

# Exploring the Assessment Strategies of Secondary School Teachers in Schools: Views of Novice Teachers

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**Abstract:-** This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in one of the Clusters of Schools in the Division of Davao City regarding their assessment practices during the post-pandemic era, utilizing phenomenological design. A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather the data. Ethical considerations were observed in data collection. The themes were extracted using thematic content analysis. The findings were: addressing learning gaps, technological challenges, social and emotional considerations, reteaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, transition to online assessment, professional development needs, and supporting diverse learners are the experiences of the teachers; their coping mechanisms are collaboration and peer learning, individualized support, clear communication, incorporate social and emotional support, adaptability and resilience, staying informed, and employ flexible assessment methods; while their insights include need for professional development, flexibility in assessment approaches, recognition of individual learning needs, technology integration assessment, considers social and emotional well-being, and collaboration and sharing best practices. The recommendation advanced included recognizing the significance of technology in assessment by the Department of Education and invest in the required infrastructure and tools, ensuring that teachers have access to reliable technology and training in order to properly use digital technologies into their assessment processes.

**Keywords:-** Experiences, Coping Mechanisms, Educational Management Insights, Post-Pandemic Era, Assessment, Secondary Teachers.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of every educational endeavor is to foster comprehension and knowledge acquisition. Assessment and Evaluation tools aid educators in evaluating students' gained knowledge and abilities before, during, and after the instructional session. It is an indisputable fact that it serves as a reflection of the caliber of education and academic progress demonstrated by the students. This assumption posits that evaluation is an inherent component of the teaching process. According to the Glossary of Education Reform (2015), assessment encompasses a diverse array of methodologies or instruments employed by educators to assess, gauge, and record students' scholastic

readiness, educational advancement, skill acquisition, or instructional needs. Educators worldwide employ diverse assessment techniques and methodologies to ascertain the level of cognitive aptitude exhibited by their students at different points throughout the academic years. The classroom teachers exhibit the highest level of engagement among all educators within the educational institution, with a primary focus on ensuring the effective implementation of the curriculum within the classroom setting. Consequently, individuals seek avenues to enhance the quality of education provided to every student. In addition, they employ a variety of assessment methodologies that have been validated over their tenure. Professional standards are utilized as a framework to guarantee the provision of high-quality educational activities. Therefore, this assertion provides justification for the notion that the caliber of educational professionals significantly contributes to the overall quality of educational results.

Nationally, the Philippines has placed increased significance on the role of assessment as a learning tool with the adoption of Republic Act 10533, also referred to as the K to 12 Basic Education Act of 2013. The Department acknowledges the significance of performance and skills enhancement, attributing it with the utmost weightage of either 50 percent or 60 percent (Manalo, Reyes & Bundalian, 2022).

In view of the changes in the Philippine educational system due to the pandemic and even now in the post-pandemic era, in the Cluster 13 secondary schools of the Division of Davao City, this holds true. Teachers in different academic disciplines encounter various obstacles that necessitate resolution. The individuals are encountering difficulties in evaluating the comprehension of the learners. The implementation of distance learning protocols, regardless of whether they are conducted online or by other means, necessitates educators to promptly adjust their instructional methods, as well as their daily responsibilities, obligations, and levels of responsibility in face-to-face set-ups.

## II. METHOD

Presented in this chapter is the method. It includes the Philosophical Assumption, Qualitative Assumption, Design and Procedure, Research, Participants, Role of the Researcher, Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Trustworthiness of the Study.

The philosophical assumptions in my study were used in analyzing and interpreting my results. At its most basic level, psychological research can be used to explain and forecast parts of the human experience, improve our understanding of the lived experiences of different groups of people, or criticize and change the current conditions in which we live and seek to grow (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2013). According to Creswell (2012), the *ontological issue* relates to the nature of reality and its characteristics.

### ➤ *Qualitative Assumptions*

Individuals want to comprehend their reality and generate their own unique meanings that correlate to their experiences using Social Constructivism as an interpretative framework for qualitative assumptions (Creswell, 2013). These meanings are not imprinted or innate in each person. Rather, meanings emerge as a result of interactions with others (Creswell, 2013). These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas.

### ➤ *Design and Procedure*

The study was conducted using a qualitative-inquiry-based phenomenological research design using open-ended questions. Phenomenological research is a kind of investigation in which the researcher identifies the essence of participants' descriptions of a phenomenon. The researcher brackets or sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand the experiences of the study participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

### ➤ *Research Participants*

This study was conducted in one of the Clusters of Schools in the Division of Davao City, Region XI. Only 10 participants from 10 different schools as the key informants were included and were purposely selected based on their assessment practices/strategies and experiences from year 2019-2023, their awareness and participations in assessment trainings, assessment tasks for the learners and teachers and the contribution they made to their respective schools as master teachers. The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. According to Bernard (2006), it is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants.

### ➤ *Role of the Researcher*

In qualitative research, the researcher's role is to try to gain access to the needed data while exploring the research participants' ideas and feelings on the phenomenon being studied. This is not a simple task, to say the least. This entails inviting people to discuss topics that are potentially highly personal to them. Reliving prior experiences might be tough at times when the experiences being explored are somehow negative to them and are still fresh in the participant's thoughts. My first job as a researcher is to protect participants and their data in any method that data is acquired. Participants shall be given explicit and articulated mechanisms for such safeguarding.

### ➤ *Data Collection*

In gathering the data, I prepared the interview guide which is composed of four (4) main significant questions which inquired about the experiences of master teachers. A thorough deliberation was made on the aspect of determining the problems of teachers in their assessment practices. I made sure that my interview guide was validated by the experts. Moreover, I made sure that all ethical protocols were observed and implemented as I collected the data.

### ➤ *Data Analysis*

In this study all the data collected were carefully examined and thoughtfully analyzed. The researcher first described personal experiences with the phenomenon under study. The researcher began with full description of her own experience of the phenomenon. This is an attempt to set aside the researcher's personal experiences so that the focus can be directed to the participants. He developed a list of significant statements. He then finds statements about how individual were experiencing the topic, lists these significant statements as having equal worth, and works to develop a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping, statements.

### ➤ *Analytical framework*

According to Braun and Clark (2006) methods of qualitative data analysis fall in two groups. The first group consists of methods driven by an epistemological or theoretical position, which have limited variability in how they are applied within their frameworks, such as conversation analysis (CA) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and methods which are situated within a broad theoretical framework and can therefore be used in a variety of ways within those frameworks, such as grounded theory (GT), discourse analysis (DA) narrative analysis (NA).

The second group includes methods independent of theory and epistemology, which can be applied across a range of different theoretical and epistemological approaches and are therefore very flexible. One such method is thematic analysis, which through the theoretical freedom "provides flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun and Clark, 2006).

➤ *Trustworthiness of the Study*

For trustworthiness of the study, I adhered to credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability of qualitative study.

• *Credibility.*

This is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings.

• *Transferability.*

The term "transferability" refers to the extent to which the results of one study can be applied to a variety of circumstances (Silverman, 2001).

• *Dependability.*

In this study, I used approaches to address the issue of reliability. to demonstrate that comparable results would be reached if the work was redone using the same procedures and circumstances.

• *Confirmability.*

The qualitative investigator's concept of confirmability and objectivity is a similar concern. In order to lessen the influence of bias, the importance of giving back and sharing the results to the participants in promoting such confirmability was highlighted once more to satisfy this part.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings and discussion based on the data gathered. The presentation is organized in four sections: first, the experiences of secondary teachers in their assessment practices during the post-pandemic era; second, the coping mechanisms of secondary school teachers with the challenges they experienced in assessment; third, the educational management insights of secondary school teachers regarding their experiences in assessment in the post-pandemic era; and fourth, the synthesis of the findings.

➤ *Experiences of Secondary Teachers in their Assessment Practices during the Post-pandemic Era*

Presented in Figure 3 is the seven (7) experiences of secondary teachers in their assessment practices during the post-pandemic era. The experiences include the following: (1) addressing learning gaps, (2) technological challenges, (3) social and emotional considerations, (4) reteaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, (5) transition to online assessment, (6) professional development needs, and (7) supporting diverse learners.

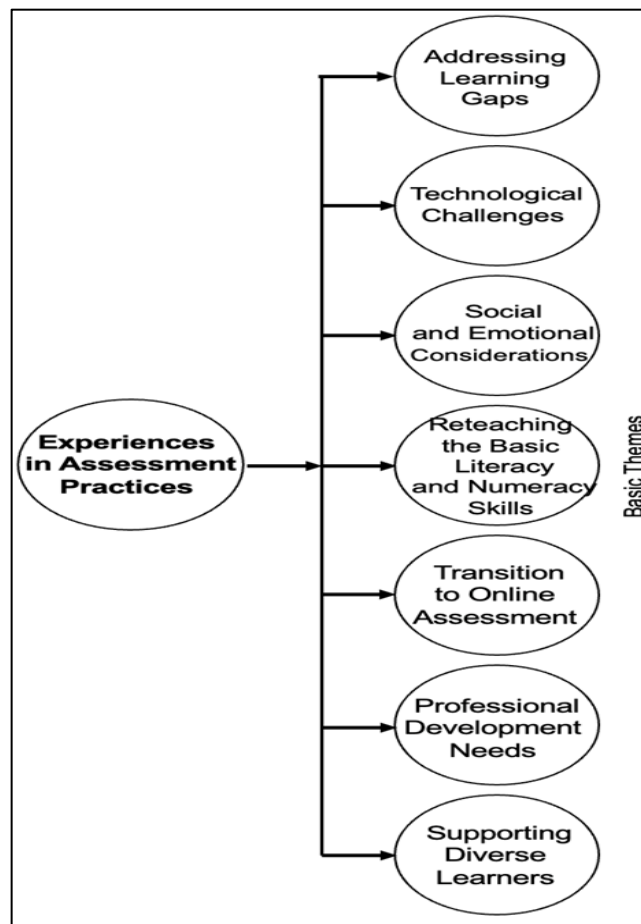


Fig 1 Experiences of Secondary Teachers in their Assessment Practices during the Post-pandemic Era

• *Addressing Learning Gaps.*

It shows that one of the experiences of secondary school teachers in their assessment practices during the post-pandemic era is, addressing the learning gaps. Some of them mentioned that most of their students are having a hard time in reading and comprehension, when they give this kind of assessment that needs comprehension their students have hard time to utter some unfamiliar words.

With this, teachers should use varied instruction strategies to satisfy students' diverse learning demands in the classroom. This could include modifying instructional techniques, providing more resources, or offering alternate evaluations to ensure that every student has a chance to succeed despite learning gaps. This finding is congruent to the result of the study of Cooper and Tschobotko (2020) who revealed that the pandemic has exacerbated scholastic gaps and caused learning loss, particularly for students who were unable to access resources or encountered difficulties with distance learning.

• *Technological Challenges.*

Technological challenges is one of the experiences of secondary school teachers in their assessment practices during the post-pandemic era. According to them, it is not easy specially in giving feedback and follow-up because some of the students have no access to Internet. Specifically, they uttered that:

This implies that managing technological problems in assessment in the post-pandemic period necessitates a proactive and adaptable strategy. Teachers who invest in digital literacy, lobby for equal access, and promote a good technological culture create a more effective and inclusive learning environment. Similarly, Triemstra et al. (2021) claimed that the uneven distribution of students' access to technology was one of the major issues noted.

- *Social and Emotional Considerations.*

The participants mentioned that during the post-pandemic, the social and emotional aspects of the students are considered in giving assessment. In fact, they expressed that understanding of the psychological states of the students, as teachers they should know the background of each students and the level of leaning ability so they can understand and provide differentiated materials to them. For instance, they added that:

By incorporating the social and emotional aspects into their practices, teachers can help students have a more emotionally supportive and inclusive assessment experience in the post-pandemic period. This approach not only addresses academic issues, but also recognizes the role of social and emotional well-being in the learning process. This finding finds support with the claim of Bustillo and Aguilos (2022) that students experience higher levels of stress and anxiety during the pandemic. Stress levels increased as a result of economic hardships, disturbances to daily life, and health uncertainty.

- *Reteaching the Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills.*

Due to the problem that the pandemic has brought to the learning of the students, in the assessment during the post-pandemic era, teachers need to reteach the basic literacy and numeracy to the students. The participants claimed that they find the assessment hard since their learners are product of pandemic, they need to re-teach them the basic reading, writing and computing before giving the evaluation. Specifically, they cited that:

Relatedly, Agaton and Cueto (2021) suggested that learning was lost as a result of the pandemic's interruptions, which included closing schools and switching to remote learning, especially for basic literacy and numeracy abilities.

- *Transition to Online Assessment.*

Due to the different teaching practices that the pandemic has brought to the teachers, during the post-pandemic era the assessments are given to the students through different online platforms. They even revealed that, they engage into modernize assessment like using technology and more creative style of assessment, because their students have different ways of learning so they prepare a lot of assessment that cater their needs. As a matter of fact, they pointed out that:

This is parallel to the report of Cohen et al. (2022) stated that teachers had to modify conventional assessment formats as a result of the transition to online assessment. To fit the online learning environment, they looked into substitutes including discussion boards, project-based assessments, online tests, and multimedia assignments.

- *Professional Development Needs.*

Another experience of the secondary school teachers in their assessment during the post-pandemic era is, they need professional development. Some of them even mentioned that they need to utilize more strategies in teaching specifically to the subjects with hard to teach concepts, hence the school shall provide a lot of seminars and training's to the teachers in terms of classroom strategies that would be useful in the field of teaching, particularly in giving assessments to the students. They highlighted that:

Relatedly, in order to handle the complexities of online assessment, many educators stated that they needed professional development. To provide teachers with the knowledge and techniques required for the successful design and execution of online assessments, training sessions and workshops were conducted (Nugroho, Lin, Borisova, Nieto & Ntekim, 2021).

- *Supporting Diverse Learners.*

The last experience of the secondary school teachers in their assessment during the post-pandemic era is, supporting diverse learners. For instance, ensuring that students receive meaningful feedback on their assessments promptly can be challenging, because the learners have different characteristics, backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles, impacting the learning experience and making it harder for them to address areas of improvement in a timely manner.

This means that Teachers can foster a more inclusive and supportive assessment environment in the post-pandemic age by assisting different learners. This method fosters an equitable learning environment for all children, encouraging academic success and personal growth. This finding is similar to what Molato-Gayares, Suryadarma and Park (2022) claimed that to fairly evaluate a diverse group of learners, teachers investigated ways for diversified assessment.

- *Coping Mechanisms of Secondary School Teachers with the Challenges they Experienced in Assessment*

Presented in Figure 4 is the seven (7) coping mechanisms of secondary teachers with the challenges they experienced in assessment. The coping mechanisms include the following: (1) collaboration and peer learning, (2) individualized support, (3) clear communication, (4) incorporate social and emotional support, (5) adaptability and resilience, (6) staying informed, and (7) employ flexible assessment methods.

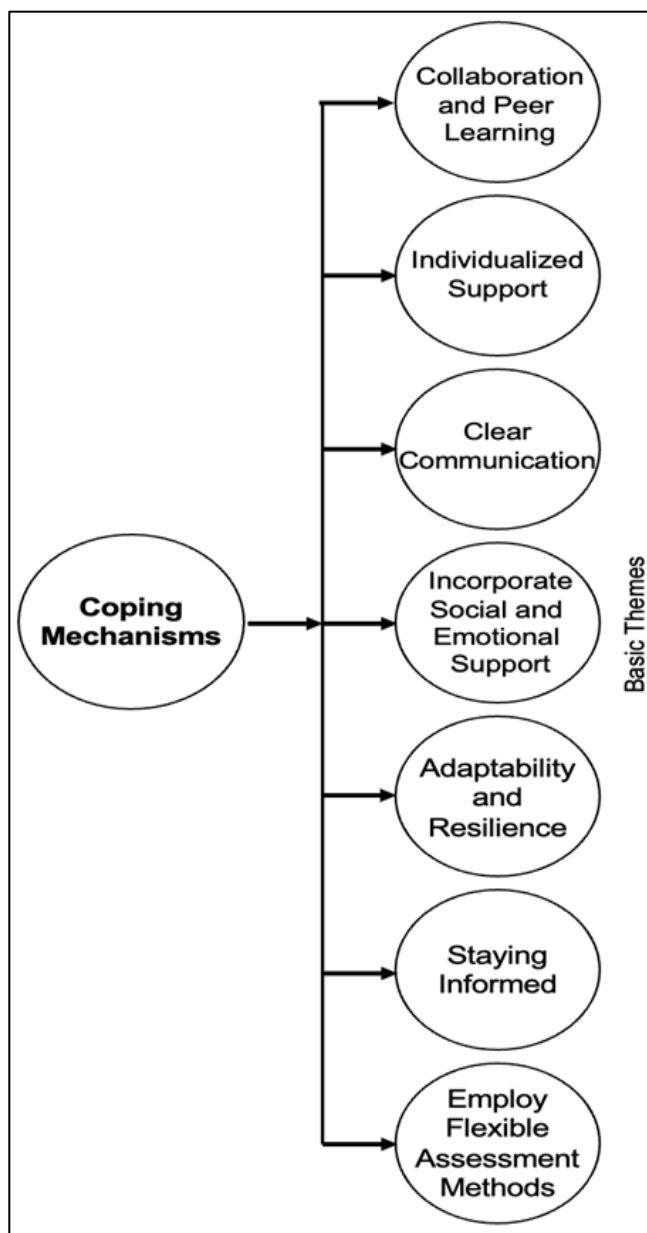


Fig 2 Coping Mechanisms of Secondary School Teachers with the Challenges they Experienced in Assessment

- *Collaboration and Peer Learning.*

One of the coping mechanisms that the secondary school teachers employ with the challenges they experienced in assessment is, collaboration and peer learning. In fact, they cited that they create a centralized bank for assessment resources, tools, and best practices, including sample assessments, rubrics, and guidelines for effective grading. They also encourage other teachers to share their successful assessment strategies with their peers. Some of them expressed the following specific details:

- *Individualized Support.*

To cope up with the challenges that the secondary teachers experienced in their assessment during the post pandemic, one of the strategies they employ is, individualized support. According to them, If their assessment strategy is observed as challenging to the learners, they explore different styles for each learner, for

them to easily cope with the assessment. As a matter of fact, they stated that:

- *Clear Communication.*

Clear communication is also one of the coping mechanisms that the secondary teachers employed with the challenges they experienced in their assessment during the post pandemic. They mentioned that they provide regular updates and reminders to the learners about upcoming assessments, deadlines, and any changes to the assessment schedule. They also utilize various communication channels to the parents about the assessment result of their child such as messenger, text message and calls.

- *Incorporate Social and Emotional Support.*

Incorporating social and emotional support in their assessment is another coping mechanism that the secondary teachers employed during the post-pandemic. They revealed that before the Quarter Exam, they discuss the student's well-being, address any concerns, and provide encouragement. According to them, this personalized approach helped build a supportive relationship and ensures students feel seen and heard.

- *Adaptability and Resiliency.*

Being adaptive to the new assessment strategies and resilient to the educational challenges, is another coping mechanism that the secondary teachers made in their assessment experienced during the post-pandemic era. They even revealed that they design assessments that can be easily adapted to different learning environments, including flexibility in submission methods, allowing for both online and face-to-face options.

- *Staying Informed.*

Teachers keep themselves updated on the new assessment strategies that fit to the learning demands during the post pandemic. They shared that they regularly attends professional development webinars, subscribes to educational newsletters, and participates in virtual conferences to stay updated on new and suitable assessment strategies. They promptly adapt their assessment strategies to align with the updated guidelines, ensuring compliance and effectiveness.

- *Employ Flexible Assessment Methods.*

Teachers employ various and flexible assessment methods as their coping strategy with the challenges they experienced in their assessment during the pos-pandemic era. Some of them uttered that they offer a range of assessment setups, including written assignments, visual projects, oral presentations, and hands-on activities. They added that students can choose the setup that aligns with their strengths and learning preferences, promoting a more inclusive and individualized assessment experience.

➤ *Educational Management Insights of Secondary School Teachers Regarding Their Experiences in Assessment in the Post-pandemic Era*

Presented in Figure 5 is the six (6) educational management insights of secondary school teachers regarding their experiences in assessment in the post-pandemic era. This includes the following: (1) need for professional development, (2) flexibility in assessment approaches, (3) recognition of individual learning needs, (4) technology integration assessment, (5) considers social and emotional well-being, and (6) collaboration and sharing best practices.

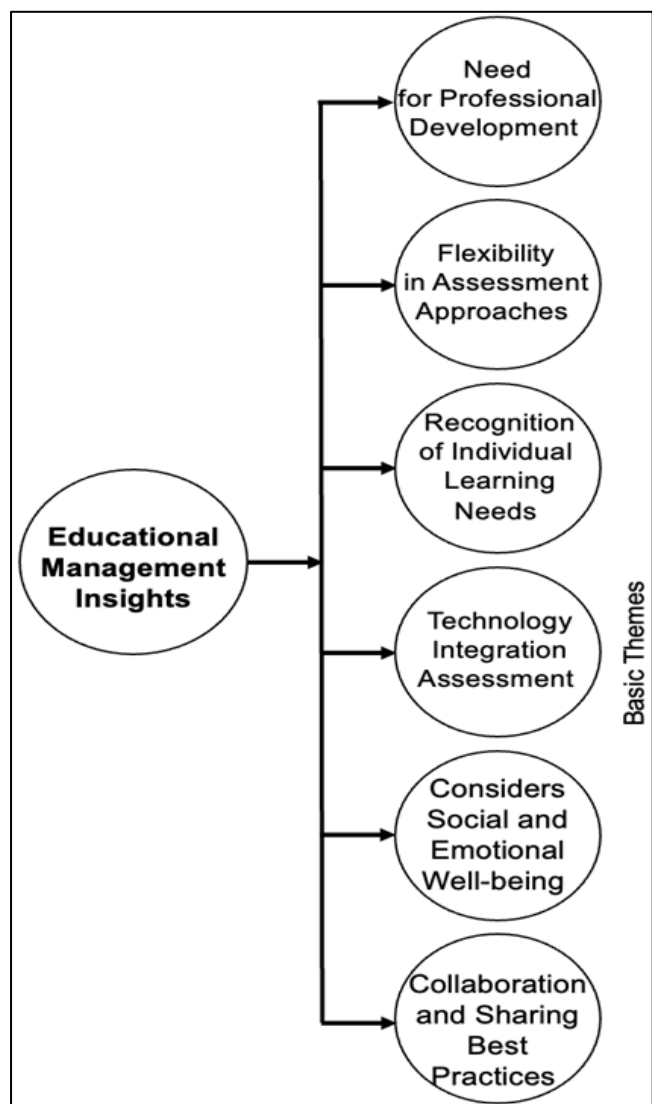


Fig 3 Educational Management Insights Secondary School Teachers Regarding Their Experiences in Assessment in the Post-pandemic Era

• *Need for Professional Development.*

With the experiences of secondary teachers in their assessment during the post-pandemic era, including their coping mechanisms, one of the educational management insights they presented is to have more professional development activities for teachers. The participants exposed that they recognize the need for more trainings on the new assessment technology, focusing on navigating and effectively utilizing the platform.

• *Flexibility in Assessment Approaches.*

Another educational management insight obtained by the secondary school teachers regarding their experiences in assessment during the post-pandemic era is, flexibility in assessment approaches. Some of them revealed that they design assessments that incorporate real-world applications, allowing students to apply their knowledge to practical situations, promoting engagement and providing a context for students to see the relevance of their learning.

• *Recognition of Individual Learning Needs.*

The participants learned that the individual learning needs of the students shall be considered in selecting and designing assessment tools during the post-pandemic era. For instance, some of them mentioned that they employed differentiated instructional strategies and assessments to meet the diverse needs of students, by giving each student the opportunity to succeed based on their individual abilities.

• *Technology Integration Assessment.*

Another educational insights that the participants acquired in their experiences in the assessment during the post-pandemic era is to integrate technology in the assessment. According to them, they utilized an online quiz platform that provides immediate feedback to students, allowing for timely identification of areas that need clarification or reinforcement, enabling students and teachers to quickly correct misconceptions.

• *Considers Social and Emotional Well-being.*

Another educational management insight that the secondary teachers acquired in the assessment during the post-pandemic era is to consider the social and emotional well-being of the students. Some of the participants shared that, instead of standard tests, the they give reflective assessments in which students evaluate their personal development, obstacles, and coping techniques, promoting self-awareness and highlights the value of emotional health.

• *Collaboration and Sharing Best Practices.*

The last educational management insight that the secondary school teachers obtained regarding the assessment during the post-pandemic era is, collaboration and sharing best practices among colleagues. According to the participants, they meet on a regular basis to discuss difficulties, share effective solutions, and collaborate on new assessment methods, promoting a culture of continual improvement.

➤ *Synthesis*

It was noted that the participants identified seven (7) experiences of secondary teachers in their assessment practices during the post-pandemic era, namely: (1) addressing learning gaps, (2) technological challenges, (3) social and emotional considerations, (4) reteaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, (5) transition to online assessment, (6) professional development needs, and (7) supporting diverse learners. There were seven (7) coping mechanisms that the secondary teachers practice to mitigate

the challenges they experienced in assessment, such as: (1) collaboration and peer learning, (2) individualized support, (3) clear communication, (4) incorporate social and emotional support, (5) adaptability and resilience, (6) staying informed, and (7) employ flexible assessment methods. With these, the following educational management insights were derived based from the experiences of the secondary school teachers regarding the assessment during the post-pandemic era: (1) need for professional development, (2) flexibility in assessment approaches, (3) recognition of individual learning needs, (4) technology integration assessment, (5) considers social and emotional well-being, and (6) collaboration and

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