



Adapting in Various Ways: DepEd Teachers' Exposure in Teaching Learners using Approaches

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning is an instructional approach that blends online and in-person learning activities in a planned, pedagogically beneficial fashion, with some in-person time being replaced by online activities. This phenomenological study set out to look into the blended learning narratives of Department of Education teachers. Ten teachers participated in a detailed interview to provide insights on the challenges they faced in the new normal environment of teaching. The findings revealed themes on challenges such as lack of parental support, lack of learners' participation, and lack of access to technology. To address these challenges, the study identified coping mechanisms such as communication with parents and stakeholders with two subthemes – home visitation and coordination with the barangay were generated. Lastly, for the educational management insights, the themes extracted were judicious selection of competencies, teacher empowerment, and educational leaders support were noted as themes. This paper offers directions to policymakers on how to assist teachers in implementing assessments, empower teachers within the educational system, enhance digital literacy, promote parent-teacher collaboration, and establish effective avenues of communication. Future researchers will have opportunities to go deeper into the other aspects of blended learning and provide a more comprehensive knowledge of how it could influence teaching and learning from all angles and dimensions.

Keywords: *Blended Learning, Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Insights, DepEd Teachers, Davao Region.*

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

➤ *The Problem and Its Setting*

“This increased interconnectivity sets the stage for students to develop deep compassion for one another and be upstanders in their community and world. This is empowerment at its very core.” Katie Muhtaris

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic had completely altered the educational setting in the Philippines. With the limitations brought by the health concerns, the Department of Education opted to adapt to the current changes. Several efforts to address the needs of Filipino learners had been carried out by the DepEd, school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders.

The blended learning approach is one of the methods that the DepEd had adopted to continue education in the Philippines amid a global health crisis. According to Pappas (2020), the implementation of blended learning in education dates back to the early 1840s. Several decades ago, blended learning was carried out through the use of mailed postcards, and in recent years, researchers and educators had made significant reforms to adapt it to modern pedagogical practices. More so, in a study conducted by Lothridge et al. (2012), they argued that blended learning involves the leveraging of various platforms to deliver training contents to learners. Mixing online theoretical contents with mentor-based instruction or hands-on application is efficient, timely and cost-effective in delivering training.

Generally, blended learning is divided into three main types: skill-driven, attitude-driven, and competency-driven (Perante et al., 2021). The skill-driven dimension of the blended learning approach is more focused in honing students' knowledge and skills. It calls for the practical application of the skills acquired by the students whilst learning independently. Meanwhile, attitude-driven is based on the interaction among the groupings. This dimension is much more social in nature. The enhancement of students' attitudes and behaviors rely heavily on peers working together on a task. Lastly, the competency-driven dimension is much more concerned about working with experts in the subject. The skills and knowledge that the students will acquire significantly depend on teachers' mentoring. Therefore, mentors should have the required knowledge to equip students with abilities and skills.

In China where the virus was first discovered, over 180 million children had been affected by lockdowns and home-quarantine regulations imposed by the government (Anoba & Cahapay, 2020). Despite schools being shut down, learning continued through different modes, but the highlight is through the use of technology. Schools had opted to use electronic textbooks and online courses to carry out education even amid pandemics. Moreover, in a study conducted by Bernardi et al., (2021), the use of the blended learning approach had been used as well to explore its effects on teaching fieldwork in Japanese studies. Results showed that e-learning and blended learning are useful tools to bridge the distance between students and teachers, and for better supporting learners in the field. They suggested that blended learning is an ideal approach as it can be easily adjusted to various teaching contexts.

However, problems in the implementation of the blended learning approach have emerged in impoverished countries like the Philippines. In the study of Perante et al. (2021) it was revealed that the implications of the blended learning approach among the respondents were mostly negative, challenges have also emerged in the aspects of the resources and adopting a lesson as learners do not have the necessary equipment for the effective carrying out of the approach, and social support had been needed by students in order to cope with the stress and pressures posed by blended learning in the Philippines' educational climate.

In line with this, in the study of Alvarez (2020) which explored the learning problems and challenges in blended learning, there were five themes that occurred: instructional, technological, class size, collaboration, and technical support. The results of the study suggest that instructors face roadblocks in the implementation of the blended learning approach for reasons such as lack of teachers' pedagogical exposure and expertise in the implementation of the approach, lack of learning materials on the students' end, huge class size in the classroom, lack of opportunities for group collaborations, and lack of support from a more knowledgeable other (MKO).

The pandemic had significantly changed the educational set-up in the Philippines. With the looming risk of COVID-19 around, the newly implemented pedagogical approaches will stay as well. However, despite the relevance of the subject of blended approach in the Philippine setting, there are still not that much literature that explore the subject, particularly on the educational conditions of teachers in poor urban areas with huge numbers of student population, who have limited to no access to technology to implement the blended learning approach. Thus, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of teachers, the challenges they face and the coping strategies they used in using the blended learning approach in the new normal classroom.

➤ *Purpose of the Study*

This study aimed to shed light on the problems surrounding the implementation of the blended learning approach and the coping strategies used by teachers to solve the challenges. The findings of the study would contribute to the growing number of literatures that discussed the practical application of the blended learning approach in Philippine classrooms.

➤ *Research Questions*

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What pedagogical challenges did teachers face when using the blended learning approach?
- What are the coping mechanisms used by the teachers to adapt to the challenges?
- What insights can be drawn from the findings of the study?

➤ *Review of Significant Literature*

- *Blended Learning*

Picciano (2006) defined blended learning as a method of instruction that combines online and face-to-face learning activities that are integrated in a planned, pedagogically valuable way, with some face-to-face time supplanted by online activities. Accordingly, blended learning has anywhere between 30 to 79% of online content delivery with the remaining content delivered in a non-web-based method such as face-to-face instruction (Allen et al., 2007). Further, in Krasnova's description, blended learning is a "method of teaching that combines the most effective face-to-face teaching techniques and online interactive collaboration, both constituting a system that functions in constant correlation and forms a single whole (2015).

Lalima and Dangwal (2017) posited that blended learning as a modality in teaching and learning provide an avenue for students to construct knowledge rather than just consuming it. Guided by the tenets of constructivism, learners construct their own knowledge rather than depending on others to design teaching-learning strategies for them. The Department of Education in the Philippines interpreted blended learning as a learning delivery that combines face-to-face with any or a mix of online distance learning, modular distance learning, and TV/Radio-based Instruction (DepEd BELCP, 2020, p.37)

- *Context of Blended Learning in the Philippines*

The demand for blended learning especially in the Philippines was predicated by the health and community restrictions in place brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic during the first quarter of 2020. As a result, the Department of Education instituted DepEd Order No.12 series of 2020 or the Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, which formulated guidelines and policies pertaining to the adoption of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), the alternative learning delivery modalities at all levels, to name a few. Online distance learning, blended learning, homeschooling, and modular distance learning in digital or printed format are among the various learning modalities presented.

In the data released by the DepEd Planning Service for SY 2020-2022, the top 3 learning delivery modality preferred by parents and learners were MDL (Print), Blended Learning, and ODL. In all levels and sectors, 75.1% or 20,688,555 K to 12 learners in all sectors are under Modular Distance Learning (Print). Printed modular learning modality is the most preferred among all the modalities, citing its practicality since there is no need for parents and learners to buy gadgets or devices if their situation or financial status do not allow them to do so. In school year 2020-2021, the DepEd Region XI including the other regions opted generally with MDL (Print Modality) while NCR, was the lone region in the country that adopted blended learning (DepEd Planning Service, 2022). Accordingly, the number of learners under Blended Learning incurred the highest increase at 38.63% or over 1M learners from SY 2020-2021 (2.88M learners) to SY 2021-2022 (3.99M learners).

At present, while the country is still under a public health emergency, strengthening of the blended learning program is called for by no less than the Secretary of Education herself, Vice President Sara Z. Duterte. The school year 2022-2023, the department released Department Order 34 or the School Calendar of Activities for the current school year which directed schools to conduct face-to-face classes allowing a transition period until October 31, 2022, after which all public and private schools should transition to 5 days in-person classes. After the said date, no school shall be allowed to implement purely distance learning or blended learning except for those that are implementing Alternative Delivery Modes. In the said directive, it highlighted that in the event when a student contracts COVID-19, a blended learning system will be implemented to ensure all children's continued safety. According to the preliminary data released by the department in August, 29,721 schools, or 51.8 % of schools nationwide, were employing the blended learning modality when SY 2022-2023 began. In addition, a total of 24,175 schools, or 46 percent of all schools in the country, used five days of in-person instruction, while 1.29 percent, or 1,004 schools, used full distance learning.

- *Teacher's Pedagogical Challenges in Blended Learning*

Research has shown that, if designed and implemented correctly, blended instruction could be an effective learning strategy that can promote student participation, engagement, interactivity, and productivity on the side of the teachers.

Tshabalala, et.al (2014) conducted a study in South Africa in which they examined teachers' perspectives on blended learning and identified various challenges encountered when using a blended-based approach. The findings illustrated that some respondents believe that blended-based instruction has the potential to increase teaching and learning flexibility while also encouraging learning independence, opportunities for networked learning, and accessibility for both teachers and students. Another group of respondents

thought blended learning was difficult to implement in the classroom because of a lack of institutional policies on the use of blended learning, a lack of ICT training/knowledge, a lack of confidence in using a blended learning approach, and limited access to computer laboratories. As a result, these were viewed as roadblocks to the advancement of blended learning.

In India, the research of Qasem and Viswanathappa (2016) discovered that teachers in their study had an optimistic view toward ICT integration through blended learning instruction. From there, one could assert that the study's findings demonstrated teachers' satisfaction with professional development training delivered through a blended learning approach, given the rapid development of technology-based teaching delivery. Regardless of geographical distance, the study concluded that in blended instruction, teachers and students' connection still continues as they are both part of the virtual classroom.

On the contrary, Shand and Farrelly's (2018) study pointed out that not all faculty members prefer blended-based instruction. Some of them still believed that using ICT took too much time. It was discovered, for instance, that designing a lecture or teaching materials on web-based platforms takes longer than face-to-face interaction. With this, it can be gleaned that some argue that using a hybrid approach necessitates more rigorous preparation for teaching and learning. Educators believe that more time should be spent on designing the course platform, uploading instructional materials, answering questions, and evaluating students' online outputs. However, it turned out the other way in their case as the preparations increased their workloads.

According to Aldosemani et al. (2018), some of the challenges that teachers face when using blended learning in Saudi Arabia are a lack of faculty training and support, language barriers, and poor promotion incentives for blended learning initiation. For example, the use of language texts in LMS in Saudi is presented using the English language, which was the source then of communication breakdown, considering that English is not their primary or secondary language. In the same study, it was also revealed that technological infrastructure such as a lack of computers, internet connection, and LMS instability prevent blended learning from taking place in the country.

Similar to other countries' experiences, limitations of ICT integration like shortage of ICT facilities, poor maintenance of available or existing ICT resources, and lack of ICT budget are also experienced in the Philippines (Tomaro, 2018). In a real sense, there are still areas in the Philippines, particularly in rural areas, where a reliable supply of electricity and internet is a long distance away. As a result, it inhibits and affects teachers' ability to become skilled in the use of ICT in blending with teaching and learning. Tosun et al. (2021) also observed that one of the huge challenges teachers had faced was the lack of experience among them in dealing with the current situation. Pentang et al. (2021) stated that regardless of the circumstances, teachers must use available and applicable pedagogy to effectively deliver their lessons. According to Macaraeg et al. (2021), modular distance learning which could be a complement to online interactions has increased workload, health risks, and additional expenses for teachers, such as the procurement of paper and ink for reproduction.

While the challenges of applying blended learning in the public basic education schools are recorded, a minimal number is noted in the private schools. According to the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Association (COCOPEA) in the Philippines, in the two previous years, blended learning modes in private schools have been effective in implementing the curriculum. The only challenge they have faced was the decrease in enrollment as some of the learners transferred to public schools.

- *Teacher's Coping Mechanisms and Strategies*

Teachers managed to cope with the new normal and complete their tasks despite challenges that have impeded their work. Agayon, et al. (2021) enumerated some of the coping mechanisms and strategies employed by Filipino teachers in the new normal where blended learning is a modality. As there are additional resources/materials that teachers need, the teachers in their study mentioned that they shoulder excess finances to materialize remote learning. In terms of the learning activities, teachers have initiated among themselves to craft learning activity sheets especially if there are no available learning modules for reproduction. The teachers have also secured ways to overcome problems on internet connectivity. In areas where internet connection is not good, teachers went to nearby areas where they could continue their tasks. Additionally, the teachers in the study believed that in order to successfully implement the learning modality, consistent employment of policies, parental support, and constant monitoring and feedback have to be done. Positive well-being, collaboration, openness to change, peer mentoring and time management were the measures taken also by the Filipino teachers in Manalo and De Villa's research (2020).

In their article titled "From coping to improving and accelerating: Supporting teachers in the pandemic and beyond," Wilichowski and Cobo (2020) outlined strategies which must be considered to ensure support to teachers in time of blended learning and other modalities in remote set-up. They pointed out that the Ministry of Education in countries such as Lebanon, the United Kingdom, Canada and Mexico, invested in the in-service training of teachers. Webinars, and short courses were deployed to ensure that the teachers' pedagogical skills are upskilled in response to the demands of blended set-up. The same is made in the Philippines. Virtual in-service trainings and workshops are also conducted regularly at the national down to the school levels. The same authors suggested that the department should provide actionable guidance for teachers. Hence, teachers have to be guided step by step to become content presenters and make recommendations on their outputs so that they do not overwhelm students with lectures, lesson plans, and homework.

• *Theoretical Lens*

This study was anchored on Person-Environment Correspondence Theory as proposed by Davis and Lofquist in the 1960s. This theory was based on the view that work is a reciprocal process between work environments and individuals (Eggerth, 2008). This meant that as the individual fulfills work, the work environment also fulfills various dimensions of the individuals' needs. This may cover financial, psychological, and social needs. PECT creates a framework that predicts the results of the match between the work environment and the individual.

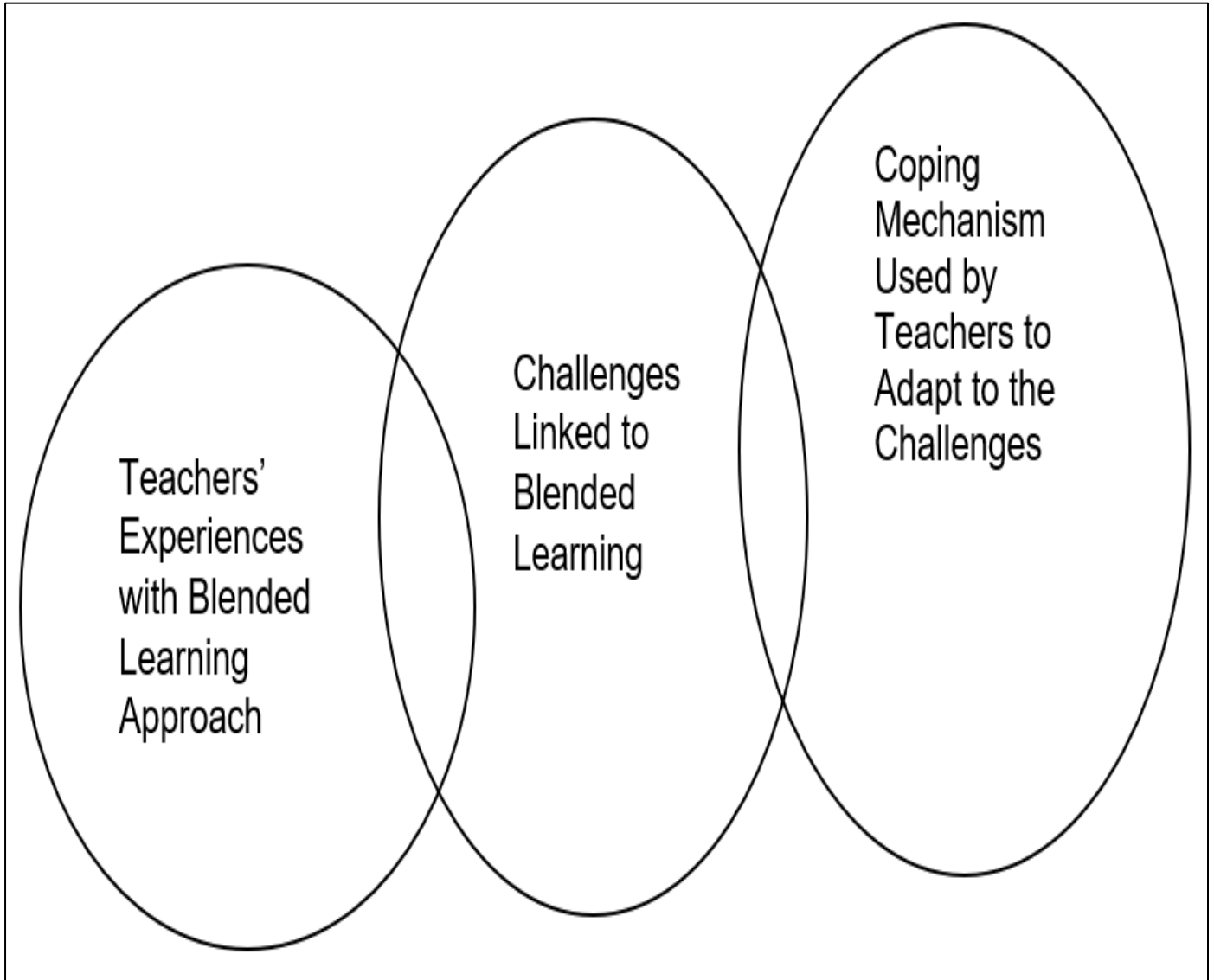


Fig 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

This section of the paper discusses the research design, the researcher's purpose, the research participants, the data analysis, the study's reliability, and the topic of ethical concern.

The focus of the qualitative research method was on the processes and contexts that give rise to social phenomena, according to The NIHR Research Design Service for Yorkshire and the Humber (2013). As such, ethnography, grounded theory, interpretative phenomenological analysis, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, content analysis, and narrative analysis are just some of the methodologies that can be applied to this design.

Ethnography, as defined by The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Research Design Service for Yorkshire and the Humber (2013), was a method for descriptive studies of cultures and episodes, with the common cultural parameter being that the people being studied share something in common. Grounded theory differs from traditional phenomenology as it focuses on collecting and analyzing data to form explanations for the phenomenon of interest rather than starting with pre-existing hypotheses, analyzing a phenomenon through an Interpretive Lens. The phenomenological approach acknowledges the researcher's role in interpreting the participants' experiences in order to gain insight into their significance.

➤ *Philosophical Assumptions of the Study*

As a result of certain quantitative researchers being aware of the limitations of the quantitative evidence, qualitative research has received prominence as an alternative to or in addition to quantitative research. This is stated by Creswell and Poth as cited by Moroi (2020, p. 127). According to Denzin and Lincoln (quoted in Pryce et al., 2014), qualitative research bridges the gap between different academic areas and can be found in a variety of scholarly fields.

As Creswell and Poth (as cited in Moroi, 2020, p. 128) point out, as researchers, whether we are aware of it or not, we have certain beliefs that we bring into the research, and they somehow influence how we, as researchers, seek information to answer questions. Moroi (2020) argued that this is true whether or not we are aware of it. When conducting qualitative research, there are four philosophical assumptions that frequently have an impact on the way researchers investigate issues, plan their studies, and determine what data to collect. Ontology, epistemology, method, and axiology are all categories that fall under the umbrella of philosophical assumptions. Additionally, ontology is the study of the nature of reality, and it is concerned with the assumptions that researchers make in order to believe that anything makes sense. Ontology is defined as the study of the nature of reality. This assumption is absolutely necessary for comprehending how researchers give meaning to the information that they gather.

Moreover, epistemology is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature and the scope of knowledge, as well as how humans come to know something and how they know the truth. According to Moroi (2020), it is vital to take this method since it affects how a researcher will engage in a study and how they will discover knowledge in the area that they will investigate.

Furthermore, as noted by Moroi (2020), the methodology is concerned with the concepts and ideas that govern data gathering and decision techniques. Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research to pick a sample that can provide adequate information to fully grasp the phenomena being studied. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are more appropriate than objectivity and generalizability when evaluating qualitative research. Axiology is the final premise of philosophy. This has to do with the importance of ethics in scientific inquiry. Axiologically speaking, objectivity is valued, and subjectivity is devalued; yet, in qualitative research, the researcher discloses the value-laden character of the data they collect and the researcher's own values and prejudices that they bring to the study. As a result, axiology takes into account the weight that researchers place on variables like participants, data, and the target population, which can conflict with the other three assumptions.

➤ *Qualitative Assumptions*

A phenomenology is a research approach that falls under the qualitative research design and is best suited to assisting scholars in learning from the experiences of others. Phenomenology, as defined by Neubauer et al. (2019), is a type of qualitative research that focuses on the examination of an individual's actual life events. Phenomenology seeks to explain this experience by detailing not just the content but also the manner in which it was had. Phenomenology can be broken down into sub-disciplines, each of which is founded on a distinct understanding of the nature and scope of the human experience. Researchers who are considering using phenomenology as a research approach should give some thought to the philosophy they will be applying. Lifeworld studies, post-intentional phenomenology, and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) are the three modern phenomenological methodologies. In addition, post-intentional phenomenology is a hybrid method that uses the phenomenon itself as the unit of analysis while maintaining that phenomena are not singular but rather many, partial, contextual, and dynamic.

Moreover, Neubauer et. al. (2019) elucidated that interpretive-phenomenological analysis (IPA) is another blended approach that sought to provide an in-depth examination of the lived experience of a phenomenon through the participant's personal experiences and personal searcher performs an active role in the interpretive process.

➤ *Research Design*

The phenomenological methodology of qualitative research was utilized in the course of conducting this investigation. The mode of investigation that was typical of this form of research lends itself particularly well to the use of the phenomenological approach (Neubauer et al., 2019). The phenomena themselves, as well as our perceptions and interpretations of them, and the meaning that those interpretations hold for us as individuals, are the primary foci of this qualitative research approach. When we examine a real-life experience from the first-person point of view, we are able to get insights that have the potential to mold or even completely reorient our perception of the situation being examined.

➤ *Research Participants*

The ability of prospective respondents to shed insight into the questions at hand was taken into consideration when selecting participants for this study. This study included the participation of ten teachers from the Department of Education. All of these teachers had experience teaching students before, during, and after the current pandemic. They are also interested in developing students' flexibility through blended learning. Importantly, participants were able to continue teaching even after the outbreak of the disease had begun, showing the significance of the strategies investigated by the researcher to assist in the development of teaching and learning in spite of obstacles.

➤ *Role of the Researcher*

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher took on several responsibilities. Integrity maintenance was one of its functions. A researcher's ability to safeguard and guarantee that the study contained as few flaws as possible rested on his or her own knowledge and honesty. According to Capella University (n.d.), a researcher needs to know how to explain the study to potential participants without biasing them, how to conduct interviews according to the design, how to make appropriate field observations, how to choose appropriate artifacts, images, etc., how to handle data according to the design, and how to analyze and interpret the data. The researcher should also be able to effectively gather data, analyze it, and present the results.

➤ *Data Gathering*

It is imperative that the researcher adhered to the stringent health protocol that was imposed by both health and government agencies given that the pandemic has not yet been declared over by the authorities. The researcher went above and beyond the typical procedure of data collecting that was carried out in the course of qualitative research by taking these additional steps.

To begin, a local DepEd school in Davao City was selected as the research site so that protocols may be quickly implemented. The second step was for the researcher to acquire permission to perform the study by submitting letters and documentation to relevant academic institution heads such the Dean of the Graduate School, the School Division Superintendent, the School Principal, and the Head of the Selected DepEd School.

Participants were involved in the few phases, such as selecting 10 DepEd teachers to take part in the study. After that, in-depth interviews were conducted in which participants were asked to reflect on their own personal experiences in regard to the research issue, such as the pedagogical difficulties they have encountered when implementing a blended learning strategy. The researcher checked to see that thorough notes were taken during the interview. The researcher also took precautions to ensure the safekeeping of all the information amassed through record-keeping.

➤ *The COVID 19 Health Protocols.*

Researchers still adhered to the rules established by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) because, as indicated, the country is still experiencing the effects of a pandemic. The International Assistance Task Force (IATF) was tasked with ensuring that the pandemic is contained and that the spread of the virus was minimized through the various activities of the population. The researcher conducted the in-depth interviews following social distancing and other health protocols.

➤ *Data Analysis*

Certain steps must be completed in a qualitative study design prior to data analysis. All strategies have access to these warm-up assignments in this study's setup. The primary responsibility of the researcher was to ensure the safety of the data and all of the items used to collect it (Capella University, n.d.). Individuals' anonymity and privacy must be safeguarded throughout storage and retrieval. The next step is to convert the raw data into a useful format, making a master copy and backup copies just in case. Also, make sure you read the data transcripts at least three times to get a feel for the whole picture. Following that, the researcher can move on to the steps listed below:

➤ *Descriptive Approach.*

According to Sandelowski (as cited in Lambert & Lambert 2012), qualitative descriptive research: should be viewed as a categorical, rather than non-categorical, alternative for inquiry; is less interpretive than an 'interpretive description' approach because it does not require the researcher to move as far from or into the data and does not require a conceptual or highly abstract rendering of the data. Naturalistic inquiry, from which qualitative descriptive studies draw, professes a dedication to investigating something in its natural state to the extent possible within the research arena. Therefore, there was no commitment to a particular theoretical framework, no manipulation of study variables, and no predetermined explanation for the phenomenon of interest. The goal, like

with any qualitative research method, is to collect a large number of "rich" instances to fully represent the phenomenon of interest. Researchers need to be able to explain and defend the methods they use to collect the data they need for their investigations. With descriptive studies, codes are created directly from the data collected. Qualitative descriptive studies, like other types of qualitative research, typically include collecting and analyzing data at the same time.

➤ *Trustworthiness of the Study*

Study legitimacy is important because it demonstrates that the research approach employed is widely known and accepted in the relevant academic, professional, and policy communities as well as by the general public (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 03). One manner in which researchers might convince themselves and their readers that their research findings merit attention is by establishing their credibility. Lincoln and Guba introduced the four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in 1985, further refining the concept of trustworthiness.

- *Credibility.*

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 03), the study's credibility is established when core researchers or readers are put in a position to identify with the experience being studied. This criterion focuses on discrepancies between respondents' perspectives and researchers' interpretations of those perspectives (Tobin & Begley, 2004 cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 03). These scholars proposed a variety of methods for establishing trustworthiness, including activities that encourage sustained attention, persistent observation, triangulation in data collecting, and triangulation among researchers. It was also suggested that conducting a debriefing would be helpful for gaining external validation of the research methodology.

- *Transferability.*

This criterion concerns the extent to which findings can be applied to other situations. Since researchers in qualitative designs often don't know, which sites will want to implement their findings, transferability is often determined on a case-by-case basis. Researchers are still responsible for providing detailed descriptions, however, so that interested parties can determine whether or not the findings are applicable to their own context (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 03).

- *Dependability.*

This criterion can be met if the researchers can assure that the process they are using to carry out the study is rational, traceable, and thoroughly documented. Auditing a process is one method that can be utilized to evaluate its dependability (Koch, 1994 cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 03).

- *Confirmability.*

This criterion is focused with establishing that the interpretations and findings of the research are clearly derived from the data. The researcher is required to illustrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached in order to satisfy this criterion. In addition, this criterion can be satisfied when the desired levels of credibility, dependability, and transferability are reached (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 03).

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative research, ethical questions are especially pertinent. According to Mohd Arifin (2018), conducting a face-to-face interview with a vulnerable set of participants who may become stressed when expressing their feelings throughout the interview session raises more serious ethical concerns. Consent must be freely granted by the participants, the participants must comprehend what is being asked of them, and the participants must be competent to consent before the consent process can begin. This means that those taking part in the study need to be given all the information they need to make an educated decision about whether or not to continue taking part in the study, and that they need to be given the opportunity to exercise their right to refuse participation if they so choose. By not releasing participants' names or identifying information at any point during the study's data collecting, analysis, or reporting processes, we ensured that their privacy was protected (Mohd Arifin, 2018, p. 30). Careful attention was to be paid to maintaining the interviewee's privacy and confidentiality throughout all phases of the process, including pre-interview preparation, the interview itself, data analysis, and the dissemination of results.

The researcher took all necessary precautions to conduct this study in accordance with the ethical guidelines for qualitative research. The researcher made sure the participants knew everything there was to know about the study and that they grasped the concepts presented to them. In addition, the ethics committee of the graduate school at Rizal Memorial College, which was in charge of verification and approval, required the researcher to present certain documentation.

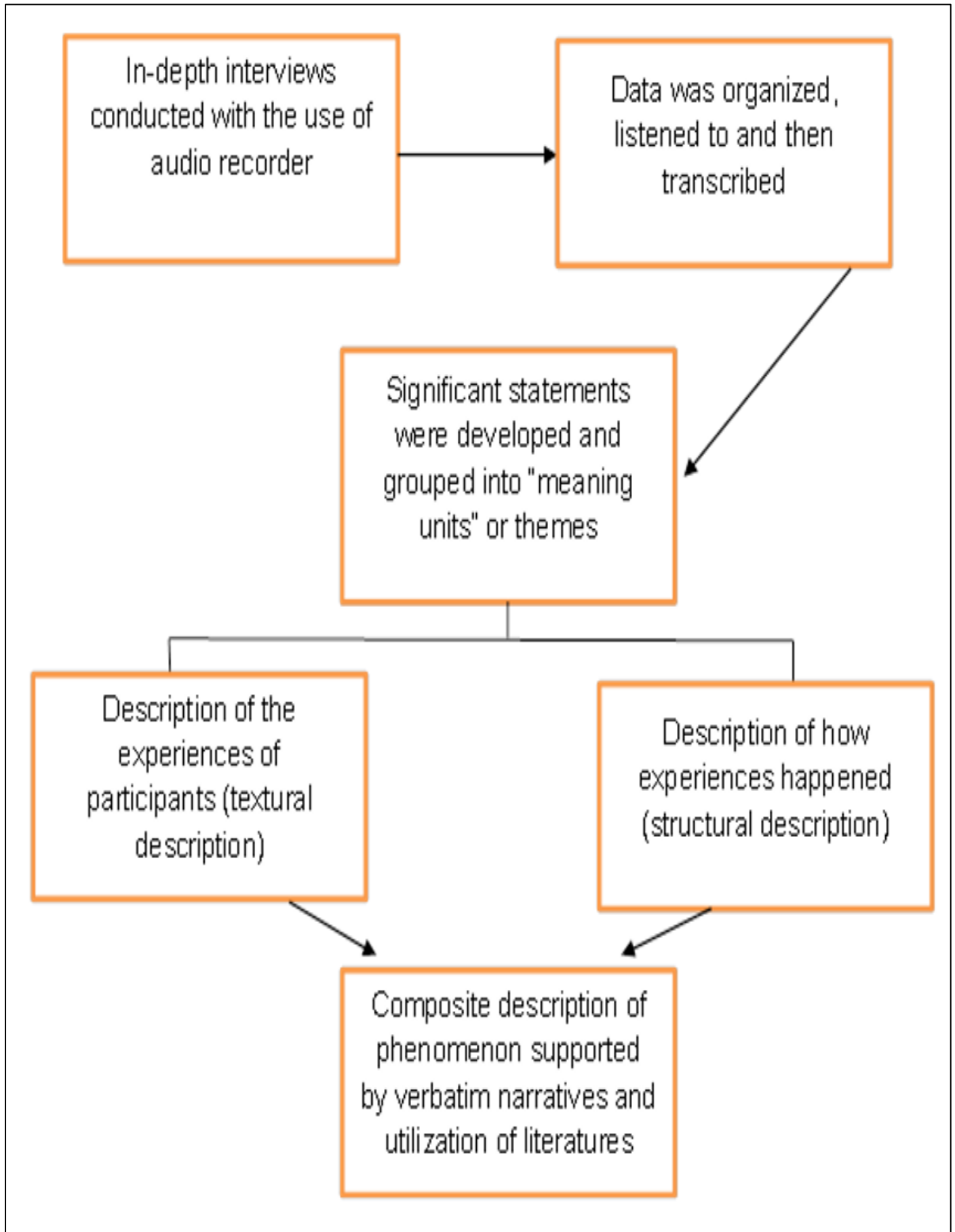


Fig 2 Analytical Framework of the Study

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section of the study discussed the research questions based on the respondents' answers. The study participants revealed the challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights that they acquired throughout their experiences in blending while adapting to the new normal. In this portion of the paper, the themes gained during the interview will be discussed.

➤ *Challenges in Blended Learning During the New Normal*

Eight out of ten respondents mentioned that they experienced implementing the blended learning modality two years into the pandemic. Meanwhile, two participants stated that they had one year of blended learning experience. Below are the themes gathered under the challenges experienced by participants.

- *Lack of Parental Support.*

Parental support is crucial to a child's development. Evidence shows that successful students have parents who display strong support on their academic life (Sheldon, 2009 as cited in Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). Parental involvement in students' education starts at home. Parents are considered students' first teachers. The role of parents covers the responsibility of providing a safe physical, emotional, and mental space for students. Parental involvement, as backed up by research, is also most effective when seen as a partnership between school teachers and parents (Epstein, 2009). However, this ideal may not at all times be present in students' home environments, particularly for those who belong in low-income households. According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, as cited in Garcia (2018), school dropout rates are high in the Philippines given its poverty rate and input discrepancy in basic education. Many children who grew up in disadvantaged backgrounds do not receive enough support and most of the time their parents are not equipped as well with the necessary skills to give such support to these learners. Thus, these children do not receive the essential provision they may need in order to be successful in their academic pursuits unlike those coming from better socioeconomic backgrounds or healthier home environments per se.

In the context of the distance learning modality implemented in the basic education curriculum in the Philippines, students were left to fend for their own learning using self-paced modules and online classes. Ideally, parents should serve as their teachers and facilitators. However, with the absence of necessary skills to do so, these learners may suffer from a lack of academic support and assistance.

The challenge we face at the beginning of the school year is getting parents to sign their kids up for classes, and then we have to get the parents to adhere to the weekly schedule by getting the modules and returning them on time, as well as take responsibility for teaching their kids at home since face-to-face classes are suspended. -P1

Lack of education of parents that resulted to inefficiency in giving teaching assistance to their child/ren. -P2

- *Lack of Access to Technology.*

Another theme that occurred in the findings of the study is the lack of students and parents' access to technology. The distance learning modality demanded technological equipment such as laptop computers and smart phones. Teachers, parents, and students use messaging applications to communicate with each other in order to comply with the learning activities in the new normal.

Factors like availability of internet and gadgets like cell phones, computers, laptops and, etc. of the learners while having blended learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Another one is the eagerness of the parents/ guardians in claiming Self-Learning Modules. -P5

The factors that I have encounter during the implementation of blended learning are the following: insufficient online connectivity, some learners don't have cellphone, some parents are not punctual in retrieving the modules for their children, other answers from the modules are done by their parents. -P8

Yes, in terms of technological knowledge resources, there are learners who don't have the internet connection, thus, sharing resources makes it harder. Also, there are parents whom we had problems connecting with because of the lack of communication. Learners' participation is also harder compared to the face-to-face learning. -P9

The cost of technology, insufficient training, technical difficulties, lost motivation and strained relationships between my students are only a few of the main difficulties I faced. -P10

Problems may occur in the communication process when teachers and stakeholders find problem exchanging messages due to the lack of resources. This suggests that technology does play a crucial role in the current climate of the educational set-up during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Xiao (2018) noted that though new normal education is widely characterized by the use of technology in the teaching and learning process, this should not solely define the new normal pedagogical implementation. Fege (2020) cited that there is more to education than providing students with an academic experience. More than that, a school is also a

place where young people acquire learnings in life; it is a community, a space for connection, emotional and physical safety; it provides food and shelter and teaches freedom and democracy. These experiences cannot be surmised by technology, regardless of if it is online classes. In the end, technology and its application in the teaching and learning process are only parts of the educational ecosystem. They must not be the singular basis of education.

➤ *Lack of Learners' Participation.*

Motivation plays an important role in education. According to the University of Wisconsin Whitewater (n.d.), there are three indices of motivation: choice, effort, persistence. Teachers must realize that it is imperative to recognize students' needs for autonomy and self-determination. Likewise, they must be given chances to make choices and take control. With the somewhat isolated set-up of the new normal education in the time of COVID-19, this form of control and autonomy may be lost. This is in contrast to when students are engaged with teachers and peers inside the classroom.

With regards to participation, it was apparent that most of my learners would rely solely on their parents' active participation in continuing education and how they would provide for their needs when they were restricted. -P1

Lack of interest in self-learning. -P2

I have encountered problems especially learner's participation and parental involvement. Learners' lack of involvement and responsibility on their own learning. They lack initiative to do their roles as a student. -P4

The peer learning theory teaching method supports this claim. It suggests that students learn by doing activities with others rather than observing (Keerthirathne, 2020). According to Dewey (2001), students do not learn by "telling" and "being told". They learn through constructive and active engagement. With that being said, teachers and learners may find great difficulty in achieving this without real-life interaction.

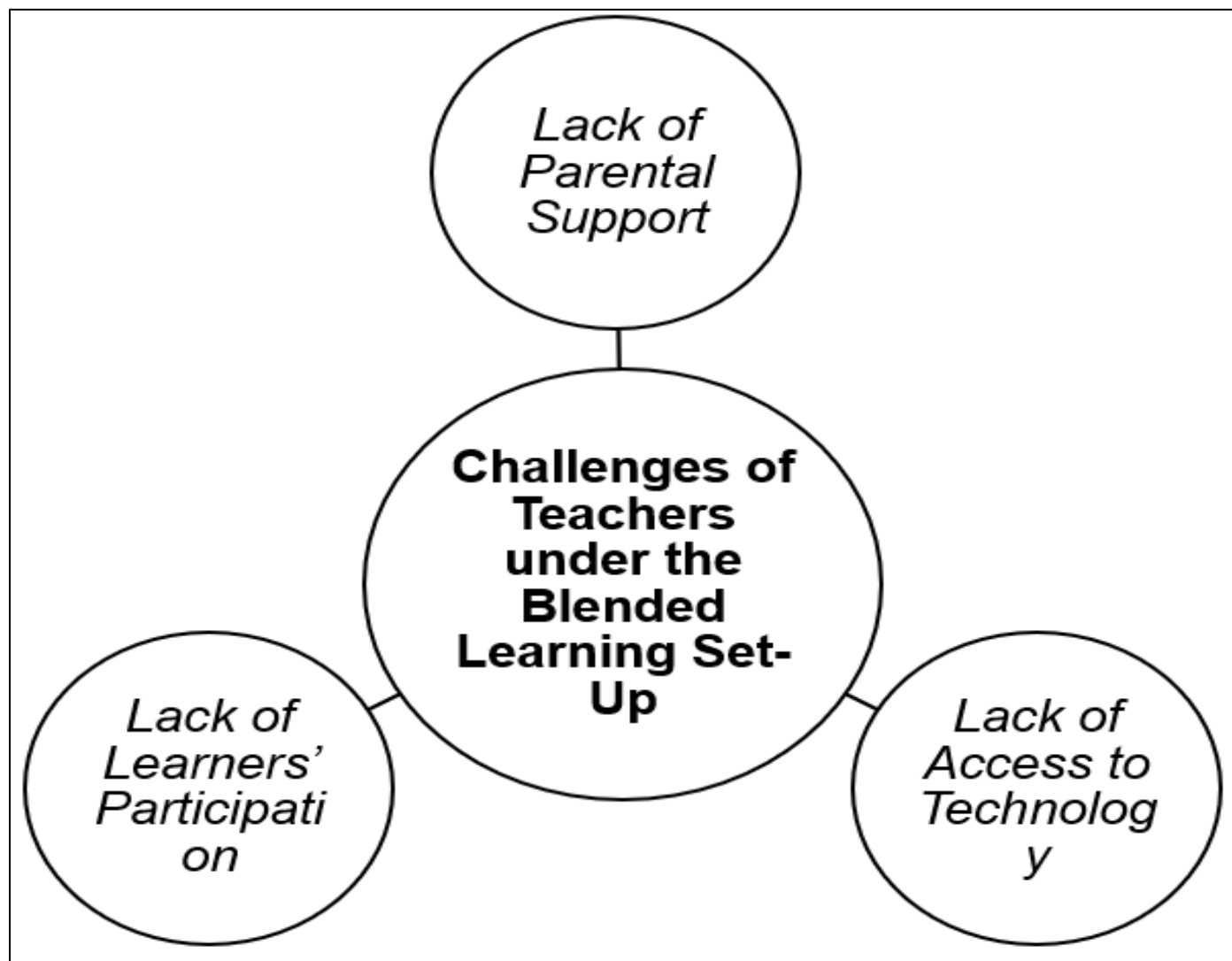


Fig 3 Challenges of Teachers Under the Blended Learning Set-up Coping Mechanisms

In an attempt to continue the learning process amid a global health crisis, teachers arrived at coping strategies to counter the challenges brought by blended learning. Two themes have occurred based on the participants' responses – communication with parents and use of technology. Under communication with parents and stakeholders, there are two subthemes – home visitation and coordination with the barangay.

- *Communication with Parents and Stakeholders.*

The study participants reiterated the importance of communication with learners, parents and stakeholders to usher the demands of blended learning. Additionally, they noted that constant communication will help ease the delivery of instruction regardless of the modality. Below are the points stressed by the teacher-respondents on this theme:

- *Home Visitation.*

It was revealed in the investigation that home visitations eased the implementation of blended learning modality. The respondents dispensed the following statements:

We had home visitation, talked with both parents and pupils to know the reasons for lack of interest in school. We had counseling with the pupils to bring back their interest. The school conducted a symposium on mental health. -P2

The coping strategies we had applied to address such concerns, we conducted interviews of some parents and stakeholders, thorough discussion, and explanation regarding this matter by doing parent's orientation. -P5

P2 emphasized that home visitation, counseling, and symposium had helped in blended learning. On the other hand, P5 highlighted how communication with parents and stakeholders were integral in sustaining learners' participation in learning. This positive acceptance of home visitation is seen in the study of Agayon, et al. (2022) who pointed out that in distance learning, tolerance and empathy through communicating with care is a must-have for teachers.

- *Coordination with the Barangay.*

Apart from home visitation, this theme which emerged in this area highlighted the benefits of coordination of the school with the barangay. Tapping external stakeholders has been practiced by teachers at the height of distance learning. Considering the limitations, teachers have included the barangay in the distribution of learning modules.

Since there are parents who cannot go to school, we have a partnership with the PTA and the barangay officials to deliver the modules to a nearby subdivision in the barangay. -P9

- *Use of Technology.*

Technology has become a staple in blended learning environments. With flexibility as its main principle, technology gauged distance learning easier and better. Below are the respondents claim on this theme:

Another strategy is that since my learners are children with special needs, during the online session we have, there was a limited time in online learning, and I created my slides/lessons with a lot of pictures and activities so that they can be easily engaged with the lessons. -P3

I had an online discussion once and only five pupils out of 31 pupils attended. With this, I decided to monitor their progress individually. I called them one by one through messenger or phone calls. -P4

P3 shared that slide decks loaded with pictures and activities engaged her learners in the new learning set up. Moreover, P4 utilized messenger or phone calls in tracking her learners' progress. These positive uses of technology were highly supported in the study of Qasem and Viswanathappa (2016) entailing teachers' notion of ICT integration using blended learning instruction. Accordingly, in the context of a virtual classroom, learners have the chance to navigate the learning materials regardless of time and space.

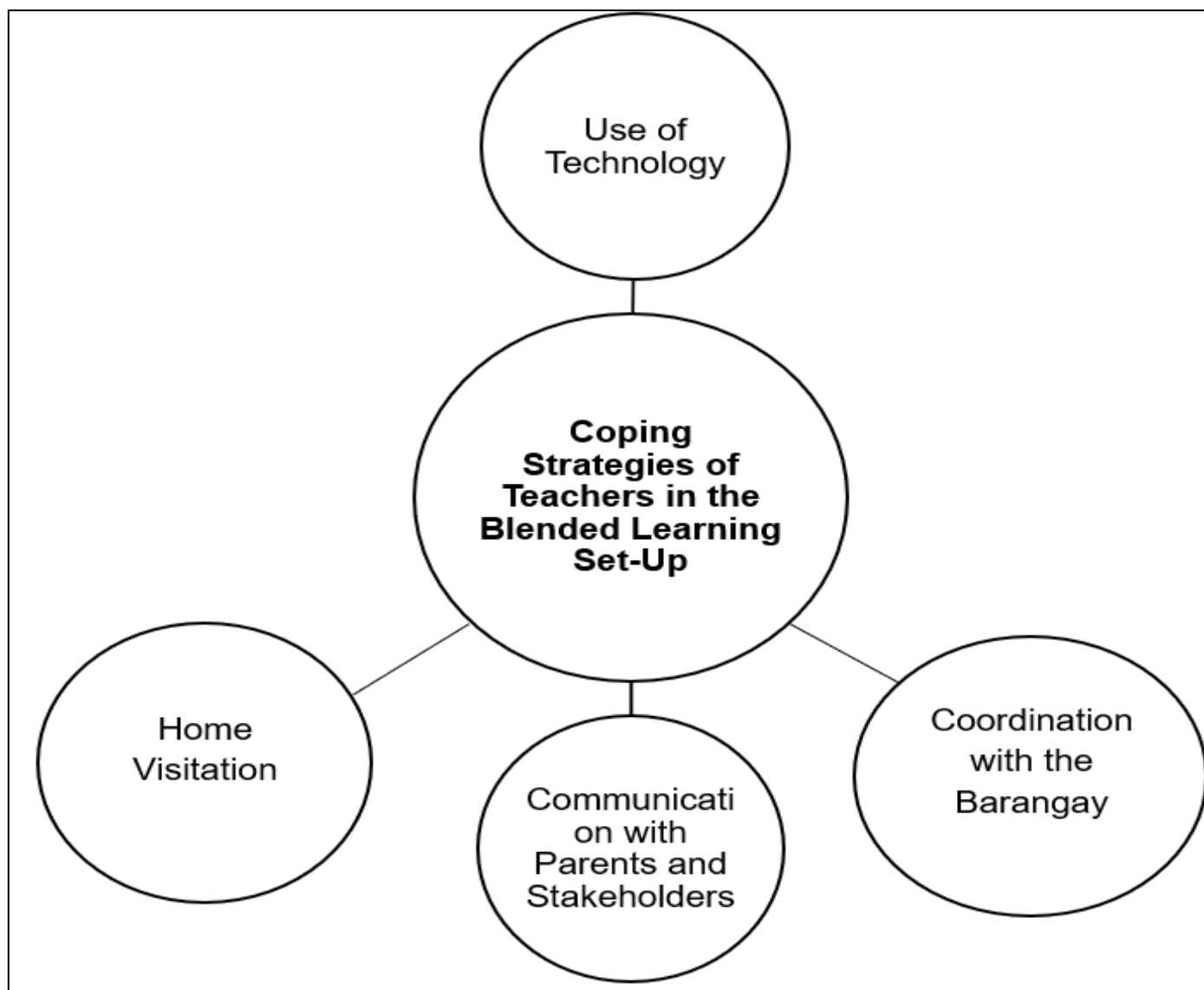


Fig 4 Coping Strategies of Teachers Under the Blended Learning Set-up

➤ *Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Experiences and Challenges of DepEd Teachers on the Blended Learning Set-up.*

The third research objective deals with the valuable educational insights taken from the experiences of teachers with regard to problems surrounding the implementation of the blended learning approach and the coping strategies used by teachers to counter the challenges. This section generated two major themes on (1) judicious selection of competencies, (2) teacher empowerment; and (3) educational leaders' support.

- *Judicious Selection of Competencies.*

The learning competencies which are the building blocks of curriculum implementation were cited as an essential aspect needed to be evaluated by and by. The respondents aired the following sentiments on how selection of competencies is integral and what else could be done to better its delivery in the pandemic setting.

Though it has given rise to the MELC, the development of the curriculum still raises the question of whether the selected competencies are actually the most essential given the implementation gaps. -P1

Should have focused on the reading and arithmetic skills development of pupils. -P2

Ensure that the goal or objectives are fit to learners especially for the lower grades. -P10

P1 argued on the applicability of the MELCs considering the gaps in the implementation. P2 noted that in the early grades, reading and arithmetic skills must have been developed. This was reinforced by P10 in his point that the curricular goals and

objectives are tailor fit to the primary graders. These pronouncements are seen in the investigation of Ravina and Mendoza (2021), teachers including the students had high marks on the evaluation of the MELCs in implementing techniques in science education.

On the other hand, a study of the UNESCO (2020) posited that lowering the number of competencies in times of crisis, may be also used to invite teachers to delve into other elements of the written curriculum in addition to textbooks, such as curriculum frameworks and syllabuses, from where they can access broad orientations around what makes up the quality of learning and curriculum delivery.

- *Teacher Empowerment.*

In blended learning, teachers who are empowered wins. Empowerment, as defined in the work of Uysal, et al. (2021), are the practices that make teachers feel motivated, increase their confidence in their knowledge and expertise, and enable them to do what they find appropriate and meaningful for a certain purpose.

While they are not ready for teacher implementers, they are compelled to be for the circumstance that has been put forward. It is one of their strengths as Filipino teachers, and they continue to be receptive in every part of their teaching careers. -P1

Empower ourselves with positivity in all challenges we encounter. -P2

More training should be given to us teachers to become more effective in lesson delivery. -P4

Additional training and workshops for the teachers, in case there are necessary changes in the educational system it is easy for the teachers to adapt and accept new challenges. -P10

In the new normal, teachers being empowered for change has long been seen as a coping strategy for Filipino teachers, according to Malabad and Mamauag (2022). They were able to thrive and prosper as a consequence of their ability to adapt and change with the times. This suggests that adaptation and flexibility are valuable traits for all teachers to have.

- *Educational Leaders Support.*

In any modifications made in the curriculum, the support from educational leaders was counted. At the height of the very challenging times of education, teachers who are realizing the plans at the grassroots must be heard. Indeed, there shall be constant communication of concerns to their superiors. The following were noted by the respondents:

It was part of the responsibility of educational leaders to set an example and carry out the directives of higher authorities, but they also had to have the fortitude to complete their own jobs without depending on teachers. -P1

[School administrators] should always consider their teachers' capabilities and limitations to be more effective educators. -P2

I hope that the educational leaders will continue to support their teachers in order to promote quality education. -P3

Should work hand and hand with the teachers in the field, to be guided accordingly. -P5

The curriculum should not be exhausted; teachers focus on the learners' needs and not too much on paper works and overflowing reports. Education leaders should look at the situation in the field and help them solve the problem facing public school teachers and students. -P8

P1 banked on the leader's role as a point of reference for good example. P2, P3 and P5 called for administrators' support and guidance. Meanwhile, P8 cut off notions on leaders looking at the situation on the grassroots to serve the teachers and learners effectively. These findings are ushered in a study conducted by Ho and Tay (2020) in Singapore citing the role of leadership during the pandemic to tighten the confidence and abilities of teachers, students, and the whole school community as a whole. In conclusion, as change and uncertainty are the only constants in the future world, leaders at the national and educational levels must embrace a long-term investment view in order to educate students to be more self-directed and self-regulated. Since change is a continuous, leaders must be prepared to respond to it and alter the context as needed while maintaining a long-term view.

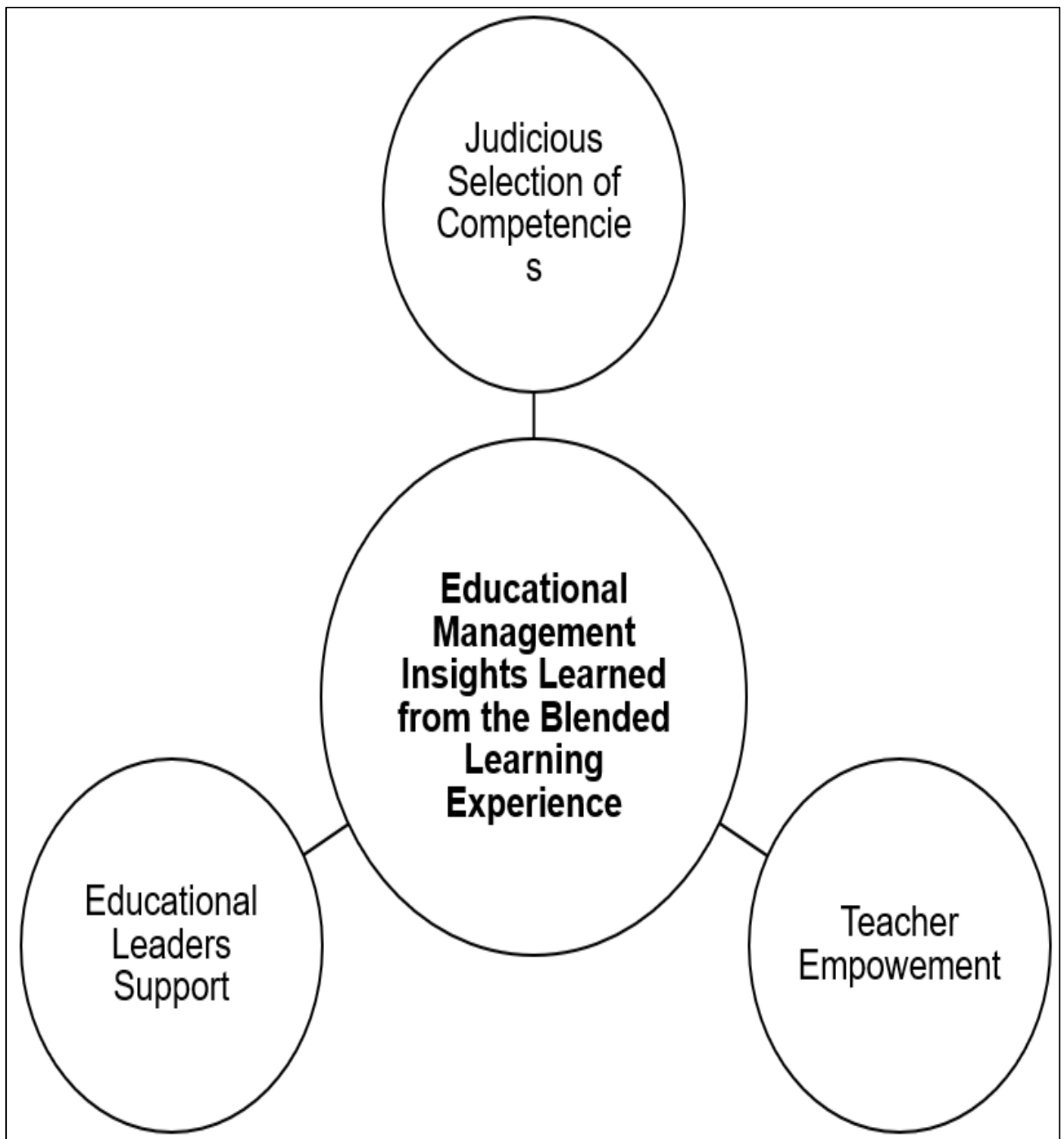


Fig 5 Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Experiences and Challenges of DepEd Teachers on the Blended Learning Set-up.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this chapter, the summary of the study is presented, from the summary of the findings, I drew the implications and future directions. The purpose of my study was to find out the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of DepEd teachers in the implementation of blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve the objectives of the research, I combined a qualitative phenomenological approach with a thematic analysis. To accurately capture people's experiences, open-ended interview questions were utilized in accordance with Cresswell's (2006) suggestions. Additionally, I was able to persuade my participants to fully and honestly characterize or interpret the phenomenon—in this case, DepEd teachers' experiences—in their own words by employing an interviewing technique.

➤ *Findings*

Based on the results of thematic analysis of the responses from the Department of Education teachers in using teaching-learning strategies during the pandemic, the following themes were revealed for the challenges: lack of parental support, lack of access to technology, and lack of learners' participation. As for the coping mechanisms, these themes on communication with parents and stakeholders and use of technology were generated.

Communication with parents and stakeholders have two subthemes – home visitation and coordination with the barangay. Lastly, for the educational management insights, judicious selection of competencies, teacher empowerment; and educational leaders support were noted as themes.

The following conclusions were drawn in relation to the first study objective, which was concerned with the challenges. In the context of the distance learning modality implemented in the basic education curriculum in the Philippines, students were left to fend for their own learning using self-paced modules and online classes. Meanwhile, the distance learning modality demanded technological equipment such as laptop computers and smart phones. Moreover, teachers, parents, and students use messaging applications to communicate with each other in order to comply with the learning activities in the new normal. Additionally, some of the learners lose motivation in the said modality. This implicated for teachers to realize that it is imperative to recognize students' needs for autonomy and self-determination.

In the domain of coping techniques, which was considered the study's second intent, it was revealed that home visitations eased the implementation of blended learning modality. Tapping external stakeholders was practiced also by teachers at the height of distance learning. On the other hand, technology has become a staple in blended learning environments. With flexibility as its main principle, technology gauged distance learning easier and better. Accordingly, in the context of a virtual classroom, learners have the opportunity to access the learning materials regardless of time and space.

Finally, the educational management insights that summarized this study's findings stated the learning competencies which are the building blocks of curriculum implementation were cited as an essential aspect needed to be evaluated by and by. On the other hand, blended learning exalts Filipino teachers' characteristics of being adaptable and flexible to shifts allowed them to survive and succeed. This implies that flexibility and adaptability are important qualities for all teachers to possess.

➤ *Implications*

The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. The study's findings have a significant impact on many elements of education and call for specific actions to address the issues they identify. The difficulties students encountered in distant learning, when they were left to manage their own education through self-paced modules and online classrooms, are of the utmost importance. They show how important it is for educators to acknowledge and cater to students' requirements for autonomy and self-determination. Teachers should give students the chance to be in charge of their education by giving them the freedom to choose and decide according to their interests and skills. Students are more likely to remain motivated and interested in their studies if there is a sense of empowerment and ownership among them.

The study found that home visits made it easier to integrate blended learning, showing that visiting students' homes and involving outside parties like parents or guardians can enhance the educational process. Teachers can create a more encouraging and individualized learning environment by forming relationships with students' families and communities. Working together with outside parties also enables a comprehensive approach to education, with many viewpoints and resources supporting the academic success of pupils.

Another implication that this study suggested is on the gargantuan role of technology. Technology has established itself as a mainstay in blended learning settings by enabling accessibility and flexibility to learn resources regardless of location or time. This suggests that educators should keep embracing and utilizing technological technologies to improve the educational process. Teachers can design a dynamic and interesting virtual classroom where students can access educational materials, communicate with peers, and get prompt feedback by integrating digital resources, online platforms, and communication tools.

The study stressed the need of assessing learning abilities since they serve as the foundation for implementing curriculum. Effective teaching and learning depend on regular evaluations of students' development and comprehension of essential competencies. Teachers can pinpoint areas for growth, modify their educational tactics, and give specific help to certain students by regularly analyzing learning outcomes. As a result, overall academic performance is improved and a student-centered approach to education is promoted.

The value of teachers' adaptation and flexibility in navigating upheavals and changes in the educational landscape has been underlined by blended learning. According to the study, Filipino teachers' capacity to adapt and be flexible helped them thrive in the new learning modes. This suggests that all teachers should work to develop these traits in order to adapt to changing educational situations, adopt cutting-edge teaching strategies, and meet the requirements of a wide range of students.

Continuous and effective channels of communication are essential from the perspective of educational management for effective teaching across a variety of modalities. This calls for proactive measures to be taken in order to establish reliable communication platforms that allow for seamless information flow and support teachers in overcoming challenges. The educational system needs to be strengthened to support teachers as they conduct evaluations, enhance digital literacy, foster parent-teacher collaboration, and provide efficient communication channels. By taking these actions, educational institutions can better manage challenges and improve the overall teaching and learning experience in the face of ongoing transformations.

➤ *Future Directions*

Based on the findings of the study, it is important that the findings are properly relayed and used by the significant people whom this research was intended for.

The Department of Education may offer light on the problems faced by teachers in blended teaching and learning environment in light of the pandemic. The department can rely on looking for alternate solutions to keep education going despite the disasters or pandemics the nation has or might experience. To address the concerns mentioned, the DepEd may devise and implement intervention programs including professional development and psychosocial support.

In implementing blended learning, the administrators or school leaders might be proactive and positive to the challenges and concerns of their subordinates. With the new norm of teaching and learning in place, it was challenging for everyone to carry out all of their academic duties as they had in the past. The principal or head of the school may also keep a close eye on the effectiveness and results of the distance learning resources and activities being channeled in the various curriculum areas.

The DepEd teachers may be more appreciative of the coordination of the parents and other stakeholders in implementing the new innovations in teaching and learning.

The future researchers may embark on the same research with different participants, place and school. Other avenues not scrutinized in this research may be explored.

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APPENDIX A

Participants' Informed Consent

Title of the Study: **ADAPTING IN VARIOUS WAYS: DEPED TEACHERS' EXPOSURE IN TEACHING LEARNERS USING APPROACHES**

Name of Investigator: **JOANA MARI A. SECUYA**

To the Participant:

You have been asked to participate in this study because you can provide information about the topic being investigated. Any information that is obtained from you in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

I understand my rights as stated above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature of Teacher

Date

Participants' Informed Consent

Title of the Study: **ADAPTING IN VARIOUS WAYS: DEPED TEACHERS' EXPOSURE IN TEACHING LEARNERS USING APPROACHES**

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Signature of Teacher

Date

APPENDIX B**Rizal Memorial Colleges**

F. Torres St., Davao City
Office of the Graduate School

ADAPTING IN VARIOUS WAYS: DEPED TEACHERS' EXPOSURE IN TEACHING LEARNERS USING APPROACHES

Interview Guide

Research Questions	Guide Question	Probing Questions
1. What are the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of the blended learning approach?	1.1 What are your experiences in the implementation of the blended learning approach? 1.2. Which aspect of the blended learning approach is most difficult for you?	1.1.2. How many years of experience did you have with implementing blended learning? 1.2.1. What are some of the factors that hinder your successful implementation of blended learning? 1.2.2. Did you encounter difficulties in the implementation of the blended learning instruction following the key aspects: technological knowledge, resources, learner's participation, parental involvement, faculty and administrative support?
2. What are the coping mechanisms used by the teachers to adapt to the challenges?	2.1 Explain how you implemented blended learning instruction in your classroom. 2.2 What are some of the factors that enable you to successfully implement blended learning?	2.1.1 In your specific context, describe the process of how you implemented your blended learning instruction. 2.1.2. After dispensing the difficulties in the implementation, what coping strategies did you apply to address such concerns? 2.2.1. Which of the aspects in the implementation of blended learning went well? 2.2.2. Cite specific instances in the implementation where these aspects are deemed successful.
3. What insights can be drawn from the findings of the study?	3.1 What's your perception about the overall implementation of the blended learning approach? 3.2 Which part of the implementation requires more improvement?	3.1.1. What is your general assessment of the whole implementation of the blended learning instruction? 3.2.2. Drawing out from your experiences in implementation, what specific prospects can you recommend/suggest to the following in relation to blended learning: 3.2.2.1. curriculum 3.2.2.2. teacher-implementers 3.2.2.2. educational leaders 3.2.2.3. Department of Education

APPENDIX C



**RIZAL MEMORIAL COLLEGES
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

RMC Buildings, Purok 5, Lopez-Jaena & Torres Sts. Barangay 8-A Poblacion
District, Davao City
Tel. No. 300-71-73

**Adapting in Various Ways: DepEd Teachers' Exposure in Teaching Learners
using Approaches**

JOANA MARI A. SECUYA

Transcriptions of the Interview

SPECIFIC QUESTION TO BE ASKED:

. How many years of experience did you have with implementing blended learning?

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of blended learning did not begin until the fourth quarter of SY 2020-2021. It lasted into the succeeding school year (2021-2022). My experience in the implementation of blended learning lasted roughly two years.
2. In our school, we have implemented the blended learning for 2 school years, the first year was a combination of modular and online learning (asynchronous). While on the second year, we were able to implement the limited face-to-face learning whilst having the modular and the online learning (asynchronous).
3. Two years.
4. 2 years
5. We had two years implementation of blended learning.
6. 2 years
7. Less than one year.
8. I am a newly hired teacher when blended teaching was implemented. Based on my observation, most of the learners had difficulties in answering their modules.
9. We have implemented blended learning for 2 school years.
10. I first encountered blended learning during my 13 years in the service.

What are some of the factors that hinder your successful implementation of blended learning?

- Since this is our first time implementing blended learning, our knowledge and expertise, as well as our anxiety for our health and safety, are essentially the main obstacles.
2. - Children's lack of interest in answering the modules.
- Lack of teaching assistance from parents/guardians at home.
 3. There are different factors that hindered in the successful implementation of blended learning such as the difficulty in communication with the parent and the learner, since we are in a public school it is undeniable that there are families who don't have smart phones or cellphones per se, and the only means of communication we have is when the parent is scheduled to retrieve the modules in the school. Another factor is the internet, there are a lot of families in our school that do not have access on the internet, consequently they cannot access the learning materials that could aid in their learning.
 4. Factors like availability of internet and gadgets like cell phones, computers, laptops and, etc. of the learners while having blended learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Another one is the eagerness of the parents/ guardians in claiming Self-Learning Modules.
 5. The factors that hinder in the successful implementation of blended learning, some parents and stakeholders were not ready yet to paradigm shifting, they were still bound in the traditional way of learning.
 6. Expense of technology, inadequate training, and technological issues
 7. Internet connection, accessibility and availability of the learners/parents.
 8. The factors that I have encounter during the implementation of blended learning are the following: insufficient online connectivity, some learners don't have cellphone, some parents are not punctual in retrieving the modules for their children, other answers from the modules are done by their parents.
 9. For me, the communication with the parents and learners have hindered the implementation of the blended learning.

10. Teachers, technology, unique learning preferences and targeted learning objectives are all factors that affect how blended learning programs are designed.

Did you encounter difficulties in the implementation of the blended learning instruction following the key aspects: technological knowledge, resources, learner's participation, parental involvement, faculty and administrative support?

Yes, **technological knowledge**

The difficulty I have encountered in the implementation of blended learning in terms of technological knowledge is the use of a learning management system, since it was my first time, and I have doubts about whether my learners will be able to use it as well.

resources

The challenge I face as one of the division writers assigned to write self-learning modules is finishing the module in time for distribution as well as checking other modules as I am also tasked with serving as an evaluator.

learner's participation

With regards to participation, it was apparent that most of my learners would rely solely on their parents' active participation in continuing education and how they would provide for their needs when they were restricted.

parental involvement

The challenge we face at the beginning of the school year is getting parents to sign their kids up for classes, and then we have to get the parents to adhere to the weekly schedule by getting the modules and returning them on time, as well as take responsibility for teaching their kids at home since face-to-face classes are suspended.

faculty and administrative support

The challenge I run into with faculty and administrative support is that it feels like the workload has increased merely because teachers are working from home. They don't respect time because tasks and reports are still being requested to be submitted at midnight, which is quite taxing, and the assignment that has been assigned has tripled in size.

2. **Technological knowledge** – none

Resources – malfunctional printers and computers

Learner's participation – yes, lack of interest in self-learning

Parental involvement – Yes, lack of education of parents that resulted to inefficiency in giving teaching assistance to their child/ren

Faculty and administrative support – none

es, I have encountered a lot of difficulties in the implementation of the blended learning instruction. One instance that I could think of was that there are learners who have difficulty in reading and without stable communication with that learner, it

was hard to teach him in reading, thus his/her answers in the module was obviously copied from the answer key. Another difficulty is there are a number of parents who didn't have the time to retrieve modules in the school, sometimes they went to school once a month which was really for their child because he/she can be bombarded by the modules she must finished.

4. I have encountered problems especially learner's participation and parental involvement. Learners lack of involvement and responsibility on their own learning. They lack initiative to do their roles as a student. With regards to parental involvement, some parents have lack of support towards their children's education.

5. Yes, we experienced difficulties in the implementation, such as: technological knowledge, resources, learners' participation, parental involvement, faculty, and administrative support.

6. Yes, technological knowledge, resources, learner's participation, parental involvement in these factors.

7. Yes, somehow a teacher you cannot identify properly the learners understanding and level of participation within or across the given topic.

8. Absolutely yes, expense of technology that includes insufficient internet connection, learners participation were affected, the need to adapt content for blended learning, decreased motivation and weakened relationship among students and teachers. Parents involvements were very significant to continue the learning of the students.

9. Yes, in terms of technological knowledge resources, there are learners who don't have the internet connection, thus, sharing resources makes it harder. Also, there are parents whom we had problems connecting with because of the lack of communication. Learners participation is also harder compared to the face to face learning.

10. The cost of technology, insufficient training, technical difficulties, lost motivation and strained relationships between my students are only a few of the main difficulties I faced.

2.1.1. In your specific context, describe the process of how you implemented your blended learning instruction.

1. The learning continuity plan in the majority of schools includes a section on blended learning implementation. We have decided to establish a one-day distribution and module return period at school. With the assistance of their parents, students will learn the desired competencies at home, and they will schedule online or contact teachers for further instruction.

2. For the past two years, our school had adopted the pure modular instruction. This current school year, we started the blended learning on the first quarter, i.e, face-to face-learning and modular that served as their homework and was only implemented merely on the first quarter.

3. For the first year, there was a strict no face-to-face contact with the children, the parents/guardians were tasked to get the modules every 2 weeks, we teachers are tasked to communicate and follow up the learners through sms, chat or call and we also sent online learning materials that could aid with the learning of the students.

For the second year, for the first 2 quarters it was the same the flow of blended learning was the same with the first year of blended learning, however in the 3rd and 4th quarter of the school year we were able to conduct the limited face-to-face learning.

4. For me, blended learning include modular and face-to-face mediums of education. Last year, School Year 2021-2022, we had a four (4) days face-to-face instruction which schedule every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. On Wednesday, we cater modular.

5. We conducted parents, stakeholders, and community orientation regarding the new implementation of the blended learning. Then, we had thoroughly discussion on the process of the distribution of modules, and how to conduct online classes. We work hand and hand on the new strategies and approaches to have efficient and effective new modalities of learning.

6. Technological knowledge was shared but to no avail, learners doesn't have basic computer at home.

7. Follow the process of daily lesson log giving of modules and other alternative activities.

8. In our school we have alternative learning delivery mode (ADM). We used to sort and staple the modules and distributed to the parents. I do have group chat to my parents for their queries and information.

9. First, we had a full modular learning, which the learner's parents and guardians went to school to get the module, we do follow ups through messaging. The next year on the latter part of the quarter we had a limited f2f and modular learning.

10. I created a group chat so that my parents could asked questions and received my announcement, instructions and a various digital lessons for my students.

2.1.2. After dispensing the difficulties in the implementation, what coping strategies did you apply to address such concerns?

I turned to exercise and strength training in an effort to defend myself and my family against COVID-19. I made an effort to limit my use of social media for business as it was the main channel of communication. Since it was affecting my mental health and making it harder for me to work, I tried to limit my work to office hours and get more rest.

We had home visitation, talked with both parents and pupils to know the reasons of lack of interest in school. Had counselling with the pupils to bring back their interest. The school conducted symposium on mental health

Since, the difficulties that we have encountered was how to communicate with our students and parents consistently, the strategy we have applied to address this concern is to explain to parents how important it is to have a proper communication, we also did lots of "hangyo" from the parents. Another strategy is that since my learners are children with special needs, during the online session we have, there was a limited time in online learning and I created my slides/lessons with a lot of pictures and activities that they can be easily engaged with the lessons.

I had an online discussion once and only five pupils out of 31 pupils attended. With this, I decided to monitor their progress individually. I called them one by one through messenger or phone calls.

The coping strategies we had apply to address such concerns, we conducted interviews of some parents and stakeholders, thoroughly discussion and explanation regarding this matter by doing parent's orientation.

With technological difficulties, one strategy I used is providing learning materials/ additional resources.

I talk to the parents upon getting back their modules get their active cellphone number and social media account or any form of communication to reach them from a far.

The strategy that I have applied to address such concerns was constant communication to my parents especially in getting and returning of modules. Reminded them always the importance of continuing the learning of the students through blended learning instruction.

Since, there are parents who cannot go to school, we have a partnership with the PTA and the barangay officials to deliver the modules to near subdivision in the barangay.

I adapt the exercises to the learner's needs and design exercises that are in line with the most crucial learning competencies. I sent the video lessons so they could follow along.

2.2.1. Which of the aspects in the implementation of blended learning went well?

My personal opinion is that the deployment of blended learning proceeded smoothly and is accomplishing its fundamental goal, which is to keep providing all students with a basic education despite the pandemic.

I think it's the faculty and administrative support. Everyone helped one another that made us collaborate in doing the modules. The school head never failed to give all our needs like bond papers, ink, and printer/computer repair.

I think, the online session that I have with my learners with special needs went well. Since, I cannot really track if they have really understood their module, the online session helped me to look at the progress of my learners.

The most effective aspect in the implementation of blended learning that went well was modular learning. Our pupils were able to cope up and continue with their education in spite of the Covid-19 Pandemic which affect our educational system.

The aspects went well from the time parents understood thoroughly that learning must not stop and must continue whatever pandemic we were facing, we must ready and adopt the shifting method to traditional way to more advance, just to continue the learning process of the learners.

Difficult to implement especially from students coming from low-income families.

Their patience to grasp and explore learning of their own.

The learning modular delivery mode went well because most of them choose this kind of learning style rather than in online class.

For me, all in all the implementation of the blended learning was successful.

Being able to teach on a new platform was wonderful. I increased my technological knowledge since it can be a powerful tool to reimagine learning experiences based on those ideas.

2.2.2. Cite specific instances in the implementation where these aspects are deemed successful.

Its execution is judged successful in two ways: 1. maintaining the procedures to guarantee the students' safety 2. to guarantee that education will continue to be provided despite COVID-19's threat.

On-time distribution and retrieval of learning materials.

Sufficient resources.

- Camaraderie among teachers and administrator.

Though there were number of parents who have the difficulty in retrieving the modules on time, there are also a lot of parents/guardians who went to school and got the modules on time so I still considered this as successful. Most of the students were able to complete their modules on time. Another instance is that during the online session with my learners, since my students have special needs, the parents were able to assist their children which I think was of great help in the success of the implementation of online learning.

Continuous Learning

Self-Learning Modules helped our pupils keep track on their learning

Maintained involvement of the pupils in the process

Learners have several ways to understand their lesson learned.

The rejection of parents to ideas of paradigm shifting.

- The connectivity of internet.

- Lack of support from faculty, administrator, and government officials.

6. Despite and in spite of the situation, some of them make ways to continue claiming the modules

7. Follow the instructions given and answers question clearly and precisely.

8. The modular learning approached because they were successfully promoted to the next level of their education.

9. The delivery of modules in specific subdivisions were successful and the once a week giving of modules.

10. Video lessons can be watched multiple times for increased learning and familiarization opportunities

3.1.1. What is your general assessment of the whole implementation of the blended learning instruction?

The use of blended learning is generally seen as a success since it has succeeded in meeting its primary goal of providing all students with a foundational education while shielding them from the COVID-19 health break.

Looking at the over-all outcome, the implementation of the blended learning instruction in our school was quiet successful.

Since, we had to do the blended learning to protect our learners from the unseen virus that was risking the lives of our learners. I think that we did a great job in implementing the blended learning, of course it was not an easy journey, there were trial and errors especially in the case of teachers on how they can help their students learn well and how to communicate with the parents especially they were acting as the bridge in the education of our learners. We still did our best to continue providing the quality education that our learners must get amidst the pandemic.

It was successfully implemented. We were able to cater our pupils' needs when it comes to their education though we weren't able to attain all our goals yet the Department of Education still made sure that we can still provide quality education for all.

It was successful despite of the hindrances being encountered.

Needs more trainings.

Online video call one on one question and answer or drill given based on the given lesson.

Learning was done successfully in spite of the COVID 19 Pandemic. It was hard at first but with the desire to support the DepEd program to continue the education amidst this health crises and our passion to help the children to learned in any ways was a great factor to make this blended learning become successful.

The blended learning instructions over all went well, though we had some difficulties encountered, teachers made it sure that we have some solutions given.

Due to the fact that the majority of students lack the necessary technology for online classes and watching videos, blended learning is not as effective as it could be. In addition, the Self-Learning modules was responded by parents rather than students to meet the deadline.

3.2.2. Drawing out from your experiences in implementation, what specific prospects can you recommend/suggest to the following in relation to blended learning:

- 3.2.2.1. curriculum
- 3.2.2.2. teacher-implementers
- 3.2.2.2. educational leaders
- 3.2.2.3. Department of Education

1. 3.2.2.1. **curriculum** Though it has given rise to the MELC, the development of the curriculum still raises the question of whether the selected competencies are actually the most essential given the implementation gaps.

3.2.2.2. **teacher-implementers** While they are not ready for teacher implementers, they are compelled to be for the circumstance that has been put forward. It is one of their strengths as Filipino teachers, and they continue to be receptive in every part of their teaching careers.

3.2.2.2. **educational leaders** It was part of the responsibility of educational leaders to set the example and carry out the directives of higher authorities, but they also had to have the fortitude to complete their own jobs without depending on teachers.

3.2.2.3. **Department of Education** The Department of Education has made every effort to be resilient in the face of the COVID-19 issue, but like the most of its programs, its implementation actually needs enough time and meticulous execution. The welfare of the teachers should also be taken into account. The fear of the epidemic is increased by the barrage of online seminars that teachers must attend. Teachers are still being asked to work past normal office hours in order to meet the agreements, targets, and other objectives that have been made, with educational officials who are also pressuring them to perform as if there were no epidemic.

2. 3.2.2.1. **curriculum** – should have had focused on the reading and arithmetic skills development of pupils.

3.2.2.2. **teacher-implementers** – empower ourselves with positivity in all challenges we encounter.

3.2.2.2. **educational leaders** – should always consider their teachers' capabilities and limitations to be more effective educators.

3.2.2.3. **Department of Education** -should consistently design programs that always benefit not only the learners but also the teachers.

3. 3.2.2.1. **curriculum** - It was good that the curriculum was altered and we were able to implement the most essential learning competencies during the blended learning. I hope that these MELCS will continue even though we are now implementing the full face-to-face learning.

3.2.2.2. **teacher-implementers** The teachers have a big role in implementing the blended learning, congratulations to them/us. I know that we will still

continue to give the quality education that our learners deserved.

3.2.2.2. **educational leaders** I hope that the educational leaders will continue to support their teachers in order to promote quality education.

3.2.2.3. **Department of Education** The department of education should always think of ways that can help in improving the system of the department that could help in promoting the quality of education, and also lessen the paper works of teachers and teachers should focus on teaching in the classroom.

4. **Curriculum** – revise the learning competencies that our pupils need to meet because we need to go back to the basic wherein reading, writing, and arithmetic should be given importance.

Teacher-implementers – more training should be given to us teachers to become more effective in lesson deliver.

Educational leaders – always remember that writing fare reports just to have good impressions is not just and ethical. The reality in our educational system right now should be given importance and attention. Please stop asking for reports which only serves you and not the future of our nation.

Department of Education well done! You need capable and truthful people around to serve your purpose.

3.2.2.1- **Curriculum** Modules must be given on time, and thoroughly examine to have less mistakes.

3.2.2.2- **Teacher-implementers** Must be given enough time and trainings regarding the online classes.

3.2.2.2 **Educational Leaders** Should work hand and hand in the teachers in field, to be guided accordingly.

3.2.2.3 **Department of Education** They must prepare advance plan regarding the blended learning, so teachers in the field could prepare well.

6. 3.2.2.1. **curriculum**: sort it out, compress learning competencies

3.2.2.2. **teacher-implementers**: be more adaptive to technology

3.2.2.2. **educational leaders**: know the grassroot problems and evaluate

3.2.2.3. **Department of Education**: be more empathetic to learners

Department of education assisted by teacher implementers for they are the one really know the progress of every learners inside the four corners of the classroom.

The curriculum should not be exhausted, teachers focus on the learners needs and

not too much on paper works and overflowing reports. Education leaders should look at the situation in the field and help them solve the problem facing by the public-school teachers and students. The Department of Education implements programs for the benefits of everybody.

3.2.2.1. **curriculum** During the blended learning, the curriculum was modify which was great. Hoping that this will continue.

3.2.2.2. **teacher-implementers** Kudos to the teachers who have been the greatest asset on the successful implementation of the blended learning.

3.2.2.2. **educational leaders** I hope that they will continue the support that they must give to the teachers, parents and learners.

3.2.2.3. **Department of Education** they should continue equipped teachers to continue in promoting the quality education that the learners deserves.

10.3.2.2.1. **curriculum** ensure that the goal or objectives are fit to learners especially for the lower grades.

3.2.2.2. **teacher-implementers** additional training and workshops for the teachers, in case there is necessary changes in educational system it is easy for the teachers to adapt and accept new challenges

3.2.2.2. **educational leaders** always consider the hard work of the teachers and their Duties and responsibilities in life.

3.2.2.3. **Department of Education** provide a different program that will help our learners especially who went to blended learning because most of the learners have poor performances.