Knots and Bolts of Online Teaching Internship amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. The use of an online learning modality during the COVID-19 pandemic has become widespread. This paper aimed to ascertain the "knots and bolts" of teaching internship, utilizing both the quantitative and qualitative methods of research. With the eighteen (18) student interns of the Cebu Normal University academic year 2020-2021, a survey was employed to gather data on the influence of their personal, family, and academic backgrounds on the areas of lesson planning, teaching modality, communication skills and classroom management. In addition, an unstructured interview was conducted to solicit their experiences. Results revealed that among the factors of influence, the school background engendered the "knots" or greatest motivating influence on their online student internship. On the other hand, the online modality with intermittent connectivity issues as well as the young learners' behaviors has proved to be the greatest challenge, namely the "bolts". The teaching interns' sustaining powers were rooted in their belief in the Supreme Being, self-confidence, and the encouragement of significant others. It was therefore concluded that online student internship during the pandemic was both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunities may be enhanced and the challenges may be examined by allowing the teacher education institutions to repackage the teaching internship programs' teaching and learning modalities.

Keywords: motivation; demotivation; teaching interns; online teaching; internship; experiences

1. Introduction
Teaching internship is a leadoff stage towards a profession for a lifetime. It is an important component towards becoming a teacher as it provides experience to

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teaching interns in the actual teaching and learning environment (Msanya, 2016). A key component of teacher education programs, teaching internship seeks to expose teaching interns to a variety of long-term, practical classroom experiences (Rupp & Becker, 2021). Every college education student who earnestly wishes to become a teacher, needs rigorous preparation before undertaking the formal official stage of their vocation. Academic preparation in particular together with personal background is taken into consideration towards the actual teaching internship experience.

In the Philippines, teaching internship is based on the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order (CMO) 104 s. 2017. It is the ultimate step in pre-service professional training for education majors. It comprises an essential practical experience that provides teaching interns with a variety of activities to aid in the development of their knowledge and abilities in dealing with learners in real-world circumstances.

In teacher education institutions, academic internship serves as a link between theory and practice by enabling students to participate in supervised and scheduled work. These internship programs not only increase students' personal talents, but also help them advance professionally (Gault et al., 2010). According to Cadosales et al. (2021), the efficiency and effectiveness of various teaching internship approaches for teaching interns across countries result in the development of a potentially beneficial teaching internship program. Further, internship programs, according to Anjum (2020), have an impact on the professional growth and skills of Pakistani business students, enhancing their personal development, skills, and competencies. It is therefore viewed as the climax to a teaching intern's preparatory experience, as Anderson and Stillman (in Goldhaber et al., 2020) noted.

In similar vein, Kumar and Ratnalikar (2005) asserted that because of the current changing and challenging world, teachers should be provided with a range of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and relevant educational experience that enables them to cope with these challenges.

Therefore, Young (2022) contends that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the lives of the entire global population. Its immense impact, especially in the field of education, has been increasingly felt. Meeting the educational needs of students, especially the young children, during a global crisis during which instructional delivery was done online, presented remarkable challenges. Hence, early childhood educators recognized their critical role in ensuring that every child's development remained a priority despite their distance from the physical classroom. Teachers of young children were trained to be engaging, culturally competent, and to recognize the importance of teaching young children.

Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact, not only on how the young learners were taught remotely, but also on how preservice teachers (student interns) were trained to became relevant and competent future teachers as well. To this end, the professors collaborated among themselves on the transition

from in-person to virtual instruction. Similar to the conventional framework, this includes lesson planning, online teaching modality vis-à-vis the selection of instructional materials, classroom management and communication skills.

This mode of teaching, which is still conducted in a virtual class has noticeably challenged the teaching interns in the preparation as well as the implementation of their teaching activities among the early childhood learners. It is therefore in this context that this study aimed to find out the "knots and bolts" (motivating and demotivating factors) of online teaching internship in the identified areas in the framework and how their personal convictions, family support and school input have influenced their online teaching internship.

2. Research Objectives
The study aimed to ascertain the "knots and bolts" of online teaching internship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this examined how the teaching interns' personal, family, and academic backgrounds influenced their teaching experiences as regards lesson planning, online modalities, classroom management and communication skills during online teaching. Individual accounts were likewise noted to validate the findings. Determining their personal and academic backgrounds together with their teaching proficiency would help validate their individual accounts.

3. Research Methodology
This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. As Creswell (2014) mentioned, quantitative methods may use a survey design to provide a numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a sample of a population. In this study, the survey method was used to determine the profile of the participants in terms of personal, family, and social background. The qualitative research method was further employed by conducting an unstructured interview to validate individual accounts. The thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to treat the qualitative responses.

The participants of the study were the 18 teaching interns enrolled in the Bachelor in Early Childhood Education course of the Integrated Laboratory School, in a State University in Region 7, Philippines during the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021. The teaching interns were teaching various subjects at the preschool level.

The research employed stratified random sampling with 18 teaching interns in three preschool classes to gather the required data through test administration and unstructured interviews.

Data was obtained on the degree of influence of the factors that have affected their teaching internship experiences as regards lesson planning, teaching strategies, classroom management and communication skills, For this a test questionnaire compiled by the researcher was utilized. Further, to validate the individual accounts of these teaching interns, an unstructured interview was conducted.

In the gathering of data, proper procedure was observed. Written permission was secured from the Office of the Supervisor of the Integrated Laboratory School in a State University. Upon approval, a written consent from the participants was obtained prior to the unstructured interview.

To gather the required data, the questionnaires were distributed to and answered by the participants. The unstructured interview was scheduled based on the availability of the teaching interns. This was done during their free time or after school hours to avoid disruption of classes. Subsequently, all the data were collected, consolidated, and analysed according to their relevance to the study.

It was necessary that ethical issues be discussed and understood in the context of the research process. The ethical considerations required for this research undertaking included honesty, quality, legality, integrity, informed consent, voluntary participation, beneficence, confidentiality, anonymity, incentives, and compensation, among others.

4. Results and Discussion

The following data on the teaching interns' profiles as well as their performance and teaching experiences were gathered to determine how these variables have affected their teaching performance, either positively or negatively:

Table 1: Profile of the respondents

Profile	frequency	Percentage
Age		
21	1	5.56
22	10	55.56
23	7	38.89
Civil Status		
Single	18	100
Gender		
Male	2	11.11
Female	16	88.89
Father's occupation	15	83.33
Mother's occupation	7	38.89
Gadget available at home (Cell phone, Laptop, Desktop)	18	100

As presented in Table 1, the age of the teaching interns ranges between 21 and 23 years old and were all single. This denoted that they were on schedule as regards their scholastic engagements. This was a manifestation that their significant others, family, school and community, have positively influenced them regarding their education, deferring their plans for marriage. The data relating to these participants in the Bachelor in Early Childhood Education program revealed that the number of females (16) outweighed the male teaching interns (2). This is an apparent indication that females loved teaching young learners, pointing to their roles as "nurturing mothers" of the future. As generally noted, their parents are employed and are therefore able to support the needs of their children since they considered their children's education a priority. This was manifested in their having instructional materials at home: cellular phones, laptops or even desktops. This was an indication of their parents' care and concern for them. According to Crocker (1997), the professions have traditionally underestimated the magnitude of parental contributions to the success of a child's studies. The love of parents for their children is immeasurable.

The subsequent data present the factors influencing the teaching performance of teaching interns in a virtual instructional engagement in terms of lesson designing, online teaching modality or pedagogy, classroom management and communication skills. In each component, these teaching interns identified their sources of knowledge, "knots" (motivating experiences) as well as the "bolts" (demotivating experiences).

Table 2: Factors influencing the teaching interns' performance

FACTORS	SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE (FROM WHOM/WHAT?)				KNOTS/MOTIVATIONAL EXPRIENCES (WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?)				BOLTS/DEMOTIVATIONAL EXPERIENCES (WHAT DEMOTIVATED YOU?)			
	Personal	Family	School	others	Personal	Family	School	others	Personal	Family	School	others
Lesson Designing	0	0	8	13	1	7	8	5	11	0	0	7
Online Teaching Modality/Pedagogy	0	0	14	11	1	0	14	2	9	1	3	4
Classroom Management	5	0	14	7	6	0	11	0	1	1	6	5
Communication Skills	6	1	8	11	0	0	16	3	14	0	0	0

Preparation for Teaching Engagement

According to the findings, it can be noted that 72% of the teaching interns indicated that their knowledge of lesson designing was learned from online sources such as Google, and YouTube. Eight (44%) noted that they learned lesson planning from their teachers or mentors, classmates and from books. This implied that in the era of technology, these teaching interns, apart from the input facilitated by their teachers, mentors and the sharing of ideas with classmates, found it convenient to access this specific need on lesson planning either on Google or YouTube since these sources were readily available any time of the day.

Furthermore, the "knots" or motivational experiences that they encountered as regards lesson planning are ascribed to mentors and students (44%), their families (38%), learners, and videos on YouTube (27%), and expected outcome (5%). On the other hand, this paper likewise looked into the "bolts" (demotivational factors) of these TIs based on their lesson design experiences. The majority of these TIs (61%) indicated that distractions and procrastination demotivated them. Furthermore, the rest mentioned that household chores and poor Internet connection (38%) also contributed to their demotivational experiences. These negatively affected their virtual facilitation with the learners.

It could therefore be deduced that lesson planning was an essential aspect in the lives of the teaching interns. For them to keep going, the positive influence of the aforementioned factors, especially of the family, needs to be afforded careful consideration. According to Liu and Chiang (2019), parents influence children's educational outcomes by adopting class-based patterns of parental involvement and providing cultural resources that impart educational benefits to their children (Calarco, 2011; DiMaggio, 1982; Lareau, 2011).

Teaching Modality amid the Pandemic
In terms of online teaching modality or pedagogy, the findings revealed that the teaching interns significantly (77%) acquired their knowledge from their college professors as well as mentors. Gupta and Sengupta (2021) indicate that the common practice of the chalk-and-talk method is no longer the only recommended method of pedagogy. As a result, blackboards are gradually being replaced by digital smart boards and LCD screens which allow both traditional and technological modes of teaching.

The factors that motivated the learners to engage proactively in online teaching were primarily related to their eagerness to learn as well as their animated responses (77%). Their obvious enjoyment motivated the TIs to continue despite their numerous challenges. Moreover, their professors' and mentors' guidance inspired them as well (11%). Real-life application of knowledge (11%) and personal growth (5%) gave them the assurance that these challenges could be overcome if everyone was conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities.

Despite these "knots" or motivational aspects, the participants noted, however, that certain aspects have been considered as "bolts" (demotivation) in the online teaching modality. These TIs mentioned that sudden interruptions of Internet connectivity as well as the passivity of learners with their short attention span (56%) dampened their enthusiasm somewhat. The noisy surroundings and their inability to plan or initiate online activities for the learners (37%) have also been identified as demotivating factors. In the study of Siripol and Wilang (2021), the demotivating situations in synchronous online class settings were related to the self-determination theory such as familiarity with the platform, students' attention and control, and teachers' own beliefs towards teaching and learning.

Orderly Academic Facilitation

The teaching interns acquired their knowledge of classroom management from the college professors and mentors (77%), YouTube information and demonstrations (38%), as well as their own experiences (27%). The data denoted that as regards classroom management, helpful and relevant input from the professors as well as mentors enabled them to be equipped with theories and practice on appropriate and relevant classroom management. Understandably, the value of classroom management in instructional facilitation plays a pivotal role in any successful academic engagement.

Marzano and Marzano (2003) posit that research has shown that teachers' actions in their classrooms have twice the impact on student achievement as do school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community. Moreover, it is common knowledge that one of the classroom teacher's most important jobs is managing the classroom effectively. In support of this finding, Liu, and Chiang (2019) stated that by using research-based strategies combining appropriate levels of authority, cooperation and an awareness of student needs, teachers can build positive classroom dynamics.

In the realization of good classroom management, certain aspects were considered as ”knots” or motivation, such as the learners' adherence to the rules and guidance from the mentors (61%) and self-discipline regarding time management (33%). These data show that the behavior or response of the learners, the focus of the educative process, motivates the STI's to find more animating ways to engage them. They believe that in doing so, learners' attention will be captivated, and they will not become unruly. In support of this finding, Liu and Chiang (2019) stated that by using research-based strategies combined with appropriate levels of authority, cooperation and an awareness of student needs, teachers can build positive classroom dynamics.

Despite the ”knots” or motivations, there were "bolts" or demotivations which were encountered by these participants. These were the unpredictable behavior of the learners (27%), unexpected interruptions by parents during class engagement (16%), and intermittent connectivity (5%). These show that the participants were somehow distracted, which they believe had detracted from their teaching performance. It is hoped that these distractions will be addressed as these can deter them from instructional improvement if not promptly responded to.

Comprehensibility of Oral Transaction

Communication, the channel of the facilitation activity, needs to be clear and comprehensible. According to Zlatovic (2018), whether a teacher, an educator, or a parent is helping a child with homework, this gives the child an opportunity to hear and comprehend the material as it is presented. Hence, as regards the communication skills of the teaching interns, it was evident based on the findings that they acquired their knowledge and skills from Grammarly and from certain online sources, videos movies and books (61%), from their professors or mentors (44%), by self-assertion (33%) and from family members (5%).

On the other hand, there were "bolts" or demotivating factors in the practice of the target language, especially in the delivery of instruction. As noted, these participants expressed that their limited vocabulary and grammatical errors (77%) somehow prevented them from freely expressing their thoughts and ideas. This was supported by their statement that anxiety (11%) crept in along the way, thus making them self-conscious and awkward in their communication.

Their successful imparting of ideas to the learners depended on their own levels of fluency. In certain cases, they also felt somewhat demotivated if the learners could not answer their questions. For them, this was confirmation that learners did not clearly understand their instructions or input.

All these emphasized the value of communication skills, especially while teaching because this served as a potent driver of understanding and applying the knowledge learned. Misbah (2017) contended that learning English, being the global lingua franca, needs to be well facilitated by the teacher in the classroom, whether virtually or in-person. In today's ever-changing world, the English language is regarded as one of the most important languages in communication, as well as the main medium of instruction in education worldwide.

These four factors (Lesson Designing, Online Teaching/Learning Modality, Classroom Management and Communication Skills) from which the teaching interns have generally gained their knowledge created "knots" or motivation in their teaching internship despite the "bolts" or demotivating factors they encountered. Positively, they were gradually able to turn the "bolts" into "knots" in the process of learning as guided by their mentors and significant others.

Experiences of Teaching Interns
The teaching interns indicated that there were challenges as well as opportunities in their online teaching internship.

Challenges in Online Teaching Internship
Theme 1: Dealing with Personal Issues
Personal issues were the concerns, challenges, and problems encountered and discussed on a personal level. These reflected the opinions of the teaching interns in the bachelor's program in early childhood education in their teaching demonstration experience via online platforms. This proved to be a significant challenge since their experiences vary regarding their concerns about conducting an online delivery of instruction with the diverse set of learners given the sole modality used in the school.

Self-Confidence. This was a common concern of teachers in the conducting online or virtual classes. Teachers needed to develop self-confidence as it is a prerequisite in the profession where one faces the whole class with the command of authority centered in them. In confidence research, two trends can be distinguished. Within one trend confidence is viewed as "certainty in being able to handle something" (Stajkovic, 2006) and the other trend focuses on the

"accuracy of judgments about a perception or an outcome". The teachers tend to pretend that they have mastered the competency of the lesson that they are teaching. However, the experience of the teaching interns during the teaching demonstration was the opposite owing to self-doubt: they were anxious about what they were saying and that led to their forgetting what was to follow. The challenge was more about the exposure of teaching interns to a large group during the pandemic time where there was no face-to-face interaction.

Being Demotivated. Motivation plays an important role in the teaching-learning process. It was not unusual for the teaching interns to feel demotivated instead of being encouraged to do their best to deliver a good lesson. Being demotivated leads to failure; thus effective teaching would not take place. As shared by one intern:
"I felt unmotivated during my internship because every time I was having my live demo, I got disconnected due to intermittent connectivity. Our place was very known for having slow Internet connection. I was sad that though I have given my best to do with my lesson plan I end up doing nothing in times of demonstration."

According to Dornyei and Ushioda (2013), demotivation is "specific external forces that reduce or diminishe the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action". It further denotes that demotivation does not only entail connectivity issues in teaching but also affects the way of doing things. Moreover, demotivation was not caused by more attractive options nor by stronger distractions, gradual loss of interest, or internal processes of deliberation without the influence of specific external triggers.

Theme 2: Meeting the Demands of Teaching
The teaching profession requires more understanding regarding its demands and conditions. One of these includes competence in the use of technology in the different modalities of teaching. Along with these demands were some challenges with which the TIs also had to contend. Connectivity issues was one significant challenge for both teachers and students as they could be disconnected any time during the day. With the mantra that learning continues despite the pandemic, academic engagements in all levels were solely done virtually. As it had drastic global implications, many were unprepared, especially the learning institutions. Students and teachers experienced an uphill battle towards a sudden shift of the education landscape.

The challenges experienced by some of the teaching intern participants were evident in their feedback:
"During my internship journey, I've been given the chance to explore and know my strengths and weaknesses. I couldn't perform well during my demo because of my connection, there were times that I could no longer attend the synchronous.

Similarly, another teaching intern further said that:
"The challenges that I have encountered when my Internet connection was not stable and when my laptop got hanged and the most unforgettable one was during my off campus, an hour before my demonstration, someone edited my presentation. I was so nervous that time, good thing I got to retrieve the files.

These comments revealed that the TIs were obviously disturbed by the Internet connectivity problems. Apart from these, another concern regarding low or no electrical power supply also surfaced:
"I almost cried when there was a sudden brown out in the middle of my activities. The children enjoyed it a lot but due to no power, everything stopped."

Moreover, TIs added:
"I was embarrassed when I experienced fluctuating electrical current because I didn't know what to do. One good thing was my mentor contacted me to stay because she would continue to facilitate".

These encounters emphasized that Internet connectivity as well as good electrical power supply were essential for successful virtual academic activity. Asemah (2021) shared similar thoughts, namely that poor as well as erratic electric power supply being experienced across the country was one of the challenges that rendered online teaching programs useless in Nigeria. Rahman et al. (2017) then stipulated that students need enhanced Internet usage for their studies and further suggested that the university should provide Internet facilities and a digital environment for students. They added that the unavailability of proper digital tools, Internet or WiFi connections caused considerable setbacks which led to many students losing out on the learning process.

The mode of teaching was also considered as a significant challenge. It is described as the delivery of instruction by the teacher to the students in either synchronous or asynchronous sessions. According to Ali (2020), for both students and teachers globally, online distance learning has become a necessity. Meanwhile, in the study of Bao (2020) he indicated that regardless of the problems encountered and the short time for planning, moving all current courses online was a significant and disruptive adjustment. This was pointed out by one of the interns when she said that:
"From my experiences, at first, I had trouble dealing with my students. I'm on the stage of adjusting and adopting the new modality of teaching and learning".

The use of instructional materials should also be varied in the teaching and learning. It can be defined as a collection of tools that enables teachers to educate successfully, making the learning process easier for the learners (Savery, 2015). In the process, teachers utilized several resources apart from the traditional ones to meet needs of the present.

This is demonstrated by a teaching intern when she said that:
When I make a PPT, I have a theme to make it more interactive since children have a short burst of energy. From 3rd grading to 4th, I was also challenged to find more videos since we also spoke different languages like Cebuano in the third grading and Filipino in the fourth grading."

It is explained further by another teaching intern that:
"Also have trouble making a more engaging topic, design, and activities for my students. I searched a lot of videos on how to make my PowerPoint more engaging to the students."

As a further guide in the delivery of instruction, teachers use various online learning applications to ensure learners are actively engaged in the learning process. Culatta (2011) posited that to improve education and promote learner engagement, multimedia technologies are employed. Internet or web-based applications are among the types of technology most frequently employed by instructors to support instruction (Rolando et al., 2013; Kale & Goh, 2014), as well as online classes (Martin & Parkerm, 2014), and applications based on games (Wang, 2015).

Theme 3: Handling the Behaviors of the Preschoolers in a Virtual Class
Facilitating academic engagement with the preschoolers is fundamental. It can be both exciting and challenging. This entails thorough preparation on the part of teachers, especially in relation to consideration of the learners' stage of development. According to Grantham et al. (2007), this age is the critical period when the brain as well as intellectual, physical, emotional, and behavioral processes develops rapidly, and the brain development is determined by the quality of the environment. More precisely, the student teaching interns who are assigned to preschool education should preferably possess the qualities of a teacher who can support and address the needs of the preschoolers.

In the virtual preschool class activities, certain encounters such as pupils' tantrums and boredom challenged the teaching interns. Since these learners are starting to expose themselves to a learning environment, especially a virtual learning environment, some, if not most, of these learners exhibited either a flamer (dominating) or lurker (non-participant) mode of learning behavior. The STIs had to deal with these types of behavior. In the course of their teaching-learning activities, the following were encountered by the various TIs:

The first one was having to encounter a child who was spoiled and threw tantrums so easily. As I was starting my class, I like to begin with a prayer and then with an energizer just so the learners would not feel sleepy. Now what happened was when I asked them if they felt energized, this kid answered me that it was boring for him and instead of making him energized and ready for class, he said it made him even more tired."

The second teaching intern added that:
"…during my Nursery 2 class one learner was already crying because he thought it was a Chinese class and he even explained that he didn't want to attend the class because he couldn't understand anything. "

According to Enanoza (2022), disciplining the learners is not a significant problem in this case since everyone was receiving attention.

These experiences are manifestations that despite the challenges, teaching interns were undaunted in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities. This dedication is considered praiseworthy. According to Lorena (2015), temper tantrums are considered as outbursts displayed by young children towards their parents or guardians. These behaviors can be considered normal and a reflection of immaturity as the child strives to accomplish age-appropriate developmental

tasks. Tantrums can become less frequent and even be prevented by not giving the performer an audience and by not giving into their demands. Furthermore, Eguico et al. (2022) concluded that parents as co-teachers contributed to the success of their children during their homeschooling with the onset of the COVID–19 pandemic and were highly engaged in attending to the learning needs of their children (Hinggo et al., 2022).

All these challenges motivate teachers to be better with every teaching opportunity. Any teacher therefore who is determined to succeed conscientiously needs to turn challenges into opportunities.

Opportunities in Online Teaching Internship
According to Young (2022), the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the lives of the entire global population. The devastating impact on the lives of students, teachers, and staff was increasingly felt in the field of education. Meeting the educational needs of young children during a global pandemic presented unique challenges. Early childhood educators recognize the significance of teaching and learning in a child's development. Teachers of young children are trained to be engaging and culturally competent, and to recognize the value of teaching children. In this study on the experiences of teaching interns in online teaching during the pandemic, some opportunities such as personal preparedness, teaching preparedness, and the value of the mentor-mentee relationship are highlighted.

Theme 4: Transitioning to Personal Preparedness
The teaching interns need to be personally prepared when they want to succeed in their internship journey. *Reflecting* on one's strengths and weaknesses allows student teaching interns to focus on their strengths in overcoming the challenges they may face along the way. Once a student teaching intern is personally prepared to tackle the various teaching-related tasks, then they will be ready to deliver their actual teaching demonstrations. As a teaching intern (TI 15) claimed:
"I reflect on what went right and what went wrong in my teaching and how I could improve from my teaching experience".

A variety of research articles are outlined in the literature review by Morris et al. (2017), demonstrating that teachers who feel well-prepared for the classroom are more likely to give a positive assessment of their own abilities.

Self-regulation is a component of the personal preparation for teaching interns. Getting started in the teaching internship program requires a great deal of planning, carrying out many teaching-related duties, and overcoming hurdles associated with degree completion. Therefore, *regulating oneself* assists teaching intern in maintaining their composure and attention. As a teaching intern (TI 6) shared, *"Self-management is the key to unlocking all the sub-skills of being a teacher."* Another teaching intern (TI 3) reinforced that:
"I overcome teaching-related obstacles by being disciplined and staying on track with my goals and objectives".

Also, the teaching intern (TI 1) emphasized that:

"I remained calm and patient in dealing with learners with attention problems".
Along these lines, Russell et al. (2022) revealed the circumstances that enable teachers to promote student self-regulated learning considering the difficulties they encounter. Vijaya et al. (2022) also concluded that learners should be scaffolded to concentrate on their strengths rather than on their weaknesses, educated in time management skills, and given strategies for dealing with stress.

As they fully immerse themselves in the internship program, the teaching interns' ideals are important. Their *optimistic mentality* affects how they approach their teaching duties and maintain their focus while working toward their own objectives. The teaching intern (TI 1) mentioned that:
"My first teaching demonstration made me realize that I can achieve anything if I put my mind into it".

Another teaching intern (TI 8) emphasized that:
"My thoughts become my reality that is why I will always think positively. I will always remember to work smarter rather than harder".

Moreover, TI (14) posited that:
"I was able to surpass the challenges because I kept pushing myself as long as I know I am on the right path and still capable of doing so. I am persistent enough and continue to think positively as I complete the teaching internship".

The teaching interns encountered numerous difficulties when providing the essentials of online instruction. However, they were able to manage the risks and challenges of online teaching by relying on their beliefs, exercising self-control, being accountable, being resilient, and maintaining their commitment. In a similar context, Williams et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of fostering resilience in educators in order to increase their self-assurance in the face of challenges. According to Baruani et al. (2021), resilient teachers use a variety of efficient coping mechanisms, such as collaboration, social contact, protective strategies, and professional growth to manage the stress associated with their line of work as teachers. On the other hand, their research revealed that in the case of teachers who are not stress-resistant, poor performance and job unhappiness result in accidents and absence.

The strengths of the teaching interns were rooted in their faith in God. As teaching interns, their faith gave them the strength to confront life's challenges. Teaching interns indicated that:
"I asked help from the Lord that He would help me continue the class I was teaching (TI 1). God always listens and provides the answers and guidance (TI 8). Prayer is my main key in overcoming all the challenges. It gave me the strength to continue (TI 15).

Workplace spirituality influences teachers' organizational citizenship behavior both directly and indirectly by influencing their affective commitment, as Al-Mahdy et al. (2022) found in their study, which enhances school performance.

Thus, attention to an employee's spiritual needs must be prioritized (Astakoni et al., 2021).

Theme 5: Teaching Preparedness
The teaching interns acknowledged that their exposure to online teaching internships helped them to be prepared for the numerous roles and responsibilities in teaching. They reported that online teaching presents various challenges. However, the feeling of *being excited and thrilled to make teaching meaningful* overflowed in them. They considered these feelings as opportunities that motivate them to give their best in teaching. As a teaching intern described: *I am thankful for all my teaching experiences because I grow independently and become more resilient in all forms of struggles"* (TI 11).

The online instruction gave teaching interns the chance to *improve their interaction* with students. Teaching intern (TI 3) said that:
"I practice interacting with pupils while I hone my teaching abilities. When I see the pupils learn and progress, I get inspired to teach and enhance my passion to teach".

According to Perry (2022), motivated students are emotionally invested in their learning and can maintain focus on a single task for extended periods of time. Additionally, Salas-Pilco et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review on student involvement in online learning. The teaching interns reported that the online teaching offers opportunities in *providing engaging collaborative activities.* Teaching interns shared that:
*"My teaching internship provided me with the opportunity to learn and experiment with various teaching techniques (*TI 3) *to make my lesson more interactive* (TI 7) *so that students will be more interested* (TI 5)".

The study of Kristianto and Gandajaya (2022), found that students' participation in offline and online problem-based learning (PBL) results in scores that are similar but not significantly different. This is made feasible by the PBL structure, which calls for students to participate actively in learning, work cooperatively in teams, and interact with lecturers and other students. In the same vein, Gamage et al. (2022) asserted that engaged students are more likely to achieve their academic goals. Additionally, during COVID-19, Fabian et al. (2022) examined the elements affecting online learners' participation and engagement in study skills. They found that study skill engagement is influenced by e-learning capital and transactional distance between students and teachers as well as between students themselves.

As a result, online teaching is an opportunity for the interns to *be creative in teaching*. The teaching intern revealed that:
"My teaching internship journey is an opportunity for me to discover and learn different teaching strategies and techniques; write better lesson designs; and formulate SMART learning objectives (TI 18)".

"I overcame the hindrances related to teaching demonstrations by creatively finding ways on how to solve the problem (TI 12)".

According to Starko (2021), creative teaching refers to a teacher's efforts to use innovative strategies. As the teaching interns ventured into online teaching demonstrations, they designed the lesson guides and employed the appropriate strategies as well as the assessment to be used. In this study, the teaching interns mentioned that being creative in teaching entailed the ability to integrate technology in teaching. They highlighted the advantage of tech-driven online teaching. Congruently, the literature review conducted by Tang et al. (2022) supported the revelation of the teaching interns in this study where digital technology impacts students' creativity owing to the integration of teaching strategies.

Theme 6: Anchoring on Mentor-Mentee Relationship
The teaching internship mentors played a significant role in the overall performance of the teaching interns. Their assistance enabled the teaching interns to reflect on their teaching performance. Thus, the teaching interns valued the mentors' constructive feedback. They commented that:
"My mentor provided guidance, feedback, attention, and models professionalism" (TI 9).
"My mentor provided endless effort in giving advice for my professional growth for my holistically development (TI 14). *I am thankful to my mentor who motivated me to improve my teaching skills and continue doing my best* (TI 16).

The study of Rodriquez et al. (2022) emphasized how preservice teachers' skills develop gradually during teaching practice in teacher education according to the viewpoint of school mentors. The findings indicate that the preservice teachers' personal skills have been evaluated more favorably by the school mentors than their professional competences. On the other hand, Michos et al. (2022) concluded that the scaffolding provided by mentors helped student teachers build their motivational orientations.

The mentors' assessments of the knowledge and abilities that mentees bring to school were generally favorable, according to the research. The mentors also acknowledged their high level of satisfaction with their own understanding of their mentoring position and competencies. The researchers concluded that the effectiveness of mentor-teachers influenced teacher-trainees' teaching practices in a positive way (Radulović et al., 2022). In the same vein, Cadosales et al. (2021) conducted a meta-synthesis on the potential effectiveness of a teaching internship program. They found that the mentor played an important role in the success of the teaching interns through coaching and feedback.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations
Based on the findings, this study concludes that teaching internship involves both the "knots" (motivating) and "bolts" (demotivating) factors which make STIs' experiences fruitful and meaningful. Their personal, family, school and other factors corroborate the positive influence on their teaching performance. In the same vein, the prevalent challenges encountered were turned into opportunities, especially with the guidance of the teaching internship mentors. This concurs with the contention of Goldhabber (2020) regarding the importance of the mentor teacher who supervises this placement, as teachers tend to be more effective when the student teaches with a mentor who is more experienced

teacher. As the school takes a primary role towards a meaningful teaching internship journey, it is therefore recommended that the identified "knots" be sustained and enhanced. On the other hand, to address the "bolts", the STIs may be given more opportunities to teach and attend relevant training and seminars in order to minimize their social-emotional pressure gradually. It is also worth mentioning how the teaching interns develop a positive outlook by being flexible in dealing with the students and how they have made their approach more personalized. Likewise, issues on Internet connectivity on blended instruction may be addressed in a partnership with the academic institution (in-person modality) and the local government units (work-from-home scheme). Although it may seem difficult, one should never cease to take on new learning challenges.

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Knots and Bolts of Online Teaching Internship Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

A. Teaching Intern's Profile

Name (Optional): _____

Age : _____

Civil Status: _____

Gender: _____

Father's Occupation : _____

Mother's Occupation : _____

Gadgets available at home: _____

Teaching Intern's Performance Rating:) On-campus _____, Off-campus _____or NA ___
(Second Semester, 2021-2022, general average _____, for profiling)

B.   Factors Influencing the Teaching Interns' Performance

(What is the source of the factor/s? From whom/what?)

Factors	Source of Knowledge (From whom/what?)	Knots/ Motivational Experiences (What motivated you?)	Bolts/ Demotivational Experiences (What demotivated you?)
Lesson Designing (online)			
Online Teaching Modality / Pedagogy			
Classroom Management			
Communication Skills			

C. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE TEACHING INTERNS' EXPERIENCES
   (freely narrate your answers)

1. Cite the most unforgettable experience/s you have encountered as a teaching intern (both the challenges and opportunities)

Challenges	Opportunities

2. How did you cope/respond/solve with those challenges / difficulties?

3. Identify your strength/s as a teaching intern. How will you apply them to your actual teaching experiences in the future?

Strength/s	How to apply your strength in the future?