379

34. Ellis, P. (2016). Understanding research for Nursing Students (3rd edn). Sage Publications, London

35. Englander, M., & Morley, J. (2023). Phenomenological psychology and qualitative research. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *22*(1), 25–53. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-021-09781-8

36. Enrique, E. S. (2022). Preparedness and Challenges on Modular Teaching of Social Studies Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Zambales, Philippines

37. Retrieved from: chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://www.researchpublish.com/upload/book/Preparedness%20and%20Challenges-05092022-4.pdf

38. Felicisimo, C. (2021). Modular distance learning modality: Challenges of teachers in teaching amid the Covid-19 pandemic. International Journal of Research Studies in Education. Volume 10 Number 8, 7-15

39. Finlay, L. (2014). Engaging Phenomenological Analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *11*(2), 121–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.807899

40. Fitchett, P. G., & Heafner, T. L. (2018). Teacher quality or quality teaching? Eighth grade social studies teachers' professional characteristics and classroom instruction as predictors of u.s. history achievement. RMLE Online, 41(9), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2018.1514826

41. Gallardo, K., Glasserman, L., Rivera, N., & Martínez-Cardiel, L. (2023). Learning assessment challenges from students and faculty

42. perception in times of COVID-19: A case study. Retrieved from: chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://www.cedtech.net/download/learning-assessment-challenges-from-students-and-faculty-perception-in-times-of-covid-19-a-case-12985.pdf

43. Gallardo, E., & Others. (2022). The Challenges of Modular Learning in the Wake of COVID-19: A Digital Divide in the Philippine Countryside Revealed. Education Sciences, 12(7), 449.

44. Garbe et al. (2020). COVID-19 and Remote Learning: Experiences of Parents with Children during the Pandemic. Retrieved from https://www.ajqr.org/download/parents-experiences-with-remote-education-during-covid-19-school-closures-8471.pdf

45. Gençten, V. Y. (2021). Minimizing Harm in the Context of Educational Research: An Ethical Issue. *Journal of Education, Theory and Practical Research*, *7*(1), 147–157. https://doi.org/10.38089/ekuad.2021.54

46. Giorgi, A. (2012). The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, Volume 43, Issue 1. DOI:10.1163/156916212X632934.

47. Girgin D., & Sahin Ç. (2019). Investigation of professional identity formation processes of primary teachers: a case study. Journal of Qualitative Research in Education, 7(3), 1174-1204. doi: 10.14689/issn.2148-624.1.7c.3s.12m

48. Gonzales, J. (2021). DepEd's First Modular Distance Learning. Retrieved from https://depedpampanga.com/2021/03/10/depeds-first-modular-distance-learning/

49. Gordon, E. J., & Prohaska, T. R. (2006). The ethics of withdrawal from study participation. Accountability in Research, 13(4), 285-309.

50. Groenewald, T. (2004). A Phenomenological Research Design Illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *3*(1), 42–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104

51. Heritage, M. (2010). Formative Assessment and Next-Generation Assessment Systems:

52. Are We Losing an Opportunity? Retrieved from: chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543063.pdf

53. Hidalgo, M. C. (2022). eachers' Experiences in the Implementation of Modular

54. Distance Learning. Retrieved from: chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://www.ajhssr.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/O22606152160.pdf

55. Hobbs, L. 2020. "Learning to Teach Science Out-of-field: A Spatial-temporal Experience." Journal of Science Teacher Education 31 (7): 725–745. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/1046560X.2020.1718315. [Taylor & Francis Online], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]

56. Hobbs, L., C. Campbell, S. Delaney, C. Speldewinde, and J. Lai. 2020. Defining and Mapping Out-of-Field Teaching in Victorian Government Schools. Report prepared for the Victorian Department of Education and Training, October 15. [Google Scholar]

57. Johnson, J. L., Adkins, D., & Chauvin, S. (2020). A review of the quality indicators of rigor in qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, *84*(1), 138–146. https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7120

58. Kokoç, M. (2019). Flexibility in e-Learning: Modelling its relation to behavioural engagement and academic performance. Themes in eLearning, 12, 1–16. Retrieved from: chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdfmadadm/https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1251161.pdf

59. Kristof-Brown, A. & Guay, RP. (2011). Perso-Environment Fit. Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Vol. 3 ed. MD. Dunnette , pp. 3. Washington DC, Am Psychology Association

60. Lainchaur, L.M. (2020). GUIDANCE ON DISTANCE LEARNING MODALITIES TO REACH ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/7996/file/Guidance%20Continuity%20of%20Learning%20during%20COVID-19%20-%20Reaching%20All%20Children_UNICEF%20ROSA.pdf

**61.** Lagrio, R., & San Jose, L. (2023). Strategies and Challenges Encountered by the Teachers in Implementing Modular Distance Learning: Impact on Students' Academic Performance. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *8*(4), 1-1

62. Lake, R. (2023). New report: How the pandemic battered student engagement, attendance

63. Retrieved from: https://crpe.org/new-report-how-the-pandemic-battered-student-engagement-attendance/

64. Levitt, G., Grubaugh, S., Maderick, J., & Deever, D. (2023). The Power of Passionate Teaching and Learning: A Study of Impacts on Social Science Teacher Retention and Student Outcomes Retrieved from: https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/article/view/8484

65. Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

66. Lindheim, T. (2022). Participant Validation: A Strategy to Strengthen the Trustworthiness of Your Study and Address Ethical Concerns. In A. Espedal, G., Jelstad Løvaas, B., Sirris, S., Wæraas (Ed.), *Researching Values* (pp. 225–239). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90769-3_13

67. Magdaraog, R. & Benavides, N. (2019). Profile, Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Out-of-Field Teachers in the Second Congressional District of Sorsogon. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR) ISSN: 2319-7064 ResearchGate Impact Factor (2018): 0.28 | SJIF (2019): 7.583

68. Manen, M. (1977). Linking ways of knowing with ways of being practical. Curriculum Inquiry, 6 (3), 205-228.

69. Mensah, R. O. (2020). Pedagogical analysis of teaching social studies: an empirical literature review. Mensah, Ronald Osei, Pedagogical Analysis of Teaching Social Studies: An Empirical Literature Review (Apr 24, 2020).

70. Mishra, N. R. (2023). Constructivist approach to learning: An analysis of pedagogical models of social constructivist learning theory. *Journal of research and development*, *6*(01), 22-29.

71. Miles, M.B. & Huberman, M.A. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

72. Moore, M. G. (2013). The theory of transactional distance. In *Handbook of distance education* (pp. 66-85). Routledge.

73. Morrow, Rosie, Rodriguez, Alison and King, Nigel (2015) Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. The psychologist, 28 (8). pp. 643-644. ISSN 0952-8229

74. Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 9–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091

75. Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, *8*(2), 90–97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

76. Ontas, T., & Koc, E. S. (2020). Primary school teacher candidates' views of citizenship and ıdeal citizenship. International Journal of Educational Methodology, 6(2), 455-470. https://doi.org/10.12973/ijem.6.2.455

77. Onwuegbuzie, A., & Leech, N. (2015). Sampling designs in qualitative research: Making the sampling process more public. *The Qualitative Report*, *12*(2), 238–254. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2007.1636

78. Pacaña, N. M. S., Ramos, C. D., Catarata, M. N., & Inocian, R. B. (2019). Out-of-field social studies teaching through sustainable culture-based pedagogy: a Filipino perspective. International Journal of Education and Practice, 7(3), 230-241.

79. Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Health and Human Services Public Access*, *42*(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

80. Pating, I. K. S., Mejia, S. D., Gayla, J. J. B., Mangino, B. B., Napiza, M. J. M., Padilla, S. M. O., Dela Cruz, D. C., & Ferrer, D. C. (2023). Phenomenologizing the Experiences of Social Studies Teachers in Modular Distance Learning Among Indigenous Peoples (IP) Students. Retrieved from: https://po.pnuresearchportal.org/ejournal/index.php/asten/article/view/2166

81. Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. A. (2014). A practical guide to using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne Psychological Journal*, *20*(1), 7–14. https://doi.org/10.14691/cppj.20.1.7

82. Pokhrel, S. (2021). A Literature Review on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Teaching and Learning. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2347631120983481

83. Porsch, R., and R. Whannell. 2019. "Out-of-Field Teaching Affecting Students and Learning: What Is Known and Unknown." In Examining the Phenomenon of "Teaching Out-of-Field": International Perspectives on Teaching as a Non-Specialist, edited by L. Hobbs and G. Törner, 179–191. Singapore: Springer. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-3366-8_7. [Crossref], [Google Scholar]

84. Ranganathan, P., Caduff, C., & Frampton, C. M. A. (2024). Designing and validating a research questionnaire - Part 2. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, *15*(1), 42–45. https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.picr_318_23

85. Ruslin, Mashuri, S., Rasak, M. S. A., Alhabsyi, F., & Syam, H. (2022). Semi-structured Interview: A Methodological Reflection on the Development of a Qualitative Research Instrument in Educational Studies. *IOSR Journal Of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, *12*(1), 22–29. www.iosrjournals.org

86. Rodriguez, A., & Smith, J. (2018). Phenomenology as a healthcare research method. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, *21*(4), 96–98. https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2018-102990

87. Sargeant, J. (2012). Qualitative Research Part II: Participants, Analysis, and Quality Assurance. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *4*(1), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.4300/jgme-d-11-00307.1

88. Savage, C. (2019). Academic majors of social studies teachers and student achievement in the U.S. Teaching and Teacher Education, 84(2019), 66-73. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.04.020

89. Schleicher, A. (2020). THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION INSIGHTS FROM EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2020. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/education/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-insights-education-at-a-glance-2020.pdf

90. Shorey, S., & Ng, E. D. (2022). Examining characteristics of descriptive phenomenological nursing

studies: A scoping review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *78*(7), 1968–1979. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15244

91. Simsek, U., & Ontas, T. (2021). The meaning of out-of-field teaching for social studies and professional experiences, International Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 13(4), 1089-1106.

92. Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain. *British Journal of Pain*, *9*(1), 41–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/2049463714541642

93. Sousa, D. (2014). Validation in Qualitative Research: General Aspects and Specificities of the Descriptive Phenomenological Method. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *11*(2), 211–227. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.853855

94. Soydaş, M. (2020). Öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik ve mesleki gelişime ilişkin görüşleri. (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi) [The opinions of teachers about professional identity and professional development]. (Unpublished Master Thesis) Bahcesehir University Institute of Education Sciences

95. Sundler, A. J., Lindberg, E., Nilsson, C., & Palmér, L. (2019). Qualitative thematic analysis based on descriptive phenomenology. *Nursing Open*, *6*(3), 733–739. https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.275

96. Sunoto et al. (2021). Social Science Learning In Covid 19 Pandemic By Using Internet Media. Retrieved from https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1742-6596/1823/1/012086/pdf

97. Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative reserch: Data collection,analysis,and managment. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, *68*(3), 226–231.

98. Taherdoost, H. (2022). How to Conduct an Effective Interview: A Guide to Interview Design in Research Study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management (IJARM)*, *11*(1), 39–51. www.elvedit.com

99. Tang, Y., & Hew, K. F. (2022). Effects of using mobile instant messaging on student behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement: A quasi-experimental study. International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 19(1), 1–25

100. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357732788_Effects_of_using_mobile_instant_messaging_on_student_behavioral_emotional_and_cognitive_engagement_a_quasi-experimental_study

101. Tanucan, J. C. M., Alejandro, B. A., & Corcino, R. B. (2023). Towards an Enhanced Implementation of Printed Modular Distance Learning in the Philippines: A Meta-Synthesis. Retrieved from: https://www.ijlter.org/index.php/ijlter/article/view/6831

102. Thacker, E., & Friedman, A. (2021). Three Social Studies Teachers' Design and Use of Inquiry Modules. Retrieved from https://citejournal.org/volume-17/issue-3-17/social-studies/three-social-studies-teachers-design-and-use-of-inquiry-modules/

103. Van Eeuwijk, P. (2017). *How to Conduct a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Methodological Manual* (pp. 1–15). Zurich Open Repository and Archive. https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-150640