

Challenges and Coping Strategies of Senior High Students and Teachers: Informing Academic Policies during the Pandemic

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Abstract. The study sought to investigate the extent of problems encountered and the coping mechanism of the 206 students and 22 teachers of the MSU-TCTO Senior High School in terms of distribution, submission, and collection of learning materials/modules, content-related issues in the module, student-teacher communication, learning materials and resources and flexibility during a pandemic. A researcher-made questionnaire with two parts containing checklists and open-ended questions was used. The data obtained were analyzed using the mean rating for the problems encountered, and the coping mechanisms were also identified. This study found that students and teachers rarely encountered problems with distributing, submitting, and collecting learning materials/modules and student-teacher communication. The students sometimes encountered problems with content-related issues in the module, including a lack of examples provided in the module and undetailed and unexplained lessons. In terms of learning materials and resources, they sometimes encountered problems such as poor internet connection, and in terms of flexibility, they experienced emotional stress during a pandemic. The teachers rarely encountered problems with these variables. Other problems among senior high school students and teachers were the lack of focus and the numerous modular activities. Teachers' and students' common coping mechanisms were time management and taking breaks during the pandemic.

Keywords: Academic guidelines; Coping mechanism; Pandemic; Problems encountered; Senior high school.

1.0 Introduction

All agencies in the country and the world have been badly affected. The COVID-19 Pandemic is caused by a retrovirus that spreads quickly and affects many individuals. The ravage brought by the spread of the COVID-19 virus left both sectors of the government and non-government organizations in the world unprepared. Most, if not all, have been vulnerable to the pandemic outbreak. UNESCO (2020) states that the education sector is one of the most affected agencies during the pandemic. The coronavirus has caused a dramatic disruption in the delivery of education and health services in the Philippines. Different government sectors and human beings have also

been working to fight and, at least, to reduce the threats and risks brought by the pandemic. Wearing face masks, home quarantine, social distancing, getting vaccinated, and the like became the norm in all areas. Moreover, the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), a government sector in charge of assessing and evaluating the health situation of the area and disseminating information, has been working hard to protect and secure the community.

In order to prevent and lessen the spread of the virus, various safety measures have been implemented by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) to protect teachers', students', and parents' health and welfare while continuing the teaching and learning process in the country (Anzaldo, 2021). Because of the unforeseen effects of the COVID-19 virus, various education sector strategies were also implemented to continue student learning. Before the pandemic, the teaching and learning setup took place mostly in the four corners of the classrooms and were managed by teachers. Whatever teaching and learning styles were adopted must have occurred in school. Due to the advancement of digital technology, the traditional setup of education in the country has suddenly changed. The usual venue for teaching-learning has become 'empty. Many innovative teaching and learning strategies with the aid of technology have been applied, and different learning modalities have been adopted.

Kim (2020), as cited in the work of Manalo and De Villa (2020), revealed in her study that globally, many schools have already replaced traditional classroom setups with innovative, flexible learning strategies. Moreover, most countries worldwide are focused on starting the new school year within the new normal of teaching and learning without depriving the students of their right to quality education. (Ancheta and Ancheta, 2020). Learning must continue to shape the future of the youth. Innovative educational strategies, such as the modular approach, limited face-to-face, and blended learning instruction, must be developed and applied. The Mindanao State University – Tawi Tawi College of Oceanography and Technology (MSU-TCTO) and other schools in Tawi-Tawi have also adopted feasible plans and strategies for instruction during the pandemic. Different strategies are used for a common purpose- to maximize learning.

The MSU-TCTO Senior High School offers academic programs such as General Academic Strands (GAS), Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Strands (STEM), and Humanities and Social Sciences Strands (HUMSS). It is located in Bongao and extended to other island municipalities of Tandubas, Sibutu, and Mapun, Tawi-Tawi. The Senior High School -Science High (SHS) offers a STEM strand, while the Integrated Laboratory School –Prep High (ILS-Prep) has GAS and HUMSS strands. On the other hand, the College of Arts and Science (CAS) extension Senior High Schools in Sibutu, Mapun, and Tandubas are offering GAS, STEM, and HUMSS strands, respectively. The implementation of the MSU-TCTO Senior High Schools started in the academic year 2017-2018.

Just like the other schools in the country, no single learning method is appropriate for learners' varying characteristics. Despite the many strategies and techniques implemented in MSU-TCTO, there are still problems encountered by the students and teachers that need to be addressed in order to maximize learning. Thus, this study was conceptualized. This study provides valuable insights into the challenges students and teachers face in adapting to the new learning environment. It is crucial to develop effective academic guidelines that can support their educational needs. Further, this study might be used to promote the adoption of effective coping strategies and to provide resources and training to enhance resilience among teachers and students.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized the quantitative and qualitative research design to gather the data needed. A quantitative research design was used to interpret the data statistically, while a qualitative research design was used to describe the indicator variables. These research designs were used to determine the problems encountered and coping mechanisms of the Senior High School students and teachers through survey questionnaires and open-ended questions.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted at the Mindanao State University –Tawi Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography in Barangay Tubig Mampallam, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, where the two Senior High Schools are located. The two MSU-TCTO Senior High Schools involved in this study were the MSU-TCTO Integrated

Laboratory School -High School Department (ILS-HSD) and the MSU-TCTO Science High School (SHS). The Integrated Laboratory School -High School Department (ILS-HSD), specifically its Senior High School, offers the Humanities and Social Sciences Strand (HUMSS) and General Academic Strands (GAS), while the Science High School offers Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand. Just like the other schools in Tawi-Tawi, the problems thought to have been encountered by these schools were similar to those of the other schools in the province. Thus, they can serve as representative schools of the municipality if not the province. Also, the location of the study was purposively selected due to the travel restrictions, accessibility, health protocols, and distance between the threats and risks of the pandemic situation.

2.3 Research Participants

The respondents of this study were two hundred six (206) Senior High School students and twenty-two (22) Senior High School teachers of Grades 11 and 12 under the Senior High School strands, namely General Academic Strand (GAS), Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Strand (STEM) and Humanities and Social Sciences Strand (HUMSS) of the Mindanao State University- Tawi Tawi College of Oceanography and Technology of the school year 2021-2022.

A stratified sampling technique, which was defined as a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller subgroups, was used to select the sample of respondents in this study from the total population. Under each grade level and strand, the student respondents were stratified and purposely selected to represent the needed sample size from the total population. The student respondents were selected by their year level, grade sections, and strands. Out of four hundred fifty-five (455) of the total population, two hundred six (206) were considered a sample of student respondents with a 5.15% margin of error using Slovin's formula. There were two hundred forty-six (246) Grade 11 and two hundred twelve (212) Grade 12 students in the population. Also, for the teachers, there were twenty-two (22) Senior High School teachers available as respondents. Out of the total population, a number of students needed in the study under each strand and grade level who reside in the Bongao area were asked by their advisers to come to school for the survey. Also, the teacher-respondents and the faculty who teach in the senior high school were asked to be present during the survey questionnaires.

2.4 Research Instrument

A research instrument used in this study was a researcher-made questionnaire- checklist. The first part of the questionnaire -checklist was about the problems encountered, and the third part was about the coping mechanisms. The 1st part of the questionnaire is a closed-ended checklist in which students and teachers were asked to indicate their problems encountered other than what was mentioned in the survey questionnaires. The 2nd part was an open-ended questionnaire to give the respondents a freeway to express their coping mechanisms. This part may be answered in whatever language or dialect they may feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts based on their experience. For the instrument's validity, the researcher-made questionnaire checklist was validated by the panel of experts. The panel was asked to comment and give suggestions and recommendations on the clarity and coherence of each item to ensure that the level of questioning and the terms used were appropriate or suitable for the respondents. Furthermore, the instrument's reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha and found at 0.930.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, a letter of communication was sent to the head of the school (Deans, Principals, and Class Advisers) to seek their permission and consent. Information such as the number of students enrolled and teachers was requested. The teachers and student respondents were also requested to be present during distributing the questionnaire checklist. Upon approval, the questionnaires were distributed to the students with the help and assistance of the school principal and class advisers. Safe and healthy protocols like proper wearing of masks and social distancing were strictly observed in the data-gathering procedure. The data gathering among the respondents was conducted in batches and was limited in each classroom. The advisers were also tapped to explain the process of distributing and collecting the questionnaires to the students. The goals and objectives of the study and the manner of distribution and retrieval of the instrument being conducted were also explained to the students. Queries were answered, and the date of questionnaire collection was made clear.

Teachers involved in this study were also informed, and the questionnaire checklist was distributed in the faculty room. Twenty-two (22) Senior High School teachers participated as teacher-respondents. All of the teacher-respondents were present in one room while the survey was conducted. The assistant principal also helped distribute and collect the data.

Then, for the statistical treatment of the data, the researcher asked the statistician for help tabulating and analyzing the gathered data using statistical tools. Statistical tools such as Mean response to determine the extent of problems encountered by the Senior High School students and teachers were utilized for computations, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Also, differences and similarities were presented, tabulated, and analyzed for the coping mechanisms of both students and teachers.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

For the ethical considerations, this research followed ethical guidelines before this study was conducted. The respondents' permission was sought, and they were briefed about the purpose of the study. In order to guarantee anonymity, secrecy, and the avoidance of harm, all information was handled and held with utmost confidentiality by not disclosing the names and identifying the research participants by RA 10173, generally known as the DA Privacy Act.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Challenges Encountered by Students and Teachers

In terms of Distribution, Submission, and Collection of Modules

Table 1 presents the mean scores of the extent of problems encountered by the students on the distribution, submission, and collection of learning materials/modules. When the student respondents were asked about the problems with the distribution, submission, and collection of learning materials/modules, they responded that they sometimes encountered problems such as unreturned outputs, late submission of outputs, and difficulty adjusting to this new teaching-learning setup. On the other hand, they rarely encountered problems with the delay of the distribution of modules and non-flexible modes of submission and collection of output on time. The students rarely encountered problems with the distribution, submission, and collection of their learning modules, with an average mean of 2.46.

Table 1. Challenges encountered by students in terms of distribution, submission, and collection of modules

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. There is a delay in the distribution of modules	2.34	Rarely
2. Only one type of learning module is distributed.	1.89	Rarely
3. The mode of submission/collection of output is not flexible.	1.99	Rarely
4. Checked/ graded output is not returned.	2.87	Sometimes
5. Only one form of submission of output is allowed.	1.92	Rarely
6. Late submission of output is accepted, but points are deducted.	2.70	Sometimes
7. Teachers do not have time to return the outputs/papers of their students.	2.79	Sometimes
8. It is not easy to adjust to this new teaching-learning setup.	3.33	Sometimes
9. Submitting and collecting learning packets are difficult for students.	2.49	Rarely
10. Students' outputs are strictly submitted on time.	2.27	Rarely
Overall Mean	2.46	Rarely

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

The above result is similar to the study of Dangle & Sumaoang (2020), which was on the problems encountered in submitting modules to the fifteen students from selected schools in San Gabriel, La Union, and Baguio City, Benguet. The study also revealed that modules were submitted late, and most items were unanswered. With eight modules and 3 to 5 activities to be accomplished in a week, students had difficulty accomplishing the requirements. Some learners could not finish their modules on time or did not answer all questions because they had other chores to be done for the family at home.

Table 2 describes the extent of the problems encountered by the teachers in the distribution, submission, and collection of learning materials/modules. Data show that the teacher-respondents sometimes encountered problems such as insufficient time allocated to checking students' outputs and that they experienced difficulty in adjusting to the new teaching-learning set-up. However, most of them rarely encountered problems with the delay

of distribution of modules, non-flexible mode of submission and collection of output, late submission of outputs by the students, and difficulty in the distribution and collection of learning packets. Generally, the extent of problems teachers encounter in the distribution, submission, and collection of learning modules is rarely encountered, with an average mean of 2.24.

Table 2. Challenges encountered by teachers in terms of distribution, submission, and collection of modules

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. There is a delay in the distribution of modules	2.32	Rarely
2. Only one type of learning module is distributed.	2.05	Rarely
3. The mode of submission/collection of output is not flexible.	2.0	Rarely
4. Checked/ graded output is not returned.	2.87	Sometimes
5. Only one form of submission of output is allowed.	1.86	Rarely
6. Late submission of output is accepted, but points are deducted.	2.14	Rarely
7. Teachers do not have time to return the outputs/papers of their students.	2.27	Rarely
8. It is not easy to adjust to this new teaching-learning setup.	2.77	Sometimes
9. Submitting and collecting learning packets are difficult for students.	2.09	Rarely
10. Students' outputs are strictly submitted on time.	2.23	Rarely
Overall Mean	2.24	Rarely

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

The above result is similar to the study of Agayon *et al.* (2022) and that of Castroverde & Acala (2021), which revealed that teachers encountered problems with the late submission of outputs and incomplete answers. This may be due to the numerous tasks provided in each module. The data also showed that late module claims caused additional burdens to teachers. In addition, the study by Tsang *et al.* (2021) also revealed that there was adversity in the module distribution, erroneous modules, loss of interest among students, and resistant parents in fulfilling roles supporting their child's education. These challenges include the adversity in the distribution of modules.

In terms of Content Issues in the Module

Table 3 shows the extent of the problems encountered by the students on content-related issues in the module. On the content-related issues in the module or learning package, the students agreed that they sometimes encountered problems such as a lack of examples provided in the module, undetailed and not well-explained lessons, unclear instructions, numerous modular activities, and lack of prior knowledge on the topics. However, they rarely encountered problems with insufficient time allocated to accomplish a task in the module, concepts /topics not being organized, unclear words being written in modules, and difficulty in presenting the lessons. In totality, the extent of the problem students encounter with content-related issues in modules is sometimes encountered with an average mean of 2.60.

Table 3. Challenges encountered by students in terms of content issues in the modules

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. There is an inadequacy of examples for each topic in the module.	2.90	Sometimes
2. Lessons are not detailed and well-explained.	2.78	Sometimes
3. Instructions are unclear and not understandable.	2.61	Sometimes
4. The amount of time allocated to accomplish a task is insufficient.	2.44	Rarely
5. Activities in all subjects consume much of my time.	2.66	Sometimes
6. Concepts /topics are not organized.	2.01	Rarely
7. There is a need for a thorough explanation of the concept.	2.85	Sometimes
8. Students lack prior knowledge of the given topics.	2.99	Sometimes
9. Words written in modules are unclear.	2.33	Rarely
10. Students find teachers difficult in presenting the lessons.	2.43	Rarely
Overall Mean	2.60	Sometimes

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

The result is similar to the study of Pastore *et al.* (2021) on module content issues, which revealed that students also encountered problems with unclear instructions, numerous activities in the module that could not be completed within the allotted time, and difficult-to-understand lessons that they had to learn on their own. Gueta & Janer (2021) also conducted a similar study on the thirty students of Bulan North Central School of Barangay Aquino, Bulan, Sorsogon, on the Distance Learning Challenges of the Use of Self-Learning Module. The data showed that not enough examples were provided in the modules, so students had difficulty understanding the lessons.

Also, in the study by Dangle & Sumaoang (2021) conducted among fifteen students of San Gabriel, La Union, and Baguio City, Benguet, on problems encountered in the new learning modality, it was found that the late submission of modules and difficulty adjusting to the new learning modality were the most common problems encountered. Hence, 90% of the participants had difficulty answering their modules. Similarly, Pastore *et al.* (2021) conducted a study among fifteen high school students of different selected schools of Diffun, Quirino; findings revealed that students found difficulty in learning these lessons when modules served as their only learning tool and an inexperienced student, the content was hard to comprehend.

Table 4 describes the extent of problems teachers encounter with content-related issues in the module. Data manifest that the teachers agreed that they sometimes encountered problems such as students' difficulty following instructions, insufficient materials to print the modules/ learning materials, lack of prior knowledge of students on the topics, and difficulty understanding the module's content. However, they rarely encountered problems with a lack of references in the presentation of lessons, not well-presented lessons due to lack of access to the internet, inadequate amount of time allocated to accomplish a task in the module, unorganized topic/concepts, unclear printed modules/ learning packets, and difficulty of teachers in presenting the lessons. The average mean of 2.40 manifests that teachers rarely encountered content-related issues in the modules,

Table 4. Challenges encountered by teachers in terms of content issues in the modules

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. There is a lack of references in the presentation of lessons.	2.27	Rarely
2. Lessons are not well-presented due to lack of access to the internet.	2.27	Rarely
3. Students do not follow instructions well.	3.18	Sometimes
4. The amount of time allocated to accomplish a task in the module is inadequate.	2.0	Rarely
5. Materials (e.g., printer, ink, etc.) to print the modules/ learning packets are insufficient.	3.23	Sometimes
6. Concepts /topics are not organized.	1.68	Rarely
7. Modules/ learning packets are not clearly printed.	1.68	Rarely
8. Students lack prior knowledge of the given topics.	2.82	Sometimes
9. Students hardly understand the content of the module.	2.64	Sometimes
10. Teachers find it difficult to present the lessons.	2.32	Rarely
Overall Mean	2.40	Rarely

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 – 1.49 Never

The above result is similar to the study of Gueta & Janer (2021), Alvarez (2021), and Agayon *et al.* (2021) on module contents. Their studies revealed that teachers encountered problems with their students' difficulty following the instructions in the modules. In addition, the module contents are hard to understand and very lengthy, and the students have difficulty answering them. Agayon *et al.* (2021) also revealed that limited resources were among teachers' major problems. In this study, teachers have no choice but to find ways to prepare learning materials, especially printed modules. Teachers were challenged because of the lack of resources. As a result, several teachers utilized their own money to purchase printers, bond papers, etc., for their classes.

In terms of Communication

Table 5 presents the extent of the problems encountered by students in student-teacher communication. Data reveal that the students all rarely encountered problems such as unapproachable teachers, first-hand information, unanswered student queries, late responses of teachers, students' awareness of the subject descriptions, the use of radio and other multimedia among teachers, and non-encouragement of online participation, were the problems encountered on the student-teacher communication during a pandemic. This is indicated by the average mean of 2.24.

Moreover, Adnan & Anwar (2020), who conducted a similar study among one hundred twenty-six students of a university in Pakistan, revealed that lack of proper interaction and contact with students and instructors, lack of access to internet facilities, and ineffective technology were the challenges faced by students in the new normal. Also, the studies of Gueta & Janer (2021) and Dangle & Sumaoang (2021) on student-teacher communication conducted among thirty and fifteen students of Bulan North Central School at Barangay Aquino, Bulan, Sorsogon and of San Gabriel, La Union, and Baguio City, Benguet, respectively, revealed that teachers were approachable but responded to student queries late.

Table 5. Challenges encountered by students in terms of communication

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Teachers are hard to approach.	2.42	Rarely
2. Only first-hand information is allowed on the subject.	2.13	Rarely
3. Internet-assisted form of communication is encouraged.	2.26	Rarely
4. Student queries are not entertained.	2.25	Rarely
5. Answers to questions are given but late.	2.41	Rarely
6. It is hard to contact the teacher.	2.33	Rarely
7. Students are unaware of the description and expectations in the subject.	2.42	Rarely
8. Students' concerns are addressed only during consultation hours.	2.15	Rarely
9. Teachers use radio and other multimedia programs to accommodate students who do not have access to Android or cellular phones.	1.96	Rarely
10. Participation during (online classes, chat rooms, and the like) are not encouraged.	2.11	Rarely
Overall	2.24	Rarely

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

Table 6 presents the extent of problems encountered by teachers in student-teacher communication. Data show that all of the teachers rarely encountered problems such as student consultation with teachers, showing no concern of students about the lessons, difficulty in contacting their students, students' awareness of the subject descriptions, the use of radio and other multimedia among teachers, and discouragement of online participation. This is manifested by the average mean of 1.97.

Table 6. Challenges encountered by teachers in terms of communication

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Students have consultation time with teachers.	1.86	Rarely
2. Internet-assisted form of communication is encouraged.	1.91	Rarely
3. Students show no concern about the lessons.	2.36	Rarely
4. Students' queries are entertained through texts, calls, and messenger.	1.5	Rarely
5. Students' answers to questions are addressed.	1.5	Rarely
6. It is hard to contact the students.	2.18	Rarely
7. Students are unaware of the description and expectations in the subject.	2.36	Rarely
8. Students' concerns are addressed only during consultation hours.	1.81	Rarely
9. Teachers use radio and other multimedia programs to accommodate students who lack access to cellular or Android phones.	2.36	Rarely
10. Participation during (online classes, chat rooms, and the like) is not encouraged.	1.86	Rarely
Overall Mean	1.97	Rarely

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

This study is comparable to the study of Jamon *et al.* (2021) and Tosun *et al.* (2021), whose studies revealed that teacher-student communication is difficult in the new normal. In addition, students said that the teachers were approachable, but their response to students' queries regarding their lessons came late, as revealed in the study by Gueta & Janer (2021).

In terms of Learning Materials and Resources

Table 7 shows the extent of the problems encountered by students on learning materials and resources. Data shows that students often encounter problems with internet access. They sometimes encountered problems such as the unavailability of materials needed to supplement the available learning materials to understand the topic, more time needed for the subject, and the use of mobile data or WIFI to research. However, they rarely encountered problems with the non-provision of video clips, PowerPoint presentations, and other printed materials that are useful for the subject, the use of multimedia among teachers for teaching, and the use of online group activities to encourage student interactions. The average mean of 2.86 indicates that the extent of problems students encounter with learning materials and resources is sometimes encountered. The above result is similar to the study of Gurajena *et al.* (2021), Aboagye *et al.* (2020), Oyedotun (2020), Alvarez (2020), and Dangle & Sumaoang (2020), which reveal that students encountered difficulty with poor or slow internet access in the new normal.

In addition, the study of Aboagye *et al.* (2020) also reveals that issues among students in Ghana's tertiary institutions, including internet connectivity and using compatible smartphones and laptops, have been identified as problems encountered among students. Furthermore, Alvarez (2020), who conducted a study among twelve students from selected universities in Luzon, revealed that problems such as students' financial limitations, lack of technological devices, and affective or emotional support were encountered as problems under the new normal.

Also, Dangle and Sumaoanga (2020) revealed that problems such as self-studying, lack of sleep and insufficient time to answer all the modules, distractions, and lack of focus were identified. Oyedotun (2020) added that the unavailability of gadgets to facilitate student learning and internet accessibility were among the problems encountered by the students.

Table 7. Challenges encountered by students in terms of learning materials and resources

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Personal gadgets useful for the subject are unavailable when needed.	2.63	Sometimes
2. Supplementary materials for the subjects are difficult to find. (online or library)	2.82	Sometimes
3. Students need to use personal data or Wi-Fi to do research.	3.28	Sometimes
4. Students need to watch YouTube video clips to understand their lessons.	2.92	Sometimes
5. Students' allowance is not enough to support their studies.	2.99	Sometimes
6. Video clips, PowerPoint presentations, and other printed materials that are useful for the subject are not provided.	2.48	Rarely
7. Internet access is difficult.	4.12	Often
8. Finding time to learn more about the subject is hard for the student.	3.25	Sometimes
9. Teachers use multimedia such as PowerPoint, Facebook video clips, and messengers for teaching.	2.18	Rarely
10. Online group activities such as Facebook and chat are organized to encourage interactions among students.	1.97	Rarely
Overall Mean	2.86	Sometimes

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

Table 8 describes the extent of the problems teachers encounter with learning materials and resources. Data reveal that they often encountered problems with connectivity/internet access. However, they sometimes encountered problems with the need for teachers to use personal data or WIFI to do research and difficulty in finding time to learn more about the subject the students. While they rarely encountered problems such as the unavailability of personal gadgets useful for the subject, difficulty in finding supplementary materials for the subjects both online or in the library, the need of students to watch YouTube video clips to understand their lessons, students' insufficient allowance for studies, the use of multimedia among teachers for teaching, and the use of the online group activities to encourage interactions among students. The average mean of 2.35 indicates that the teachers rarely encountered problems related to learning materials and resources.

Table 8. Challenges encountered by teachers in terms of learning materials and resources

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Personal gadgets useful for the subject are unavailable when needed.	2.06	Rarely
2. Supplementary materials for the subjects are difficult to find. (online or library)	2.18	Rarely
3. Teachers need to use personal data or Wi-Fi to do research.	2.82	Sometimes
4. Students need to watch YouTube video clips to understand their lessons.	2.23	Rarely
5. Students' allowance is not enough to support their studies.	2.18	Rarely
6. Video clips, power point presentations and other printed materials that are useful for the subject are not provided.	2	Rarely
7. Internet access is difficult.	3.68	Oftentimes
8. Finding time to learn more about the subject is hard on student's part.	2.68	Sometimes
9. Teachers use multimedia such as PowerPoint, Facebook video clips and messengers for teaching.	1.95	Rarely
10. Online group activities such as Facebook, chat are organize to encourage interactions among students.	1.77	Rarely
Overall Mean	2.35	Rarely

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

Colebra & Irene (2020) honed similar findings with the present study, which stressed that, on the learning materials and resources, teachers encountered problems with internet connection and weak signals in the new normal. Legaspi *et al.* (2021) also revealed that during the implementation of different learning modalities, teachers encountered problems such as technical issues, lack of technology or personal gadgets, and poor student participation during online activities and in preparing instructional materials.

In terms of Flexibility during Pandemic

Table 9 presents the extent of the problems encountered by students with flexibility in the new normal. In this aspect, the students often encounter problems with emotional stress. However, most of them sometimes encountered problems such as not having enough time for home chores, difficulty in managing time as students, not participating in online discussions due to an unstable internet connection, not having enough time to prepare for examinations, finding online learning not helpful, finding hard to submit outputs on time, undeveloped study habits during pandemic, isolation from their peers and classmates, enjoying playing online games than studying and distraction by their siblings while learning at home.

Table 9. Challenges encountered by students in terms of flexibility during the pandemic

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I do not have enough time for home chores.	2.80	Sometimes
2. It isn't easy to manage my time as a student.	3.11	Sometimes
3. I find playing online games more enjoyable than studying.	2.50	Sometimes
4. I don't participate in online discussions due to an unstable internet connection.	2.81	Sometimes
5. I do not have enough time to prepare for my examinations.	2.54	Sometimes
6. I am not encouraged to use other means of learning.	2.17	Rare
7. I become distracted during my classes.	2.78	Sometimes
8. Time to prepare for examinations is inadequate.	2.41	Rare
9. I do not find online learning helpful.	2.71	Sometimes
10. I find it hard to submit my outputs in the subject on time.	2.70	Sometimes
11. Students use the online apps to help them in their studies.	2.16	Rarely
12. Study habits may not be developed in this mode of delivery (modular approach/ flexible learning)	2.89	Sometimes
13. Students find themselves isolated from their peers and classmates.	2.77	Sometimes
14. Students are distracted by their siblings while learning at home.	3.27	Sometimes
15. Students have emotional stress.	3.90	Oftentimes
Overall Mean	2.78	Sometimes

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 – 1.49 Never

A few of them rarely encountered problems, such as not being encouraged to use other means of learning in the subject and using online apps to help them in their studies. The average mean of 2.78 indicates that the extent of the problems encountered by the students regarding flexibility in the new normal is sometimes encountered. The above result is comparable with the study of Calo *et al.* (2021) and that of Gueta & Janer (2021) on the Distance Learning Challenges in the Use of Self-Learning Module, which revealed that stress was identified as a problem. According to Calo *et al.* (2021), in their study on Students' Struggles and their Coping Mechanisms in the New Normal among ten students of Napolan National High School of Napolan, Pagadian City found that stress is related to internet connectivity problems and one cause of stress was the problem on the number of modules to answer over a short period.

Also, the study by Mishra *et al.* (2020) conducted among a total of two hundred sixty students of Mizoram University, north-eastern India, on the Online teaching-learning in higher education during the lockdown period of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the problems in the learning environment, connectivity, and video issues due to the remoteness of their location and also household chores were encountered as problems by students during the lockdown period. The result also revealed that having a conducive learning environment and distractions while learning at home and doing household chores adversely affect their studies. The study by Gueta & Janer (2021), conducted among thirty students of Bulan North Central School of Barangay Aquino, Bulan, Sorsogon, on the Distance Learning Challenges in the Use of Self-Learning Module found that problems such as lack of proper scheduling or difficulty in managing time as students and inability to manage workload, too many distractions from outside, self-procrastination even on a work period, less interaction with peers and teachers due to isolation during pandemic were encountered as problems met by students in the new normal. This study also revealed that learners occupy a big portion of their time helping their parents doing household chores, and even if students would like to stay focused on their work, they sometimes lose track.

As shown in Table 10, teachers rarely encountered problems such as not having enough time for home chores, difficulty in managing time as teachers, unprepared for examinations, having insufficient time to prepare the modules/ learning packets, not encouraging the use of other means of learning, distractions during classes, finding online learning not helpful, the difficulty of students to submit their outputs on time, the use of the online

apps in their teachings and the students feeling of isolation from their peers and classmates. Hence, the average mean of 2.17 indicates that the teachers rarely encountered flexibility-related problems during the pandemic. The study by Robosa *et al.* (2021) revealed that teachers considered burnout due to a lack of resources, handling students, and submitting workloads. Dabrowski (2020) also revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has added stress to the work of teachers in the new normal and brought risks to teachers' physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being.

Table 10. Challenges encountered by teachers in terms of flexibility during the pandemic

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I do not have enough time for home chores.	2.27	Rarely
2. It is not easy to manage my time as a student.	2.32	Rarely
3. I find playing online games more enjoyable than studying.	3.5	Oftentimes
4. I don't participate in online discussions due to an unstable internet connection.	3.32	Sometimes
5. I do not have enough time to prepare for my examinations.	1.91	Rarely
6. I am not encouraged to use other means of learning.	1.77	Rarely
7. I become distracted during my classes.	1.59	Rarely
8. Time to prepare for examinations is inadequate.	2.05	Rarely
9. I do not find online learning helpful.	2.23	Rarely
10. I find it hard to submit my outputs in the subject on time.	1.62	Rarely
11. Students use the online apps to help them in their studies.	2.09	Rarely
12. Study habits may not be developed in this mode of delivery (modular approach/ flexible learning)	2.64	Sometimes
13. Students find themselves isolated from their peers and classmates.	2.41	Rarely
14. Students are distracted by their siblings while learning at home.	2.77	Sometimes
15. Students have emotional stress.	2.55	Sometimes
Overall Mean	2.17	Rarely

Legend: 4.5 – 5.49 Always; 3.5 – 4.49 Oftentimes; 2.5 – 3.49 Sometimes; 1.5 – 2.49 Rarely; 1.0 - 1.49 Never

When the students were asked about their other problems or challenges encountered during the pandemic in an open-ended question, the students answered that a) they lack focus and concentration in this new normal, b) there are numerous modular activities that consume much time, c) lack of sleep due to internet connection, d) lack of learning and loss of interest, and mental stress. Some of the students also responded that they also encountered problems such as a) depression, anxiety attacks or emotional breakdown, b) being pressured, laziness, c) too dependent on the internet, d) online games addiction, e) overtime in answering modules, f) difficulty in understanding the lessons in the module, g) no personal gadgets, h) transportation expenses from the island, and i) family problem.

3.2 Common Coping Mechanisms

In terms of distribution, submission, and collection of learning materials/modules, the students and teachers responded that they use their time wisely and have close contact with each other. However, students believed that they should ask for consideration, avoid delay in the submission of modules, and try to adjust to the new normal way of learning while teachers must become more flexible, patient, and considerate and collaborate with other teachers to make their work easier and become more productive.

In terms of content-related issues in the module, the students and teachers answered that they used the internet, watched videos for the lessons, and contacted each other. However, students believed that they should seek help from their siblings, classmates, or friends, do time management and additional time to accomplish tasks in the module while teachers used the library for their additional references, give follow-up instructions through their Facebook and messenger, insert pre-requisite lessons in the module and encourage students to consult them and give additional examples on the given topics.

To address student-teacher communication issues, the students and teachers responded that they stay connected in contact with each other. However, the students agreed that they should go to school to see their teacher while teachers used different forms of communication (online, face-to-face, text/messages, and the like) to reach out and address students' concerns and also communicate with their parents.

Additionally, when it comes to learning materials and resources, the students and teachers said that they were going to places where the internet connection is better/ stable and staying late at night. However, students

believed that they needed to buy a mobile load or come to their relatives' or friends' houses for the use of WIFI to search the internet, and also borrow gadgets from family or siblings while teachers install a home WIFI and also ask friends from other areas with a high internet connection to search for their queries.

Finally, in terms of flexibility during pandemic, the students and teachers answered were time management and taking time to rest/breaks. However, students try their best to focus on their studies during exams and when answering modules, become positive thinkers, pray for guidance, and entertain themselves through playing games, reading novels or watching movies to cope with stress, and add or chat with their classmates and friends on social media. Teachers create lists of tasks to do, give priority to more important or difficult tasks, prepare modules ahead of time, become more considerate of students for submitting output late, especially those from islands, beat the deadline, and spend time with family to cope with stress.

4.0 Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn based on the above findings: The Senior High School students and teachers of MSU-TCTO both rarely encountered problems with the distribution, submission, and collection of learning materials/ modules, student-teacher communication, and learning materials and resources. Students responded that they sometimes encountered problems with content-related issues in the module and the flexibility during a pandemic, respectively. These problems include unstable or poor internet connection and stress-related problems. Despite the challenges encountered, the students and teachers found ways to cope with their problems and were able to manage them during the pandemic time. The common coping mechanisms of students and teachers were time management, using the internet, close contact with each other, and taking rest/breaks.

The findings of the study imply significant impacts on various aspects of education, policy, and research. This includes to better inform the design and delivery of the curriculum to efficiently meet the needs of students and teachers especially in a pandemic context from the development of online learning resources, the integration of technology into teaching and learning, to the the provision of flexible learning options. This study can also identify effective instructional strategies that can be used to engage students and support their learning in a remote or hybrid learning environment and may include the training of teachers in online teaching and learning with the provision of support for teachers' professional development and well-being.

In addition, the results of this study suggest areas for future research to further explore the problems encountered and coping mechanisms of senior high school students and teachers during the pandemic. This may include the investigation of the long-term effects of the pandemic on student learning and well-being and the evaluation of the effectiveness of educational policies and practices in a pandemic context.

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Nurul-Ainie S. Eldani -writing, encoding
Prof. Sheriffa T. Andas, Ph.D - editing, supervising

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

This study does not have any conflict of interest.

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