

Student Teachers Practicum Anxiety during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The pandemic has brought different levels of anxiety to students and teachers alike. This paper looks into the levels of anxiety experienced by the Partido State University's (ParSU) Practice Teachers (PT's) during their practice teaching for the academic year 2021-2022 along the various practice teaching activities as well as analyze how the students are able to overcome those anxieties. Using the researcher-modified five-point Likert Student Anxiety Scale (STAS) to identify the levels of anxiety experienced by the PT's, two sample T-Test to compare the anxiety experienced by the PT's by gender, grade placement and course, and logistic regression analysis to see the effects of the PT's gender, grade placement, age and course on their anxiety, the researchers found that the PT's experience high levels of anxiety in lesson preparation, technology, cooperating teacher and subject/subject matter. The researchers also found that while there is no significant differences in the levels of anxiety experienced by the PT's, but their grade placement affects their anxiety in demonstration teaching and technology while their age affects their anxieties in demonstration teaching, managing virtual classroom and subject/subject matter. In overcoming those anxieties, the themes which emerged include time management to study the subject matter and prepare for demonstration teaching, exploring the features of the LMS for timely returning and checking of student outputs as well as communicating their concerns to their cooperating teacher. To reduce the anxiety of the practice teachers, especially that practice teaching is done virtually in the new normal, the researchers developed a mental health program for practice teachers experiencing practice teaching anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Pandemic, Practice Teaching, STAS

Introduction

Practice-teaching is an essential component of the teacher education curriculum in the Philippines. It is commonly done on the fourth and last year of a student-teacher in his undergraduate studies. Various teacher education institutions (TEI) across the country offer both on-campus and off-campus practice teachings. On-campus practice teaching refers to the time when student-teachers were given the opportunity to handle actual classes in the laboratory high school of their university or college, whereas off-campus practice teaching is conducted by sending the student-teachers to the partner elementary or secondary schools of their university or college for them to experience teaching in the actual field. Included in the various activities undertaken by student-teachers during their practice teaching are lesson planning, classroom management, records-keeping, demo-teaching, cooperating-teacher observation, feedbacking and many others.

Literatures suggest that during their practice teaching, practice-teachers experience anxiety. Anxiety is defined as the body's natural response to stress. It's a feeling of fear or apprehension about what's to come. The first day of school, going to a job interview, or giving a speech may cause most people to feel fearful and nervous (Holland, 2018).

Using the Student Teacher Anxiety Scale (STAS) developed by Hart (1987) and was modified by other researchers including Capel (1997), Morton, et. al (1997), Merc (2010), Ngidi & Sibaya (2003), Ek'i &

Yak???k (2016), Kanwal, Akhter & Kanwal (2017) and many others, findings on previous researches suggest that student teachers experience moderate level of anxiety during practice teaching (Hart, 1987; Wendt & Bain, 1989; Behets, 1990; Capel, 1997; Morton, Vesco, Williams & Awender, 1997 in Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003) while others suggest that student teachers report high anxiety levels in their practicum (Thompson, 1963; Erickson & Russ, 1967; Singh, 1972; Bradley, 1984; Kazu, 2001 in Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003).

Other studies on the other hand, which explored the sources of anxiety among student-teachers in practicum found that activities like classroom management is the major source of anxiety whereas the student-teacher's inexperience somewhat causes anxiety (Ek?i & Yak???k, 2016). While including classroom management as the sources of anxiety, other sources of student-teacher's practicum anxiety in the paper of Phil & Phil (2017) include teaching practices, cooperating teacher, lesson planning and evaluation from supervisor.

Anxiety for student-teachers in practicum is a worldwide incidence. Cross-country studies suggest that student teachers in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia all experience anxiety while they are deployed for their practicum (Ek?i & Yak???k, 2016). While other researchers suggest that anxiety levels could vary individually as personality plays an important role on how a person experiences or perceives anxiety, however, other factors could also include gender as well as culture (Heinrichs, et. al, 2006).

With restrictions on large gatherings including the holding of face to face classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery of instruction has migrated from the traditional face to face to online, modular or blended learning. So, in the conduct of practicum during the pandemic, the student-teachers are also forced to take their practice teaching virtually. As such, they are also mentored by their cooperating teachers virtually; and in extension, they too would have to meet their students synchronously via video conferencing tools such as google meet, zoom and etc. or asynchronously via the use of learning management system (LMS) like google classroom, moodle, canvass, etc.

The Philippines has very poor information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. On average, the internet speed could go around 71 MBPS, both download and upload for fiber connectivity while around 33 MBPS download speed and 8 MBPS for upload speed is recorded for wireless broadband internet (Barreiro, 2021). The rugged topography of the country also makes it almost impossible for some places to even receive cellular phone signals. While internet connectivity in urban areas are considered to be better in rural areas, however both urban and rural schools face the challenge of delivering instruction to their students as the students in the country are dispersed (Lacubay, 2014).

Partido State University, a university situated in the fourth district of the province of Camarines Sur, Philippines faces the same problem. Not only were majority of the students live in rural areas, but many of them are also considered to be living in poverty. It is because of this that the conduct of synchronous classes via video conferencing tools is futile as many would oftentimes find it hard to connect due to the intermittent internet connectivity, while others do not have the capacity to pay for prepaid internet or worst, others simply do not have the capacity to buy a smartphone or computer which are essential to attend classes virtually. To augment this dilemma, the university opted to go with blended learning; offering opportunities to students to pursue their classes either synchronously, asynchronously or via the printed modules to be delivered to their respective barangays (village).

While this strategy worked for other classes, the modular learning is not applicable for practice teaching. As such, the student-teachers in practicum would have to forego the modular learning option and go with synchronous classes for their practice teaching. In doing so, they have to meet their cooperating teachers virtually, and they would have to also conduct some of their lessons online via video conferencing so they could meet their students who opted to receive instruction synchronously. During the COVID-19 pandemic,

Partido State University opted for the practice-teachers to have their practicum virtually on-campus; holding students in the University's laboratory high school, and the subject teachers of the subject the practice teacher would be assigned to handle, be their cooperating teachers.

While previous studies on student teachers practicum anxiety were conducted before the pandemic, the present studies on the practicum of student-teachers during the pandemic were not focused on the anxiety that they were experiencing. This paper intends to contribute to literature by identifying the level of anxiety experienced by the Partido State University College of Education practice-teachers during their practice teaching for Academic Year 2021-2022 when it is being conducted online. Likewise, this paper also intends to identify the blended learning practice teaching elements which causes the student-teachers anxiety and analyze how the student-teachers are able to overcome these anxieties. These were also not included in the analysis of present papers on practice-teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, while contributing to knowledge, the findings of this paper will also become a basis for the development of a mental-health program for student-teachers who are going to conduct their practice-teaching online during the pandemic.

Generally, this paper aimed to identify the level of anxiety experienced by Partido State University College of Education practice-teachers during their practice teaching for the academic year 2021-2022.

Specifically, this paper sought to:

1. Identify the anxiety levels of student teachers during their practice teaching along:
2. Lesson preparation
3. Demonstration teaching
4. Managing virtual classroom
5. Grading and reporting
6. Technology
7. Cooperating teacher
8. Subject/subject matter
9. Compare the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers along the practice teaching activities by their gender, grade placement and course.
10. Identify the effects of the practice teacher's gender, grade placement, age and course on their anxiety along the practice teaching activities.
11. Analyze how the student-teachers are able to overcome their practice teaching anxiety.
12. Develop a mental health and skills development program for practice-teachers experiencing practice-teaching anxiety.

Methodology

The mixed method approach was adopted in the conduct of this study. This descriptive study combined quantitative analysis of the researcher-modified Student-Teacher Anxiety Scale (STAS) and qualitative analyses of the student-teacher's responses in the open ended interview and focused group discussion, the teachers anecdotal records and the student-teacher's journal. The researcher utilized the triangulation of the data gathering tools mentioned to have a deeper analysis of the responses.

The analysis of the STAS will enable the researchers to determine the level of anxiety of the student-teachers regarding their practice teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as identifying the practice-teaching activities which causes the student-teacher's anxiety.

In comparing the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers along the practice teaching activities by their gender, grade placement and course, the researcher utilized the two-sample T test.

The two sample T-test formula is:

$$t = \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) - (\mu_1 - \mu_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where:

X₁ = mean of first sample

X₂ = mean of second sample

u₁ = mean of first population

u₂ = mean of second population

s₁ = standard deviation of first sample

s₂ = standard deviation of second sample

n₁ = size of the first sample

n₂ = size of the second sample

In identifying the effects of the practice teacher's gender, grade placement, age and course on their anxiety along the practice teaching activities, the researchers utilized logistic regression.

The econometric model is:

$$P = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n)}} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \sum \beta_i X_i)}}$$

Where:

P = Y = Predicted probability of practice teacher becoming anxious along the various

practice teaching activities (Lesson Preparation, Demonstration Teaching, Managing Virtual Classroom, Grading and Reporting, Utilization of Technology, Observations from cooperating teacher)

B₀ = Y intercept

B₁X₁ = gender

B₂X₂ = grade placement

B₃X₃ = age

B₄X₄ = course

Table 1. Description of Variables Used in the Model

Variables		Description
Dependent Variables	Lesson Preparation	Probability of anxiety for Lesson Preparation
	Demonstration Teaching	Probability for anxiety for Demonstration Teaching
	Managing Virtual Classroom	Probability for anxiety for Managing Virtual Classroom
	Grading and Reporting	Probability for anxiety for Grading and Reporting
	Technology	Probability for anxiety for Utilization of Technology
	Cooperating Teacher	Probability for anxiety for Cooperating Teacher
	Subject/Subject Matter	
Independent Variables	Gender	Gender of the Practice Teacher
	Grade Placement	Grade Placement of the Practice Teacher
	Age	Age of the Practice Teacher
	Course	Course of the Practice Teacher

Table 1 shows the variables utilized in this study. The dependent variables are the probability of the students becoming anxious along the various practice teaching activities, namely: Lesson Preparation, Demonstration Teaching, Managing Virtual Classroom, Grading and Reporting, Technology, Cooperating teacher, whereas the independent variables are the gender, grade placement, age, and course of the practice teachers.

On the other hand, the analyses of the student-teachers responses to the open-ended questions during the interview and focused group discussion enabled the researcher to determine how the student-teachers were able to overcome their practice teaching anxiety. As the analysis of the practice-teachers responses to the STAS will enable the researchers to identify the practice-teacher’s activities which causes their anxiety, the open-ended questions in the interview and focused group discussion which will enable the researchers to identify the practice-teacher’s coping mechanism will be formulated based on these results. This is how the researchers will be blending the qualitative and the quantitative methods of the study.

As the STAS is a scale developed by Hart in 1987 and was modified by other researchers including Capel (1997), Morton, et. al (1997), Merc (2010), Ngidi & Sibaya (2003), Ek?i & Yak???k (2016), Kanwal, Akhter & Kanwal (2017) and many others were designed for face-to-face practice teaching, the researchers will be developing their own STAS which is adaptive to online practice-teaching. The researchers will be asking experts to validate their self-developed STAS.

After the researchers are able to identify the various activities in the practice-teaching which causes the practice-teacher’s anxiety, the researchers will develop a program composed of projects that would directly help the practice-teachers overcome the anxieties. These projects could include webinars on lesson planning, classroom management, records-keeping, demo-teaching, and talks on how to better prepare for classroom observation and how to deal with feedbacking and many others.

Free Prior and Informed Consent

In the conduct of this study, the participants will be given a free, prior and informed consent. They will be informed that their participation will be voluntary, that no compensation will be given, and that they can withdraw anytime. The survey will be conducted online via google form with the link sent to the practice-teachers via email. On the other hand, the focused group discussion and the open-ended interview will be conducted via google meet. Likewise the collection of the cooperating teacher’s anecdotal records and practice-teacher’s journal will be done via google drive.

Likewise, in view of the existing pandemic, the researchers will ensure that the health protocols established by IATF shall be appropriately observed.

Results and Discussion

Table 2. Summary Statistics of the Respondents

Gender		Grade Placement		Course		Age				
Male	Female	Grade 11	Grade 12	BEEd	BSEd	22	23	24	25	26
32	34	28	38	22	44	18	29	14	3	2
Total		66		66		66				

Table 2 shows the summary statistics of the respondents/participants of the study. There are a total of 66 practice teachers who took part in the online survey and participated in the interview and focused group discussion. For gender, there are 32 males and 34 female respondents. For grade placement, there are 28 participants doing their practice teaching in grade 11 and 38 in grade 12. For the course, there are 22 practice teachers enrolled in the BEEd program and 44 practice teachers enrolled in the BSEd program. For their age; there are 18 respondents who are 22 years old, 29 respondents who are 23 years old, 14 respondents who are 24 years old, 3 respondents who are 25 years old, and 2 respondents who are 26 years old.

Table 3. Anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers along the various practice teaching activities

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Lesson Preparation	66	4.28	0.509	3	5
Demonstration Teaching	66	4.85	0.690	1.6	5
Managing Virtual Classroom	66	3.81	0.933	1	5
Grading and Reporting	66	3.47	1.101	1.2	5
Technology	66	4.06	0.605	2.6	5
Cooperating Teacher	66	4.29	0.659	1.8	5
Subject/Subject Matter	66	4.18	0.781	1.8	5

Table 3 shows the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers along the various practice teaching activities. When asked at a scale of 1-5, 1 being never felt any anxiety at all and 5 as feeling anxiety very much for the various practice teaching anxiety, results show that the practice teachers has felt anxiety very much in demonstration teaching with a STAS mean score of 4.85 and moderate anxiety in cooperating teacher, lesson preparation, subject/subject matter and technology with STAS mean scores of 4.29, 4.28, 4.18 and 4.06 respectively. Finally, the practice teachers somewhat feel anxious in managing virtual classroom and grading and reporting with their STAS mean scores of 3.81 and 3.47 respectively.

This goes to show that in general, the practice teachers experience anxiety in all the practice teaching activities that they are undertaking. There are many causes of anxiety among practice teachers, but the common causes include cooperating teacher, lesson preparation and evaluation from cooperating teacher (Phil & Phil, 2017). Other causes of anxiety also include lesson planning, class management, and evaluation (Albasin-Lacaba, et. al, 2022). In the pioneering works of the early developers and users of the STAS, findings suggest that practice teachers experience moderate levels of anxiety during their practicum (Hart, 1987; Wendt & Bain, 1989; Behets, 1990; Capel, 1997; Morton, Vesco, Williams & Awender, 1997 in Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003), however others noted that practice teachers report high anxiety levels in many of their practicum activities (Thompson, 1963; Erickson & Russ, 1967; Singh, 1972; Bradley, 1984; Kazu, 2001 in Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003).

Table 4. Two sample T-Test results of the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers along the various practice teaching activities by their profile (gender, grade placement and course)

Means and Standard Deviations for the Student Teacher Anxiety Scale (STAS) for Each Factor in Practice Teaching

Factor	Groups	Obs	Mean	Difference	T Value	P Value
<i>Lesson Preparation</i>	Male	32	4.237	-0.0919	-0.729	0.468
	Female	34	4.329			
	Grade 11	28	4.185	-0.1721	-1.365	0.176
	Grade 12	38	4.357			
	BEEd	22	4.227	-0.863	-0.646	0.520
	BSEd	44	4.313			
<i>Demonstration Teaching</i>	Male	32	3.812	0.075	-0.442	0.659
	Female	34	3.888			
	Grade 11	28	3.742	-0.188	-1.099	0.275
	Grade 12	38	3.931			
	BEEd	22	3.945	0.140	0.779	0.438
	BSEd	44	3.804			
<i>Managing Virtual Classroom</i>	Male	32	3.75	-0.120	-0.521	0.603
	Female	34	3.870			
	Grade 11	28	3.657	-0.269	-1.161	0.250
	Grade 12	38	3.926			
	BEEd	22	3.936	0.186	0.762	0.448
	BSEd	44	3.750			
<i>Grading and Reporting</i>	Male	32	3.350	-0.238	-0.952	0.344
	Female	34	3.588			
	Grade 11	28	3.564	0.159	0.626	0.533
	Grade 12	38	3.405			
	BEEd	22	3.572	0.15	0.563	0.575
	BSEd	44	3.422			
<i>Technology</i>	Male	32	4.018	-0.093	-0.620	0.537
	Female	34	4.111			
	Grade 11	28	3.857	-0.363	-2.507	0.014***
	Grade 12	38	4.221			
	BEEd	22	3.909	-0.236	-1.508	0.136
	BSEd	44	4.145			
<i>Cooperating Teacher</i>	Male	32	4.131	-0.309	-1.949	0.049***
	Female	34	4.441			
	Grade 11	28	4.164	-0.219	-1.347	0.182
	Grade 12	38	4.384			
	BEEd	22	4.209	-0.122	-0.710	0.480
	BSEd	44	4.331			

<i>Subject Matter</i>	Male	32	4.093	-0.170	-0.887	0.378
	Female	34	4.264			
	Grade 11	28	4.042	-0.241	-1.245	0.217
	Grade 12	38	4.284			
	BEEd	22	3.990	-0.286	-1.414	0.162
	BSEd	44	4.277			

P-values in asterisk *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4 shows the two sample T-Test results of the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers along the various practice teaching activities by their gender, grade placement and course. From the p-values of the t-statistics which are more than the 0.05 alpha level, there is no significant differences in the anxiety levels experienced by the students in lesson preparation, demonstration teaching, managing virtual classroom, grading and reporting, and subject matter. This goes to show that regardless of the gender, grade placement and course, the practice teachers experience the same level of anxiety in the aforementioned practice-teaching activities. Previous studies support this claim as age, sex, degree program and field of specialization were found to not have any significant effect on practice teachers anxiety (Albasin-Lacaba, 2022). However, when it comes to technology, there is a significant difference between the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers in grade 11 and grade 12 (p=0.014; mean difference= 0.363). That is, practice teachers in Grade 12 experience higher level of anxiety as compared to practice teachers in Grade 11 when it comes to technology. Previous findings suggest that technology causes anxiety among teachers. That is why it is recommended that teachers be trained on the use of technology to reduce their anxiety (Johnson, et. al., 2012).

Likewise, when it comes to cooperating teacher, there is a significant difference between the anxiety levels experienced by the students by their gender (a p=0.049; mean difference= 0.30), where female practice teachers experience higher levels of anxiety compared to the male practice teachers in dealing with their cooperating teacher. This holds true in the study of Paker (2011) where they found that female practice teachers exhibit higher anxiety than male practice teachers. Likewise, in general, Soriano (2017) previously found that cooperating teachers really influence the anxiety experienced the practice teachers, but practice teachers feel at ease when they have a partnership with their cooperating teacher (Ek?i & Yak??k ,2016).

Table 5. Logit Regression Results of the regressors

Variables	Observations	R-squared	Coefficient			
			Gender	Grade Placement	Age	Course
<i>Lesson Preparation</i>	66	0.0711	0.0429 (0.183)	0.0454 (0.819)	0.022 (0.140)	0.047 (0.768)
<i>Demonstration Teaching</i>	66	0.1287	0.065 (0.433)	0.149 (0.095)*	0.082 (0.061)*	-0.143 (0.124)
<i>Managing Virtual Classroom</i>	66	0.1663	0.129 (0.198)	0.094 (0.375)	0.144 (0.007)***	-0.147 (0.187)
<i>Grading and Reporting</i>	66	0.0896	0.125 (0.300)	-0.204 (0.114)	0.103 (0.103)	0.006 (0.962)
<i>Technology</i>	66	0.0706	0.010 (0.895)	0.138 (0.095)*	0.044 (0.271)	-0.081 (0.345)

<i>Cooperating Teacher</i>	66	0.1247	0.080 (0.115)	0.053 (0.323)	0.039 (0.139)	-0.099 (0.081)*
<i>Subject Matter</i>	66	0.0897	0.049 (0.543)	0.013 (0.872)	0.095 (0.027)**	-0.013 (0.883)

P values in parenthesis

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5 is the logit regression table which shows the effects of the practice teachers profile (gender, grade placement, age and course) on the anxiety they experience along the various practice teaching activities namely; lesson preparation, demonstration teaching, managing virtual classroom, grading and reporting, technology, cooperating teacher and subject matter. From the various practice teaching activities, the anxiety experienced by the practice teachers in lesson preparation, demonstration teaching, grading and reporting, technology and cooperating teacher are not affected by their gender, grade placement, age and course. However, when it comes to managing virtual classroom, while the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers were not affected by their gender, grade placement and course, but the practice teacher’s age do (p=0.007; B=0.144), that is, for every percentage point increase in the practice teacher’s age, there is a 1.4 % increase in the level of anxiety they experience. Likewise, when it comes to the subject matter, the practice teachers gender, age placement and course do not affect their anxiety, but their age do (p=0.27; B=0.095), that is, for every percentage point increase in the age of the practice teachers, there is a .95 % increase in their anxiety. Previous studies do not support this finding as age, sex, degree program and field of specialization were found to not have any significant effect on practice teachers anxiety (Albasin-Lacaba, 2022). This also holds true in the study of Kwarteng (2018) that age has no association with the practice teacher’s anxiety during their practicum. However, these studies were conducted before the pandemic where the use of ICT in the classroom is very intensive especially during the times when education became full online. In an online setting where practice teachers have to use technology, it was found that it is one of the causes of teacher’s anxiety (Johnson, et. al, 2012).

Finally, while the student’s grade placement and age affects their anxiety in demonstration teaching (p= 0.095; B=0.149) and (p=0.061; B=0.082) respectively, but the effects are negligible. The same effect is evident in technology with grade placement (p= 0.095; B=0.138).

Table 6. Themes on how the practice teachers are able to overcome their anxiety

Category	Themes	Excerpts
<i>Lesson Preparation</i>	Time management	<p>“I really do my best to manage my time well so I could provide more time preparing the needs for my lesson. These include the lesson plan, power point preparation, interactive teaching tools online and a lot more.”</p> <p>-22, Male practice teacher</p> <p>“I allot ample time in preparing my lesson because I don’t want to face my students and cooperating teacher unprepared”</p> <p>-24, Female practice teacher</p>

<p><i>Demonstration Teaching</i></p>	<p>Time management</p>	<p>“To have a successful demonstration teaching, I make it sure that I am well prepared. I can only do that if I have managed my time well, and prepared for the demonstration teaching.”</p> <p>-23, Female practice teacher</p> <p>“One of the things that I am afraid of during demonstration teaching is not finishing my lesson because I did not manage my time well. So I time the preliminaries, lesson proper and assessment while I do the demonstration teaching so I will be able to utilize my time wisely.”</p> <p>-26, Male practice teacher</p>
<p><i>Managing Virtual Classroom</i></p>	<p>Exploring LMS</p>	<p>“I am not really aware of the features of moodle, the LMS that we are using. So when I was given access by my cooperating teacher, I have explored it’s features so I will know how I could maximize it and how I could manage the virtual classroom well.”</p> <p>-22, Female practice teacher</p> <p>“I’ve only known the features of moodle as a student. So when I became a practice teacher, I was given access to the features of moodle that are exclusive for teachers. So I tried navigating on those various features so I can check student’s outputs and comment on their forum as well as grade them. Also the videos and tutorials I’ve watched in youtube helped me lessen my anxiety of using moodle as teacher.”</p> <p>-24, Male practice teacher</p>
<p><i>Grading and Reporting</i></p>	<p>Checking and Returning of student’s outputs on-time</p>	<p>“During weekends, I ensure that I am able to check the student’s outputs, comment on them and return them as early as possible so I would not cram on checking the outputs and I am confident of the objectivity that I practiced in checking their outputs.”</p> <p>-25, Female practice teacher</p> <p>“Commenting on my student’s outputs and returning them on-time helps me overcome the anxiety I have in grading. It is because if I have checked the papers thoroughly, then I could discuss it’s weak and strong points, thus I am confident that the grades I would give to them wouldn’t be questioned, or if ever there is one, I can answer them and provide my justifications.”</p> <p>-26, Female practice teacher</p>

<p><i>Technology</i></p>	<p>Asking co-practice teachers for help</p>	<p>“Whenever I experience problem with technology, I ask my co practice teachers for help.”</p> <p>-22, Male practice teacher</p> <p>“Some of my co practice teachers are very good with technology. So whenever I am experiencing problems with one, I would simply ask them and they will be willing to help me. We work as a team anyway.”</p> <p>-23, Male practice teacher</p>
<p><i>Cooperating Teacher</i></p>	<p>Communicating concerns with cooperating teacher</p>	<p>“The expectations of my cooperating teacher really leave me anxious. But I try to overcome them by communicating with him the problems I have as well as my limitations. At the end of the day, my cooperating teacher is more than willing to help and guide me in my practice teaching journey.”</p> <p>-24, Male practice teacher</p> <p>“Actually, whenever my cooperating teacher is telling me of his concerns and expectations, I easily get anxious. But I feel lighter whenever I tell him about my concerns also because he assures me that I am on the right track. So communicating with him is the best thing I’ve done to lessen my anxiety.”</p> <p>-25, Female practice teacher</p>
<p><i>Subject Matter</i></p>	<p>Studying the lesson</p>	<p>“The subject that I am handling is actually not aligned with my discipline due to the limitations brought by the pandemic. But it is ok. As future teachers, it is expected that we have intensive knowledge of subject matters even not in-line with our field of specialization. What I do is study the lesson well and look for various resources. It helps me a lot in grasping the lesson. So I became more confident in teaching the lesson.”</p> <p>-24, Male practice teacher</p> <p>“I am a BEd practice teacher, but because we cannot do immersions in DepEd now, we were assigned at the laboratory high school. The topics there are more advanced than in elementary grades. But studying the lesson I am about to teach helped me overcome the anxiety I feel especially that I am to teach it to high school students.”</p> <p>-22, Male practice teacher</p>

Table 6 shows the themes that have emerged during the interview and focused group discussion on how the students are able to overcome the anxiety that they experience along the various practice teaching activities. For lesson preparation, the practice teachers said that they are able to overcome their anxiety by managing

their time well so they would be confident with their outputs (lesson plan, powerpoint presentation, integrative teaching tools online, etc). For Demonstration teaching, the practice teachers, likewise mentioned that they are able to overcome their anxiety by managing their time also, especially when their cooperating teacher is observing so they can avoid overtime, and they can provide more time to important parts of the discussion. For managing virtual classroom, the practice teacher said that they are able to overcome their anxiety by exploring the LMS so they will be able to know and maximize the various features of it for teachers. For grading and reporting, the practice teachers said that they are able to overcome their anxiety by checking and returning the outputs of the students on-time so they would be confident with the grades they have given and that they would be able to justify the reasons for their grades on the students. For technology, the practice teachers aid that they are able to overcome their anxiety by asking their fellow practice teachers, especially those who are more knowledgeable whenever they are experiencing problems. For cooperating teacher, the practice teachers said that in overcoming their anxiety, they communicate their concerns with their cooperating teacher as their cooperating teachers are more than willing to guide and help them. And finally, for subject matter, the practice teachers are able to overcome their anxiety by studying the lessons. They do it by looking at various sources as it helps them grasp the lesson more.

Previous researches has shed light on how the practice teachers are able to overcome their practice teaching anxiety. In a paper by Can (2019), for example, the practice teachers are able to overcome their practice teaching anxiety by seeking support from cooperating teacher. In another paper, it is claimed that the student teachers, in their personal coping strategies, uses rational/time organization strategies to reduce their practice teaching anxiety (Murray-Harvey, 2000).

Another coping mechanism to reduce anxiety would be to enhance confidence and develop positive communication with cooperating teacher (Lampadan, 2014). On the other hand, preparing also reduces anxiety among practice teachers. Building good relationship with students as well as cooperating teacher also reduces the practice teacher's anxiety (Charisma & Nurmallasari, 2020). Finally, observing experienced teachers also is found to help reduce the practice teacher's anxiety as the strategies utilized by seasoned teachers could be duplicated (Mahmoudi, 2016).

Conclusion

With the amount of anxiety felt by the practice teachers along the various practice teaching activities which include the high anxiety levels they experience in demonstration teaching, moderate levels of anxiety experienced in lesson preparation, subject matter, technology and cooperating teacher and low levels of anxiety in managing virtual classroom and grading and reporting, but still, all the practice teaching activities causes anxiety in the practice teachers. Practice teaching activities truly causes anxiety among practice teachers, especially with unexperienced ones ((Ek?i & Yak???k, 2016). Aside from classroom management, the other practice teaching activities which causes anxiety among practice teachers include the cooperating teacher, lesson preparation and evaluation from cooperating teacher (Phil & Phil, 2017). In a paper by Albasin-Lacaba, et. al (2022), they found that lesson planning, class management, and evaluation causes practice teacher's anxiety that is why they proposed an intervention to manage the anxiety of the PT's.

When it comes to the levels of anxiety experienced by the practice teachers along the various practice teaching activities by gender, grade placement and course, it was found out that the practice teachers teaching in higher year levels experience higher levels of anxiety compared to those practice teachers who are in lower grade levels. In a study of Ngidi & Sibaya (2003), they emphasized that gender, age and grade placement causes anxiety among practice teachers. While other works suggest that practice teachers in higher grade levels experience lesser anxiety (Gorospe, 2022), but the findings of this paper suggest otherwise. Likewise, in dealing with cooperating teachers, the female practice teachers experience higher

levels of anxiety compared with their male counterparts. This goes to show that the practice teacher's gender affect how they deal with the cooperating teacher. In a study of Fish and Fraser (2001), they found that female teachers often experience higher levels of anxiety compared with male teachers. This is also true with the claim of Ngidi & Sibaya (2003), that gender causes anxiety among practice teachers. While some papers suggest that gender does not have any correlate with practice teaching anxiety (Albasin-Lacaba, et.al, 2022), but the cooperating teacher's expectations from the practice teachers causes their anxiety (Gorospa, 2022).

When it comes to the effects of the practice teacher's gender, grade placement, age and course on the anxiety they experience along the various practice teaching activities namely; lesson preparation, demonstration teaching, managing virtual classroom, grading and reporting, technology, cooperating teacher and subject matter; the results show that the practice teacher's age has a significant effect in the anxiety they experience in managing virtual classroom. Likewise, the practice teacher's age also affects their anxiety levels in the subject matter they handle. Age affects practice teachers anxiety (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). In the same paper, Ngidi & Sibaya (2003) found that as the age of the practice teacher increases, their anxiety also increases.

Recommendations

From the findings of this research, the practice teachers experience anxiety in all their practice teaching activities though at varying levels. For demonstration teaching where the practice teachers experience high levels of anxiety, it is recommended that activities and webinars on increasing self-confidence be conducted. This would help the practice teachers with the anxiety they are experiencing in demonstration teaching. For lesson preparation, time management webinars which will be part of the mental health program for practice teachers should be conducted. For subject matter, aside from ensuring that the load of the practice teacher's is in line with their field of specification, there is a need to conduct trainings on the content knowledge of the subjects they will be handling. For technology, there is a need for the institution to provide the practice teachers both with infrastructure and skills support. For cooperating teachers, there is a need for them to be reoriented how to handle practice teachers and how to communicate their expectations. For managing virtual classroom, there is a need to conduct trainings and skills development workshops on the proper navigation and usage of features of the LMS. And for grading and reporting, there is a need to train the practice teachers on the usage of various assessment tools.

On the other hand, since practice teachers who are handling subjects in higher grade levels experience higher level of anxiety compared to practice teachers in lower years, there is also a need for them to attend activities and webinars on increasing self-confidence because they are at higher risk of experiencing students who challenge their knowledge on the subject matter. Likewise, since female practice teachers experience higher anxiety compared to their male counterparts, in light of parity, gender equality in the learning process where students with much needed support are given priority regardless of their gender should be extended to the female practice teachers.

In addition, since the practice teacher's age affects the anxiety they experience in managing virtual classroom and the subject matter they handle, more matured practice teachers should be given technological support and are to be prioritized for trainings on content knowledge of the subject they are about to teach. The institution must also ensure that the mature practice teachers be given subject loads that are aligned with their field of specialization.

Finally, in the appendix, a mental health program which incorporated all the recommendations in this paper was developed to help reduce the anxiety of future practice teachers doing their practice teaching.

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Appendix:

Action Plan

Mental Health and Skills Development Program for Practice Teachers

(From the findings of the research “Student Teachers Practicum Anxiety during the COVID-19 Pandemic”)

Research objectives	Research findings	Action/Activities to be undertaken	Agencies to be involved	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcome
1. Identify the anxiety levels of student teachers along the various practice teaching activities, namely: a. Lesson preparation b. Demonstration teaching c. Managing virtual classroom d. Grading and reporting e. Utilization of technology f. Observations from cooperating teacher	High levels of anxiety for Demonstration teaching	Webinar on boosting self-confidence	Guidance and Placement (GAP) Office	Improved self-esteem of practice-teachers	Holistic educators
	Moderate levels of anxiety in Lesson Preparation	Webinar on time management	Guidance and Placement (GAP) Office	Developed time-management skills of practice-teachers	
		Training on pedagogy	Faculty Association of Partido State University (FAParSU)	Increased pedagogical knowledge of practice-teachers	
	Moderate levels of anxiety in Subject Matter	Training workshop on content knowledge	Faculty Association of Partido State University (FAParSU)	Advanced content knowledge of practice-teachers	
	Moderate levels of anxiety in Technology	Infrastructure support and skills development training	Management Information System (MIS) office	Technophile practice-teachers	
	Moderate levels of anxiety in Cooperating Teacher	Training on handling practice teachers and communicating of expectations for cooperating teachers	Guidance and Placement (GAP) Office		
	Low levels of anxiety in Managing Virtual Classroom	Training and skills development workshops on the proper navigation and usage of features of the LMS	Management Information System (MIS) office	LMS knowledgeable practice teachers	
	Low levels of anxiety in Grading and Reporting	Training-workshop on the usage of various assessment tools	Faculty Association of Partido State University (FAParSU)	Practice teachers improved knowledge on various assessment tools	

<p>1. Compare the anxiety levels experienced by the practice teachers along the practice teaching activities by their gender, grade placement and course.</p>	<p>Practice teachers who are handling subjects in higher grade levels experience higher level of anxiety compared to practice teachers in lower years</p>	<p>Webinar on boosting self-confidence</p> <p>Training workshop on content knowledge</p>	<p>Guidance and Placement (GAP) Office</p> <p>Faculty Association of Partido State University (FAParSU)</p>	<p>Intensify self-esteem of practice-teachers</p> <p>Improved content knowledge of practice-teachers</p>
	<p>Female practice teachers experience higher anxiety compared to their male counterparts</p>	<p>Practice teaching support for female practice teachers</p>	<p>Gender and Development (GAD) Office</p>	<p>Gender parity in practice teaching</p>
<p>2. Identify the effects of the practice teacher's gender, grade placement, age and course on their anxiety along the practice teaching activities.</p>	<p>Practice teacher's age affects the anxiety they experience in managing virtual classroom</p>	<p>Training and skills development workshops on the proper navigation and usage of features of the LMS</p>	<p>Management Information System (MIS) office</p>	<p>LMS knowledgeable practice teachers</p>
	<p>Practice teacher's age affects the anxiety they experience in subject/subject matter they handle</p>	<p>Training workshop on content knowledge</p>	<p>Faculty Association of Partido State University (FAParSU)</p>	<p>Improved content knowledge of practice-teachers</p>