

## ADMINISTRATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

In the new normal, teachers and education leaders as reformers must swiftly design paradigm shifts that are responsive and equitable for all learners thereby contributing to the realization of the United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals on quality education. Among those initiatives was the transition to modular distance learning to ensure continuity and to produce competent learners who can follow the trends of globalization and modernization of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Modular distance learning as a combination of online and printed modules is becoming the primary tool to ensure that special education teachers can deliver the competencies in today's new normal and thereafter. The value of this paper is to draw a holistic picture of modular distance learning in ensuring the transfer of knowledge to special education learners as a normal procedure in the education system taking into account the readiness of special education teachers and school administrators in its administration thereafter its sustainability.

Keywords:

administration, modular distance learning, special education, sustainability

### INTRODUCTION

The transition to Modular Distance Learning (MDL) began when the COVID-19 pandemic first broke out. Education leaders must swiftly design responses and specific contexts in mind as the pandemic runs its course. MDL is a planned teaching-learning experience that uses a wide spectrum of technologies to reach learners at a distance and is designed to encourage learner interaction and certification of learning. In the same vein, Alvarez (2021) highlighted that one of the most common and accepted method of teaching in Australia, the United States, other Western countries and the Asian Region is modular teaching. All sorts of teaching are taught by modules. It is an educational development focused on programmed learning – a universal and conventional phenomenon. Books are now designed in modules, instead of units due to this innovation. In the Philippines, the Secretary of the Department of Education, issued department orders to ensure learning continuity through K to 12 curriculum adjustments, alignment of learning materials, deployment of multiple learning delivery modalities and provision of corresponding training for teachers and school leaders. This is supported by a study on innovation and quality management education that through a relevant and responsive mechanisms, it could realize its mandate and main thrusts, operations and quality services for its stakeholders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and even beyond with an intensive determination, strategic leadership and positioning in the dynamic world gearing towards culture of innovative management in education (Montemayor, 2020).

One of these mechanisms is the adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) that streamlines the K to 12 curricula into the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) to be delivered in multiple learning modalities and platform. The streamlining of the K to 12 Curriculum into the MELCs is an emergency measure to allow instruction amid challenging circumstances and to ease the requirement for adapting classroom-based learning resources for distance learning. These adjustments according to Rivera (2021) centered on the utilization of technology and social media. The administration of MDL as an urgent response to ensure learning continuity has been challenging to facilitate learning and render the needs of students, and the most directly affected are those with Special Education (SPED). After the pandemic, teaching and learning were never the same. As a result, it undergone a tremendous transformation. To meet the needs of every student, alternative learning modalities, including modular distance, online, blended, and hybrid learning, have been introduced and implemented. Today we understand the importance of opening up many learning avenues to respond to extreme circumstances, such as natural catastrophes on a large scale and daily disruptions of practical education. Again, despite the promises and obvious advantages of MDL. The readiness of teachers of the special education and administrators in the administration of MDL in the country became so controversial and hotly debated issue. Many teachers had diverse views on the manner how it is being implemented. In many ways, each of these issues relates to the others. There are imperatives which include the quality of instruction, hidden costs, misuse of technology, and attitudes of teachers, learners and administrators. Each one of these has an effect on the overall quality of distance learning as a product. The emphasis of this study is that effective and functional MDL is not impossible, but it is complicated. It has imperatives, but its' nobility as a learning modality could be sustained towards quality education of the present times and in the future, hence, this research study.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study aimed to analyze the readiness of teachers and administrators in the administration of modular distance learning as basis for a proposed sustainability program. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of teachers and administrators in terms of:
  - 1.1 Age
  - 1.2 Gender
  - 1.3 Highest educational attainment
  - 1.4 Teaching experience
  - 1.5 Present position held
  - 1.6 Attendance to in-service trainings relevant to new normal education
2. What is the level of readiness of teachers in the administration of MDL along:
  - 2.1 Preparation of self-learning modules;
  - 2.2 Reproduction of self-learning modules;
  - 2.3 Distribution of self-learning modules;
  - 2.4 Retrieval of self-learning modules; and
  - 2.5 Strategic interventions
3. What is the level of readiness of administrators in the administration of MDL along:
  - 3.1 School leadership and management;

- 3.2 Preparation of self-learning modules;
  - 3.3 Reproduction of self-learning modules;
  - 3.4 Distribution of self-learning modules;
  - 3.5. Retrieval of self-learning modules; and
  - 3.6. Strategic interventions
4. What is the level of adequacy of materials, equipment and facilities, intervention materials in the administration of MDL?
  5. What is the level of strengths of teachers and administrators in the administration of MDL?
  6. What are best practices of teachers and administrators in the administration of MDL?
  7. What is the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the teachers and administrators in the administration of MDL?
  8. What sustainability program can be proposed to sustain the administration of MDL based on the results of this study?

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The Big Shift to the Realms of Modular Distance Learning Approach**

The educational system has recently expanded into the realms of distance learning. Distance Learning is a mode of instruction in which learning occurs between the teacher and learners who are physically separated during instruction. There are three types of distance education: Modular Distance Learning (MDL), online distance learning (ODL), and television/radio-based instruction. Modular learning is the most common type of distance education. In the Philippines, this mode of teaching is currently used by all public schools because, according to a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), learning via printed and digital modules was identified as the most preferred method of distance learning by parents (Bernardo, 2020). The ability to instruct successfully is contingent on a number of aspects, including the possession of relevant abilities and the ability to adjust to a new situation while maintaining meaningful connections with students and their caretakers. It is critical that distance learning plans recognize the inherent limits of learning at home to help teachers adequately as they deal through this crisis (Wilichowski & Cobo, 2020). This is related to the Herbert Simons' Decision Making Theory which is the framework that provides a more realistic view where decisions affect series and outputs, making a choice between alternative course of action, and even mean choosing between action and non-action.

### **Administration and Sustainability in the Modular Distance Learning**

Malipot (2020) stated the Department of Education (DepEd) assured that its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) would address the specific needs of children with special needs through various learning modalities to ensure the continuity of their learning. Anent this, the DepEd provides contingency plans to address the needs and learning preferences of learners with disabilities (DepEd Order No. 044, s.2021) and take all the necessary measures in ensuring full enjoyment of children with Special Educational Needs. Drucker's theory on strategic planning, as applied in this study, is premised on the notion that the school's performance can be assessed in terms of its detailed plan. Strategies and tactics must be well defined to achieve a long-term success in an organization. Francisco et.al. (2020), noted that a new normal leadership happens

since schools are experiencing tough times with even tougher demands for accountability with limited financial resources and solving this dilemma calls for working together in a collaborative manner to develop cost-effective solutions. In the context of Modular Distance Learning, modules promote self-directed learning. They are developing their learning capacity; they are becoming empowered (Nardo, M.T.B, 2017). Thorndike's Law of Effect is also important to this study because it states that behaviors followed by positive outcomes are strengthened, whereas behaviors followed by negative outcomes are weakened. Intensive intervention plans can help accelerate student learning, but they need to be well-planned, implemented and monitored. If the students do not progress (based on assessment results), then educators need to re-evaluate and modify the intervention plan and instructional strategies (Duhaney, 2021).

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study used the descriptive research design. Calmorin (2020) defined descriptive research design as a method that involves the description recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition, or process of phenomena. This study used the descriptive research because it described the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the special education teachers and administrators and identified the strengths in the administration of modular distance learning. Likewise, the study provided a picture on the readiness indicators of the special education teachers and administrators. A sustainability program was designed based on the findings of the study to enhance the readiness of the special education teachers and administrators in the administration of the modular distance learning today and beyond.

### Participants in the Study

The study was conducted in the Special Education Centers in La Union, Philippines namely: Agoo East, Aringay Central, Bacnotan Central, Balaoan Central, Nagsabaran Sur, Bangar Central, Caba Central, Saytan Integrated, Rosario Integrated, Sto. Tomas Central and the San Fernando City SPED Integrated. The study involved the total enumeration of eleven school administrators and fifty-six special education teachers.

Table 1  
*Participants*

School/District	Administrators	Teachers
Agoo East Central School	1	7
Aringay Central Elementary School,	1	7
Bacnotan Central School	1	3
Balaoan Central School	1	2

Nagsabaran Sur Elementary School	1	1
Bangar Central School	1	2
Caba Central School	1	4
Saytan Integrated School	1	1
Rosario Integrated School	1	6
Sto. Tomas Central School	1	1
San Fernando City SPED Integrated School	1	22
Total	11	56

**Research Instrument**

The researcher utilized a constructed questionnaire as the main data gathering tool with six (6) parts. The validity of the questionnaire-checklist was established to ensure the appropriate items that are included in the questionnaire. Before the questionnaire was administered, it has gone through reliability testing. Using Cronbach’s Alpha test, it yielded a reliability coefficient of .90 which shows that it has a very high reliability and a validity result of “5” which shows the questionnaire checklist is highly valid. A pre-test was conducted to establish the reliability of the questionnaire as to content, format and language. There were four expert validators involved. The researcher used inter-reliability tool for the validity to determine the readiness of teachers and school administrators in the administration of MDL.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

The data gathering encompasses six (6) steps to ensure smooth conduct of the activity. These six steps are as follow: crafting of questionnaires; validation of questionnaires by the experts; respondents are determined through total enumeration; administering of questionnaires to the respondents; retrieval of questionnaires from the respondents; and tallying, organizing, and interpreting of data gathered. The letter of the researcher to respondents were submitted and properly accomplished. The questionnaires were administered and retrieved through social media platforms such as Facebook, messenger, instagram, viber and the like with the assistance of the School Heads from the Division Offices. Some were administered and retrieved through limited face-to-face during the trainings of school administrators held at the Division Conference Center with strict adherence to proper health and safety protocols.

**Data Analysis**

The data gathered in this study were computed and interpreted using frequency count, percentage and average median. All computations were done through the use of toolpak Microstat. The profile of the respondents was determined through frequencies and percentages. The level of readiness was measured and interpreted using numerical values (1-5) with descriptive rating (not ready – very highly ready). The level of strengths was determined based on numerical values (1-5) with descriptive rating (very low extent – very highly extent). The level of seriousness of the problems encountered was measured and interpreted using the values (1-5) with descriptive rating (not serious – very highly serious). The level of adequacy of materials, equipment and facilities was measured and interpreted using the values (1-5) with descriptive rating (not adequate – very highly adequate). The level of administration of the best practices was measured and interpreted using the numerical values (1-5) with descriptive rating (not implemented – very highly implemented).

**RESULTS**

**Demographic Profile of Teachers and Administrators**

The first concern of the study was to look into the demographic profile of the respondents by age, gender, highest educational attainment, teaching experience, present position held, and attendance to in-service trainings relevant to the new normal education. As to age most of the teachers belong to the younger generation (26-30 years old), only one belong to the nearly retirement age.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Profile of the Teachers and Administrators*

Demographic Profile	SPED Teachers		School Administrators	
	f	%	f	%
A. Age	(n=56)		(n=11)	
25 years old and below	4	7	0	0
26-30 years old	19	34	0	0
31-35 years old	2	4	0	0
36-40 years old	12	21	0	0
41-45 years old	7	12	0	0
46-50 years old	6	11	2	18
51-55 years old	5	9	6	55
56-60 years old	1	2	3	27
B. Gender				
Male	9	16	3	27
Female	47	84	8	73
C. Highest Educational Attainment				
Ed.D./Ph.D. Graduate	3	5	0	0
With Ed.D./Ph.D. Units	5	9	3	27
M.A. Graduate	41	73	5	46

With M.A. Units	6	11	2	18
BSE/BEED/BSIE Graduate	1	2	1	9
D. Teaching Experience as SPED Teacher/SPED Administrator				
Continuation Table 1 <i>Demographic Profile</i>				
0-3 years	20	36	6	55
4-6 years	9	16	3	27
7-10 years	7	12	0	0
11-13 years	12	21	0	0
14-16 years	4	7	1	9
17-20 years	2	4	0	0
21 years and above	2	4	1	9
E. Present Position Held				
Principal IV			4	37
Principal III			2	18
Principal II			3	27

Continuation of Table 1.....

Demographic Profile	SPED Teachers		School Administrators	
	f	%	f	%
Principal I			1	9
Head Teacher III			0	0
Head Teacher II			0	0
Head Teacher I			1	9
OIC/TIC			0	0
Master Teacher II	3	5		
Master Teacher I	0	0		
SPET III	1	2		
SPET II	17	30		
SPET I	24	43		
Teacher III	5	9		
Teacher II	4	7		
Teacher I	2	4		

F. Relevant In-Service Trainings Attended as to:	Teachers					Administrators				
	School	District	Division	Regional	National	School	District	Division	Regional	National
Administration	24	11	16	4	4	2	0	4	5	0
Delivery	24	11	14	3	5	2	0	4	5	5
Readiness	26	15	15	2	15	2	0	4	5	5
Assessment	26	9	12	0	0	2	0	4	5	0
Sign Language	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Inclusive Education	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Filipino Sign Language	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

The data reveals that majority of the respondents are females (47 or 84.00 %), while only few (9 or 16.00 %) of them are males. Most (41 or 73.00%) of the teachers are master’s graduate. It shows that twenty-four or 43 percentage SPET I, while seventeen or 30 percent are SPET II, three or 5 percent are Master Teacher II, respectively. It shows that four or 36 percent are presently occupying Principal IV, three or 27 percent are Principal II. There are two or 18 percent are Principal III and only one or 9 percent is holding Principal I and also one or 9 percent as Head Teacher I. It shows that 20 or 36 percent of the total number of respondents belong to 0-3 years teaching experience or newly-hired teachers. This implies that one-third of the number of the teachers are appointed recently, while twelve or 21 percent are appointed with 11-13 years as teachers. There are two or 4 percent respondents belong to the 21 years and above and also two or 4 percent has rendered 17-20 years who are seasoned teachers and has mastered the teaching strategies in special education. The table also shows the profile of administrators along teaching experiences. It shows that six or 55 percent of the respondents are new in the administrative stream and three respondents have 4-6 years’ experience as school administrator. Only one respondent belongs to the 14-16 years’ experience and 1 School Principal with 21 years and above as a school manager or principal who are assigned as school administrators. It shows that the respondents attended trainings pursuant to continuous development of teaching pedagogy in the school level with 24 and 26 teachers, respectively. However, only 16 respondents attended training on the administration of the MDL and respondents are trained on the Learning Delivery Modality Readiness particularly in the division level. It also shows that there are 15 respondents participated in Learning Delivery Modalities Course 2 for teachers in the national level. Further, there are significantly important trainings in the national level attended by only one (1) respondent from each group in Sign Language, Inclusive Education and Filipino Sign Language Level 1-3. It must be emphasized that teachers receive specialized training under the “new normal” in education. It shows various trainings attended which conducted in the school/district, division, regional and national levels. Of the total number or respondents, it shows no participation of trainings in the district level. From the trainings on the administration of Modular Distance Learning, it shows that not all of the School Administrators attended the training on the Learning Delivery Modality Readiness. There are only five (5) respondents who attended in the national level.



**Readiness of Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL**

Tables 2 present the readiness of teachers and administrators in the administration of MDL along areas of preparation, reproduction, distribution, retrieval of self-learning modules and intervention activities. Table 2 shows that in the preparation, reproduction, distribution, and retrieval of self-learning modules got the median of 5, respectively, which can be interpreted as “very highly ready” among the respondent teachers. Table 2 indicates an overall median of 5 with a “very highly ready” descriptive equivalent rating of the degree of readiness of administrators in the administration of modular distance learning that includes school leadership and management (5), preparation (5), reproduction (5), distribution (5), Retrieval (5) and intervention activities (5). These findings of the study point out the need for sustainability of the strategies to enhance the readiness and intervention activities of the teachers in the administration of modular distance learning to be relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of education in the new normal and thereafter.

**Table 2**  
*Readiness of Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL*

<b>Area for Teachers</b>	<b>Sub-Median</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent Rating</b>
Preparation	5	Very Highly Ready
Reproduction	5	Very Highly Ready
Distribution	5	Very Highly Ready
Retrieval	5	Very Highly Ready
Intervention	4	Highly Ready
Overall Median	5	Very Highly Ready
<b>Area for Administrators</b>	<b>Sub-Median</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent Rating</b>
Leadership and Management	5	Very Highly Ready
Preparation	5	Very Highly Ready
Reproduction	5	Very Highly Ready
Distribution	5	Very Highly Ready
Retrieval	5	Very Highly Ready
Intervention	5	Very Highly Ready
Overall Median	5	Very Highly Ready

**Adequacy of Materials, Equipment and Facilities for the Administration of MDL**

**Table 3**  
*Level of Adequacy of Materials, Equipment and Facilities for the Administration of MDL*

<b>I. Teachers</b>	<b>Sub - Median</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent Rating</b>
A. Materials	5	Very Highly Adequate
B. Equipment	5	Very Highly Adequate
C. Facilities	5	Very Highly Adequate
Over all Median	5	Very Highly Adequate
<b>II. Administrators</b>	<b>Sub - Median</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent Rating</b>
A. Materials	5	Very Highly Adequate
B. Equipment	5	Very Highly Adequate

C. Facilities	5	Very Highly Adequate
Over all Median	5	Very Highly Adequate

It is reflected in Table 3 the level of adequacy of materials in the administration of MDL among the teachers is “very highly adequate” with a sub-median of 5. This indicates the adequacy of materials provided and received such as supplies and materials, coupon bonds to be used in printing, folders and fasteners, as well as face masks, face shields, alcohol to be used in school in compliance with health and safety protocols. From the ratings given by the teachers on the readiness of equipment receives as “very highly adequate” with a median of 5. The respondents, however, receives cellphone to contact learners and parents during the distribution of self-learning modules with a median of 5, interpreted as “very highly adequate”. However, the highest rating given by the respondents on the readiness of equipment was the sim cards received with load to be used in the preparation of self- learning modules with a median of 5 which is described as “very highly adequate”. Meantime from the ratings given by the administrators on the readiness of equipment receives as “very highly adequate” with a median of 5. Administrators provided transportation vehicle for the distribution and retrieval of distribution of modules with a median of 5, interpreted as “very highly adequate”. On the other hand, the highest rating given by the administrators on the readiness of equipment was the printer provided for the reproduction of self-learning modules with a median of 5, which is described as “very highly adequate”.

### Strengths of Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL

A glimpse at Table 4 reveals the strengths of the teachers in the administration of MDL. Particularly, item number 9 and 11 had a median of 5. Moreover, item numbers 1, and 13 which described “very highly extent”. A closer look at the table indicates that item number 4, got a rating of 4, which is described as “High Extent,” followed by item numbers 6 and 7 with a median of 4, respectively and which both described as “high extent”. These indicators are considered as strengths.

**Table 4**  
*Strengths of Teachers in the Administration of MDL*

	<b>Strengths of Teachers</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>DER</b>
1.	Develops the identified Most Essential Learning Competencies in the learning disabilities	5	VHE
2.	Attends orientation in the preparation of learning kits in every learning disability	4	HE
3.	Requests the assistance of ICT experts in troubleshooting and manipulating the gadgets	5	VHE
4.	Motivates parents and guardians to provide financial support for the modular distance learning	4	HE
5.	Coordinates with the barangay officials in the installation of dap-ayan centers for the learners to avail of the video explainers	4	HE

6.	Coordinates with the para-teachers/volunteers to reach out learners in far-flung areas in the administration of modular distance learning	4	HE
7.	Receives donations in kind from alumni, stakeholders and civic organizations for the reproduction of self-learning modules	4	HE
8.	Aligns the content of the modules in every learning disability	5	VHE
9.	Conducts regular monitoring and follow-up of learners on the modular distance learning	5	VHE
10.	Crafts teaching plans and guides for modular distance learning	5	VHE
11.	Establishes linkages with parents of learners on the conduct of modular distance learning	5	VHE
12.	Requests supports of LGUs, NGOs, GOs and other stakeholders	5	VHE
13.	Disseminates information to learners through parents about schedule of distribution and retrieval of modules in case of lockdown	5	VHE
14.	Formulates remediation, reinforcement and enrichment activities to support modular distance learning	5	VHE
Overall Median		5	VHE

*Legend: Descriptive Equivalent Rating (DER) = (5) Very High Extent (VHE); (4) High Extent (HE)*

**Table 5**  
*Strengths of Administrators in the Administration of MDL*

	<b>Strengths of Administrators</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>DER</b>
1.	Conducts webinars/trainings to upgrade teachers' competence in the administration of modular distance learning.	4	HE
2.	Schedules properly the distribution and retrieval of modules	5	VHE
3.	Encourages parents to conduct closer supervision of their children in the administration of modular distance learning	5	VHE
4.	Monitors the preparation of learning kits in the learning disabilities.	5	VHE
5.	Monitors the assigned para-teachers/volunteers to assist learners in far-flung areas.	4	HE
6.	Convenes limited face-to-face meetings with teachers observing strict health protocols.	5	VHE
7.	Coordinates with barangay officials installation of dap-ayan centers or barangay learning centers for learners without gadgets to avail of the video explainers.	5	VHE

8.	Provides technical assistance to SPED Teachers in the preparation of identified Most Essential Learning Competencies.	5	VHE
9.	Recommends validation on the self-learning modules prepared for quality assurance by the Division Team	5	VHE
10.	Recommends back-up writers on the identified Most Essential Learning Competencies	5	VHE
11.	Provides a link for teachers for updating.	5	VHE
12.	Recognizes the identified writers/developers/lay-out artists in the preparaton of learning kits in every learning disabilities.	5	VHE
Overall Median		5	VHE

*Legend: Descriptive Equivalent Rating (DER) = (5) Very High Extent (VHE); (4) High Extent (HE)*

It is reflected in Table 5 a “very high extent” in the strengths of the administrators in the administration of Modular Distance Learning. It can be gleaned from item number 5, “Schedules properly the distribution and retrieval of modules (5, Very High Extent),” item number 3, “Encourages parents to conduct closer supervision of their children in the administration of modular distance learning (5, Very High Extent),” are contributory to the smooth operation of the school in the new normal. The result indicates further the determination and dedication of the respondents in providing technical assistance to SPED Teachers in preparing the identified Most Essential Learning Competencies (5, Very High Extent). Likewise, the administrators recommend validation of the self-learning modules prepared for quality assurance by the Division teams (5, Very High Extent) is a clear indication of analytical skills organized and teamwork of the respondents. This means that the indicators are highly functional, practical and can be successfully enhanced in implementing the modality.

**Best Practices of Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL**

**Table 6**  
*Best Practices of Teachers in the Administration of MDL*

	<b>Best Practices of Teachers</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>DER</b>
1.	Provides teacher-made modified/simplified Self-Learning Modules to learners suited to their level of capabilities and needs	5	VHI
2.	Conducts on-line classes to learners with internet connectivity	4	HI
3.	Conducts on-line remedial reading using the printed reading materials (Self-Learning Modules)	4	HI
4.	Develops the identified Most Essential Learning Competencies in the learning disabilities	5	VHI
5.	Prepares Powerpoint Presentations for a more effective way of teaching-learning process in times of pandemic	4	HI

6.	Creates a group chat in messenger for sending communication and updates to the parents	5	VHI
7.	Provides video lessons/video explainers as the most convenient and effective learning materials for learners	4	HI
8.	Creates facebook pages exclusively for students as audience or members of the page in watching video lessons for lessons posted for the subjects as scheduled on the day	4	HI
9.	Provides tablets for learners	4	HI
10.	Provides video lessons in flash drives USV's to be given to parents	4	HI
11.	Conducts home visitation at least once/twice a month and teach lessons that are hard to understand	4	HI
12.	Encourages students' parents to learn the sign language and encourages parents to ask for assistance	4	HI
13.	Encourages parents to write feedback/report about the performance of their kids at home in the feedback notebook	5	VHI
14.	Allows one-to-one conference with parents on-line (zoom), if necessary	4	VHI
15.	Gives weekend make-up class for those who cannot attend weekday class or misses session	4	HI
<b>Overall Median</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>HI</b>

Legend: Descriptive Equivalent Rating (DER)= (5) Very Highly Implemented (VHI); (4) Highly Implemented (HI)

Table 6 shows that the best practices adopted by teachers in the administration of MDL with a median of 5, described as “Very Highly Implemented” for items numbers 1, 4, 6 and 13. The table further reveals among the highly implemented best practices are items number 2, item number 15 and item number 3, This finding shows the readiness of the teachers in utilizing technology to maximize interaction with learners and the importance of utilizing Facebook groups as virtual video, Facebook messenger and continuous upskilling of teachers through virtual or face-to-face lock-up sessions. This means that teachers adopt initiatives in overcoming the challenges in providing education in the new normal.

**Table 7**  
*Best Practices of Administrators in the Administration of MDL*

<b>Best Practices of Administrators</b>		<b>Media n</b>	<b>DE R</b>
1.	Disseminates schedule of distribution and retrieval of Self-Learning Modules via messenger or SMS every week	5	VHI
2.	Observes proper health protocols at all times	5	VHI
3.	Ensures attendance of parents during distribution and retrieval are monitored	5	VHI
4.	Ensures Self-Learning Modules are delivered in their respective houses through the assistance of the barangay centers	5	VHI
5.	Conducts home visitation to a learner who is lagging behind	5	VHI

6. Monitors learners via text and call, messenger and video calls	5	VHI
7. Gives feedbacks on learners outputs and activity sheets	5	VHI
8. Contacts and distributes supplementary materials to learners	5	VHI
9. Prepares travelling expenses vouchers for reimbursement to teachers and personnel	4	HI
10. Creates a group chat for advisory class in updating and monitoring learners' progress	5	VHI
11. Provides cellphones and tablets to learners with Special Needs	4	HI
12. Coordinates with barangay officials installation of Dap-ayan Centers or barangay learning centers for learners without gadgets to avail of the video explainers	5	VHI
13. Monitors the assigned para-teachers/volunteers to assist learners in far-flung areas	5	VHI
14. Convenes limited face-to-face meetings with teachers observing strict health protocols	5	VHI
15. Awards certificate of recognition to deserving teachers and non-teaching personnel for their great contribution in the administration of Modular Distance Learning and delivery of basic education in times of pandemic	5	VHI
16. Conducts webinars/trainings to upgrade teachers' competence in the administration of Modular Distance Learning	5	VHI
Overall Median	5	VHI

*Legend: Descriptive Equivalent Rating (DER)= (5) Very Highly Implemented (VHI); (4) Highly Implemented (HI)*

Table 7 presents the best practices of administrators in the administration of MDL. As defined, best practices have been used to describe “what works” with an over-all median of 5, described as “Very Highly Implemented” to wit: “ensure attendance of parents during distribution and retrieval of modules are monitored and “observes proper health protocols at all times and “ensures self-learning modules are delivered in their respective houses through the assistance of the barangay officials. School leadership is focused on enhancing the skills, knowledge and motivation of the people in the school and creating a healthy relationship in the community in the administration of the modular distance learning in the new normal. Only item number 9 and 11 got 4 which means these indicators are “Highly Implemented”. The result indicates that the respondents are supportive to the financial needs of teachers and non-teaching personnel to have a meaningful and a collaborative working relationship in achieving the goals during pandemic with certain limitations.

**Degree of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered by Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL**

**Table 8**

*Degree of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered by Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL*

	Problems Encountered	Teachers		Administrators	
		Median	DER	Median	DER
1.	Lack of learner’s (children with special needs) interest.	3	MS	2	SS
2.	Negative attitude of parents of children with special needs.	2	SS	1	NS
3.	Lukewarm attitudes of administrators and SPED teachers.	1	NS	1	NS
4.	Uncooperative and unsupportive barangay officials, community and stakeholders.	2	SS	1	NS
5.	Lack of transportation/vehicle and facilities in the delivery and retrieval of modules.	3	MS	1	NS
6.	Overlapping of teachers’ activities.	4	HS	3	MS
7.	Unavailability of printed modules for SPED.	2	SS	1	NS
8.	Insufficient time of learners and lack of knowledge of parents to teach their children at home.	3	MS	2	SS
9.	Inadequate funds for the reproduction of modules in SPED.	3	MS	2	SS
10.	Difficulty of distributing and retrieving the printed modules.	2	SS	1	NS
11.	Strict observance of health and safety protocols.	3	MS	1	NS
12.	Inadequate administrative support.	2	SS	1	NS
13.	Unprepared SPED teachers to engage in the modular distance learning.	2	SS	1	NS
14.	Unprepared learners (children with special educational needs) to engage in the modular distance learning.	2	SS	2	SS
15.	Unconducive learning environment.	3	MS	1	NS
	Overall Median	2	SS	1	NS

*Legend:*

<i>Numerical Values</i>	<i>Descriptive Equivalent Rating (DER)</i>
4	<i>Highly Serious</i>
3	<i>Moderately Serious (MS)</i>
2	<i>Slightly Serious (SS)</i>
1	<i>Not Serious (NS)</i>

Table 8 reveals that the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the teachers in the administration of MDL is “Moderately Serious” with an overall median of 2. Of the 15 identified

indicators, six (6) are “moderately serious” while one (1) is “highly serious” and seven (7) are “slightly serious”. Table 9 reveals that the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the administrators in the administration of MDL is “Not Serious” with a median of 1. A closer look at the table, of the fifteen (15) indicators identified as problems encountered by the respondents, only item number 6, “overlapping of teachers’ activities is “moderately serious”, while four (4) indicators are described as “slightly serious” and ten (10) indicators were described as “not serious”. As a whole, the problems encountered by teachers were “slightly serious,”. The administrators perceived the problems encountered as “not serious” in the administration of modular distance learning.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Demographic Profile of Teachers and Administrators**

Most of the teachers belong to the younger generation (26-30 years old), only one belong to the nearly retirement age. According to Calica (2020), older adults and middle-aged adults acted significantly more agreeable and emotionally stable than the younger adults did. The older group acted more emotionally stable than the middle-aged group, but this trend was only marginally significant ( $p = .05$ ). Hence, age is important in order to comply with the most important mission of special education in providing children with special needs with development opportunities and a learning process that will improve the quality of their life which can be done through cooperation of schools and government institutions. The result shows the greater number of administrators who have rendered more years as school managers. The important role of educational supervision in the digital age demands the educators to undertake life-long, upgrading, reviewing of their own professional learning and adopting continuous development. Society expects that teaching is a “woman” world. Moreover, female teachers seem to have more opportunities to teach especially in Special education. Further, there are fewer female teachers in rural schools than urban ones. This is due to the reasons such as remote location of schools, inability to leave families behind or lack of safe accommodation in rural areas (Aytac, 2020). The result implies that the females outnumbered the males. However, the Education 2030 Agenda recognizes that gender equality requires an approach that ensures girls and boys, women and men not only gain age access to complete education cycles, but are empowered equally and through education. The results further enhance that gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO and linked to its effect to promote education and support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Master’s degree holders are believed to have an advanced understanding in their professional career. It hones the skills of the teachers that are needed in the discussions and analysis of theories related to education for their application to real-world experiences while also providing competency in educational leadership (Bosah, 2018). The teachers may have realized the importance of professional achievement in their careers as Special Education teachers considering their crucial roles for Inclusive Education. This finding shows the interest of the respondents of professional growth as they build on previously learned concepts and skills. In the same table provides the highest educational attainment of the administrators. It shows that five or 45 percent of the total number of respondents earned units in the degree of Doctor of Education or Doctor of Philosophy. This implies the continuous professional development of administrators considering the areas of responsibilities including human resources, financial resources, educational activities of students and teachers. This finding strengthens the importance of graduate studies of acquiring



specialized skills and new knowledge that paves the way for new opportunities in a different field (Glessner, M.M., Johnson, S.A., 2020). In the same data finding the profile of teachers as to position held was presented. This implies the need for reclassification of Regular Teacher to SPED Teacher Items. The New Merit Selection Process for promotion gearing up for 2021 states “that the Promotion will no longer be through natural vacancy, promotions will be through reclassification of positions” (Biscayda, 2021). It can be noted from the distribution of present position held by the respondents, there is no position provided for SPED Principal. However, the School Principals/School Heads are assigned as administrators offering special education classes. As explained, administrators supervise special education teachers oversee the education and training of students with physical, emotional, mental and learning disabilities. They design and deliver lessons geared towards the individual needs and capabilities of the students under their supervision (Semra Kiranchi and Usuf Yildirim, 2020). In the study of Jimenez (2021) she emphasized the crucial roles of administrators as managers responsible to oversee all the administrative duties, keeping programs to run smoothly and provides leadership on budgets, logistics, schedules, disciplinary actions, evaluations and public relations and implementing curriculum. One-third of the number of the teachers are appointed recently, while twelve or 21 percent are appointed with 11-13 years as SPED teachers. Accordingly, the length of teaching experiences and specialization is very strongly correlated to readiness for distance learning in special education, only teachers’ gender, length of teaching experience and geographic location have significant difference with their readiness to distance learning (Lapada and Robledo et.al., 2020). In a related study of Okongo et. al. (2020), it indicates that most of the respondents had worked for a reasonable period of time to have acquired experience in handling the special needs learners which had great influence on the administration of the inclusive education. As to the relevant in-service trainings attended, it shows that the respondents attended trainings pursuant to continuous development of teaching pedagogy. It must be emphasized that SPED Teachers receive specialized training under the “New Normal” in education. The administrators had various trainings attended which conducted in the school/district, division, regional and national levels. In-service training is important to enable the school heads acquire new understanding and instructional skills that focuses on creating-learning environments especially in this time of pandemic which can be done through various modalities. This statement confirms the idea of Grengor and Vildirim (2021) that administrators have stated positive opinion for their attendance to trainings which increases their awareness and knowledge of current legislation to the changes, enhancing the learning level of current approaches and methods within the scope of the development of administrative skills.

### **Readiness of Teachers in the Administration of MDL**

The degree of readiness of teachers in the administration of MDL includes the Preparation, Reproduction, Distribution, Retrieval and Intervention Activities. Overall, the findings of the study point out the need for DepED to sustain and improve the readiness of SPED Teachers in the administration of Modular Distance Learning. As suggested teachers are recommended to be active on line most of the time and be able to address the sentiments of some parents and students which is to be patient enough in attending to the needs and respond to the queries immediately with regards to learning. Furthermore, the Department of Education and the government must collaborate together towards the success of Philippine Educational System despite the COVID-19 pandemic and every school must be provided with support and enough funds. (Tria, J. Z., 2020).

### **Readiness of Administrators in the Administration MDL**

The degree of readiness of School Administrators in the administration of MDL includes the School Leadership and Management, Preparation, Reproduction, Distribution, Retrieval and Intervention Activities, all areas were rated 5 as very highly ready. Another important concept of readiness of school administrators and teachers by Ecoben (2019) as emphasized believed that the truly effective special education requires both a general education teacher and a special education teacher to do different things, not only to work together with a common purpose.

### **Adequacy of Materials, Equipment and Facilities for the Administration MDL**

In a related study Okongo et.al. (2020), mentioned the availability of teaching and learning resources towards the administration of inclusive education in pre-school centers in Nyamira North Sub-country to enhance curriculum delivery, meets the needs of learners with special needs and enhance pupils' enrollment and retention in pre-schools centers. It was explained that the essential learning resources like braille, slates, large prints, audiotapes and loudspeakers, wheel chairs, crutches, and sand paper letters when made available lead to higher pupil enrollment and retention. The level of adequacy of materials in the administration of MDL is "very highly adequate" with a sub-median of 5 as evaluated by the administrators. This indicates the adequacy of materials provided such as supplies like inks for printing, coupon bonds for the reproduction of self-learning modules, folders, clips and binders for the compilation of printed modules and face masks/face shields, alcohol, as well as disinfectants and other health kits to be used in school in compliance with health and safety protocols by DOH and IATF. From the ratings given by the respondents on the readiness of equipment receives as "very highly adequate" with a median of 5.

### **Strengths of Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL**

The finding signifies that the learning modality where learning takes place between the teacher and the learners who are geographically remote can be implemented through this platform. As mentioned, Modular Distance Learning involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules wherein the teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the responsibility of the learners to check on the progress and performance in various modalities. This finding reveal that the SPED Teachers need sustainability in the establishment of linkages with the barangay officials in the installation of Dap-ayan Centers to avail of the video explainers in far-flung areas. Para-teachers or learning aide can work with SPED Teachers in providing additional support particularly those with special needs. This finding supports the study of Dawis (2021), knowing the complications of COVID-19 and the possibility of not being able to meet in person, teachers have to settle for distance learning for they are also responsible in managing students' behavior as well as socio-emotional health while teaching online with the rise in special education services and their specific needs along with distance learning. Further, Dawis (2021) emphasized that there has to be a clear understanding of how such needs will meet through this avenue. On the other hand, National Center for Learning Disabilities during COVID-19 many students with disabilities have been housed and have to accept online services in replacement to not being able to go to school for their services. As cited in the study of Zaheer and Munir (2020) acknowledgement of efforts of distance learning being implemented lacks student-teacher

interactions, face-to-face interaction, and physical absence of the teachers hinders relationship building. The strengths of administrators in the administration of Modular Distance Learning are also revealed which was rated as very high extent. This means that the indicators are highly functional, practical and can be successfully enhanced in implementing the modality. This shows that recognizing the strength and weaknesses are able to help improve the areas that are lacking to generate effectiveness. Further, strengths and skills that can be supported through experience and weaknesses can include a hard skill set out to acquire this skill through a course or program. As current school leaders, they acknowledge the perspective is centered around building a comprehensive school culture and celebrate teachers as the leaders in their classroom.

### **Best Practices of Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL**

The teachers adopt initiatives in overcoming the challenges in providing education in the new normal. Further, the Department of Education supports the effort of the teachers in communicating to various stakeholders to make learning interesting in the new normal as supported by the study of Montemayor (2021) on mechanisms of innovative quality management in education. Similarly, Lapada and Robledo et.al (2020) discussed that the adaptation of various online education institution in the first two weeks of ECQ is a good indicator of good practices in the teaching and learning process and to prevent the second wave of the pandemic, the study recommended that the schools should opt for distance learning for the coming school year along with providing teachers' capability for distance learning is an excellent idea to enhance the institutions capability in delivering distance learning to students.

The result indicates that the respondents are supportive to the financial needs of teachers and non-teaching personnel to have a meaningful and a collaborative working relationship in achieving the goals during pandemic with certain limitations. This statement confirms that special education software helps students with disabilities to reach their potential. (Lapada and Robledo, 2020). This finding was explained by Khaleel et al. (2020), that principals are considered as key actors responsible for operating and directing all administrative functions successfully and effectively, with significant responsibilities in maintaining the effective internal functioning of school systems, representing the school in the community, and implementing educational policies with precision. Principals Khaleel (2020) added, also act as role models who improve the ethical and professional growth of teachers and other professional staff. In the same vein, the use of technology in special education helps children with special educational needs to provide access to the most relevant programs in the modular distance learning or blended learning modality.

### **Seriousness of the Problems Encountered by the Teachers and Administrators in the Administration of MDL**

The data reveals that the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the SPED Teachers in the administration of MDL is "Moderately Serious" with an overall median of 2. This is indicative that the teachers believe that the problems are manageable and can be addressed appropriately when right or correct measures and strategies are implemented. Similarly, the teachers also affirm the need of strong support of parents and stakeholders in the administration of the modular distance learning in the new normal. This means that their problems are manageable and it further shows the positive attitude of teachers and willingness to adopt the modular distance learning in the new normal. Meanwhile the data reveals that the degree of seriousness of the

problems encountered by the administrators in the administration of MDL is “Not Serious” with a median of 1. This is indicative that the problems are manageable and can be addressed appropriately with the strategies to be implemented culled out from the Schools’ Operational Learning Continuity Plan. The finding implies that the administrators develop the understanding and knowledge to effectively craft strategies for leading change. Change, according to Dawis (2021), exhibits itself as both planned and unplanned phenomenon, the many factors fueling the change process originate from uncontrollable factors, the attempts to create, improve and manage progress as individuals and society. This means that technological advancement is embraced by the school administrators in the administration of this modality. As a whole, the problems encountered by teachers were “slightly serious,”. The administrators perceived the problems encountered as “Not Serious” in the administration of modular distance learning. The best practices of teachers are “highly implemented” and administrators, very highly implemented the best practices of MDL. A sustainability program was designed to provide a clear vision and sense of direction to sustain the administration of MDL.

### **Sustainability for Modular Distance Learning**

Rationale: In the commitment to ensure learning continuity while looking at the health, safety and well-being of its learners, teachers and personnel, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020, known as the Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) in light of COVID-19 pandemic. The rationale of the Order is the continuing threat of COVID-19 in the country and the world brings about unprecedented challenges to basic education. Teachers, administrators and parents must adapt to alternative learning modalities to ensure that learners achieve essential curricular goals. In this regard, the use of the learning modality and other platforms in teaching should be sustained in order to maximize the teaching competencies of SPED Teachers and School Administrators along school leadership and management, hence a sustainability program is envisioned.

Areas of Concern	Program/ Activities	Objectives	Strategies	Implementer	Materials/ Budget Needed	Time Frame	Success Indicator
Demographic Profile of the Respondents	Attendance to Seminars in the National Level	Stronger Teacher Profile as to their knowledge, skills and attitude	Attendance to national level seminars to enhance their Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA)	Division Superintendent Regional DepEd Superintendent Administrators	Training Design Provision for Materials Needed in the Seminars Snacks/Lunch Honorarium for Speakers	Year Round	90-98% of the SPED Teachers attended seminars/trainings
Readiness of Teachers and Administrators	Seminar on Research Methodology especially on Validation Pilot-testing (dry-run)	Ready Teachers and Administrators	- Validation of developed self-learning modules - Submission of identified Most Essential Learning Competencies	DepEd Officials DepEd SPED Teachers Resource Persons	Training Design/ Package Honorarium for Speakers Provision for Lunch/Snacks Coupon Bond Computer	Year Round	90-98% of the teachers and administrators became ready and equipped with the KSA in MDL
Adequacy of Materials	Preparation of IPCRF	Adequate Materials for all	To submit budget proposal incorporating the amount for materials,	DepEd Officials DepEd SPED Accounting/ Finance Division	Budget Proposal re: -provision for laptops and computers	Year Round	98% Adequate Materials for all

			equipment and facilities		for teachers and learners		
					- availability of WIFI/internet connectivity		
Strength of Teachers and Administrators in the administration of Modular Distance Learning	Trainings and Seminars	Stronger Administration of MDL	- Motivation for Parents and Learners in the administration of Modular Distance Learning - Coordination with the parents, teachers, volunteers	DepEd Officials DepEd SPED Accounting/ Finance Division Parents	Budget Proposal: Trainings and Seminars And the Installations of Dapayan	Year Round	98% Stronger Administration of MDL
Seriousness of Problems Encountered	Orientation Program for learners Re-orientation on the Grading System of DepED Provision of vehicle to SPED Teachers to transport	Problems provided with solutions	To invite IT experts to present strategies on how to facilitate on-line classes or modular distance learning	DepEd Officials DepEd SPED Accounting/ Finance Division	Budget Proposal for: incorporating the amount for materials, equipment and facilities; for transportations and funds for the strict observanc	Year Round	98% solution provided in the Administration of MDL

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### **Table 9 Sustainability for Modular Distance Learning CONCLUSIONS**

In the light of the above-stated findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The teachers and administrators have limited trainings and seminars on MDL. Majority of the teachers finished the masteral degree course, some administrators pursued the graduate studies until the masteral degree, only a few of them finished Doctoral Degree.
2. The teachers and administrators need to be retooled to sustain the identified strengths, if possible, to include the learners' parents so that they can continuously provide assistance using MDL. The readiness of the key officials and teachers in the preparation, delivery, distribution, retrieval and intervention activities in the administration of MDL were a collaboration of stakeholders and key officials to ensure learning continuity in the new normal.
3. The teachers and administrators had been adequately oriented in the preparation, distribution and retrieval of learning materials and administration of intervention activities.
4. The problems encountered by the teachers and administrators can serve as bases in providing a limited face-to-face, virtual trainings/webinar for them.
5. Modular distance learning is more convenient considering the engagement capacity of learners with learning disabilities.
6. The Schools Operational Learning Continuity Plan is a tool to push through education and effective learning approach for learners with disabilities. It has greatly contributed to the successful administration of the different learning modalities and continue providing creative ways to teach specific special education services.
7. The designed sustainability program can further enhance the skills and knowledge of the teachers and administrators of MDL today and in the future.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were offered:

1. The Department of Education and schools of the world may adapt the designed sustainability program to enhance the administrative administration of the MDL.
2. For future researchers, other related and significant imperatives of MDL not covered in this study be taken into consideration.

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