

Voices of the Teachers in the New Normal Education: Their Engagement in Home-Based Learning



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ABSTRACT: This research takes insights from the experiences of teachers in home-based instruction during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was conducted in pursuit of determining the nature and level of teachers' engagement in the remote work arrangement. The study was descriptive-qualitative. Purposive sampling was employed in identifying the study participants. This study evidenced that teachers who were on a home-based work arrangement experienced various challenges. Lacking resources, technological skills inadequacy and absence of support for teachers' health and well-being are just some of the challenges accounted for. The pandemic which put everyone in distress highlighted the importance of not only the physical, but also the mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being of teachers and students. Nonetheless, teachers are aware of their own needs, as well as the needs of the school and their students, allowing them to make meaningful recommendations. Furthermore, the teaching-learning environment during distance learning, as well as the resources, may be prioritized at the national and local levels, and strategic directions may be orchestrated ahead of time to avoid injudicious actions during implementation, followed by recognized psychological well-being and quality of life, seeing as distance learning is primarily supported by technology, training, and seminars on technological skill upgrading and development of teachers should be prioritized, and a replication of this study should be conducted to assess other aspects of home-based instruction in times of health crisis for the improvement of home-based learning delivery.

KEYWORDS: Voices, teachers, new normal education, engagement, home-based Learning

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO reported that in March 2020, the COVID-19 virus forced 165 countries to close all of their schools, affecting approximately 1.5 billion learners and 63 million primary and secondary educators. School closures are posing enormous challenges to educational systems all throughout the globe. The prohibition of the conduct of face-to-face classes has utterly tested the teaching-learning process prompting teachers to serve as the education front liners ensuring that learning continues despite the event of the global pandemic.

In the time of global health emergency, teachers have had to adapt to a remote work environment (Sokal, 2020). Like any other educational methodology, distance learning delivery has pros and cons. However, despite distance learning promises, some conditions necessitate exigency plans and actions. These include the quality of teaching and learning process, hidden costs, the well-being and attitudes of teachers, students, and administrators toward the circumstances of distance learning arrangement and many more. Each one of these factors affects the overall quality of distance learning outcomes. In many ways, each of these issues relates to the others.

According to the Asia Society Philippines (2020), a combination of online, broadcast, and modular as a remote teaching was intended to protect the safety of both students and teachers in the event of the global pandemic. However, due to the hurried adaptation and construction of curricula and materials for remote teaching and learning, gaps and even risks have become unavoidable. To deliver education in the new normal, a variety of remote teaching methods were used, including online (synchronous or asynchronous), paper-based or printed-modular, and hybrid learning. Some instructors use live streaming to deliver lessons. Additionally, instructional scaffolding includes educational content streaming via devices or television, parent-facilitated learning, and knowledge exchange. Teachers' tasks appear to have been doubled in these remote modalities in contrast to traditional ways. Teachers must not only create the greatest method for promoting remote learning, but they must also guarantee that each learner is given the best possible learning opportunity based on their circumstances.

Although there are still limited published works that provide critical views about remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, there are some information regarding teachers' experiences during COVID-19 and distance learning that emerged as early as April 2020 with educators reporting lack of physical activity, exhaustion, panic, loss of students' cues that helped direct teaching decisions, and concern about both teachers and students' well-being and the uncertainty that comes with the situation (Fagell, 2020), which are all identified to be the root of teachers struggles during distance learning delivery.

Educators were plagued with adjustments that they needed to make in order to handle home-based learning. In the new setting, even experienced teachers with a variety of methods and techniques were tested and confused. As they transitioned to distance learning, they were all faced with a slew of new and complex challenges. The difficulty in spreading educational materials, particularly to those without network connectivity, determining the content and pacing for continuing to educate students, possible limited knowledge and understanding with technology and the tools needed to guide virtual instruction, assessing student progress and competency, and ensuring the support of students and their families were all experiences shared by teachers in various literature. The need to make significant changes to curriculum content and delivery were also identified as challenges for teachers in traversing distance learning. Kaden (2020) reported teachers' experiences in remote work arrangement as including increased workload, surprise at the complexity of online teaching, difficulty in converting content to teach from in-person to distance modality, and struggle to

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engage students and assess learning. Chakraborty et al. (2020) reported that teachers, students, parents, and other relevant educators faced many challenges that they were not ready to overcome. One survey revealed that the majority of educators' workdays during distance learning involved responding to student and parent emails. The next largest amount of their time was spent creating materials for online learning. The same study reported concerns regarding a decline in the quality of student work as the period of distance learning progressed as well as a notable gap in achievement and school engagement correlating to family income (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020).

Moreover, Bohan and Perrotta's (2020) online teaching experiences are mixed, suggesting online teaching leads to an increased feeling of isolation, inconsistent teaching evaluations, and varying degrees of academic freedom which aggravates teachers teaching anxiety during the distance learning delivery. Indeed, a great number of teachers were reported to suffer with anxiety during the distance learning delivery as an upshot of Covid-19 pandemic. Henshaw (2020) published an article in the United Kingdom titled Teachers' Wellbeing: COVID threatens to leave a legacy of anxiety, stress, depression, and burn-out. He argued that the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to compound existing problems with teachers' wellbeing and has a great chance of leaving a legacy of anxiety, stress, depression, and burn-out. As the Annual Teacher Wellbeing Index reported, more teachers have experienced symptoms of poor mental health, including depression and anxiety. The report draws upon research that includes two surveys of education professionals, one in July 2020 involving 3,034 staff and another one in October 2020, involving 1,072 colleagues. A key finding shows that in October 2020, 84% of teachers and 89% of school heads described themselves as feeling "stressed" or "very stressed". A rise in insomnia, tearfulness, and lack of concentration at work were also noted. There is also a high indication of professionals saying that they have considered quitting their job. In the work of Carisen, et al. (2020), teachers' experiences, obstacles, and opportunities were narrated that while everyone is facing uncertainty, educators' duties are still bound to the consideration of equity, inclusivity, and the importance of access for all children. Nevertheless, teachers who have faced the prospect of going back to onsite teaching have experienced anxiety about contagion risk as well as falling behind or having difficulty keeping up with the planned teaching schedule and overall student progress (Wakui et al., 2021)

DepEd (2020) emphasized that online learning as a new modality, it entails the use of technology and its challenges, such as (a) access to the Internet, (b) teachers training, (c) parents' supervision, (d) hands on sessions, and (e) systems preparation. While pedagogies are readily available, the stakeholders responded to a call for online learning. Hence, teachers must rethink and retool themselves on what is to come, making sure that online classes are done holistically, creatively, and with personal touch (Gonzales, 2020). In additions, researchers at the RAND Corporation (Gross & Opalka, 2020) found that nearly 90% of principals reported that students in their schools lacked internet access and 40% reported that access to technology and/or internet was also a barrier for their teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the views of teachers on remote learning delivery and the nature and level of their engagement in remote work arrangement during the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, it aims to determine: (1) teachers' experiences in home-based instruction; and (2) the nature of teachers' engagement in the remote work arrangement.

METHODOLOGY

In facilitating the gathering of data, methods were devised according to the purpose and scope for which the study is undertaken. The purpose of the study is to determine the view of teachers and the nature and level of their engagement in remote work arrangement during the pandemic. The design selected for this research study is qualitative-descriptive in nature using structured interview. Qualitative research provides an understanding of a situation or phenomenon that tells the story rather than determining cause and effect (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Specifically, in this study interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), a type of qualitative research that focused on the life experiences of a concept or phenomenon experienced by one or more individuals and attempts to understand how participants make sense of these experiences (Haradhan, 2018). In this study, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) which is a qualitative method for providing in-depth investigations of personal experiences was applied. It generates an account of experience units own terms rather than one guided by pre-existing theoretical notions, and it understands that, as humans are sense-making beings, this is often an interpretative undertaking. It is explicitly idiographic in its dedication to evaluating each case's specific experience before moving on to more general statements. IPA could also be a good way to look at things that are complicated, confusing, or emotionally charged. Thus, techniques for conducting this qualitative research include observations and interview analysis and interpretation. This research allowed the study participants to reveal feelings openly about their experiences. The research method for the study inquiry required careful consideration of all aspects of lived experience units of respondents to generate apposite conclusions and recommendations.

RESEARCH LOCALE

The study was conducted in one of the secondary schools in Tubaran, Lanao del Sur Municipality, School Year 2021-2022. It has a total teacher population of 13 in which 8 have been sought to become participants of the study.

RESPONDENTS

The respondents of this study are the select teachers of Datu Ayob Memorial National High School during School Year 2021-2022. In the selection of the sample size, the researchers employed a non-probability sampling approach known as the purposive sampling technique. According to Mathstopia, in purposive sampling, the items are selected so that each of the sample is rich in information about the parameters that the researcher is trying to study in the population. Also, according to Etikan, et al. (2016), the purposive sampling technique is a participant's deliberate choice due to the qualities that the participant possesses. As this study aims to explore individuals' perspectives and lived experiences in teaching during remote work arrangements, Roulston (2012) purports that the researchers must identify participants who can talk about their personal experience during the phenomena under review. For this reason, teachers who have rich information, are willing to share, can be accessed easily and can talk about the study will be

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interviewed for this study. As it has previously been recommended, qualitative studies require a minimum sample size of at least 5 to 50 to reach data saturation (Fugard & Potts, 2014). Therefore, a sample of 8 was held adequate for the study's qualitative analysis and scale.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND ITS VALIDITY

The study aims to determine the standpoint of teachers and the nature and level of their engagement in remote work arrangement during the pandemic. The Interview Guide Question is the primary method for gathering information. This instrument is the best tool for gathering information and answering research questions. To ensure face and construct validity of the guide question items, the researchers sought the expertise of 3 experts to validate the questions. Expert 1 and 2 are currently teaching master of arts in education, major in educational management, for almost 5 years, also serving as panel members and also a thesis adviser. Expert 3 has been a research adviser and panel member at the College of Graduate School for the past seven years. Specifically, the following questions were established to aid the researchers in improving the study's rigor:

1. How was your engagement during home-based teaching?
2. What is your perspective on remote learning delivery?
3. What are your notable teaching experiences during remote instruction?
4. What would you recommend to other teachers and the policy makers for the improvement home-based teaching-learning process?

DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

The researchers requested permission from the Schools Division Superintendent/Assistant Schools Division Superintendent and to the School Principal of Datu Ayob Memorial National High School by writing an intent letter to authorize the conduct of the study in the school. When the approval is granted and the consents from the participants were acquired, the researcher safeguarded the conduct of the interview. Specifically, the data gathering procedure employed for this study is structured interview. A structured interview is a data gathering strategy that entails asking questions in a specific order in order to gather information on a specific topic. This is the most appropriate method for the study because through interview and interpretation, the phenomenon involving the subject of the study was explicated as well as the causes of the existing phenomenon was determined.

In particular, a one on one interview was scheduled based on the participant's availability and convenience. Since there is still threat of Covid-19, the actual one-on-one, in-depth interview at an average of 10 minutes took place. The conversations were recorded with the respondents' approval. The documented interviews were transcribed in verbatim. Also, typed notes were taken during all interviews to get the key points to return to later and for better data analysis. After gathering the data through the interviews, the researchers conducted thematic data analysis, a method used in analyzing qualitative data by examining the data set to identify, analyze, and check repetitive patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers adapted the six steps of Clarke and Braun's thematic analysis cited by Kiger and Varpio (2020), which involved familiarizing the data, generating initial codes, searching and reviewing themes, describing and identifying themes, and generating the report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter illustrates the findings of the study. The results obtained from the interviews are shown. The teachers' experiences in home-based instruction, the nature of teachers' engagement in the remote work arrangement and the coping mechanisms and strategies are reported and discussed in detail.

Objective 1 Perspective on remote learning delivery

The COVID-19 pandemic put the school system to the test, where teachers faced a variety of difficulties. The study investigated the perspectives of public school teachers towards their pedagogical and instructional responsibilities and preparation for adjusting to the needs and requirements of the flexible mode of instruction in the new normal. Analysis of the findings of this inquiry identified various emerging themes describing teachers' experiences in home-based instruction and the nature of teachers' engagement in the remote work arrangement. The result revealed that teachers came across different challenges in teaching using the online and printed self-learning modules amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stage 1

Table 1. Significant Statements

Significant Statements

"Syempre, unang-una pagdating sa mga gamit at learning materials is lack of resources ang problema lalo na sa printed modules."

"Hindi sapat yung preparation, seminar and trainings to equip teachers in facilitating distance learning."

"Naging challenging ang pagtuturo ko sa distance learning kasi ibang iba sa face to face. Ang daming side tasks. So sabi ko, ang hirap talaga."

"It's very hard to teach in remote set-up. It is very challenging because I need to cope up with the new method and various technology based teaching approach."

"Kulang ang time para matapos on time ang mga reports sa dami. Dagdag pa yung adjustment and additional materials na kailangan iprepare para sa distance learning delivery."

"Nakakalungkot lalo yung maramdaman mo na walang gana sa pag-aaral via modular modality yung mga hawak mong students. Yung iba halos ayaw nila pasukan yung iba nilang teacher at kumuha ng modules."

"Struggle sya lalo yung pagtuturo ng lesson na kailangan talaga ng face to face classes."

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“Una, hirap ako sa pag adjust kasi andaming bago like yung mga pag gamit ng online platform at lahat ng gagawin online or sa computer. Pero, kahit paano natutunan ko din at naka adjust although hirap pa rin.”

The result shows 8 significant statements shared by the teachers. These statements were a subjective extrapolation from the master transcript. There was no attempt to categorize them or to arrange them in a certain sequence. The researcher only presented how individuals viewed their experience as teachers involved in the home-based learning amid the COVID-19 crisis.

Stage 2.

Table 2. Formulated Codes, Meaning Units and Theme

<i>Formulated Meaning</i>	<i>Meaning Units</i>	<i>Theme</i>
<i>lack of resources and Financial difficulty</i>	<i>Needed support</i>	Challenging modality of learning
<i>Unprepared about seminars and trainings</i>	<i>preparedness</i>	
<i>Difficulties encountered</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	
<i>Coping up with new methods</i>	<i>Coping</i>	
<i>Challenge for the teachers in preparing additional resources</i>	<i>Resources</i>	
<i>Unmotivated learners</i>	<i>demotivation</i>	
<i>Struggles in teaching</i>	<i>challenges</i>	
<i>Learn for Adjustment in online learning platform</i>	<i>Adjustment</i>	

Theme 1 Challenging modality of learning

The stakeholders involved in this pandemic—home, school, and the community—seem to share responsibilities for education during this crisis. The shift toward alternative forms of education believed to be the solution of quarantine caused by COVID-19. In the months of March to May, teachers re-equipped and retooled themselves for the upcoming school year in relation to what the new modality demands. During the old normal, they were sent to In-Service Training (INSET) to help update them on the new trends in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments. However, due to the COVID-19, the curriculum was revised, pedagogy changed, and assessments gained importance for the learner's education. Participants generally discussed the apparent issues and worries they had with each component.

Lack of resources and Financial difficulty. Teachers have stated that one of the difficulties they have had in implementing the modular learning modality were the lack of resources available and financial difficulty. They claimed relevant curriculum has been affected and quality education has become at stake. Participant 5 affirmed, *“Syempre, unang-una pagdating sa mga gamit at learning materials is lack of resources ang problema lalo na sa printed modules.”*

Findings confirm the study of Dangle and Somaoan (2020) who found the main challenges of the teachers that emerged were lack of school funding in the production and delivery of modules; students struggle with self-studying, and parents' lack of knowledge to academically guide their child/children. These findings also supported the study of Granthorn (2020). According to the latter, the Philippine teachers are mostly and adamantly stressed due to a lack of budget. The study revealed that teachers are in distress, looking for ways to ensure that their local governments' given account would meet all of their students' needs.

Unprepared about seminars and trainings. Notably, teachers pointing out their difficulties on the curriculum and the teaching-learning processes seem to call for programs that can help them address the challenges. From the narrative, *“Hindi sapat yung preparation, seminar and trainings to equip teachers in facilitating distance learning.”* The general perception of having an 'average' digital competence appears to be supported by indicating teachers' desire to know more about the different digital tools. Mainly, the results show that the respondents want to learn more about developing instructional videos and interactive materials. According to Lepp et al. (2020), the COVID-19 challenges confronted teachers in the rapid transition to distance learning exposed them to novel situations requiring decision-making skills.

Perhaps the respondents chose to create videos in which they can explain the fundamentals of their field and publish them to internet where learners can view them at their own leisure because they indicated that having an adequate internet connection is difficult for both them and the students. Consequently, such an undertaking needs skill support. Therefore, the researcher encourages schools to support teachers in these endeavors since the unique educational setup during these times requires effort to motivate students more than just teach the subject matter's content.

The majority of respondents are likely to focus on developing their personal and professional digital competencies. Teachers could use a variety of digital tools, but they still want to advance their knowledge and abilities, according to the comments regarding how they use technology in their online classroom. According to Falloon (2020), teachers' positive operational digital competence can support students in their struggles with online learning. There is a critical need for a programme that supports digital competence development for instructors. As a result, educators will be able to effectively combine technique and instructional practises, develop their digital abilities to their full potential, and experience a true paradigm change.

Difficulties encountered. They have encountered challenges in terms of distributing the printed learning modules particularly when both digital and printed modules have become unavailable and when they need to conduct an overtime when the modules are ready to be distributed as per scheduled. Participant 4 emphasized, *“Naging challenging ang pagtuturo ko sa distance*

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learning kasi ibang iba sa face to face. Ang daming side tasks. So sabi ko, ang hirap talaga.” As a result, they are usually going home late and report to work even during weekends which are supposed to be spent for their personal and family affairs.

Coping up with new methods. Teachers’ attitudes towards learning are incomparable. They are regarded as people who have high importance to lifelong learning, in the end acquiring required competencies (Tenekeci & Uzunboylu, 2020). Now, that they are facing a pedagogy new to the system they continue their efforts in learning it. As stated by Teacher no. 6; *“It’s very hard to teach in remote set-up. It is very challenging because I need to cope up with the new method and various technology based teaching approach.”* Participants acknowledged that it is in these trying times that they need to be open minded to welcome professional development and training that they can use to fully prepare themselves in the upcoming school year. Cardullo et al. (2021) added that teachers were caught off guard for emergency remote instruction owing to a lack of distant education expertise as well as computer literacy. Despite the challenges, educators continue to make learning possible, doing everything they can to acclimate to the new normal.

Challenge for the teachers in preparing additional resources. Aside from the difficulty in module preparation, they claimed to have encountered issues in module production. Based on DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2020, the development of Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) by the assigned regions, have been approved and deemed final, specifically in terms of format and content consistent with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). Respondents 3 said, *“Kulang ang time para matapos on time ang mga reports sa dami. Dagdag pa yung adjustment and additional materials na kailangan iprepare para sa distance learning delivery.”* Although the materials are downloadable, the problem for teachers has been a lack of suitable facilities, time to prepare, and equipment, all of which add to their burden.

Unmotivated learners. Aside from the number of students, another problem encountered by the participants was getting the trust of their students and making them realize the importance of education. Teacher no. 1 said, *“Nakakalungkot lalo yung maramdaman mo na walang gana sa pag-aaral via modular modality yung mga hawak mong students. Yung iba halos ayaw nila pasukan yung iba nilang teacher at kumuha ng modules.”* This finding supported the statement of Wentzel during the episode of All4Ed’s podcast. Specifically, Wentzel’s statement highlighted the necessity of building a trusting relationship between students and their teachers; through this, it will never be hard to motivate students to engage themselves in things that the teachers would like them to do (All4Ed, 2018).

Problems were already encountered at school; however, studying in the time of pandemic was not different; in fact, it was given worst according to the participants. According to American Psychological Association [APA] (2020), the students inter and intrapersonal behavior can significantly affect their ability to learn, thus, their academic skills in general. In a classroom environment, it is a good thing that the teachers could manage the students’ day-to-day behavior. However, they added that handling the students’ behavior at home is not easy, specifically, because many parents and caregivers find behavior management challenges while adjusting to virtual or at-home education.

Struggles in teaching. The teachers were challenge with the student’s difficulty in understanding modules instruction, *“struggle sya lalo yung pagtuturo ng lesson na kailangan talaga ng face to face classes”*. Among the participants, 5 claimed they have faced challenges on the retrieval of modules. This is because they have experienced receiving modules from students who did not respond. Sometimes, answers to the modules were given but they were not complete. The rest of the activities have not been answered. Other modules have been submitted or returned late that the teachers need to wait for all the modules to be retrieved.

This was evident too in the study of Alvarez (2021) where students were confused regarding the instructions indicated in their modules. This may be due to the poor reading comprehension ability of the students. Regardless of what instruction the teacher may use, reading comprehension difficulty will be a hindrance to student’s development (Abbas, 2021). In this regard, teachers are encouraged to consider developing the comprehension ability of the students since the printed modules requires reading.

Learn for Adjustment in online learning platform. Transitioning to online teaching has been extremely difficult and challenging for most educators and students. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers are facing a variety of challenges ranging from technological issues to missing the face-to-face interactions with students. Many teachers have encountered struggles from balancing school and work responsibilities as well as engaging with students in an online environment. Respondents 3 said, *“Una, hirap ako sa pag adjust kasi andaming bago like yung mga pag gamit ng online platform at lahat ng gagawin online or sa computer. Pero, kahit paano natutunan ko din at naka adjust although hirap pa rin.”* Most teachers have had a hard time making the concept work since they may face many challenges in adapting new learning methods.

Objective 2 Teaching experiences during remote instruction

Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that students get the most out of the modules that are delivered to them during the pandemic. Due to a variety of circumstances, teachers had difficulties in the transfer of quality learning. It was revealed that teachers were challenged in validating the performances of their students.

Table 3. Codes, Categories and Themes

The following are the common themes extracted from the data gathered using thematic analysis. It highlights the various significant challenges experienced by the teacher participants including their various coping mechanisms and aspirations to address the challenges in the implementation of Modular Distance Learning during this time of crisis caused by the pandemic.

<i>Examples Codes</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Themes</i>
<i>Teacher and parental support in the education of the learners.</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Challenging task and academic support</i>
<i>Financial burden of the students as one of the teachers challenges</i>	<i>Financial</i>	
<i>Unstable internet connection</i>	<i>Connectivity</i>	

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<i>Parental involvement in acquiring modules.</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Engaging stakeholders</i>
<i>Teachers effort for the learning of learners.</i>	<i>Teachers' support</i>	
<i>The importance of parents and availability of the resources</i>	<i>Parents and resources</i>	
<i>teachers and learners are both significant in this distance learning modality</i>	<i>Collaboration</i>	

Theme 1 Challenging task and academic support

Teacher and parental support in the education of the learners. Almost all the teacher participants claimed that they have experienced communication problems with the parents. According to them, some reasons have been the parents are too busy and most parents in the far-flung areas lack gadgets to be used in the communication process. Participant 3 shared, *Sakin tumatak talaga nung may ECQ (Enhance Community Quarantine) pa kung saan may mga students na makikita mo yung eagerness na gusto nila mag-aral kahit bawal lumabas kasi they want to get modules and nag reach out sila for directions. Kaya kahit mahirap at madaming dagdag na trabaho, tyatyagain mo talaga para sa kanila.*

Financial burden of the students as one of the teachers challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic had unprecedented impacts on families. Many parents faced employment changes, including job loss, reduced pay, and working remotely, while simultaneously experiencing increased childcare responsibilities due to school and childcare closures. *One time I home-visited a student and I was saddened to see their situation. They have nothing at home. I cannot blame the parent and my learner why they do not go to school to get the learning modules.*

Theme 2 Technology support issues

Unstable internet connection. All the teacher participants have totally agreed that they have been challenged due to unstable internet connectivity. They felt they have shown inefficiency in the implementation of modular instruction. According to the teachers, their time management has been badly affected. Participant 8 affirmed, *“May time na nagloloko yung signal. Nag didiscuss ako through fb messenger. Kaso hindi naman pala nila ko naririnig.”* Aside from causing work delays, it may also cause harm to electronic devices in the worst-case situation (b) teachers were hampered by poor and inconsistent internet connections, as teachers depend on strong internet connections to interact with their learners, “we experience intermittent power interruption and no/unstable internet connection, it disrupts our preparation for the modules and communication with the students with their parents”. As a result, teachers traveled to locations with a reliable internet connection.

The study revealed that poor internet connectivity has been a problem in the country since the outbreak of the pandemic until the need to switch to online education became a pressing necessity. The majority of professors struggle with online classes because their internet connection is so poor. Akin to Tosun et al. (2021), issues such as lack of internet access and infrastructure inadequacies in rural areas hinder learning delivery. With the emergence of technology in teaching-learning as well as unprecedented challenges (Pentang, 2021b), teachers are encouraged to implement innovative programs to support not only learning continuity but also the delivery of quality education with the support of school administrators. This calls the attention too of the local government unit, electric cooperatives, and telecommunication companies to support the educational sector of the country.

Theme 3 Engaging stakeholders

Teachers' support. Teachers' support is a strong mechanism for teachers to assure that the students are doing well. Pascual (2021) mentioned that teachers can support parents by suggesting an adjustment in a daily routine of a child at home which can foster a child's literacy development. Parents can serve as mentors, tutors, and guides to their children. Pentang (2021a) demonstrated that careful mentoring, tutorials, and assistance can improve the performance of home-schooling students who work with their modules under limited supervision. Ten of the participants claimed that they have been challenged on the lack of facilities and the observance of no face-to-face teaching and learning process. As a result, they could hardly monitor the performance of their pupils. Even faced with the challenges of health protocols, some of them conducted home visitation in order to provide necessary assistance to parents and their children in the improvement of academic performance.

Likewise, the community needs to provide strong support to the implementation of the school policies, programs and projects. Implementation of health protocols as well as sustaining partnership and linkages are indispensable for the efficient realization of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the school. The most important among the variables is the active involvement of the home because education begins at home and the first teachers are the parents. Strong parental support and communication are vital in the achievement of quality education even in the new normal condition.

Parents and resources. As it can be noted on the participants narrative, *“I have three children of my own who all are learning from home. The two oldest are able to complete schoolwork without my assistance, but they need devices during the same time of the day. My 6-year-old needs me to sit with him while working on his work to help guide him and if he needs to log in to complete a task, then another device is being utilized. I am overwhelmed creating new lessons in a way I've never done before, trying to teach myself new ways to interact with my students, and trying to make sure my own children are taken care of and completing their work with limited devices at home.”*

Distance learning can also be challenging for working parents who struggle to keep their children engaged and juggling between their kids' distance learning, household chores, and their own work. Studying from home may become overwhelming, particularly if a child has to juggle between different tasks, activities, assignments, and online lessons. Tanic (2020) claims that financial hardship for the family may have resulted from one or more parents losing their jobs or having their companies affected. How to pay for their children's education must be a concern for many parents.

Collaboration. Collaboration is one of the most important skills especially during this pandemic. Since the present situation posed serious challenges to the workplace and basically to the norms of life, immense efforts to sustain the practice on duties and responsibilities of the teachers are expected. And with the advent of technology, collaborating with other teachers, stakeholders,

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students, and school administrator is easier (Morel, 2014). The second strength of the teachers in the new normal in Philippine public education is their capacity to collaborate, being committed, and being competent which are essential skills. These are evident from their responses. In order to deal with the situation, some teachers recognized the importance of cooperation, support, and community involvement from their stakeholders and coworkers. Some responses described teachers' initiative to collaborate with their co-teachers. In effect, they were able to share their best practices and work together as they confront the challenges of online teaching and learning.

Blankstein, Frederick, and Wolff-Eisenberg (2020) suggested that teachers must continuously communicate with the students despite the technological divide among them. However, teachers through the help of the school administrators and DepEd policymakers must be given assistance and interventions to help teachers reach out to students and teachers. Further, the teachers must collaborate with parents, communities, and other stakeholders to continuously reach the students (Fontanos, Gonzales, Lucasan, & Ocampo, 2020). Honigsfeld and Nordmeyer (2021) supports that teachers can directly share resources with colleagues within the same school and across schools through technologies, and collaboration today is vital that allows teachers to learn new technologies like teleconferencing and online learning tools, integrate modern teaching approaches and share responsibility for creating resources to resolve the demands of present education setting.

Table 4. Formulated Codes, Categories and Theme

<i>Examples Codes</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Theme</i>
<i>The need of supplemental learning resources</i>	<i>Resource Supplement</i>	<i>Needing instrumental and appraisal support</i>
<i>Support from the administrators in the health and well-being of both teachers and learners.</i>	<i>Needs support</i>	
<i>The availability of internet and skills capacity building program and guidance from the expert</i>	<i>Connectivity, training</i>	
<i>School level preparedness for the Distance learning</i>	<i>preparedness</i>	<i>Upskilling and reskilling</i>
<i>The policy makers support in distance learning modality</i>	<i>policy support</i>	
<i>The policy makers support to teachers in the implementation of curriculum</i>		
<i>Teachers trainings and seminars to upgrade their skills in distance learning</i>	<i>Capability building</i>	

Theme 1 Needing instrumental and appraisal support

In dealing with various challenges that may emerge throughout the teaching process, teachers may have these plans of action.

The need of supplemental learning resources. In order to ensure that excellence and high-quality education are accomplished in the new normal, excellent teaching and innovation should be encouraged. With the teachers' participation, instruction is successfully managed under the direction and supervision of the school heads. The school needs to strive in the provision of available resources to sustain the best curriculum practices of the school. Administrators must ensure that teachers have a consistent supplies. All subject areas should have enough learning modules, teaching guidelines, and manipulative resources.

Participant 5 affirmed, "Since one of the problems that emerged in the beginning of distance learning implementation is the lack of materials and resources, thus, aside from SLMs, there should be additional resources that could help teachers to deliver the lessons. For example, even if there is already SLMs, there could also be other supplementary learning resources, aligned with the learning competencies, that could help the teachers with their topics. Teachers may direct the concerns to the proper authority. They may also look for sponsorships and work on donation drives or fund-raising campaigns, or partner with their co-teachers to minimize the problems pertaining to the printing of modules. Schools may allot more budget in the production, distribution, and retrieval of modules from their Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses.

Support from the administrators in the health and well-being of both teachers and learners. School administrators can lead through these tough times with compassion by understanding grief and how to help themselves, their teachers and students especially their well-being and health. Participant 8 declared, "In such time of distress, it is really important that we secure our health and well-being. There should be program to support health and well-being of teachers and students. If there is none, teachers' individual efforts to attain such is recommended. In the absence of in-person meeting, the school administrators should make effort to check on teachers and students from time to time." It is important to give teachers the foundational self-care and self-management tools to reduce stress and increase teacher and student performances.

The availability of internet and skills capacity building program and guidance from the expert. To support online education, it is suggested that faculty be provided with more resources and technology infrastructure. Participants stated, "Technological advancement like internet connection and skills capacity building program should be available for students and teachers. Guidance from the experts is needed to not compromise the quality of learning delivery." Teachers may install Wi-Fi boosters and external antennas. Schools may also provide sufficient load cards to the teachers. Moreover, all faculty members should be granted a data allowance so that they can purchase high-speed internet connections.

Teachers also urged that the local government units (LGUs) should provide connectivity and internet access to boost the online learning requirements of their students as the education sector prepares for the new normal when school resumes next month. Participant 6 stated, "Dapat tumulong and LGU na mgkaroon ng internet connection para sa teachers and students sa rural areas tulad dto sa school namin." Additionally, the Department of Education may enter into an agreement or memorandum of understanding with the Departments of Energy and Information and Communications Technology to support the electrification of rural areas and establish reliable internet connections for schools, teachers, students, and parents to connect and communicate with one another, respectively.

Voices of the Teachers in the New Normal Education: Their Engagement in Home-Based Learning

Theme 2 Upskilling and reskilling

School level preparedness for the Distance learning. There should be a clear guidance to help teachers understand key issues related to home-based distance learning during COVID-19 school closures and design and facilitate effective learning activities. One teacher affirmed, “*Dapat sa school may kahandaan at malinaw na guidelines kasi yung utos galling sa taas minsan hindi naman applicable sa school level.*” Principals/ school heads ensure that DepEd approved instructional approaches are explained to teachers. According to the teacher participants, the DepEd is tasked with disseminating pertinent instructions, memos, policies, and procedures to facilitate the smooth running of the programme. Also, the school is responsible in creating specific policies and implementing procedures suitable to the needs and demands of the learners as the focus of education. Quality teaching and innovation are being encouraged to ensure the attainment of excellence and quality education in the new normal.

The policy makers support in distance learning modality. The policy maker shall employ all effective forms of distance learning tools to ensure that no learners, especially the most vulnerable, are left behind. “*The policy makers ought to see on the ground level. They need to gauge all aspects of distance delivery. Policies should be made to ensure that no students, teachers or schools are left behind.*” Administrators must stay updated also with developments posted by the Department of Education. Recently, the government agency has addressed the issue of supporting learning continuity by announcing that all schools must submit their respective learning continuity plans before starting the school year. They ensure that the curricular objectives and school goals are reflected in the professional development activities for teachers. When there are difficulties with teaching-learning in a particular classroom, they ought to assist in finding solutions with the teachers. Teachers are informed by principals and administrators of opportunities to upgrade their subject-matter expertise and teaching techniques.

The policy makers support to teachers in the implementation of curriculum. The policy makers must be open to suggestions and feedback from faculty members and parents, and offer resolutions to their concerns. They should also support faculty members in finding creative ways to make distance learning accessible to all their students. This may include providing and encouraging the use of online applications that have features available offline like Google Docs, Google Sheets, and Google Slides. Participant 3 shared, “*To teachers, get support, as needed, on the key resources you will need to achieve your goals. To the policy makers, I hope they consider every aspect of the implementation because an abrupt and poor discernment would cause great damage to both teachers and students.*”

Teachers trainings and seminars to upgrade their skills in distance learning. Technology has been viewed as a method, rather than a tool to facilitate and support teaching, and not the other way around, and it is sometimes assumed that if computers are placed in the hands of teachers, these devices will transform teaching. School administrators can arrange teacher training for faculty members through virtual or in-school training especially when it comes to distance learning. There should be a training and seminar to upgrade their skills about transitioning to a virtual platform to assist teachers in their professional development. Participant 4 stated, “*Continuous upgrading and training of teachers to acquire necessary skills in facilitating distance learning.*” For teachers to succeed successfully in the new normal, they should be equipped with the skills to do it.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this qualitative study reveal both positive and negative sides of home-based learning delivery or remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings point to the realization that students and teachers were thriving and making efforts to surpass this endeavor with flying colors. However, despite progression in distance learning delivery, a lot of challenges are carried by teachers. On top of which is the lack of resources. Followed by lack of appropriate and continuous support through training programs. The pandemic which put everyone in distress highlighted the importance of not only physical, but also mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of teachers and students. Nevertheless, teachers are aware of their needs and the needs of the school and their students which allowed them make meaningful recommendations for the improvement of home-based learning delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. In the emergence of a national or global crisis which would require the implementation of distance learning, teaching-learning environment and the resources may be prioritized and strategic directions could be orchestrated beforehand to prevent imprudent actions to be taken during the implementation.
2. For teachers to have a better grasp and optimism in a pressing situation such as the sudden migration from classroom teaching to remote instruction, providing support for teachers' psychosocial well-being is an essential component. The psychological well-being and quality of life of teachers must be recognized and teachers must be provided with support as they continue to adapt to the changes in the learning delivery.
3. Parents were found to be vital support in the success of distance learning delivery, hence, a strengthened teacher-parent partnership framework may be designed.
4. Distance learning delivery is mostly technology supported, hence, trainings and seminar on technological skills upgrading and development of teachers may be given priority.
5. A replication of this study may be undertaken in order to assess other elements of home-based instruction in time of a health crisis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study used IPA which focused on interpreting individual experiences and opinions, therefore, the researcher cannot generalize the results. Even though the approach can be beneficial in acquiring a large amount of data, the qualitative nature of IPA makes it difficult to analyze a particular piece of information. The data of the study were obtained by means of recorded interview which may have biases. Hence, results are relatively subjective. To increase the objectivity of data may be increased through observation, structured and unstructured interviews. The study was conducted within a small school. Similar studies should be conducted on larger groups with prospective teachers teaching in macro-schools. The participants were selected with purposive sampling method within target population and conducted in a school where the researcher works. Hence, data gathered cannot be generalized for others other than the research locale.

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