Open Access Indonesia Journal of Social Sciences

Exploring Instructional Competencies of Mindanao State University-Sulu Teachers in the Age of COVID-19 Pandemic

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigated the instructional competencies of teachers in Mindanao State University-Sulu in the transition to alternative learning delivery methods in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic. The descriptive survey method was used in this study. The researcher used two sets of standardized questionnaires to obtain the necessary data including the respondents' profiles. The profile of the teacher-respondents was determined using frequency count and percentage. Mean was used to analyze research questions. T-tests for independent samples and analysis of variance were used to test the stated hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The following were the highlights of the study: (1) The common alternative learning delivery methods used by teachers were modules, Facebook, and Messenger; (2) The common instructional strategies of teachers were using Messenger for sending additional instructions on the lessons and other activities; entertaining questions from students through phone calls and text messages; and distributing printed module to students; (3) The level of instructional competencies of teachers is satisfactory; (4) There is no significant difference on teachers' instructional strategies when they are classified according to their profile; (5) There is no significant difference on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to gender and the college or high school where they teach; and (6) There is a significant difference on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to age. The study recommended that the school administration should conduct intervention programs and policies on improving teachers' competencies, especially in times of pandemic.

1. Introduction

The advent of deadly corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to the Philippines has caused a dramatic impact on the country's educational system. This impact is observed on the postponement of the usual opening of classes in June to October and on the cancellation of face-to-face classes across the country.

Relative to this, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) have strategized and implemented programs that would lead to the resumption of classes without jeopardizing the health and safety of the students and of the school employees. Such program is the alternative learning delivery methods which implies the use of modular learning approach, online classes, multimedia viewing and other modalities of learning.

However, to fully implement these methods, there is a need to consider the teaching competencies of teachers particularly during this time of COVID-19

pandemic. Exploring their instructional competencies is vital in a sense that it affects the academic learning of the students. Competencies are the skills and knowledge that enable a teacher to be successful. To maximize student learning, teachers must have expertise in a wide-ranging array of competencies in an especially complex environment where hundreds of critical decisions are required each day (Jackson, 1990 as cited by wingstitute.org).

Moreover, Agah et al. (2016) suspected that the ability to teach effectively seems to depend mainly on the teachers' pedagogic knowledge, skills, and beliefs about teaching-learning process, which collectively define instructional competencies. In context, the Mindanao State University-Sulu (MSU-Sulu) through the office of the vice-chancellor for academic affairs (VCAA) has crafted policies for the first semester classes. This is reflected on the flexible learning options (FLO) formulated by the office of VCAA. The administration has given the teachers the leeway to use modular learning approach, online classes or combination of both.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the instructional competencies of teachers in Mindanao State University-Sulu in the delivery of alternative learning methods in the age of COVID-19 pandemic. This paper determined the level of instructional competencies of teachers as rated by the students. Likewise, it sought to identify the significant difference on the level of teachers' instructional competencies and on the instructional strategies used by teachers in the delivery of alternative learning methods when they are classified according to gender, age and college or high school where they teach.

2. Literature Review

This section presents the literature and studies related to the research study. It reviewed some of the numerous works done by scholars and researchers which are directly related to this work.

Competency

Wikipedia defines "competence" as "the set of demonstrable characteristics and skills that enable, and improve the efficiency or performance of a job." It is also used as a more general description of the requirements of human beings in organizations or communities. If someone is able to do required tasks at the target level of proficiency, they are competent in that area.

Competency is sometimes thought of as being shown in action in a situation and context that might be different the next time a person has to act. In emergencies, competent people may react to a situation following behaviors they have previously found to succeed. To be competent a person would need to be able to interpret the situation in the context and to have a repertoire of possible actions to take and have trained in the possible actions in the repertoire, if this is relevant. Regardless of training, competency would grow through experience and the extent of an individual's capacity to learn and adapt. However, research has found that it is not easy to assess competencies and competence development.

Competency has different meanings, and remains one of the most diffuse terms in the management development sector, and the organizational and occupational literature.

Competencies are also what people need to be successful in their jobs. Job competencies are not the same as job task. Competencies include all the related knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that form a person's job. This set of context-specific qualities is correlated with superior job performance and can be used as a standard against which to measure job performance as well as to develop, recruit, and hire employees. Competencies and competency models may be applicable to all employees in an organization or they may be position specific. Identifying employee competencies can contribute to improved organizational performance. They are most effective if they meet several critical standards, including linkage

to, and leverage within an organization's human resource system.

Core competencies differentiate an organization from its competition and create a company's competitive advantage in the marketplace. An organizational core competency is its strategic strength.

Competencies provide organizations with a way to define in behavioral terms what it is that people need to do to produce the results that the organization desires, in a way that is in keep with its culture. By having competencies defined in the organization, it allows employees to know what they need to be productive. When properly defined, competencies, allows organizations to evaluate the extent to which behaviors employees are demonstrating and where they may be lacking. For competencies where employees are lacking, they can learn. This will allow organizations to know potentially what resources they may need to help the employee develop and learn those competencies. Competencies can distinguish and differentiate your organization from your competitors. While two organizations may be alike in financial results, the way in which the results were achieved could be different based on the competencies that fit their particular strategy and organizational culture. Lastly, competencies can provide a structured model that can be used to integrate management practices throughout the organization. Competencies that align their recruiting, performance management, training and development and reward practices to reinforce key behaviors that the organization values. (Wikipedia).

COVID-19 and education

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), also known as the coronavirus, is a contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first known case was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The disease has since spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing pandemic (Wikipedia).

Wikipedia cited in their website that most governments decided to temporarily close educational institutions in an attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As of 12 January 2021, approximately 825 million learners are currently affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic. According to UNICEF monitoring, 23 countries are currently implementing nationwide closures and 40 are implementing local closures, impacting about 47 percent of the world's student population. 112 countries' schools are currently open.

School closures impact not only students, teachers, and families, but have far-reaching economic and societal consequences. School closures in response to the pandemic have shed light on various social and economic issues, including student debt, digital learning, food insecurity, and homelessness, as well as access to childcare, health care, housing, internet, and disability services. The impact was more severe for disadvantaged children and their families, causing interrupted learning, compromised nutrition, childcare problems, and consequent economic cost to families who could not work. In response to school closures, UNESCO recommended the use of distance learning programs and open educational applications and platforms that schools and teachers can use to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education (Wikipedia).

Distance learning

Merriam-Webster defines distance learning as, "a method of study where teachers and students do not meet in a classroom but use the Internet, e-mail, mail, etc., to have classes."

Simply put, distance learning is when students are separated from teachers and peers. This means that students learn remotely and do not have face-to-face learning with instructors or other students.

Distance learning does not include any in-person interaction with an instructor or study peers. Students study at home on their own, and the learning is more individual and varies on speed and timeline according to each individual student and their availability. It actually relies on the educational tools of online learning, and that is probably why there is some confusion between the two. It is possible to study with online distance learning as well. In that sense, distance learning is a subset of online learning.

Because distance education is remote, it can connect students to universities worldwide, making it more accessible for students in different countries. It is also known to be more affordable, which is another factor that helps make education more accessible to many students around the world and in different socioeconomic levels.

Distance learning is extremely important for those who cannot attend programs due to health complications, severe social anxiety, busy work schedules or parenting demands, or any other situations which make it necessary to be confined to the home (www.uopeople.edu).

Self-efficacy theory

Self-efficacy, according to psychologist Albert Bandura who originally proposed the concept, is a personal judgment of "how well one can excuse courses of action required dealing with prospective situations." Self-efficacy affects every area of human endeavor. By determining the beliefs a person holds regarding their power to affect situations, it strongly influences both the power a person actually has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make. These effects are particularly apparent, and compelling, with regard to investment behaviors such as in health, education and agriculture (Wikipedia).

Self-efficacy theory has been embraced by management scholars and practitioners because of its applicability in the workplace. Overall, self-efficacy is positively and strongly related to work-related performance. This relationship, though, depends on task complexity. For more complex tasks, the relationship between self-efficacy and work performance is weaker than for easier work-related tasks. The implications of this research is that managers should provide accurate descriptions of tasks and provide clear and concise instructions and they should provide the necessary supporting elements for employees to be successful.

Moreover, Barni et al. (2019) stressed out that teacher's self-efficacy, namely teacher's beliefs in their ability to effectively handle the tasks, obligations, and challenges related to their professional activity, plays a key role in influencing important academic outcomes (e.g., students' achievement and motivation) and well-being in the working environment.

Teaching competencies

Abe (2014) and Carreker & Boulware (2015), as cited by Istiqomah, et. al, (2009), explained that teacher competencies are the accumulation of the teacher's ability to carry out the learning process in the classroom. Taghipourzahir (2010) divided teacher competencies into two categories, which are vocational and personality. Personality competencies are mental and physical health, adherence to values, and good mental abilities. Whereas, vocational competencies are general knowledge, vocational knowledge and communication skills.

Teacher competencies refer to the performance and rational actions in order to meet certain specifications when carrying out educational tasks (Mulyasa, 2007). Teacher competencies contains multi-dimensional constructive, both in the form of pedagogical and professional competencies (Baumert & Kunter, 2006). Hospesova and Ticha (2000) mentioned that teacher competencies are pedagogical-organization competency, and the ability to conduct self-reflection.

Redding (2014) and Carreker & Bouware (2015) stated that there are four teacher competencies, which are cognitive, competency, metacognitive competency, motivational competency, and emotional/social competency.

Educators must demonstrate the following three competencies: 1) managing class effectively; 2) implementing effective teaching practices, and 3) mastering technological skills that can help to learn (Nessipbayeva, 2012).

Theory of transactional distance

The first attempt in English to define distance education and to articulate a theory appeared in 1972 (Moore 1972) and in 1980 was named as the theory of transactional distance (Moore 1980). The concept of Transaction was derived from Dewey. As explained by Boyd and Apps (1980) it "connotes the interplay among the environment, the individuals and the patterns of behaviors in a situation." The transaction occurs between individuals who are teachers and learners, in an environment that has the special characteristic of separation of one from another and a consequent set of special teaching and learning behaviors. It is the physical separation that leads to a psychological and communications gap, a space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of ithe nstructor and those of the learner, this is called the transactional distance.

According to Moore, even in traditional face-to-face education there is some transactional distance. Transactional distance is relative and different for each person.

And at same time, it is a relative variable that is different from one distance education program to the other. In Moore's theory, the most distant program has low dialog and low structure while the least distant has high dialog and high structure. Moore then adds another dimension—learner autonomy (see Figure 2.1). Autonomy appears to be associated with a

personality characteristic—that being personal responsibility associated with self-directedness (Moore 1993; Moore & Kearsley 1996). The greater the transactional distance the greater the responsibility is placed on the learner (Garrison 2000).

Distance learning students' perceptions of the online instructor roles and competencies

Abdulla (2004) noted that online instruction depends on effective communication skills, attitudes, and behaviors. Effective online instruction requires both content knowledge and interpersonal skills because the challenges of the online instructor are essentially about human interaction.

One of the most important roles of the online instructor is to ensure successful teaching by keeping students' interactions and discussions focused on the topic, adding knowledge and expertise, and maintaining group harmony. Therefore, it is imperative that instructors have appropriate training and become aware of the skills, behaviors, attitudes, and strategies needed of them.

Existing research literature offers limited information about teaching and learning in the Web-based environment. Furthermore, within the existing research literature, there has been little that took the students' perceptions about the online instructor roles and competencies. Therefore, due to lack of research regarding competencies needed by the university faculty in order to enhance their Web-based course experience, and as colleges and universities race ahead into teaching and learning in cyberspace, there will be a need for such research.

Effective online instructional competencies as perceived by online university faculty and students: A sequel study

Bailie (2011) mentioned that although technological advancements and support for the changing distance learning environment served to

augment a new generation of educational activity, ultimately high-quality instruction will continue to be based on an array of distinct competencies attributed solely to instructors and their application of sound pedagogical practice. The constant transformation of technology would appear to make the classification of competencies held by online educators an interminable process, whereas emerging generations of technology will impact how the online faculty member most effectively apply their skills. The results of this study suggest that, at least over the short spans of five years, competencies previously identified as being critical continue to be held in high regard.

It should come as no surprise to the active online practitioner, that among the highest regarded competencies are those directly associated with instructional immediacy. Through the timely validation of competencies, it is hoped that the outcomes of investigations such as this will contribute to the evolving list of key instructional attributes associated with effective online instruction.

Teachers' competencies

The basic purpose in teacher training is to ensure the effective planning, management, development and administration of educational system by equipping teachers with certain competencies. The concept of teachers' competencies is mostly discussed in very narrow dimensions such as teachers' planning, implementation, assessment of the curriculum, standards for the curriculum or the school (Selvi, 2010).

These are related to teachers' teaching duties in the school. In this respect, teachers' competencies needs to be discussed in many dimensions such as field competencies, research competencies, curriculum competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social-cultural competencies, emotional competencies, communication competencies, information and communication technologies competencies and environmental competencies in order to develop teachers.

In parallel to the developments emerging in different fields, the changes happening in human life also cause some problems in defining and gaining the teacher competencies. For instance, environmental competencies were not probably discussed twenty five or thirty years ago as a competency field for teachers. However, the problems people have experienced with environment have raised an interest towards environment issue. As a result of this interest, environmental issues have been associated with education and teaching. Therefore, environment issue on which there are still discussions have been discussed as new competency field for teachers. In a nut shell, daily life and all the developments emerging based on human needs influence teaching profession and hence the teacher competencies.

Redefinition of teachers' professional competencies should include the curriculum competencies. Since, the curriculum competencies are core competencies of teachers' professional developments. Teachers' curriculum development competencies are not clear, not well defined or neglected; teachers have problems concerning the curriculum development and implementation of curriculum in their fields. Understanding of curriculum philosophy, curriculum theory and curriculum development models, curriculum development studies, learning and teaching approaches and models are the most neglected aspects related to teachers' curriculum competencies. Teachers' curriculum competencies is related to micro and macro level curriculum design, development and implementation.

Teachers' curriculum competencies are necessary for partnerships between teachers and the curriculum development team during the curriculum studies. Curriculum development team and the teachers have unique roles in the curriculum development process (Shkedi).

The approach of teacher-regulated curriculum will be important in near future. Thus, school-based curricula should be encouraged by teachers' researches and implementations. At the same time, this will encourage teachers to become more active participants in to the curriculum development processes. However, curriculum writers, namely curriculum design and development team do not successfully transmit their ideas to teachers (Shkedi). For this reason, curriculum studies should be projected by curriculum theorists and teachers collaboratively. It is said that curriculum studies have intensified teachers' work (Bulajeva 41). Thus, teacher competencies concerning curriculum are of great importance for teachers to conduct their profession. The competencies of teachers encompass both theoretical and practical of curriculum. At the same time, defining teacher competencies will contribute to the improvement of the quality of the educational system by positively affecting the teacher training and curriculum development studies.

The changes in science and educational system have also affected teachers' competencies. There is strong relationship between the other sciences and system of society and they affect the educational system and teachers' competencies. The educational system can be based on scientific results of educational sciences, psychology, economy, technology, sociology and so on. Any kind of change and reform study in the other systems or science damage teachers' professional competencies unless teachers' competencies are developed (Carlgren 49-50). Teachers must follow all of these changes in order to improve their professional performance. The development of teachers' competencies is based on the changes in other sciences and society and is not associated with only the individualistic development but also professional development.

Internationalization of curriculum ideas is a kind of reform study and teachers ensure changes by embracing new ideas. In this respect, teachers need to

have more competencies than they had before. By taking the international developments into consideration, the teacher competencies should be discussed and updated. Teachers' competencies are highly important in both implementing the current curricula effectively and training people for future by developing these curricula. Teachers who are responsible from the training of the individuals of future need to be well equipped in order to fulfill this responsibility. Teacher competencies should continuously be the subject of research and analysis and should be developed by updating. Therefore, pre-service and in-service teacher education should focus on understanding and application of teachers' competencies. As a curriculum development specialist and a teacher trainer, I believe that teachers' competencies should reflect developing conditions for sustainability.

Most of the developments of teachers' competencies do not a process but from time to time some developments can occur by chance. The teachers' competencies should be reviewed consistently in parallel with the changes and reform studies through scientific studies. Teachers' main role is transferring changes the into the educational system and they must deal with all the changes effectively. The future will be different from the past and present in some certain respects (Avery 442). Thus, teachers need new competencies to cope with all these changes and it is necessary to redefine the teachers' competencies.

Teacher education in times of COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal: national, institutional and pedagogical practices

Flores and Gago (2020) cited in their paper "Teacher education in times of COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal: national, institutional and pedagogical responses" that teachers identified the main difficulties they had to handle: lack of adequate equipment for pupils, involving pupils in their learning, lack of time, lack of adequate training on

online teaching, lack of support from parents. They also said that in most cases, teachers had to use their own technological devices to teach. They added that most of the participating teachers claimed that the time spent in remote teaching has increased when compared to face-to-face teaching, but pupil participation in assessment has decreased.

If the technical and instrumental response was of paramount importance at the beginning of the transition period from face-to-face to remote teaching, the need to focus on pedagogical matters in order to address pupils' needs became evident. As such, more focused and specific responses will be needed in order to make sure that no pupil is left behind. The transition from face-to-face to online teaching has entailed some pedagogical challenges, not only in terms of teaching methods but also with regard to assessment strategies and tools. The need to plan and adapt pedagogy and resources to online teaching environments was a process marked by an ongoing search for the best solutions to meet students' needs as well as the goals of each curriculum unit (Flores and Gago, 2020).

The Effect of Teacher Competencies on Student Achievement in Vocational High School

Istiqomah (2019) cited that Ugbe & Agim (2009) had explained that there is a significant influence between teacher competencies and student academic achievement. This may be due to the fact that teacher competencies are a major asset for the student learning quality at school. Teachers who are competent in their work will have qualities that enable them to inspire and develop the capacity of student abilities and will automatically affect the student academic performance. A qualified teacher also has good classroom control, effective communication skills, adequate knowledge on the subject, and can utilize varied teaching strategies to improve student learning outcomes.

The research findings of Istiqomah et al. (2019) recommend the importance of developing the teacher competencies in schools so that student achievement can be increased. Passos (2009) explained that competencies can be developed through formal teacher training, teacher experience in teaching, and trainings organized by schools as well as trainings that teachers participate independently. In contrast to Passos (2009), Fathivajargah (2003) emphasized the importance of considering the teachers' potential in teacher recruitment. In teacher recruitment, it is necessary to consider high cognitive abilities as well as emotional and practical competencies. In addition to the recruitment matter, teacher competencies development also needs to pay attention to the assessment of teacher performance on a regular basis. Teacher competencies assessment is not only to determine the extent of the mastering of learning material but also encourage teacher to self-development (Wilkerson & Lang, 2007). Teacher performance assessment can also ultimately: (1) improve teacher performance in performing professional tasks (improvement function); and (2) ensuring teachers to perform better in developing student learning (the accountability function) (OECD, 2009). In addition, teachers need to manage an effective teaching and learning processes so that students know how to learn and utilize their knowledge appropriately in daily lives, and then live in society with happiness. Therefore, teachers need to develop competencies in accordance with the education transformation in practice and professional activities effectively (Surasak, 2013).

Validated competencies for distance teaching

Darabi et al. (2006) stated that the pedagogical and logistical roles of distance education instructors are satisfactorily performed if they are technologically experienced and keenly aware of the significance of interaction as the building block of distance education. These results also point out several

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implications not only in the field of instruction but also in the areas of recruiting, selection, employment, and training of distance education instructors.

Recruitment and selection of distance education instructors must be based on their competencies in the use of technology for managing the logistical aspects of distance instruction as well as their qualifications for teaching the content of a course.

Traditional instructors, by contrast, did not necessarily need to master the operation and occasional troubleshooting of a computer to be able to do a good job in the face-to-face delivery of their topics. According to our findings, for distance education instructors, maintaining the course accuracy and certain logistical aspects of the course are highly important. Given that in a distance education environment most of the content is delivered electronically, this logistical maintenance demands technological competence of the instructors. It seems that in a distance environment, the instructors share the burden for accurately maintaining and logistically upgrading a course as well as teaching it satisfactorily.

These requirements should also be reflected in training programs provided for distance instructors in educational environments similar to those in which this study was conducted. As part of their training, instructors should be prepared to collaborate with the designers and developers skilled in computer programming to be able to ensure the accuracy of the content and maintenance of the logistics. The training programs also need to emphasize planning and communication as the key ingredients of interaction at a distance, as evident by ratings of the competencies and tasks in this study. The upgrading and updating resulting from this type of training will contribute to the satisfactory retention of the distance education instructors and therefore lowering the turnover rate. The improved quality of instruction as a result of meeting all these challenges will be the bottom line outcome of the recruitment, selection, and training of the instructors according to the criteria derived from these competencies.

Implications of these findings may also include the policies governing the recruitment, selection, and training activities for those institutions engaged in similar types of distance training. According to the list of highly important and frequently demonstrated competencies found in this study, these policies must also focus on the dual function of technological qualifications of the candidates for distance teaching as well as their mastery of the subject areas. Further research should focus on these implications and the content of training for distance education instructors.

Summary of literature review

There are many issues concerning the instructional competencies of teachers in Mindanao State University-Sulu during this COVID-19 pandemic. One primary issue is how the teachers can perform better in their instruction amidst the present situation of education system. The other issue is about responding to the needs of the students while maintaining the quality of education.

Again, this chapter discussed the concept of instructional competencies and its role in the facilitation of teaching-learning process in distance or remote learning. The theories concerning teachers' effectiveness and distance education were also discussed as support to the research inquiry. Based on the cited literature, teachers' competence is a requisite for improving students' learning competence. Thus, teachers need to be flexible and must be equipped with the initiative to effectively deliver the subject matter.

3. Methods

This research study used descriptive survey method. Said method is considered apt because it enables the researcher to generate information from the respondents through research instruments based

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on well-defined concepts and related variables. Two questionnaires were used to get the desired information from the respondents. The first questionnaire titled "Alternative Learning Delivery Methods and Instructional Strategies of Teachers in the Age of COVID-19 Pandemic" was answered by some selected faculty members. It contained the demographic profile of the respondents and a 5-point Likert scale response options such as Always (A), Oftentimes (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R), and Never (N); while the second questionnaire titled "Level of Instructional Competencies of MSU-Sulu Teachers as Assessed by Students", which is modified and adopted from the study of Elizabeth B. Thach and Karen L. Murphy entitled "Competencies for Distance Education Professionals", was answered by the students with response choices: Outstanding (O), Very Satisfactory (VS), Satisfactory (S), Fairly Satisfactory (FS) and Unsatisfactory (US). It also included the personal data of the respondents. Both questionnaires were validated by three experts in research. A total sample size of 59 teachers was randomly selected using stratified random sampling from the population of 195 full-time faculty members in Mindanao State University-Sulu. 885 students of the same university were also selected using convenient sampling. Responses from the questionnaires were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage and weighted arithmetic mean, and inferential statistics of t-test for independent samples and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Frequency counts, percentages, and weighted arithmetic mean were used in analyzing demographic variables and research questions, while t-tests for independent samples and ANOVA were used to test the stated hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. In particular, frequency counts and percentages were used for analyzing the distribution of the respondents according to their profile. Weighted arithmetic mean was used to identify the instructional strategies employed by MSU-Sulu teachers in the delivery of their lessons and the alternative learning delivery methods they used during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mean was also used to determine the level of instructional competencies of teachers in using the strategies as assessed by students; while t-test for independent samples and ANOVA were both used to analyze the significant difference in the instructional strategies used by these teachers in the delivery of alternative learning methods and the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to gender, age and college or high school where they teach.

4. Results

This section deals with the findings of the research work. The answers to the five research questions are portrayed. The main question is about the level of instructional competencies of teachers and the strategies they used in the delivery of alternative learning methods in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research questions were interpreted using the prescribed statistical tools after the data has been analyzed. Tables are also drawn to help present the data.

Table1. Instructional strategies employed by the teachers in the delivery of their lessons

Statements	Mean	Verbal Description
1. I distributed printed modules to my students.	4.39	Oftentimes
2. I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and other activities.	4.20	Oftentimes
3. I entertained questions from my students through phone calls and/or text messages.	3.83	Oftentimes
4. I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module.	3.34	Sometimes
5. I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube.	2.66	Sometimes
6. I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures.	2.53	Sometimes
7. I used to send lectures to my students through Email.	2.44	Rarely
8. I gave my students additional lectures through EBook.	2.36	Rarely
9. I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom.	1.56	Rarely
10. I administered oral exams through phone calls.	1.59	Rarely
11. I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform.	1.47	Never
12. I discussed lectures to my students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video Application.	1.47	Never
Overall Mean	**2.65**	**Sometimes**

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Never; 1.50-2.49=Rarely; 2.50-3.49=Sometimes; 3.50-4.49=Oftentimes; 4.50-5.00=Always

Table 1 shows the instructional strategies employed by the teachers in the delivery of their lessons. The participants responded oftentimes on the following strategies: I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and other activities; I entertained questions from students through phone calls and/or text messages; and I distributed printed modules to students.

The participants responded sometimes on the following strategies: I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube; I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures; and I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module.

The participants responded rarely on the following strategies: I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom; I gave my students additional lectures through EBook; I used to send lectures to my students through Email; and I administered oral exams through phone calls.

The participants responded never on the following strategies: I discussed lectures to my students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video Application; and I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform.

The highest mean 4.39 which corresponds to verbal description oftentimes indicates that the respondents often distributed printed modules to their students. On the other hand, the statements "I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform" and "I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform" both obtained the lowest mean 1.47 which corresponds to the verbal description never. The overall mean 2.65 implies that the cited instructional strategies are sometimes employed by the teachers.

Table 2. Alternative learning delivery methods used by teachers

Alternative Learning Delivery Methods	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Description
1. Modules	4.80	.783	Always
2. Messenger	4.42	1.591	Oftentimes
3. Facebook	3.68	.878	Oftentimes
4. SMS and/or Phone Calls	3.42	1.303	Sometimes
5. Email	2.63	1.618	Sometimes
6. YouTube	2.17	1.234	Rarely
7. EBook	2.41	1.498	Rarely
8. Google Classroom	1.69	1.163	Never
9. Zoom Video Application	1.47	1.004	Never
10. Google Meet	1.42	.792	Never
Overall Mean	**2.81**	**1.186**	**Sometimes**

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Never; 1.50-2.49=Rarely; 2.50-3.49=Sometimes; 3.50-4.49=Oftentimes; 4.50-5.00=Always

Table 2 shows the alternative learning delivery methods used by the teachers during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data show that the respondents always used modules, and oftentimes used Facebook and Messenger. It also indicates that Email and SMS and/or phone calls are sometimes used by the teachers. Moreover, the respondents rarely used YouTube and EBook; and never used Google Classroom, Zoom Video Application, and Google Meet. This implies that during the COVID-19 pandemic, most teachers relied on using modules and other social media platforms such as Facebook and Messenger as alternative learning delivery methods.

The highest mean is 4.80 with a standard deviation of .783 and verbal description always indicates that the modules are the most used alternative learning delivery methods by MSU-Sulu teachers. Whereas, the lowest mean 1.42 with a standard deviation of .792 implies that the respondents never used Google Classroom. The overall mean of 2.81 indicates that the cited alternative learning delivery methods are sometimes used by the respondents.

Table 3. Level of instructional competencies of teachers as assessed by the students

	N	Mean	Verbal Description
Level of Instructional Competencies	3.42	.498	Satisfactory

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Unsatisfactory; 1.50-2.49=Fairly Satisfactory; 2.50-3.49=Satisfactory; 3.50-4.49=Very Satisfactory; 4.50-5.00=Outstanding.

Table 3 shows the level of instructional competencies of teachers as assessed by the students. As shown in the table, the teachers' level of instructional competencies has a mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation (SD) of .498 with verbal description satisfactory. This means that the teachers' level of instructional competencies is satisfactory. This further implies that the teachers consistently met expectations and occasionally exceeded expectations on the teaching performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4. T-test on the instructional strategies used by teachers according to gender

Statements	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision Rule
1. I discussed lectures to my students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video Application.	1.481	57	.144	Accept Ho
2. I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities.	-.725	57	.471	Accept Ho
3. I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom.	1.716	57	.092	Accept Ho
4. I gave my students additional lectures through EBook.	1.117	57	.269	Accept Ho
5. I entertained questions from my students through phone calls and/or text messages.	-.662	57	.511	Accept Ho
6. I distributed printed modules to my students.	-1.166	57	.248	Accept Ho
7. I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube.	.450	57	.654	Accept Ho
8. I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures.	.450	57	.655	Accept Ho
9. I administered oral exams through phone calls.	.342	57	.734	Accept Ho
10. I used to send lectures to my students through Email.	.116	57	.908	Accept Ho
11. I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module.	.587	57	.559	Accept Ho
12. I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform.	2.098	57	.040	Reject Ho

Sig.-value of .05 and below are significant and above .05 are not significant

Table 4 presents the t-test on the instructional strategies used by teachers in the delivery of alternative learning methods when they are classified according to gender. The null hypothesis is accepted along these statements: I discussed lectures to my students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video Application; I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities; I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom; I gave my students additional lectures through EBook; I entertained questions from my students through phone calls and/or text messages; I distributed printed modules to my students; I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube; I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures; I used to send lectures to my students through Email; I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module; and I administered oral exams through phone calls. However, the null hypothesis is rejected on the statement: I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform.

Since majority of the statements are accepted, this implies that the gender of the teachers, whether male or female, does not cause variations on the instructional strategies they used in the delivery of alternative learning methods.

Table 5. ANOVA on the instructional strategies used by teachers according to age

Statements	Df	F	Sig.-value	Decision Rule
1. I discussed lectures to my students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video Application.	3	.937	.429	Accept Ho
2. I administered oral exams through phone calls.	3	.297	.827	Accept Ho
3. I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform.	3	.645	.590	Accept Ho
4. I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom.	3	.875	.460	Accept Ho
5. I gave my students additional lectures through EBook.	3	.628	.600	Accept Ho
6. I distributed printed modules to my students.	3	2.223	.096	Accept Ho
7. I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube.	3	.627	.600	Accept Ho
8. I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures.	3	2.157	.103	Accept Ho
9. I entertained questions from my students through phone calls and/or text messages.	3	4.023	.012	Reject Ho
10. I used to send lectures to my students through Email.	3	3.777	.016	Reject Ho
11. I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module.	3	3.920	.013	Reject Ho
12. I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities.	3	6.385	.001	Reject Ho

Sig.-value of .05 and below are significant and above .05 are not significant

Table 5 shows the ANOVA on the instructional strategies used by teachers in the delivery of alternative learning methods when they are classified according to age. In the strategy that they discussed lectures to their students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video application, there is no significant difference on the instructional strategies used by teachers when they are classified according to age. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. There are also no significant differences on the instructional strategies used by teachers when they are classified according to age along all these strategies: I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom; I gave my students additional lectures through EBook; I distributed printed modules to my students; I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube; I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures; and I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform. The null hypotheses are accepted on these five statements because there exist no significant differences on the instructional strategies used by teachers when they are classified according to age.

The table also presents that there are significant differences among the instructional strategies of teachers when they are classified according to age along these statements: I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities; I entertained questions from my students through phone calls and/or text messages; I used to send lectures to my students through Email; and I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected because there is a significant difference on their instructional strategies when they are classified according to age.

Table 6. ANOVA on the instructional strategies used by teachers according to college or high school where they teach

Statements	Df	F	Sig.	Decision Rule
1. I discussed lectures to my students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video Application.	8	1.974	.069	Accept Ho
2. I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube.	8	1.128	.362	Accept Ho
3. I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures.	8	1.974	.069	Accept Ho
4. I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform.	8	1.993	.067	Accept Ho
5. I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom.	8	2.341	.032	Reject Ho
6. I gave my students additional lectures through EBook.	8	5.838	.000	Reject Ho
7. I entertained questions from my students through phone calls and/or text messages.	8	2.141	.049	Reject Ho
8. I distributed printed modules to my students.	8	4.859	.000	Reject Ho
9. I used to send lectures to my students through Email.	8	3.876	.001	Reject Ho
10. I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module.	8	2.352	.031	Reject Ho
11. I administered oral exams through phone calls.	8	2.305	.035	Reject Ho
12. I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities.	8	6.831	.000	Reject Ho

Sig.-value of .05 and below are significant and above .05 are not significant

Table 6 shows the ANOVA on the instructional strategies used by teachers on the delivery of alternative learning methods when they are classified according to college or high school where they teach. The data revealed that the null hypothesis is accepted on the following strategies: I discussed lectures to my students using Google Meet and/or Zoom Video Application; I provided my students with educational videos downloaded from YouTube; I provided my students with "link" of YouTube videos for our lectures; and I used to meet my students virtually in Zoom online platform. The null hypothesis is rejected along all these statements: I used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities; I uploaded activity worksheets in Google Classroom; I gave my students additional lectures through EBook; I entertained questions from my students through phone calls and/or text messages; I distributed printed modules to my students; I used to send lectures to my students through Email; I used Facebook in elaborating the lessons in the module; and I administered oral exams through phone calls.

Table 7. T-test on the level of teachers' instructional competencies according to gender

	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision Rule
Level of Instructional Competencies	-.449	57	.655	Accept Ho

Sig.-value of .05 and below are significant and above .05 are not significant

Table 7 shows that the sig. value of .655, with degrees of freedom (df) 57, is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference in the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to gender. This implies further that there is not enough evidence that gender can interfere with the instructional competencies of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 8. ANOVA on the level of teachers' instructional competencies according to age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision Rule
Between Groups	4.164	3	1.388	7.454	.001	Reject Ho
Within Groups	10.242	55	.186			
Total	14.407	58				

Sig.-value of .05 and below are significant and above .05 are not significant

As shown in Table 8, the sig. value of 0.001 with degrees of freedom (df) 3 is less than the alpha level 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to age. This further implies that the age interferes with the teaching performance of teachers during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 9. ANOVA on the level of teachers' instructional competencies according to college or high school where they teach

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision Rule
Between Groups	1.223	8	.153	.580	.789	Accept Ho
Within Groups	13.183	50	.264			
Total	14.407	58				

Sig.-value of .05 and below are significant and above .05 are not significant

Table 9 presents the ANOVA on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to college or high school where they teach. As shown in the table, the sig. value of 0.789 with degrees of freedom (df) 8 is greater than the alpha level 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means there is no significant difference on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to college or high school where they teach. This further implies that regardless of the college or high school where the teachers teach, the level of their instructional competencies does not differ from that of others.

5. Discussion

This study investigated the instructional competencies of MSU-Sulu teachers in the transition to alternative learning delivery methods in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic. The descriptive survey

research design was adopted in this study. 59 full-time faculty members and 885 students enrolled during the first semester of S.Y. 2020-2021 served as respondents of the study who were selected using stratified random sampling and convenient sampling respectively. Checklist questionnaires were used to solicit data for the instructional strategies; the alternative learning delivery methods; and the instructional competencies of teachers. Mean and standard deviation were used for instructional strategies; for alternative learning delivery methods; and for the level of instructional competencies of teachers. T-test and analysis of variance were used for determining if there is a significant difference on the instructional strategies used by teachers in the delivery of alternative learning methods and on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified in terms of gender, age and college or high school where they teach. The significant findings to emerge in this study are the following: 1) during the pandemic, the teachers of MSU-Sulu often used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities; entertained questions from students through phone calls and/or text messages; and distributed printed modules to students. In addition, the teachers used modules, Facebook and Messenger as the common alternative learning delivery methods; 2) the level of instructional competencies of teachers in MSU-Sulu during this pandemic as assessed by the students is satisfactory; 3) there is no significant difference on the instructional strategies used by the teachers in the delivery of alternative learning methods when they are classified in terms of gender, age and college or high school where they teach; 4) there is no significant difference on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to gender and college or high school where they teach; and 5) there is a significant difference on the level of teachers' instructional competencies when they are classified according to age.

6. Conclusion

To study the teaching-learning condition of an educational institution during this time of pandemic is a complex and difficult task. Indeed, the instructional competencies of teachers can be evaluated both positively and negatively. The main goal of the current study was to explore the instructional competencies of teachers in Mindanao State University-Sulu in the transition to alternative learning delivery methods in the age of COVID-19.

In the light of the findings, the study concluded that MSU-Sulu teachers often used Messenger for sending additional instructions of the lessons and of other activities; entertained questions from students through phone calls and/or text messages; and distributed printed modules to students. The teachers favored the use of modules, Facebook and Messenger as the common alternative learning delivery methods during this pandemic. The study also concluded the level of instructional competencies of the MSU-Sulu teachers is satisfactory. Academically speaking, this denotes that they can have an alternative to obtain "very satisfactory" in their teaching performance through intervention program. The study shows that there is no significant difference on the instructional strategies used by teachers in the delivery of alternative learning methods when they are classified according to gender, age, and college or high school where they teach. It means there is no enough evidence to say that the profile of the teachers is statistically significant on the instructional strategies in the delivery of alternative learning methods. The teachers' gender and college or high school teaching affiliation do not have an influence on the level of their instructional competencies. However, with regards to their age, the respondents' level of instructional competencies differs to one another. The difference is due to variations of teachers' engagement with their students. The results of this study suggest that teachers should improve more their instructional competencies and look for timely teaching strategies

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so as to respond to the needs of students during the new normal education.

7. References

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