



Teachers' Flexibility and Coping Mechanisms among Teachers Impacted by School Closures

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Abstract

Background and Aim: School closures are disruptive phenomena that severely affect teachers' well-being and professional stability. There is a predominance of studies that talked about closures due to the pandemic in the Philippines, which ignored the context of structural closures like low enrolment. This research explored the experiences of the five (5) teachers who happened to be affected by the partial, low-enrolment-driven closure of the school in a private school within the province of Zamboanga Sibugay, Philippines. It examined how these affected teachers emotionally respond to the problem, how they adapt strategies, and how these teachers had developed resiliency after experiencing school closure.

Materials and Methods: Using in-depth interview data, qualitative narratives from five teacher-participants were analyzed through thematic analysis within a phenomenological framework. Lived experiences of school closure were thematically coded to identify emotional, challenge, coping, resilience, and support constructs. Analysis followed an iterative process of coding, theme development, and interpretation, anchored in Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping. The credibility of the method used in the study was ensured through member checking and the reflexivity of the researcher.

Results: The study revealed that there was a strong thematic pattern that strongly showed emotional, challenge, coping, resilience, and support dimensions. One of the main effects was the extreme emotional distress after closure, which was sadness, fear, and shock. The financial instability and displacement of professionals were the main challenges that teachers had to deal with. The coping strategies were more emotion-oriented, and spiritual surrender and cognitive reframing were major. Resilience was a socially mediated process, which was highly dependent on lateral peer support and internal family support, but institutional support was always reported to be missing or inadequate.

Conclusion: The study concluded that teachers build resilience not alone, but through the support of colleagues and family, transforming a professional crisis into a chance for personal growth. It was found that the school's formal support was largely absent, leaving teachers to rely on each other and their personal networks to cope with financial instability and the loss of their professional community. Ultimately, the research shows that a teacher's recovery depends on finding new purpose and meaning in their work, even after their original role has been dismantled.

Keywords: Teacher's resilience, Coping mechanisms, School closure, Phenomenological study

Introduction

Resilience is a significant part of the life of teachers, particularly when they are faced with issues and challenges. Even when the normal school routine is disrupted, teachers are expected to adapt and go on, and move on with teaching and helping their learners. Teachers are experiencing an abrupt shift in their practice, new burdens, and uncertainty due to the closure of schools, and, as a result, both the work and personal lives of teachers have been greatly affected. Research indicates that teachers are more likely to have increased workloads, high levels of stress, and challenges between work and family when they adapt lessons and teaching practices to new environments while experiencing issues like those of school closures (Kaden, 2020). Through these experiences, one can learn the significance of knowing how resilient teachers are in oppressive circumstances.

In the Philippine educational environment, it can be easily understood that school closures are not only about making policies, but also living experiences that have an intense impact on the teachers. There are a large number of teachers who must work even in cases of limited resources, unstable internet connectivity, and fear for their health and employment. In the Philippines, it has been found that teachers underwent emotional strain and burnout when there were sudden changes in the operations of schools,





particularly in situations where they had not foreseen significant shifts in the teaching delivery process (Doria and Cruz, 2024). It is a fact that cannot be denied, which necessitates the need to discuss the coping mechanisms, adjustment of teachers, and their persistence in the role in times of closure.

The closing of schools causes several difficulties for teachers. Besides the acquisition of new technologies and changing their methods of teaching, most educators are really concerned about the progress and development of their students, especially those who are already struggling or have no one to support them at home (Kelly, 2022). The lack of access to devices and internet connection services in most Philippine schools also makes it harder to teach and learn in times of closures (Dabrowski et al., 2023). These challenges frequently go outside the classroom, with the physical and mental health of teachers being impacted because long-term remote working and the less and lack of social interaction may lead to stress and exhaustion (Silverman and Wang, 2021).

The social and economic causal factors of school closures are also wide. In case of a closure, teachers in private schools usually have more job insecurity and financial challenges (Esposito and Principi, 2020). Locally and internationally, school consolidation, falling enrollment, population changes, and permanent closures have interfered with the careers of teachers and undermined community ties (Andriess & Seong, 2024). There are also temporary closures and unregulated teaching hours in the Philippines due to overcrowded classrooms, absence of school facilities, and ineffective planning, which have contributed to stress among teachers (Salanguit et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, despite such challenges, some teachers showed unparalleled resilience. It has been shown that teachers who perceive their competencies, apply positive coping mechanisms, and get the support of peers and school administrators can more easily cope with stress in challenging situations (Mutiah and Ramadhani, 2024). The response of teachers has been attributed to enhancing their technological abilities, modifying lesson plans, and using peer support groups to come up with and exchange experiences and solutions (Fronza, 2024). Further, the emotional needs of students in times of crisis are also supposed to be addressed by teachers, which may be overwhelming without sufficient institutional assistance (Parveen et al., 2024; Dabrowski et al., 2025).

This study, therefore, sought to examine the resilience and coping strategies of teachers affected by school closures in the Philippines. It aimed to identify the specific challenges they encountered, the adaptive strategies they employed, and the support systems they needed. The findings were intended to inform policies and programs that strengthen teacher well-being and ensure educational continuity amid various forms of disruption.

Objectives

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives; To explore the lived experience of the teachers affected by school closures.

Literature Review

The situation of school closures has put teachers in dilemmas or circumstances that require them more than adapting to instructions but also to emotional turmoil and psychological resilience. Teachers had to reconstruct their own learning plans and redesign learning materials during closures to be delivered remotely or through alternative methods, with very little preparation and resources in many cases (Kaden, 2020). This abrupt change bothered the usual teaching routine and added to the increased stress that often went beyond the scope of the professional work and had a toll on the personal well-being of the teachers (Hascher et al., 2021).

Besides the workload problems, most teachers had difficulties adapting to the fast pace of digitalization in terms of instruction. Being taught how to utilize online platforms and, at the same time, maintain student interaction produced some pressure and inadequacy, particularly among teachers with little previous experience in the use of educational technology. Although these challenges persisted, a small number of teachers eventually created teaching practices that were flexible, which were the first indications of flexibility that eventually proved useful as schools reopened or switched to blended learning models (Tagare, 2024).

Emotional burden on teachers was also increased by the concerns about the progress of learning in students. Teachers were concerned that continuous disruptions of classes, especially in in-person





education, would lead to knowledge gaps and retention, especially in the case of disadvantaged students (Kelly, 2022; Shayo et al., 2024). These concerns contributed to the feelings of responsibility and stress among teachers because most of them felt responsible for the outcomes that they could not control. These kinds of pressures seemed to show the strong connection between the professional activities of the teacher and his/her emotional strength in times of turmoil.

Doria and Cruz (2024) reported that Filipino teachers experienced mild to severe psychological distress when compelled to abruptly transition to remote teaching, often leading to widespread burnout and highlighting the urgent need for effective coping mechanisms. Teachers also serve as key figures in disaster preparedness and community recovery, offering stability to learners during crises (Tero & Escote, 2024). Tagare (2024) highlighted how teachers in difficult circumstances employed innovative, technology-enhanced strategies to connect with students. Salindo and Salindo (2024) similarly identified adaptability as an essential trait among teachers in disaster-prone countries like the Philippines, while also emphasizing the importance of training and institutional support.

Silverman and Wang (2021) noted that educators in consolidating schools had to modify curricula for digital settings, a process that often revealed stark resource disparities. In the Philippines, teachers lacking reliable internet or devices struggled to maintain instructional quality (Dabrowski et al., 2023).

Besides the issue of instruction, teachers have also been impacted by the school shutdowns in terms of physical and mental health. The effects of remote teaching over a long period of time enhanced inactivity and the lack of balance between work and personal life, which led to severe stress and emotional burnout (Silverman and Wang, 2021). These circumstances were more acute in the situation when a teacher had job insecurity, like in a private school or in institutions with a shrinking enrolment (Esposito and Principi, 2020). School shutdowns in the Philippine situation are also caused by economic factors and a lack of infrastructure, which only increases the level of stress in teachers forced to cope with uncertainty and the need to remain professional (Keoboulaphet, 2024; Navarro, 2024).

The effects of the school closures do not just affect the teachers of the school but the community at large. Schools can be a social and civic place, especially in rural or remote areas, and their shutdown weakened the community connections and safety nets (Moon, 2024). In case of disruption of these links, teachers often develop extra emotional work, trying to take care of learners and families, and this puts further stress on their own strength (Torres et al., 2024).

It is against these odds that studies have found a number of protective factors that help teachers to be resilient. Self-efficacy and proactive coping skills are personal qualities that enable teachers to cope with stress better and be psychologically healthy (Mutiah and Ramadhani, 2024). Social support of colleagues and school leaders is also crucial as it offers emotional support and practical help in times of disruption (Boischevska, 2024). Nevertheless, in cases when there is a lack of institutional support, teachers can be exposed to more strain, particularly when they are supposed to meet the mental health needs of students and their own needs (Parveen et al., 2024).

School closures have made teachers develop various coping mechanisms. These are adjustments of teaching methods, enhancement of technological capabilities, peer support, and the use of self-care methods to deal with stress (Fronza, 2024; Preciado and Garcias, 2024). The collaboration with peers has proved especially useful, as educators could exchange experience and ways out of the uncertainty (Cenedesi et al., 2024). These coping strategies not only depict survival but also resilience since the teachers are active in changing and continuing to face the challenges.

Conceptual Framework

The present study was based on the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (1984) by Lazarus and Folkman, which describes the formation of resilience in teachers in reaction to the crisis in the institution (closure of schools). This model considers stress as a dynamic process that is determined by how an individual perceives a situation and not the event. It entails primary appraisal, which entails the teachers assessing whether the closure is a threat, challenge, or loss, and secondary appraisal, which involves the assessment of the existing resources and options that can be used to cope with the situation. The coping strategies may be problem-oriented (to deal with the stressor) or emotion-oriented (to deal



with emotional responses). School closures in this context could pose a threat to employment and job security, professional identity, or financial stability and cause fear, shock, or grief. The result of this appraisal is coping responses of teachers, such as proactive skill development or spiritual surrender. Resilience is therefore not an inherent characteristic but a dynamic result of the continuous interaction between appraisal and coping with the help of personal and social resources, which enable teachers to adjust and sustain their well-being as they proceed with their professional duties.



Figure 1. Transactional Process Framework of Teacher Resilience during School Closures

The theoretical framework shows how the teachers react to the closing of schools. To begin with, they pass through primary appraisal and assess the closure as a threat to their employment, identity, or even to their money. Secondly is the secondary appraisal, where the teachers reflect on the resources they have to cope with, including personal ability, peer support, and institutional support. According to these appraisals, teachers develop coping strategies, problem-oriented coping strategies to actively solve the problems, or emotion-oriented strategies to control the emotional reactions. These coping mechanisms support the development of resilience, which allows the teacher to adjust to well-being and remain in his or her professional life despite the disruption. This model demonstrates that resilience is dynamic and emergent and is influenced by appraisal and coping, and not a predetermined trait.

Methodology

1. Research Design

The design of the study was a qualitative case study according to the framework proposed by Merriam (1998). It sought to explore the experiences of teachers in detail and comprehensively after a school closure as a closed system. The design was based on the explanations of the process, context, and meaning of resilience and coping, and the viewpoint of the teachers who experienced these issues.

2. Research Environment

The research was carried out in one of the privately-owned academic institutions in Zamboanga Sibugay, Philippines. The place experienced the partial closure of the elementary department because of the low enrollment persistence. It was a real-world environment that enabled a study of the effects of structural and not crisis-based closures on educators both professionally and personally.

3. Research Participants

Five (5) teachers were directly displaced or reassigned by the school closure, and they were used as participants. Purposive sampling was used to select them based on factors like being full-time teachers in the department that was affected during the closure. According to Merriam (1998), small yet informative samples suffice in case study research in order to provide significant information.

4. Research Instruments

In this study, the researcher was the main tool, which is a characteristic of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). The deep interviews were carried out using a semi-structured interview guide that was validated by professionals in the field of educational management. This guide included open-ended questions that were aimed at giving rich and descriptive explanations of experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and support systems of the participants.

5. Data Gathering Procedure

The process of data collection started with getting permission from the institution as well as informed consent. Before the interview, the respondents were informed as to what the interview was all about. They were informed of the objectives of the study and the risks or harm of participating in the study. The in-depth interviews were one-on-one, audio-taped, and transcribed verbatim so as to be precise.



6. Data Analysis

The analytical approach applied to data was the inductive, thematic approach of case studies (Merriam, 1998). It was carried out by repeatedly reading the transcripts, coding the meaningful statements, and classifying the codes into categories and outlining the broader themes. An analysis was done to form a logical story that would integrate personal experiences and common trends across the case.

7. Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted following high ethical standards, including taking voluntary and informed consent under which the participants were guaranteed their right to withdraw. This ensured that the identity of the participants was not compromised during the research or publication process, as the anonymity of the participants was preserved with the help of pseudonyms and safe data storage. The principle of beneficence was observed, and the interview was done sensitively in order to reduce any possible emotional distress. Lastly, the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were also ensured through member checking and researcher reflexivity.

Results

Emotions After Closure

School closure was a disruptive life event that gave rise to multiple and compounded emotional reactions amongst teachers. From a phenomenological perspective, such emotions are the lived experience of loss, doubt, and relational disruption experienced by teachers. It is shown that four subcategories were interrelated and had a shared description of the emotional landscape after the closure.

Sadness and Grief. The loss of interaction with students on a daily basis and the fact that their professional community was no longer a reality caused profound sorrow to teachers. This loss was not limited to the issues of employment, but a loss of relationships and an identity loss. Teachers referred to emotional attachment towards students and colleagues as being at the core of their purpose, and the closure became very personal.

One participant shared, “*Sad ma’am... naguol sab ko ma’am...*” [I was sad, ma’am... I also grieved (Teacher 1)], while another reflected, “*Sad pero ge dawat nalang... naguol, mingaw kay na attach nako sa mga bata*” [It was sad, but I just accepted it... I grieved, I felt lonely because I got attached to the children (Teacher 2)]. The use of “*mingaw*” (loneliness) signifies emotional emptiness, suggesting that teaching relationships were central to teachers’ emotional well-being.

It can be analyzed that this sorrow reveals the fact that the identity of the teachers is strongly paired with their identity as nurturers and mentors. It was not just the experience of institutional change but also a form of existential disruption. Altogether, the emotional reactions of sadness and grief proved to be the core emotional reactions that predetermined further understanding of the crisis by the teachers.

Fear and Anxiety. In addition to the feeling of grief, there was also a feeling of constant fear and anxiety among teachers, which was associated mainly with financial instability and doubts about the next job. These feelings indicate a threat-based appraisal, in which the closure was viewed as a threat to the basic needs and future stability.

As one teacher stated, “*Aduna koy kahadlok ma’am kay basin ako mawala pud ko sa akong trabaho*” [I was afraid, ma’am, that I might also lose my job] (Teacher 1). Another emphasized economic concern, saying “*the feeling of being unemployed, how to cope with financial struggles...*” (Teacher 3). These stories show that anxieties are highly anticipated, in which the teachers speculatively faced the potential loss before the confirmation of the outcomes.

The concept of fear and anxiety served as a burden in terms of cognitive and emotional aspects, which limited the ability of teachers to plan or make immediate adaptations. These feelings demonstrate the unstable situation of teachers in moments of instability in the institution, showing how the uncertain attitude towards the profession is transformed into mental misery. Hence, anxiety and fear enhanced the emotional relevance of the closure in the sense of future survival concerns.

Shock and Disbelief. Immediate reactions of teachers to the disclosure of the school closure were shocking and disbelieving. This answer represents a break in non-reflexive assumptions about





being permanent in the institution and workplace job security. The suddenness of the decision was emotionally unexpected, and the teachers were in a transitional situation of emotional paralysis. This is a time that broke their processing capacity and the onset of coping mechanisms.

One participant recalled, “*na shock ko ato kay wala ko ga expect*” [I was shocked because I did not expect it] (Teacher 1), while another expressed hesitation caused by uncertainty, stating, “*At first I’m very hesitant... without any assurance...*” (Teacher 3). These stories indicate an emotional suspension in which teachers were unable to come to terms with the situation because they were unprepared and not clear. Shock served as an upheaval to the normal levels of emotional regulation.

This belief condition slowed adaptive decision-making and made them more vulnerable. The abruptness of the closure compounded the emotional distress because the teachers were not given the chance, time, and information to prepare psychologically. Shock was therefore a prelude to more permanent emotional challenges, making grief and anxiety even more effective.

Empathetic Sorrow. In addition to personal loss, teachers also felt sympathetic grief, especially those who suffered more in the closure. This feeling indicates the social and collective distress in the schools. Closure, as processed by teachers, did not go through the personal experience only, but through the collective care of peers who were more displaced or suffering. The suffering of feelings was made a collective one.

One teacher explained, “*Sad ko sa akong mga kauban*” [I was sad for my colleagues] (Teacher 4), indicating that emotional pain extended beyond the self. This phrase emphasizes solid professional relationships and vulnerability among the teaching community. Individual emotional reactions were enhanced due to the suffering of other people.

This empathetic sorrow shows the theme of teaching as a relational profession, based on solidarity. Negotiation of emotional distress led to the realization that the problem of institutional crises extends into the whole professional community. Finally, the emotional distress after the closure did not remain a personal experience but an emotional reality created in interpersonal relationships.

Post-Closure Challenges

After the first emotional reactions, there have been a variety of tangible and ongoing issues faced by the teachers that have transformed the lives of the teachers and their family members. These difficulties reflect the lived experiences of what came after the emotional shock had passed and teachers had to adjust to the new realities. Four interconnected subcategories were identified through the analysis, which demonstrates how the closure was transformed into day-to-day struggles that impacted the state of economic stability, professional identity, instructional practice, and social belonging. The problems did not take place in isolation but were interconnected to make teachers even more vulnerable and unsure of themselves.

Financial Instability. The most urgent and immediate issue that occurred after the school closure was financial instability. The teachers had lower incomes because they had lower teaching workloads, and therefore, they had difficulty in providing the basic needs of the household. These financial hardships increased the pressure and decreased the ability of teachers to fully concentrate on professional development or emotional healing. Money and other fiscal issues emerged as an incessant background stress factor influencing day-to-day decision-making.

One participant stated simply, “*financial struggles...*” (Teacher 3), while another explained, “*mo-decrease ang salary kay per loads ang salary*” [the salary decreases because it is based on teaching load] (Teacher 4). These statements indicate how the issue is structural in nature, such that the system of compensation only increased vulnerability as the institution was changing. The shortness of the answers explains how the financial strain was a perceived and normalized impact of the closure.

Financially, instability emptied mental and emotional resources, which might otherwise be used to aid in the process of adapting. The insecurity of income added to the insecurity and aggravated previous feelings of emotional distress. In this way, economic precarity did not only serve as a practical problem but as a psychological one that affected the general health and well-being of teachers.

Professional Displacement. Professional displacement became one of the major issues for teachers who were transferred to other departments or schools. This change upset their normative





professional identity as most of them were not comfortable with new working positions, coworkers, and demands. The teachers spoke of a feeling of having to start over, which created incompetence and self-doubt. Professional familiarity was lost, which affected the confidence earned through many years of service.

One teacher shared, “*Ang pag-adjust sa bag-ong mga kauban. Sa sunod nga school year, adjustment para sa bag-ong workmates*” [*Adjusting to new colleagues. The next school year was an adjustment to new workmates (Teacher 5)*]. These words show how displacement was not limited to physical movement, but rather to social and professional restructuring. The repetition of the word adjustment is an indication of emotional and cognitive exhaustion.

This professional displacement involves an identity dislocation and not a mere change of role. The competence taught is strongly linked with the environment, relationships, and experiences gathered, and they were disturbed. This problem escalated the feeling of instability among teachers and demanded a lot of emotional work to restore professional confidence.

Pedagogical Adjustment. The other significant obstacle was pedagogical adjustment, whereby the teachers had to work with new grade levels or learner profiles. The instruction of students who are older or who are taught a subject that they do not know requires changes in instructional methods, classroom management techniques, and content knowledge. This change brought pressure on work and performance. Teachers were required to learn pedagogical practices and learn how to cope with emotional strains.

One participant explained, “*Lain-lain ang strategyang gamiton kay lain-lain pud ang attitude*” [*You use different strategies because attitudes are also different*] (Teacher 2). This is a statement that indicates the realization of the complexity of teaching and learning different learners. Nevertheless, it also implies the additional load of constant adjustment due to a lack of proper preparation.

Teaching transitions is an invisible work of teaching as demonstrated by pedagogical adjustment. Such demands are usually institutionalized but have a massive impact on the well-being of teachers. The necessity of continuously adjusting the teaching practice also led to exhaustion and supported a sense of ambiguity at the post-closure stage.

Collegial Disorientation. The loss of acquaintances with peers and professional support networks was manifested as collegial disorientation. The shutdown also disrupted many years of collegialism, such that teachers found themselves socially isolated in new surroundings. Formal peer support that was once used as a coping mechanism was suddenly reduced. This loss made the feeling of isolation worse.

One teacher stated, “*Pag-close sa elementary, nabag-uhan ka kay lahi napud imong kauban*” [*When the elementary closed, you felt new because your colleagues are different*] (Teacher 2). The term “*nabag-uhan*” (feeling unfamiliar or out of place) conveys emotional dislocation and uncertainty. This expression captures the struggle of rebuilding social connections.

In a phenomenological perspective, collegial disorientation implies the loss of social belongingness in professional life. Teaching is a relational work that is maintained by common experiences and mutual support. These broken relationships undermined one important psychological buffer, which further burdened the ability of teachers to adjust once the closure.

Teacher Coping Strategies

Teachers responded to the emotional disturbance and after-closure problems by actively participating in different coping mechanisms that helped them deal with stress and establish feelings of control again. Coping is the active attempt of teachers to react constructively to the disruption instead of reacting passively to it. Four interconnected subcategories were found to show how teachers controlled emotions, reframed experiences, sought support, and engaged in action. These coping mechanisms acted as mediating coping mechanisms that modified the effect of the closure and formed the basis of resilience.

Spiritual Surrender. Spiritual surrender became a leading emotion-oriented coping mechanism for teachers, especially in times of uncertainty and helplessness. Prayer and faith became the means of





comfort, a sense of meaning, and emotional control for many teachers. This coping strategy enabled them to live with situations they could not change and to maintain hope. Religion was a source of internal stability in times of instability.

One teacher shared, “*Pray ma’am... pray lang jud ma’am*” [*Pray, ma’am... just pray*] (Teacher 1), while another stated, “*I pray the guidance with family...*” (Teacher 4). These words point to the use of spiritual practices as a direct reaction to distress. The repetitive nature of the prayer emphasizes that it is a stabilizing ritual.

Spiritual submission helped teachers to be emotionally discharged of anxiety and psychologically balanced. Instead of signifying passivity, this strategy is adaptive acceptance and emotional control. It enabled teachers to save emotional energy and be functional in the state of uncertainty.

Cognitive Reframing. There was cognitive reframing with teachers deliberately changing their interpretation of the school closure. They did not just concentrate on loss, but instead they tried to find other meanings that would stress acceptance, purpose, or personal development. This change of mind allowed a decrease in emotional load and made a transition. Reframing turned adversity into an experience that can be managed.

One teacher expressed, “*ge-divert nalang ang attention, lingaw-lingaw ang kinabuhi*” [*I just diverted my attention, enjoyed life*] (Teacher 2), while another reflected, “*accepting that everything happens for a reason...*” (Teacher 3). These passages imply a deliberate diversion of the mind out of distress. The language shows emotional distancing and not denial.

Cognitive reframing is a higher-order coping that promotes psychological resilience. Teachers were able to redefine the meaning of the closure, and they began to feel a sense of agency. Hence, this plan minimized emotional paralysis and created ways of adapting.

Seeking Social Support. The use of social support was an important coping mechanism, as teachers used their family, friends, and colleagues to gain emotional confirmation and useful information. This social interaction was reassuring, and isolated feelings were alleviated. The experience exchange helped teachers to normalize their feelings and feel empathetic. Protective buffering was performed by support networks.

One participant shared, “*Halubilo sa mga kauban nakig isturya lang tapos share sa problem*” [*I socialized with colleagues, talked, and shared the problem*] (Teacher 1), while another stated, “*family bonding para maibsan ang stress*” [*family bonding to reduce stress*] (Teacher 4). These expressions focus on relational coping. The use of both professional and personal networks was applied.

Social support indicates the relational coping aspect of teaching. Emotional resilience was not created in a vacuum but due to experience, which was shared. This plan enhanced emotional stability and increased the ability of teachers to endure change.

Proactive Engagement. The problem-oriented coping strategy came up as proactive engagement, in which teachers were provided with opportunities to adapt and evolve. Some of the teachers opposed change by instead adopting new roles and responsibilities or even learning new skills. This attitude indicated a futuristic orientation. Powerlessness was substituted with action.

One teacher explained, “*I accept the challenge given by the school admin... an opportunity for me to expand my leadership skills*” (Teacher 3). This reaction indicates that there has been a conscious attitude towards change instead of evading it. The psychological preparedness is indicated by the framing of a challenge as an opportunity.

Active involvement implies active adaptive resilience. Teachers were able to reestablish professional competence and control by addressing the situation directly. Thus, this approach was critical in making a crisis developmental experience.

Resilience Development

Teacher resilience turned out to be a flexible and changing process and not a characteristic or predetermined attribute. The resilience was built up by the maintenance of continued interaction with adversity, meaning-making, and relational support by teachers. It was analyzed that there are four interconnected subcategories explaining the way through which teachers restored emotional strength,





professional identity, and purpose gradually after the school closure. Such processes indicate that resilience was grown by experience, reflection, and adjustment.

Relational Strength. Relational strength emerged as a primary factor in the creation of teacher resilience. Family, close friends, and trusting colleagues were always mentioned by teachers as the main places of emotional support and encouragement. These connections came in handy during times of weakness and doubt. The ability to preserve emotional strength was achieved by being in the presence of each other instead of employing official interventions.

One participant stated, “*Sa family makuha ang kusog... sa family rajud ug friends ang madaganan*” [*Strength comes from family... it is only family and friends you can run to*] (Teacher 4). This statement depicts the centrality of strong support systems. The use of “*kusog*” (strength) signifies emotional reinforcement rather than material aid.

The resilience is represented by the relational strength as a socially embedded process. The teachers were not able to recover alone but rather through significant interpersonal relationships. The relationships were emotional anchors that served to stabilize identity and provide psychological stability.

Purpose Reaffirmation. Purpose reaffirmation was also created because teachers discovered their identity again as a teacher, even through institutional disruption. It is their contribution to the lives of students that makes them feel their purpose and motivation again. Their professional setting did not change their focus on teaching because they based their identity on it. This confirmation decreased the sense of loss and displacement.

One teacher shared, “*Through... with all my students, not all pero naa my student na attach sa inuha*” [*Through all my students, not all but there are students attached to you*] (Teacher 5). This observation showcases the continuity of emotions even when one is physically apart. The attachment reestablished their value as teachers.

Analytically, purpose reaffirmation helped teachers to get beyond the situational hardship. It revived professional identity and re-affirmation to teaching. The role played by purpose was that of a compass within, which directed resilience.

Adversity as Growth. Teachers also exhibited resilience in changing the negative view to a positive one and using adversity as a learning experience. They did not see closure as an act of loss but rather, a test of patience, flexibility, and personality. This cognitive transformation enabled them to bring out positive meaning in disruption. The helplessness was substituted by growth-oriented thinking.

One teacher expressed, “*It’s a blessing in disguise because giving them the opportunity...*” (Teacher 3), while another stated, “*E test jud ka... tas-an ang pasensya kay mao na pamaagi na mo grow ka as a teacher*” [*You are really tested... You increase your patience because that is how you grow as a teacher*] (Teacher 2). These thoughts denote a redefinition of suffering. Testing language implies the challenge of development.

Seeing adversity as development is the sign of adult strength. Teachers recreated the crisis story into a story of learning and empowerment. This results in increased self-efficacy and emotional stamina.

Collegial Positivity. Colleagues’ positivity was an additional factor that helped in developing resiliency. Emotional recovery was enabled by the existence of supportive and optimistic colleagues. Positive relations were used as everyday emotional rewards. The common sense of humor, support, and sympathy relieved tension.

One participant noted, “*murag sa faculty rajud nimo makuan tanan... kay ang mga teachers man gud murag positive vibes kayo*” [*It’s like in the faculty you get everything... because the teachers have very positive vibes*] (Teacher 5). This statement is an indicator of the emotional climate at the workplace. Positivity served as an effective transmission.

Collegial positivity is a type of collective resilience that consists of emotional reinforcement between teachers. Relations with positive colleagues also produce a mutual impact, as well as an increase in personal and group coping skills. Subsequently, the work environment itself becomes a healing experience that helps the teachers endure the institutional adversities.





Discussion

The teacher experiences after a school closure triggered by enrollment are an example of a complex process of crisis, adaptation, and resilience. The study is examined through the lens of the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) because it demonstrates that the emotional reaction of teachers was determined by the initial assessment of the closure as a threat by them in terms of their job security, professional identity, and economic stability. The personal reactions of sadness, grief, fear, and shock were not the only ones, as they were also relational reactions and represented the strong ties that teachers have with students and colleagues (Hascher et al., 2021; Doria and Cruz, 2024). Sympathetic grief over classmates helps further emphasize that emotional turmoil within school groups is not limited to people who have been displaced directly, but that the psychological effects spread collectively (Moon, 2024; Tero & Escote, 2024). These results show that the lived experiences of teachers of institutional change are existential and social, with the purpose of relationships and professional identity being interwoven.

Moreover, these emotional reactions were enhanced by post-closure issues that exposed personal and professional stress factors. The environment of high demand and low resources, caused by financial instability and professional displacement, pedagogical adjustment, and disturbance of collegial networks, challenged the ability of teachers to adapt (Silverman and Wang, 2021; Dabrowski et al., 2023). Teachers have indicated that they were not prepared to take on new roles and that they could hardly guarantee the quality of instruction, which is also reflected in the literature on the demands of institutional consolidation and resource disparities (Boischevska, 2024; Kaden, 2020). These issues imply that the closure of schools is not only a social process but also a structural stressor that requires instant professional rebalancing and identity renegotiation, especially in situations where there is a lack of digital and institutional support (Salindo & Salindo, 2024; Tagare, 2024).

One of the mediated factors in the distress-to-resilience transition was the coping strategies of teachers. Teachers were able to use emotion-focused strategies to help them control their emotions and find sense in the closure (Doria and Cruz, 2024; Mutiah and Ramadhani, 2024), whereas the problem-focused ones assisted teachers in acting directly to overcome the challenges (Tagare, 2024). The fact that they sought social support, both with family and peers, provided the necessary emotional and practical support, marking the socially mediated character of coping (Boischevska, 2024; Fronda, 2024). This mixture of culturally specific emotional coping and cognitive problem-solving demonstrates the mutual influence of appraisal and action according to the Transactional Model, which creates resilience in the process of conscious involvement of both internal and external resources (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Preciado and Garcias, 2024).

Lastly, the development of resilience was mostly a social phenomenon of co-construction. The connection strength, collegial positivity, and purpose reaffirmation allowed teachers to restructure the closure as a chance to develop and enhance their professional identity and self-efficacy (Tagare, 2024). Even so, a lack of institutional support emphasized systemic discontinuities, which required teachers to work through informal networks to retain well-being and professionalism (Silverman and Wang, 2021). Entirely, the study can show that resilience is not a characteristic but a developing and socially deeply rooted process that depends on appraisal, coping measures, and support (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). To offer meaningful teacher assistance to institutions in times of crises, educational leaders and administrators need to integrate leadership empathy, open communication, funding protections, and well-organized networks of peers to ensure short-term accommodation as well as long-term professional ones (Salondo & Salinda, 2024; Tero and Escote, 2024).



Knowledge Contribution

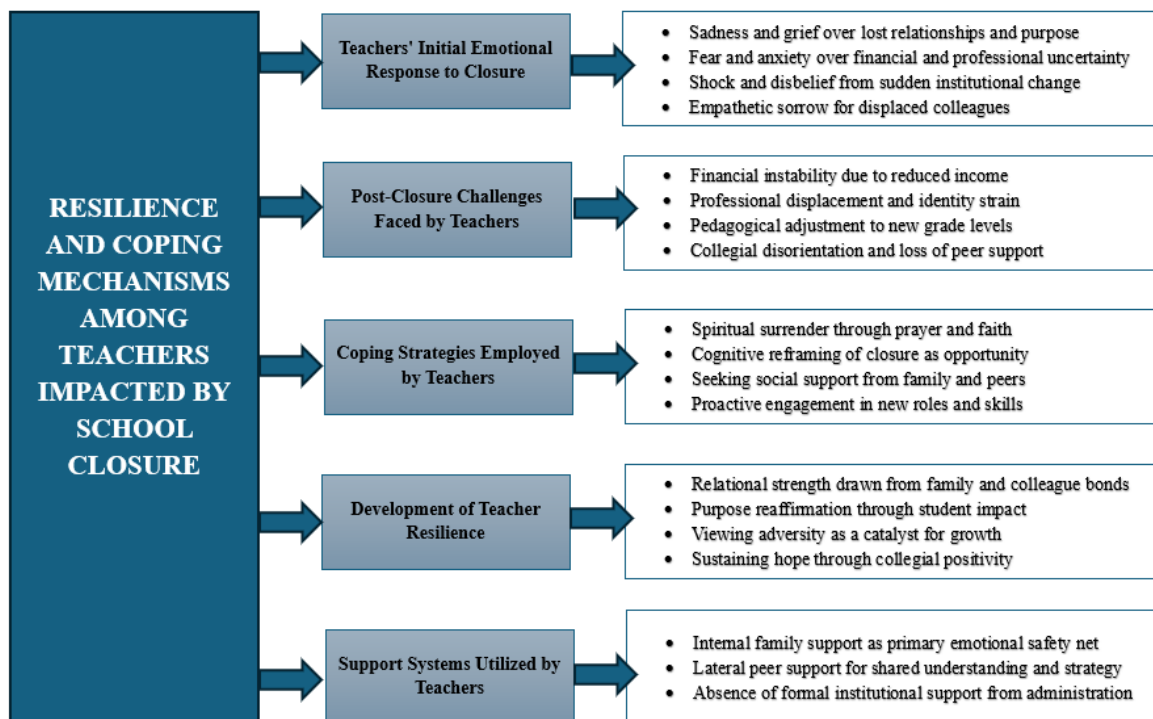


Figure 1. Framework of Teacher Resilience and Coping Following School Closure

The most important results of the research are illustrated in Figure 1, according to which the process of experiences of teachers in a school closing appeared in the sequence and connection process. It starts with the emotions of the teachers: sadness, fear, shock, and empathetic sorrow, which are the result of the profound personal and interpersonal effects of the closure. These feelings were accompanied by tangible post-closure difficulties, such as financial insecurity, career displacement, pedagogic accommodation, and interference with the collegial networks, which pushed the teachers to their limits. In turn, teachers responded to stress with the help of various coping strategies, including spiritual surrender, cognitive reframing, social support search, and proactive engagement, which contributed to stress management and allowed teachers to ameliorate practical demands.

These experiences and strategies over time have led to the development of resilience that became stronger with relational support, reaffirmation of professional purpose, reframing adversity as growth, and positivity among colleagues. During this process, the teachers relied mainly on family and peer support, even though the institutional support was minimal. The framework emphasizes how resilience is dynamic and socially mediated and is shaped by the relational networks and limited by institutional structure, and how it is important to have organized support from educational leaders in times of crisis.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

Establish Structured Peer-Support Networks – Create and provide teachers with the means of sharing experience and strategies in order to decrease isolation and offer mutual support.

Ensure Clear and Compassionate Communication – Give early, transparent information about the closure and transition plans to reduce the teachers' feelings of uncertainty, fear, and shock.



Provide Financial and Job Security Support – Provide financial help or promised teaching loads to alleviate short-term financial tension on the impacted teachers.

Offer Targeted Training and Professional Development – Give displaced teachers adapt to new grade levels, subjects, or pedagogical demands through focused training programs.

Facilitate Access to Counseling and Reduce Administrative Burdens – Offer teachers the counseling services and minimize non-teaching responsibilities so educators can prioritize recovery and focus on their students.

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