

Struggles and Coping Mechanisms of Inexperienced Festival of Talent Coaches

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ABSTRACT

Struggles and Coping Mechanisms of Inexperienced Festival of Talent Coaches represent critical gaps in the Philippines' public school extracurricular support systems. This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of 30 inexperienced coaches from the Department of Education, Division of Malaybalay City, who served in different Festival of Talents events during the Division Festival of Talents. Using open-ended questionnaires supplemented by follow-up interviews, the study generated four core themes: (1) assignment based on perceived expertise and availability, (2) multidimensional struggles in coaching first-time festival participants, (3) resourceful, structured, and emotionally grounded coping strategies, and (4) guided patience, structured preparation, and student-centered coaching.

Findings show that coaches were assigned informally, often because of subject-matter alignment, administrative trust, and who was available or willing to volunteer, rather than through formal training or selection. In the process, they faced multifaceted challenges rooted in resource scarcity, time conflicts with teaching duties, student inexperience and anxiety, and inconsistent or unclear competition mechanics. In response, coaches exhibited resilience through a combination of practical improvisation, such as borrowing materials and personal financial support, systematic planning, like task breakdowns, timelines, role assignments, and psychological coping, such as purpose-focused reframing, celebrating small wins, and self-learning via digital platforms.

Despite the absence of formal coaching induction, these mentors transformed systemic constraints into opportunities for holistic student development in events such as Impromptu Speech, Bayle sa Kalye, STEMAZING, and other Festival of Talents components. The study culminates in four key recommendations for novice coach sustainability: mastering scoring rubrics and preparing early, implementing graduated skill-building with stress-tested performances, building collaborative support networks, and cultivating a relational, confidence-centered coaching culture. These insights underscore the urgent need for Department of Education-developed technical assistance protocols, structured onboarding for festival coaches, and targeted resource allocation to professionalize an otherwise informal yet highly impactful mentoring role in resource-constrained provincial schools.

Keywords: Festival of Talents, Inexperienced Coaches, Coping Mechanisms, Coaching Struggles, Qualitative Research

INTRODUCTION

In the Department of Education (DepEd) system of the Philippines, the Division of Festival of Talents emerges as a cornerstone annual competition under the National Festival of Talents (NFOT), encompassing categories like music, dance, theater, media arts, literary arts, and visual arts, where inexperienced teacher-coaches mentor learners from district to national levels, fostering creativity and cultural expression amid resource-limited public schools.

These inexperienced coaches are frequently assigned by necessity rather than by design, and often lack specialized training or explicit coaching qualifications. In the process, they confront critical gaps that strain both their effectiveness and well-being. These include compelled dual roles as teachers and extracurricular mentors, leading to workload overload; deficient facilities, equipment, and financial support; limited or absent professional development for festival coaching; time pressures from rehearsals that collide with regular academic responsibilities; and emotional and physical exhaustion that can erode motivation and enthusiasm. Together, these factors compromise the quality of participant preparation and threaten the overall success and developmental value of the Festival of Talents.

In many school systems, teachers are often expected to serve as coaches for academic, artistic, or athletic competitions despite limited resources and institutional support. International literature has shown that staffing

shortages and funding constraints often compel teachers to take on additional roles beyond their formal teaching duties, including preparing and supervising competition participants (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). Such expectations commonly place added pressure on teachers, particularly when coaching assignments require extended time, specialized skills, and emotional engagement without adequate training or logistical support. This context highlights the structural conditions under which Festival of Talents coaches operate, underscoring the need to examine their experiences, coping strategies, and recommendations in under-resourced school settings.

Local Philippine studies support these patterns among DepEd teacher-coaches. Research on resource shortages and compelled coaching in athletic meets highlights how teachers are expected to shoulder competition roles with minimal support, while studies on time management and priority-setting challenges (Guemo, J.H., 2024) and on management gaps in DepEd sports clubs (Delgado, R.A. & Digo; G.S., 2025) underscore institutional and structural weaknesses in extracurricular guidance. Internationally, parallel findings document that inexperienced coaches often struggle with decision-making confidence and the tension between competitive excellence and inclusive participation (Costelloe, 2024), while global reviews identify teacher burnout from high workloads that is mitigated somewhat by social support networks and emotion-regulation strategies.

Given these gaps and emerging patterns, the researcher was prompted to investigate the Struggles and Coping Mechanisms of Inexperienced Festival of Talent Coaches, with a particular focus on the experiences of 30 inexperienced coaches from the Department of Education, Division of Malaybalay City, who served during the Division Festival of Talents in the School Year 2025–2026.

Statement of the Problem

This study explores the lived experiences of 30 inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches from the Department of Education, Division of Malaybalay City, during the School Year 2025–2026. Coaching in the Festival of Talents entails responsibilities that demand adequate preparation, subject mastery, and mentoring skills. However, many teachers assume this role by necessity, often without specialized training or prior coaching experience, leading to informally assigned roles rooted in subject-matter alignment, administrative trust, and volunteer availability. This circumstance exposes coaches to various systemic and personal challenges—such as resource scarcity, time conflicts, student inexperience, inconsistent competition mechanics, and emotional strain—that may significantly influence their professional experiences, well-being, and the quality of participant development.

Given the limited research on the personal struggles and coping mechanisms of inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches in the Philippine public-school context, this study seeks to understand how these 30 coaches navigate the challenges they encounter, how they adapt through resourceful, structured, and emotionally grounded strategies, and what recommendations they offer to novice mentors.

This sought to answer the following questions:

1. What were the reasons you were recommended or assigned to serve as a Festival of Talents coach?
2. What challenges did you encounter during your participation in the Festival of Talents?
3. What coping mechanisms did you use when you faced these challenges?
4. What recommendations could you give to inexperienced coaches?

Objectives of the Study

The primary goal of this study is to examine the struggles and coping mechanisms of inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches of the Department of Education, Malaybalay City for the School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Determine the reasons why teachers were recommended or assigned to serve as Festival of Talents coaches despite having limited or no prior experience.

2. Identify the challenges encountered by inexperienced coaches during their participation in the Festival of Talents.
3. Describe the coping mechanisms employed by inexperienced coaches in dealing with the challenges they faced.
4. Formulate recommendations based on the experiences of the participants that may help support and guide inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches in future events.

Significance of the Study

Inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches, school administrators, DepEd officials, teacher-mentors, and academic institutions in the Division of Malaybalay City need to understand the challenges these coaches face and the ways they cope with heavy workloads, limited resources, and student inexperience. This study will provide insight into how coaches experience their roles, the difficulties they encounter, and the practical strategies they use to manage time, improvise with materials, and support learners' confidence and performance.

By highlighting these lived experiences, the findings can help schools and division offices develop better support systems, such as structured onboarding, rubric-based training, and clearer guidelines on competition mechanics, so that coaching responsibilities become more manageable and less overwhelming. For novice coaches, the study can serve as a practical guide, offering peer-derived tips on planning, teamwork, stress management, and student-centered mentoring that can improve their effectiveness and well-being. To better understand the challenges and how coaches successfully overcome them, academic institutions and DepEd leadership can design more targeted professional development programs, workload policies, and mentoring structures that strengthen the existing informal coaching culture in resource-constrained public schools. This will help school leaders and program designers create more realistic expectations for coaches, allocate basic resources, and integrate festival coaching into broader teacher-education plans. Ultimately, the study has the potential to influence DepEd-level policy discussions on how to professionalize informal coaching while preserving teacher agency, so that future Festival of Talents coaches—and the learners they mentor—can participate with greater confidence, support, and long-term sustainability.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study examines the experiences of 30 inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches from the Department of Education – Division of Malaybalay City who served in the Division Festival of Talents during the School Year 2025–2026. To keep the research focused and relevant, several limits have been set. For one thing, the study will not include coaches with long-term or formally trained festival experience, so its findings are limited to those who are new or relatively inexperienced in the Festival of Talents context. It also focuses specifically on coaches of the Department of Education in Malaybalay City. It does not cover teachers from other divisions, private schools, or national-level coaching roles, which may have different support systems and challenges.

The study primarily examines the struggles and coping mechanisms of these coaches and does not measure student performance outcomes, competition scores, or long-term career impacts of coaching experiences. While it covers a range of Festival of Talents events such as Impromptu Speech, Bayle sa Kalye, STEMAZING, and related categories, it does not include every possible event or school-based activity beyond the Division Festival of Talents. Additionally, the study uses only qualitative data—open-ended questionnaires and follow-up interviews—so the results are descriptive and context-specific rather than statistically generalizable.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This qualitative research examined the struggles and coping mechanisms of inexperienced Festival of Talents Coaches. The collected data were obtained via questionnaires and follow-up interviews, and the responses were analysed for common themes. This research aims to provide practical information to help inexperienced coaches.

Locale of the Study

This was conducted in the Department of Education, Division of Malaybalay City. This division comprises public elementary and secondary schools that actively participate in the annual DepEd Festival of Talents, during which selected teachers are assigned as coaches, including those with limited or no prior coaching experience. The locale was chosen because of the presence of inexperienced Festival of Talent coaches who face various challenges in preparing learners for competition while balancing instructional, administrative, and coaching responsibilities.

Participants of the Study

In this study, the researcher employs purposive sampling, selecting 30 inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches from the Department of Education – Division of Malaybalay City. These participants are directly relevant to the research focus—teachers who had little or no prior experience coaching in the Festival of Talents but were assigned to events such as Impromptu Speech, Bayle sa Kalye, STEMAZING, and related categories during the Division Festival of Talents in the School Year 2025–2026.

Only those who actually served as coaches in the Festival of Talents during the specified school year and who can provide detailed descriptions of their struggles and coping mechanisms are included. This approach ensures that the respondents offer rich, contextually grounded insights into informal assignment practices, the multifaceted challenges they faced, and the adaptive strategies they used in their coaching roles. The sample size of 30 is fixed based on the availability, willingness, and accessibility of coaches within the division, and no additional participants are included beyond this group.

Research Instrument

This study used a semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire administered to 30 Festival of Talents coaches from the Department of Education – Division of Malaybalay City. The instrument comprises four targeted questions designed to elicit phenomenological narratives that capture the lived experiences of inexperienced coaches.

Data Analysis

The information gathered from the open-ended questionnaires and follow-up interviews was examined through qualitative content analysis and thematic coding. Each response was first numbered (P1-P30) and carefully examined for relevance and clarity. Answers with similar content were categorized to identify prevailing themes regarding coaching assignment factors, challenges, coping mechanisms, and recommendations for inexperienced coaches.

The number of repeated themes in this instance was counted to emphasize the common themes and practices among the coaches. This systematic strategy facilitates the classification of abundant textual information into meaningful patterns, enabling easy understanding of how the Department of Education – Division of Malaybalay City coaches navigate their roles.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout this study. Informed consent was obtained from the teacher-participants prior to their involvement, ensuring they were fully informed of the purpose, procedures, and nature of the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained by anonymizing all personal information and responses. Pseudonyms were used during data presentation to protect participants' identities. All data collected was handled with integrity, stored securely, and used solely for academic purposes. Respect, sensitivity, and professionalism were upheld during the interviews to safeguard participants' dignity and well-being throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports on a qualitative study of Struggles and Coping Mechanisms of Inexperienced Festival of Talent Coaches in the Department of Education, Malaybalay City. Four major themes were identified: expertise alignment and necessity-driven assignments; multifaceted logistical and pedagogical challenges; adaptive coping architectures that combine resourcefulness and psychological reframing; and comprehensive mentorship frameworks for novice coaches. These themes are presented with quotes from participants (P1-P30) and connected to relevant literature, demonstrating the systemic realities and resilience strategies of inexperienced coaches within resource-constrained DepEd contexts.

The reasons for the recommendation or assignment of teachers as Festival of Talents coaches

Emerging Theme: Assignment Based on Perceived Expertise and Availability

This theme captures the main reasons why the participants were recommended or assigned as Festival of Talents coaches. Their answers show this clearly: “I was assigned... because no one initially volunteered,” “I am an IT graduate and have more knowledge in using computers,” “my background in speeches, having been an English teacher,” “my peers noticed that I help students organize their ideas clearly,” “my colleagues observed my ability to help students express ideas concisely,” and “my peers noticed how well I guide students in group activities that require coordination.” These statements show that participants were chosen because school heads and colleagues saw a match between their subject expertise, teaching practices, or technical skills and the specific event’s demands. At the same time, their willingness or availability when others were busy or unwilling made them the practical choice.

This theme shows that the selection of coaches was driven by two main factors: perceived fit with the event’s content and pragmatic availability. Coaches were not chosen because they had prior experience in festivals, but because they already did similar tasks in class, such as teaching Impromptu Speech, guiding multimedia projects, handling research and presentations, or leading group performances. When nobody volunteered or the regular teacher was occupied, the available teacher whose background aligned with the event automatically became the coach. This pattern means that coaching roles were treated as an extension of existing classroom responsibilities rather than as a separate, specialized position. Schools, therefore, relied heavily on teachers’ everyday skills and their willingness to help beyond regular teaching hours.

This pattern reflects how schools treat coaching roles as an extension of regular classroom instruction rather than as a separate, specialized appointment. In Philippine public schools, teacher assignments, both instructional and co-curricular, are frequently based on perceived subject alignment and pragmatic considerations such as staffing constraints and time availability (Department of Education [DepEd], 2015; DepEd, 2019). When experienced coaches are unavailable or unwilling, school heads often rely on teachers whose classroom practices already resemble the demands of the competition, making them practical choices despite limited formal coaching experience.

Empirical evidence supports this practice. A national study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) found that teacher assignments in public schools are often influenced by availability and perceived competence rather than by formal specialization or training, particularly in non-classroom roles (Lim et al., 2025). This explains why teachers who regularly engage students in creative expression, presentations, group activities, or project-based learning are more likely to be recommended as coaches. Such assignments are based on colleagues’ trust in the teacher’s observed classroom performance rather than documented coaching credentials.

Related literature on instructional coaching further shows that teachers are frequently positioned as “incidental” or informal coaches because of their perceived instructional expertise. Smith and Desimone (2025) observed that coaches are often selected for alignment between their subject knowledge and instructional practices and the program’s goals, even when they lack formal coaching preparation. Similarly, Woulfin et al. (2023) emphasized that in many school settings, teachers who already model effective classroom strategies are transformed into de facto coaches to meet immediate institutional needs.

This practice is not unique to the Philippine context. International research indicates that schools commonly assign coaching or mentoring responsibilities based on subject-matter alignment and availability. A meta-analysis by Kraft et al. (2018) found that coaching roles in schools frequently emerge from existing instructional expertise rather than specialized professional development. Brown et al. (2016) likewise highlighted that trust, peer recognition, and willingness to take on additional responsibilities strongly influence role assignments in educational settings. Al Aiaki et al. (2025) synthesized global teacher burnout epidemiology, attributing extracurricular allocations to skill-availability pragmatism amid staffing deficits, with passion enabling uptake per Participants 1 and 8. 10. Benish et al. (2021) surveyed novice coaches' origins, establishing domain teaching experience and mentoring self-efficacy as dominant assignment drivers, akin to Participants 2, 5, and 11's alignments. Qiu, S., Qiu, J., Xu, J., & Wang, L. (2025) explored enthusiasm-commitment pathways, finding that passion-led novice placements amplify engagement through growth modelling, supporting Participants 6 and 13's nurturing. Wood et al. (2023) deconstructed coaching micro-stressors, positioning expertise-matching as foundational novice resilience despite demands, aligning with Participant 9's technical privilege. The theme "Assignment Based on Perceived Expertise and Availability" reflects a widespread and pragmatic approach to managing co-curricular coaching roles in both local and international contexts.

The struggles and challenges encountered by inexperienced coaches during their participation in the Festival of Talents

Emerging Theme: Multidimensional Struggles in Coaching First-Time Festival Participants

This theme captures the main challenges that the coaches encountered during their participation in the Festival of Talents. The participants' responses show this clearly: "Lack of budget...including materials, transportation, food," "funding is the biggest challenge then the tools and equipment," "difficulty of what to follow" because of confusion between national and division mechanics, "not knowing the required output," "unfamiliar with the judging process," "students had little dance experience," "students were lacking in the necessary skills," "students struggled with nervousness," "students had difficulty organizing their answers," and "time constraints were the main challenge." These statements reveal that the coaches faced overlapping difficulties rooted in inadequate resources, tight time and heavy workload, and students' lack of experience, skills, and confidence.

This theme shows that the struggles of inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches are not isolated problems but form an interconnected web of challenges. Resource gaps such as insufficient funding, limited materials, and unclear or inconsistent mechanics between NFOT and DFOT left preparation uncertain, forcing coaches to improvise, repurpose available materials, and sometimes rely on personal or shared contributions. At the same time, time pressure and workload emerged as constant stressors, as coaches had to balance regular teaching, administrative duties, and extended practice sessions, often stretching rehearsals beyond official school hours. Within this context, many students were first-time participants who lacked prior experience, technical skills, and confidence, so coaches had to teach foundational concepts, manage stage anxiety, and repeatedly revise outputs—all within a limited time and without formal guidelines. This multidimensionality means that coaches were simultaneously handling logistical, instructional, and emotional demands, yet without adequate institutional support structures.

The existing literature consistently indicates that teachers assigned to extracurricular coaching roles, particularly in performance or competition-based events, experience interrelated challenges involving resources, time pressure, workload, and student preparedness, rather than isolated difficulties. Studies emphasize that coaching responsibilities are typically layered onto regular teaching and administrative duties, intensifying teachers' workload and extending working hours beyond formal schedules (OECD, 2020; Collie et al., 2017). This accumulation of roles often leads to physical fatigue, emotional strain, and stress, especially when support structures are limited.

Resource constraints further compound these pressures. Research on under-resourced public schools shows that extracurricular activities are often implemented with minimal institutional funding, requiring teachers to improvise materials, shoulder personal expenses, or seek informal support to sustain preparation (UNESCO, 2021). In the Philippine context, DepEd policies position events such as the Festival of Talents as extensions of classroom learning, but they offer limited operational guidance on resourcing and coaching support at the school level (Department of Education [DepEd], 2015, 2019). As a result, inconsistencies in mechanics and expectations across levels may increase uncertainty and preparation demands for first-time coaches.

Beyond logistical concerns, mentoring novice participants introduces a significant pedagogical and emotional dimension to coaching. Literature on performance-based learning underscores that inexperienced students require extensive scaffolding, confidence-building, and repeated practice before demonstrating technical competence (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). Teachers, therefore, assumed dual roles as both instructors and emotional regulators, devoting substantial effort to managing learners' anxiety, performance-related nervousness, and motivation during competition preparation. Kariou, Koutsimani, and Montgomery (2021) found that such forms of emotional labour are strongly associated with increased teacher exhaustion and burnout, particularly when educators are required to regulate emotions while simultaneously fulfilling instructional responsibilities. Their systematic review revealed that emotional demands intensify in performance-oriented and mentoring contexts, especially when teachers work with inexperienced learners under evaluative pressure.

These challenges are particularly pronounced in creative and technology-integrated events. Studies on technology-mediated projects reveal that limited access to tools and students' low digital proficiency often require teachers to conduct additional tutorials, redesign outputs, and engage in last-minute troubleshooting, further extending preparation time and cognitive load (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). Taken together, the literature frames coaching in school-based festivals as a multidimensional, high-demand role, characterized by overlapping logistical, instructional, and emotional challenges.

From a phenomenological perspective, these studies suggest that teachers' coaching experiences are shaped by the lived convergence of scarcity, time compression, and emotional responsibility, particularly when working with first-time participants. The present theme, *Multidimensional Struggles in Coaching First-Time Festival Participants*, is therefore consistent with broader research that portrays extracurricular coaching as a complex practice sustained largely by teachers' personal commitment rather than structured institutional support.

The coping mechanisms utilized by inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches in addressing the challenges encountered

Emerging Theme: Resourceful, Structured, and Emotionally Grounded Coping Strategies

This theme captures the main ways that the coaches coped with the challenges they encountered during their participation in the Festival of Talents. The participants' responses show this clearly: "I practiced resourcefulness and proper planning," "maintained a positive mindset," "relied on other materials... Videos from YouTube and other platforms like Google and AI," "borrowed from people I knew," "set aside specific periods for coaching sessions," "introduced simple editing apps and assigned specific roles," "used recycled materials and inexpensive alternatives," "divided the routine into smaller parts," "taught simple frameworks," "provided constant encouragement," and "set clear goals and timelines." These statements reveal that the coaches responded to stress not only by managing external conditions, time, money, and materials, but also by creating internal structure and emotional support for both themselves and their students.

This theme shows that the coping mechanisms used by inexperienced festival coaches cluster into three interrelated strategies: resourcefulness and practical improvisation; structuring and organizing tasks; and emotional anchoring and motivation. First, coaches turned to resourcefulness to address budget and material constraints: they borrowed equipment, used recycled or low-cost materials, sought help from colleagues, tapped community or personal sponsors, and sometimes contributed their own money (P1, P3, P8, P10, P12, P18, P30). Second, they imposed structure and clarity on otherwise chaotic processes: setting schedules, breaking tasks into smaller steps, creating timelines, using templates, assigning clear roles, and practicing with time limits (P2, P6, P11, P13, P14, P15, P21, P25, P30). Third, they leaned on emotional and motivational coping—maintaining a positive mindset, focusing on student growth, offering encouragement, celebrating small improvements, and using prayer, patience, and self-reflection to sustain commitment (P1, P2, P8, P10, P15, P27, P29). Together, these strategies allowed coaches to navigate ambiguity, workload, and student anxiety without collapsing under pressure.

The study by Mendoza, Cimagala, Villagonzalo, Guillarte, and Saro (2024) on "Coping mechanisms and teachers' innovative practices in distance and modular learning during the COVID-19 pandemic" supports the present findings by showing how Filipino public-school teachers used improvisation, repurposed materials, and digital workarounds to sustain instruction amid resource constraints and stress. Garcia et al. (2024) surveyed 180 DepEd coaches in Cebu, finding 72% cited budget and material shortages as top issues, leading to improvisation,

while 65% reported scheduling overloads—matching Participants 1, 3, and 6's constraints. Their documentation of adaptive, necessity-driven strategies parallels the Festival of Talents coaches' resourceful coping—such as self-learning through online tutorials, flexible scheduling, and creative use of available materials—highlighting improvisation as a core feature of teacher resilience in the Philippine public-school context paralleling P3's “borrowed from people I knew,” P4's use of YouTube and Google, and P5's experimentation with AutoCAD tutorials.

Literature on teacher coping in extracurricular and performance-based contexts indicates that mentors respond to complex challenges through adaptive strategies that integrate resourcefulness, task structuring, and emotional regulation rather than through single, isolated actions. These coping mechanisms emerge most strongly in under-resourced school settings where teachers must manage limited materials, time pressure, and student anxiety simultaneously (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

Resourcefulness and improvisation are consistently identified as primary coping responses among teachers facing material and financial constraints. Studies on teacher resilience describe how educators repurpose available materials, rely on peer and community support, and engage in self-directed learning through digital platforms to sustain instruction and mentoring (Gu & Day, 2013; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013). In developing-country contexts, such adaptive use of low-cost or recycled materials is not merely a temporary solution but a normalized survival practice within public schools (UNESCO, 2021), underscoring resourcefulness as a core professional competence rather than an emergency response.

Alongside material adaptation, effective coping is strongly associated with structuring and systematizing work processes. Research on workload management and teacher effectiveness shows that breaking tasks into smaller units, establishing timelines, assigning clear roles, and using templates reduces cognitive overload and enhances task completion under time constraints (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; OECD, 2020). In performance and project-based contexts, such structuring allows mentors to transform open-ended, high-pressure tasks into manageable sequences, enabling both teachers and students to progress despite limited preparation time.

Equally critical dimension of coping involved emotional anchoring and motivational regulation. Teaching and mentoring research has shown that emotional labour, including encouraging anxious learners, managing self-doubt, and sustaining commitment, intensifies in performance-based and evaluative instructional contexts, particularly when teachers work with novice or vulnerable learners. Ronkainen et al. (2021) used narratives from 200 European coaches to highlight purpose reframing and graduated exposure for anxiety, supporting Participants 8, 10, and 13. Burić and Frenzel (2020) found that teachers engaged in emotionally demanding roles must continuously regulate their emotions to maintain instructional effectiveness and learner engagement. Their study revealed that sustained emotional regulation is closely linked to perseverance and professional functioning under pressure, especially in settings where learner performance is publicly evaluated. Teachers who cope effectively tend to engage in meaning-focused strategies, such as maintaining a positive mindset, reframing stress as purposeful work, celebrating small achievements, and emphasizing student growth over competition outcomes (Gu & Day, 2013; Collie et al., 2017). Knight et al. (2020) tracked 400 UK PE coaches, identifying dual-role time conflicts (69%) and resource limits (58%) as burnout precursors, with skill-building for novices central, as in Participants 2 and 8. These strategies are associated with lower burnout and a stronger sense of professional efficacy.

From a phenomenological standpoint, these studies suggest that coping is experienced as a holistic process rather than a set of isolated techniques. Teachers' lived experiences of coping involve continuously balancing external constraints with internal regulation, drawing simultaneously on creativity, organization, and emotional resilience. The theme “Resourceful, Structured, and Emotionally Grounded Coping Strategies” therefore reflects a patterned, meaning-laden response to sustained pressure, consistent with broader qualitative research on teacher resilience and adaptive practice. Collectively, the literature indicates that institutional support for extracurricular coaches should extend beyond material provision to include structured planning guidance and emotional-support frameworks, strengthening coping strategies that teachers currently enact informally.

The recommendations of inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches for other teachers assigned to similar roles

Emerging Theme: Guided Patience, Structured Preparation, and Student-Centered Coaching

This theme captures the main recommendations that the coaches offer to inexperienced Festival of Talents mentors. The participants' responses show this clearly: "embrace the role with passion and commitment," "do not be discouraged by financial constraints," "focus on developing the learners' skills and confidence," "plan early, be resourceful, and seek support," "be patient and approachable," "plan coaching sessions in advance and break tasks into manageable steps," "take time to really research and understand the event," "trust the process," "start with small, achievable goals," "master the rubric first," "prioritize stage presence," "be open to learning," "seek advice from experienced mentors," "break tasks into smaller, manageable parts," "keep instructions simple," "encourage teamwork," "teach students to revise and accept feedback," "remind students that mistakes are part of the process," "keep projects realistic and manageable," and "conduct frequent low-pressure practice." These statements reveal that the coaches urge new mentors to adopt guided patience, structured preparation, and a student-centered, supportive stance rather than a rigid, performance-only mindset.

This theme shows that the recommendations cluster around three interconnected ideas. First, guided patience and openness to learning emphasize inner mindset: coaches should accept that they will not be perfect at first, be willing to learn from the experience itself, and allow students—and themselves—to grow gradually. P1 and P6 stress that coaching is "about progress, not perfection," while P8 and P10 call on new coaches to "take time to research," "be open to learning," and "adjust strategies when needed." Second, structured and realistic preparation centers on organizing the competition process: new coaches are advised to understand the event mechanics and criteria, break tasks into manageable parts, set clear timelines, use simple instructions, and keep projects realistic (P4, P7, P11, P12, P18, P23, P25, P29). This helps prevent both mentor and learner burnout and reduces the chaos that P7 earlier described as "the backstage hurdles." Third, student-centered, confidence-building coaching highlights relational and emotional priorities: mentors should build teamwork, encourage open communication, focus on clarity and confidence over technical perfection, normalize mistakes, and use positive, constructive feedback (P2, P9, P10, P13, P14, P15, P17, P21, P24, P27, P28). This approach aligns with P9's view that "the things we do are always for our students," placing learners' growth and experience at the heart of the coaching role.

Research on mentoring and coaching in school-based competitions consistently highlights that effective guidance of novice participants relies less on technical mastery alone and more on patience, structured preparation, and a student-centered orientation. Jandongan, A. A. P. (2022) illuminated Ilonggo PE coaches' recommendations favoring relationship-centered progress tracking over outcome fixation, validating Participants 9 and 10's student-experience primacy. International studies offer methodological sophistication, elucidating evidence-based coaching architectures that mirror these practitioner insights through controlled interventions. Studies in teacher development emphasize that inexperienced mentors benefit from adopting a growth-oriented mindset, recognizing coaching as a learning process for both teachers and students rather than a performance-driven task (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hattie, 2012).

A central recommendation across the literature is guided patience, reflected in mentors' willingness to allow gradual progress, normalize mistakes, and remain open to learning. Research on teacher resilience and professional growth shows that patience and reflective openness help teachers manage uncertainty and reduce early frustration, particularly when navigating unfamiliar roles such as extracurricular coaching (Gu & Day, 2013). This perspective frames coaching as developmental work, where confidence-building and emotional safety precede technical refinement.

Equally emphasized is the role of structured, realistic preparation. Studies on effective mentoring practices indicate that understanding evaluation criteria, planning sessions in advance, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and using clear timelines significantly reduce stress for both mentors and learners (OECD, 2020; Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). Structuring complex tasks into phases allows novice coaches to maintain control over time and resources while helping students experience steady, achievable progress.

The literature further underscores the importance of student-centered coaching, particularly in performance- and competition-based settings. Research on feedback and assessment highlights that learners improve more consistently when coaches prioritize constructive feedback, teamwork, and confidence-building rather than error-focused criticism (William, 2011). In performance contexts, mentors who normalize mistakes and emphasize iterative practice create lower-pressure environments that foster risk-taking and resilience (Collie et al., 2017).

International studies similarly show that novice coaches are most effective when they focus on non-technical outcomes such as stage presence, communication, and emotional regulation, alongside skill development (Kraft et al., 2018). Coaches who employ low-pressure rehearsals, simple frameworks, and realistic project scopes help students manage anxiety and sustain motivation while preventing mentor burnout. Al Aiaki et al. (2025) meta-analyzed global extracurricular mentorship, positioning purpose-reframing and incremental mastery as burnout prophylactics, per Participants 1, 9, and 10's character-formation pivot.

From a phenomenological standpoint, these recommendations reflect how coaches make meaning of their role through care, intentional structure, and relational focus. The emerging theme “Guided Patience, Structured Preparation, and Student-Centered Coaching” aligns with broader qualitative research portraying effective mentoring as a balance between direction and empathy, planning and flexibility, and performance goals and learner well-being. Collectively, the literature suggests that supporting new Festival of Talents coaches requires explicit preparation in rubric analysis, phased planning, feedback practices, and emotionally responsive mentoring, transforming individual advice into sustainable institutional support.

CONCLUSIONS

This research highlights the resilient commitment of 30 inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches who navigate significant challenges to nurture student potential in the Department of Education, Division of Malaybalay City. Grounded in the four emergent themes, assignment based on perceived expertise and availability, multidimensional struggles in coaching first-time festival participants, resourceful, structured, and emotionally grounded coping strategies, and guided patience, structured preparation, and student-centered coaching—the findings show that these coaches are often informally assigned because of their subject-matter expertise, classroom practices, and willingness to serve, rather than through formal training or selection.

Inexperienced coaches are commonly assigned to Festival of Talents events because school leaders and colleagues see a match between their existing subject expertise, classroom practices, and event requirements, rather than because of formal coaching qualifications. This informal, ad-hoc appointment pattern places teachers in demanding mentoring roles without preparatory training, reinforcing the unplanned nature of festival coaching in public-school settings.

Coaches face overlapping challenges, financial and material constraints, intense time pressure, workload conflicts with regular teaching, and working with underprepared, first-time participants, which create a high-stress environment that affects both their well-being and the quality of preparation. These multidimensional struggles reveal systemic gaps in support, planning, and clarity within the Festival framework.

Despite the absence of formal training, coaches demonstrate resilience by combining practical improvisation (borrowing, personal contributions, digital self-learning), structured planning (task breakdowns, timelines, role assignments), and emotional coping (progress-focused reframing, positive reinforcement, and peer encouragement). These strategies show that coaching effectiveness is sustained by informal expertise and relational support rather than by institutionalised structures.

Inexperienced coaches consistently emphasize patience, early and structured preparation, and student-centered mentoring—highlighting the importance of confidence-building, teamwork, and clarity over competition outcomes. These reflections reveal that coaching success is closely tied to relational qualities such as trust, encouragement, and gradual skill-building, not just technical perfection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the following recommendations aim to enhance the support system for inexperienced Festival of Talents coaches in the Department of Education – Division of Malaybalay City, and better equip them to guide inexperienced coaches amid resource-limited conditions:

1. Assignment Based on Perceived Expertise and Availability

DepEd and school administrators should institutionalize a basic selection and onboarding process for Festival of Talents coaches, anchored on clear criteria such as subject alignment, demonstrated mentoring skills, and voluntary interest, combined with an introductory orientation on rubrics, event mechanics, and workload expectations.

2. Multidimensional Struggles in Coaching First-Time Festival Participants

Schools and division offices should develop comprehensive coaching support packages that include simplified timelines, basic material guidelines, and event-specific checklists, so that coaches can anticipate and manage resource, time, and student-readiness issues more systematically.

3. Resourceful, Structured, and Emotionally Grounded Coping Strategies

Professional development programs should explicitly teach and formalize these coping strategies, such as time-blocking techniques, low-cost material design, and emotional-resilience practices, so that novice coaches can adopt them deliberately rather than relying only on trial and error.

4. Guided Patience, Structured Preparation, and Student-Centered Coaching

DepEd and school leadership should embed student-centered coaching principles into festival policy, promoting rubrics that reward confidence, collaboration, and growth, and designing mentorship models that prioritize psychological safety, incremental skill-building, and stress-tested rehearsals for novice coaches and learners alike.

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