Original Research Article

MIXED-MODE INSTRUCTION AMIDST THE PANDEMIC: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

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| This study explored the challenges faced by elementary school teachers in implementing mixed-mode instruction amidst the pandemic. A total of ten (10) teachers from various public elementary schools in Davao del Norte. Using a phenomenological approach, the research examined their experiences, challenges, and insights regarding the mixed-mode instruction amidst the pandemic. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data, which was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed three major themes related to the experiences of teachers in mixed-mode instruction: technological adaptation and digital competency, student engagement and learning gaps, and workload and time management struggles. Teachers faced various challenges in delivering instruction, including technological difficulties, student participation issues, and increased workload and stress. From these findings, significant insights emerged: the need for technological support and training, strategies to enhance student engagement, and better workload management. The study highlights the importance of institutional support, professional development, and policy improvements in addressing these challenges. Teachers may benefit from additional training, access to reliable technology, and administrative measures that ease their workload. These findings serve as a valuable resource for school administrators, policymakers, and future researchers in refining educational strategies for blended learning. |

*Keywords: Mixed-mode Instruction, Blended Learning, Teacher Challenges, Online Teaching, Face-to-face Teaching, Pandemic, Education*

1. INTRODUCTION

Mixed-mode instruction combines in-person and remote learning through classroom space rotation, integrating either synchronous or asynchronous remote instruction. This approach optimizes in-person class time for experiential learning activities or blends various instructional methods (Retherford et al., 2021). In the Philippine education system, mixed-mode instruction—also referred to as blended learning has been widely implemented, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Bihasa et al., 2022).

The Department of Education (DepEd) has reported that various schools across the country have innovatively adapted blended learning approaches to meet the needs of their learners. Following the closure of schools due to the pandemic, DepEd encouraged its field offices to contextualize the implementation of the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) based on local circumstances and available resources (Tupas & Linas-Laguda, 2020).

However, as highlighted by the Social Development Committee (SDC) XI, the initial implementation of DepEd XI’s Distance Learning Delivery Modalities (DLDM) in SY 2020-2021 faced several challenges. These included poor or unstable internet access for learners, a lack of ICT equipment for both students and parents, and the need for more visually engaging lesson presentations. To address these issues, DepEd XI committed to improving the quality of learning modules, expanding the use of television and radio for instruction, and implementing blended learning with limited face-to-face interactions, particularly in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs) and Last Mile Schools. This blended approach was intended to provide psychosocial support and promote student well-being during the pandemic.

Mixed-mode instruction is not a new concept in Philippine education, as many colleges and universities have long adopted blended learning strategies. However, due to the pandemic, traditional classroom methods were forced to transition into mixed-mode instruction. DepEd emphasized the need for teachers to explore all available alternatives to ensure that classes could continue as scheduled for SY 2020-2021 (Bihasa et al., 2022).

Many forward-thinking educators, including myself, have embraced blended learning in our classrooms to equip students with 21st-century skills. Despite the lack of technology-rich classrooms and the rapid evolution of the educational landscape, school leadership has been compelled to integrate technology to personalize student learning. Mixed-mode instruction offers several benefits, such as increased knowledge accessibility, enhanced connectivity for research collaboration, and more creative teaching strategies (Daniel et al., 2024). However, while I am eager to implement mixed-mode instruction, I also recognize the importance of ensuring accountability for my students’ learning while adhering to DepEd’s guidelines.

There remains some confusion among educators regarding the validity and effectiveness of mixed-mode instruction. Many teachers continue to question the most effective approach to delivering lessons in this format. According to Chhatria et al. (2024), curriculum design should be subject-centered, learner-centered, and problem-based, incorporating various learning theories. The Philippine education system aligns itself with current trends and innovations, and DepEd must design content that strengthens students’ skills and values to help them become productive citizens. To achieve this, teachers play a crucial role in curriculum implementation, requiring dedication, competence, creativity, compassion, and integrity (Utamirohmahsari, 2024).

To protect students from COVID-19, teachers nationwide have transitioned from traditional teaching methods to the new normal. Bozkurt (2020) reported that many educators sought assistance from younger colleagues to navigate new learning styles and technologies, ensuring the delivery of quality education despite challenges such as poor internet access.

DepEd Davao del Norte highlighted on social media how the pandemic has driven the adoption of mixed-mode instruction due to restrictions on face-to-face interactions. This shift posed significant challenges for indigenous learners at Palma Gil Integrated School (PGIS) in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, who lacked access to quality education. However, through partnerships with non-government organizations (NGOs), students received educational tablets and accessories to support their learning. Since modular learning was self-paced, many PGIS students initially struggled due to a lack of gadgets. Teachers also faced difficulties communicating with parents, most of whom lacked digital devices, prompting them to use written letters instead.

Although mixed-mode instruction is still relatively new to DepEd’s system, I am motivated to explore teachers’ experiences and challenges in implementing this approach. By gathering firsthand insights from educators, a comprehensive evaluation can be presented to DepEd XI, which may lead to necessary interventions should the Learning Management System (LMS) prove ineffective. This study aims to assess whether students have successfully adapted to mixed-mode instruction, considering the realities faced by local schools.

**1.1 Purpose of the Study**

This study was conducted primarily to examine the teachers’ experiences and challenges about the implementation of mixed-mode instruction in some schools in New Corella. The experiences did not only capture the practices or strategies used, but also the teacher’s insights drawn from a mixed-mode instruction.

2. methodology

**2.1 Research Design**

In the new normal, teachers are required to adhere to the mandates set by the Department of Education (DepEd). With the implementation of mixed-mode instruction, educators have had to innovate and adapt their pedagogical practices to effectively serve their students and fulfill their responsibilities to the department. It was within this context that I decided to conduct qualitative research.

Qualitative research is often guided by an interpretivist philosophy, which holds that social reality is socially constructed. Interpretive social scientists seek to understand the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences rather than attempting to define an objective reality independent of human perception. This perspective challenges the positivist belief in a concrete, measurable reality that can be objectively understood through scientific methods. Instead, interpretivists argue that researchers construct an image of reality shaped by their own perspectives, biases, and interactions with others (Pregoner, 2024; Alagasi & Baguio, 2025).

Building on this foundation, McBride et al. (2022) introduced the constructivist paradigm, which extends interpretivist philosophy by emphasizing the importance of exploring how different stakeholders in a social setting form their beliefs. This paradigm recognizes the diverse goals of researchers and participants and seeks to foster consensus in understanding the research focus.

Given this framework, a phenomenological study was deemed the most appropriate approach for exploring and understanding the lived experiences of teachers navigating their professional journey amid the pandemic. This method facilitates a deeper examination of a particular phenomenon by capturing the perspectives and narratives of individuals experiencing it firsthand (Dempsey & Mestry, 2023). Specifically, this study focuses on the experiences of ten teachers from different schools in Davao del Norte who have been teaching remotely during the global health crisis.

**2.3 Research Participants and Sampling**

Choosing this phenomenology required establishing a rationale of a purposeful sampling strategy for selecting the teacher’s view and for gathering information about the experiences and challenges; hence, purposive sampling was used. This helps researchers delve deep into their participants’ lived experiences about the phenomenon being studied (Dahal et al., 2024). Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources. This involved identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Luciani et al., 2019). In addition to knowledge and experience, Hassan et al. (2021) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

For the criterion, I focused on suitable samples from the different elementary schools in New Corella. Prospect participants who have met the qualifications intended for the study were invited for the interviews. Luckily, I was able to invite one (1) teacher from each elementary school in the municipality of New Corella, and gathered five (5) for an individual interview, and another seven (7) teachers for a focus-group discussion (FGD). I had a total of twelve (10) participants. The rationale of the study was explained to them, and at the course of the interview and FGD, they may withdraw should they change their mind. This was beyond the researcher’s control; hence, they should not be forced to be part of the study. Full respect was given should the participant withdraw his/her intent to participate.

**2.4 Data Collection**

Data collection is one of the most important stages in conducting research. One can have the best research design in the world, but if the required data is not met, the outcome will be incomplete. Data collection is a very demanding job that needs thorough planning, hard work, patience, perseverance and more to be able to complete the task successfully (Kabir, 2016). Data collection starts with determining the kind of data required, followed by the selection of a sample from a certain population. After that, instruments shall be determined to collect the data from the selected sample.

An important step, however, should be done first in collecting data. I asked for an endorsement from the Graduate School of RMC. Then, another communication letter was given to the Schools Division Superintendent, to the Public Schools Division Supervisor as well as to the School Head of the school asking permission to conduct the study attaching the endorsement released from the Graduate School. Upon approval, the identified participants were asked to sign the Informed Consent Form (ICF).

A need to explain and clarify the purpose of the study is an important way of establishing rapport with the participants. They were oriented about the main purpose of the study, and I asked them to affix their signature in the ICF. Moreover, they were assured that their responses would remain confidential. An In-Depth Interview (IDI) was used to collect the primary data. This interview method is felt to be of the greatest value to the study that may arise because it allows the power of interactive dialogue through language to reflect the teachers' experiences. The interview setting offered me the opportunity to clarify statements and gave me the freedom to explore new avenues with the potential to enhance meaning during the process. This data collection technique was employed to elementary school teachers who will be sharing their perceptions and practices during the adoption of blended learning in classroom instruction. Key Informant Interview (KII) was used for the three (3) teachers in each school who have first-hand knowledge of the new normal policy, particularly the implementation of blended learning. Participants shared their thoughts by answering the semi-structured questions using their own words. They were reminded towards the end of the interview that there is a need for the second contact to discuss the findings of the study to make sure that they reflect their own experiences. A copy of the transcript of the interview was emailed to the participants. Interview protocols were observed properly.

Before the conduct of the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, research guide questions were formulated aligned to the research questions, to get significant information from the participants and to attain the purpose of the study. It was validated by the experts. The stored interview was secured in a flash drive or in a personal computer drive making sure that the information remains confidential. I made it sure that a password was set for each Word document where the data gathered had been written. For reference, I kept the gathered data for three years. The recorded interview was transcribed and coded, ready for thematic analysis. In the thematic analysis, I assisted by my data analyst to ensure the correct analysis of the data.

**2.5 Data Analysis**

This study employed thematic analysis, a method for analyzing qualitative data by identifying, analyzing, and reporting recurring patterns within a dataset (Lochmiller, 2021). Kiger and Varpio (2020) describe thematic analysis as not only a method for summarizing data but also an interpretive process that involves selecting codes and constructing themes. A key advantage of thematic analysis is its flexibility, allowing it to be applied across various theoretical and epistemological frameworks, study designs, and sample sizes.

In analyzing my data, I focused on identifying themes that emerged from responses to the guide questions. The process of theme identification—akin to constructing the walls and roof of a conceptual framework—is inherently active and interpretive. Themes do not simply emerge from the data, rather, they are constructed by the researcher through a rigorous process of analyzing, comparing, combining, and even graphically mapping how codes interrelate.

To facilitate discussion and ensure a deeper understanding of the issues being explored, I utilized vignettes—short, descriptive scenarios that illustrate key themes. The use of vignettes in qualitative research has been increasingly recognized for its effectiveness (Rizvi, 2019). Erfanian et al. (2020) highlight that vignettes are particularly valuable in well-designed qualitative research, as they provide a structured yet flexible approach to exploring participants' perspectives and experiences.

In order to have systematic data, I assigned codes or numbers that signify specific participant, type of data, page and line numbers. Hence, to identify: T1 is for Teacher 1, T2 is for Teacher 2, and so on. For the types of data collection, the code Í for the in-depth interviews. The first number will represent the participant number, the second is the page number, and then the last number or numbers specify the line or lines where the cited transcriptions start and the line where it ends. So, an audit trail that says (T1, IP1, L4-18) would mean the data is derived from Teacher 1’s interview, page 1, from lines 4 to 18.

Lastly, I made sure that there were pertinent studies and research to support and relate my gathered data. With this, I was sure to capture trustworthiness and credibility of my study.

3. results and discussion

**3.1** **Experiences of Teachers Using Mixed-Mode Instruction**

The participants shared their experiences as they navigated the challenges and opportunities of implementing mixed-mode instruction in public elementary schools. These educators, coming from various schools, encountered both difficulties and benefits as they balanced face-to-face and online teaching.

***Technological Adaptation and Digital Competency***

The transition to mixed-mode instruction required teachers to integrate digital tools into their teaching strategies. However, many struggled with limited access to technology, unreliable internet connectivity, and difficulties in mastering new platforms.

Here are some of the responses shared by the participants during the interview:

*“Lisod ang pagkat-on sa bag-ong teknolohiya kay wala pa namo kini nagamit sauna, unya kinahanglan nga mapaspas ang among pag-adjust” (P1).*

*“Ang kahinay sa internet ug kalit nga pagkawala sa koneksyon naghatag og daghang hagit sa among online nga pagtudlo” (P7).*

*“The training on digital tools was helpful, but we need more hands-on practice to be fully confident in using them” (P3).*

*“We often face issues navigating new applications, and it takes time to become proficient while balancing our teaching load” (P10).*

The finding aligns with the study of Lukas and Yunus (2021), which emphasized that limited technological access and inadequate digital training hinder teachers' ability to effectively implement online learning strategies. Similarly, Ferri et al. (2020) found that unreliable internet connectivity remains a major barrier for educators, particularly in rural areas, affecting lesson delivery and student engagement. In line with this, Yildiz Durak (2021) argued that while digital tools are essential in modern education, teachers require continuous training and hands-on experience to fully integrate these technologies into their teaching practices. Furthermore, Oliveira et al. (2021) highlighted that adapting to new educational applications demands additional time and effort from teachers, often leading to increased workload and stress.

***Student Engagement and Learning Gaps***

Teachers observed that while some students adapted well to mixed-mode instruction, others struggled due to a lack of devices, difficulty in self-paced learning, and minimal parental support.

Here are some of the responses expressed by the participants during the interview:

“Ang uban estudyante walay kaugalingong gadgets ug kinahanglan magpa-load pa aron makaapil sa klase” (P1).

*“Some students do not have their own gadgets and need to buy mobile data just to join the class” (P4).*

“Lisod para sa uban estudyante ang independent learning kay wala silay suporta gikan sa ilang pamilya” (P3).

*“Independent learning is difficult for some students because they lack support from their families” (P8).*

This finding corroborates the study of Vardeh (2023), which highlighted the significant challenges students face in mixed-mode instruction, particularly due to the lack of access to devices and reliable internet. The research emphasizes that students in low-income households are often forced to purchase mobile data or rely on public internet connections, which limits their ability to fully participate in online classes. Similarly, Gonzalez-DeHass (2019) found that many students struggle with independent learning, particularly when they lack parental support and guidance, which is essential for keeping them engaged in self-paced activities. Moreover, Bonal and González (2020) also noted that the absence of proper technological resources and family involvement contributes to the widening of learning gaps, leading to increased educational disparities. Furthermore, Bowles (2021) argued that effective student engagement in a mixed-mode setup requires not only access to technology but also a strong support system at home, which can significantly affect their academic performance and motivation.

***Workload and Time Management Struggles***

Teachers expressed that managing both online and face-to-face classes significantly increased their workload. Preparing materials for both modes and addressing students' diverse needs required extra effort and time.

Here are some of the responses mentioned by the participants during the interview:

*“Daghan kaayo ang among trabaho tungod sa blended setup, kay duha ka pamaagi sa pagtudlo ang among andamon” (P3).*

*“Our workload is overwhelming because we have to prepare for two modes of teaching” (P5).*

*“Dili lalim ang pagbalanse sa administrative tasks ug lesson preparation, labi na kay taas na daan ang among responsibilidad” (P6).*

*“Balancing administrative tasks and lesson preparation is difficult, especially since we already have many responsibilities” (P7).*

*“Managing time effectively has become more challenging because of the additional workload from mixed-mode instruction” (P8).*

This finding is consistent with the study of Goedhart et al. (2021), which discussed how the shift to mixed-mode instruction has led to increased workloads for teachers, particularly due to the need to prepare materials for both online and face-to-face classes. Their research highlighted the additional effort required to address the diverse needs of students across different learning modes. Similarly, Hobeck (2023) found that the dual demands of managing administrative tasks while preparing lesson plans for both online and in-person classes are overwhelming for educators, leading to time management struggles and burnout. Moreover, McLaughlin (2020) also noted that balancing multiple responsibilities in a mixed-mode environment has created significant stress for teachers, who often feel pressured to meet the demands of both teaching formats. Furthermore, Austinson (2022) emphasized that effective time management training is essential for teachers to navigate these increased workloads, as the added responsibilities significantly hinder their ability to maintain a work-life balance.



***Figure 1. Experiences of Teachers Using Mixed-Mode Instruction***

**3.2 Challenges of Teachers in the Delivery of Mixed-Mode Instruction**

The participants shared their challenges in implementing mixed-mode instruction in public elementary schools. These educators, from various schools under faced difficulties in balancing online and face-to-face teaching. Their responses highlighted issues related to technology, student participation, and workload management.

***Technological Difficulties***

Teachers encountered several technological challenges, including unstable internet connections, limited access to devices, and difficulty in navigating new digital tools. These issues affected their ability to deliver lessons effectively.

Here are some of the responses shared by the participants during the interview:

*“Lisod kaayo kung magklase online unya kalit mawala ang signal, labi na kung naa mi sa lagyo nga lugar” (P2).*

*“It is very difficult to teach online when the signal suddenly disappears, especially in remote areas” (P4).*

*“Dili tanan magtutudlo kabalo sa paggamit sa bag-ong teknolohiya, kinahanglan pa namo og dugang nga training” (P5).*

*“Not all teachers are skilled in using new technology; we still need additional training” (P6).*

*“Sometimes, the learning platforms crash, making it hard to continue with our lessons” (P7).*

*“We have to switch between different apps and devices, which can be confusing and time-consuming” (P8).*

This finding reflects the challenges highlighted in Sumalinog (2022), which reported that many teachers face significant technological barriers, including unreliable internet and insufficient access to digital devices, which hinder their ability to deliver online lessons effectively. Similarly, Merikko and Kivimäki (2022) found that teachers struggle with adapting to new digital tools, as not all educators are trained in the use of these platforms, leading to confusion and inefficiency. In the study by Khlaif et al. (2021), it was noted that teachers, particularly in rural areas, are greatly affected by unstable internet connections, which disrupt their teaching and affect student engagement. Furthermore, Oliveira et al. (2021) emphasized that the constant need to switch between different applications and devices adds to the workload and stress, reducing the time available for lesson planning and delivery.

***Student Participation Issues***

Teachers observed that many students struggled to engage in mixed-mode instruction due to a lack of resources, motivation, and parental support. Some students had difficulty focusing in an online setup, while others were inactive in discussions.

Here are some of the responses expressed by the participants during the interview:

*“Lisod makuha ang atensyon sa estudyante sa online classes kay daghan sila’g distractions sa balay” (P1).*

*“It is hard to get students' attention during online classes because there are many distractions at home” (P2).*

*“Naay estudyante nga dili makaapil sa klase kay walay load o walay maayong signal” (P3).*

*“Some students cannot attend classes because they have no mobile data or a poor signal” (P4).*

*“Some students do not participate in discussions, making it difficult to assess their learning” (P8).*

*“Parental support is lacking, and some parents do not prioritize their children’s online learning” (P10).*

This finding is consistent with the study of Oliveira (2021), which discussed the challenges faced by students in mixed-mode instruction, particularly the lack of access to resources and the difficulty of maintaining focus in an online setting. Their research found that students are often distracted by home environments, making it hard for teachers to engage them effectively. Similarly, Al-Amin et al. (2021) noted that many students struggle with participation due to limited access to mobile data or unreliable internet connections, which prevent them from attending or actively participating in online classes. Moreover, Tawfik et al. (2021) also emphasized that a lack of parental support is a significant barrier, as some students are left to navigate online learning on their own, leading to disengagement. Furthermore, Alipio (2020) highlighted that the absence of student participation in discussions poses a challenge for teachers to assess learning, making it harder to monitor student progress in a mixed-mode setup.

***Increased Workload and Stress***

Teachers experienced a heavier workload due to the need to prepare lessons for both online and face-to-face instruction. Managing administrative tasks alongside teaching responsibilities also added to their stress.

Here are some of the responses mentioned by the participants during the interview:

*“Doble among trabaho kay kinahanglan namo mag-andam og materials para sa duha ka klase—online ug face-to-face” (P4).*

*“We have twice the workload because we need to prepare materials for both online and face-to-face classes” (P5).*

*“Dili lalim ang pag-manage sa oras kay daghan ang admin tasks ug lesson preparation” (P7).*

*“Time management is difficult because of administrative tasks and lesson preparation” (P9).*

*“Switching between online and face-to-face teaching is exhausting, and we need better support” (P10).*

This finding aligns with the study of Kim et al. (2021), which examined the impact of increased workload on teachers in blended learning environments. Their research found that educators often struggle with balancing lesson preparation, administrative duties, and instructional delivery, leading to heightened stress levels. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2022) emphasized that teachers in mixed-mode instruction face time management difficulties as they shift between online and face-to-face classes, which can result in burnout. Moreover, the study by Singh and Sharma (2021) highlighted that inadequate institutional support further exacerbates teacher fatigue, as many educators lack the necessary resources and assistance to manage the demands of blended learning effectively. Furthermore, Gonzalez et al. (2023) pointed out that the additional workload associated with preparing materials for two different teaching modalities significantly impacts teachers’ overall well-being, making it crucial for educational institutions to implement strategies that reduce unnecessary administrative burdens.



***Figure 2. Challenges of Teachers in the Delivery of Mixed-Mode Instruction***

**3.3 Insights Can be Drawn from the Findings**

The findings of this study highlight various challenges encountered by teachers in delivering mixed-mode instruction. These challenges, particularly technological support and training, enhancing student engagement strategies, and managing teacher workload and stress, provide valuable insights into the areas that require attention to improve teaching and learning in this setup.

***Technological Support and Training***

Teachers need more support in adapting to digital tools, as many struggle with unstable internet, lack of devices, and limited technical skills. Schools must ensure access to reliable internet and provide comprehensive training on technology use.

Here are some of the insights drawn from the findings:

“*Lisod para sa mga magtutudlo nga walay igong kahibalo sa teknolohiya, labi na kung walay klarong training” (P2).*

*“It is difficult for teachers who lack sufficient knowledge in technology, especially without proper training” (P5).*

*“Dapat adunay dugang suporta sa mga eskwelahan aron mapadali ang pagkat-on sa paggamit sa digital platforms” (P7).*

*“Schools should provide more support to help teachers learn digital platforms more easily” (P10).*

This finding aligns with the research of Spiteri and Chang Rundgren (2021), which emphasized that teachers need more technological support to adapt to digital tools. Their study highlighted that many teachers struggle with using new technologies effectively due to a lack of proper training and support. Similarly, Noor et al. (2020) found that schools with insufficient technological resources, such as poor internet connectivity and limited devices, face significant challenges in ensuring that teachers can deliver lessons effectively. Moreover, Valverde-Berrocoso et al. (2021) also discussed how comprehensive training on digital platforms is essential for educators to fully integrate technology into their teaching practices. Furthermore, Caena and Redecker (2019) argued that consistent support from schools, including technical assistance and ongoing professional development, is crucial in helping teachers build the digital competency needed for effective online teaching.

***Enhancing Student Engagement Strategies***

Teachers find it challenging to keep students engaged in a mixed-mode setup due to distractions at home, lack of learning resources, and minimal parental support. Strategies should be developed to improve student participation and motivation.

Here are some of the insights drawn from the findings:

*“Ang mga estudyante dili kanunay aktibo sa online class tungod kay daghan silang distaksyon sa balay” (P1).*

*“Students are not always active in online classes because there are too many distractions at home” (P5).*

*“Some students struggle with online learning because they do not have access to reliable internet” (P7).*

*“Mas makatabang kung ang mga ginikanan mas mopatigbabaw sa edukasyon sa ilang mga anak” (P8).*

*“It would help if parents prioritized their children's education more” (P9).*

This finding supports the study by Yıldırım et al. (2021), which highlighted the difficulties teachers face in keeping students engaged in mixed-mode learning due to home distractions and lack of resources. Their research emphasizes the importance of developing strategies to address these challenges, including creating more engaging learning activities and offering resources to mitigate distractions. Similarly, Bergdahl (2021) found that the lack of reliable internet and limited access to digital devices significantly affect students' ability to actively participate in online classes, contributing to disengagement. Moreover, Yang et al. (2023) also discussed how parental involvement plays a critical role in supporting student motivation and engagement, particularly in the online setting, where students need more guidance at home to stay focused on their studies. Furthermore, Levinthal and Kuusisto (2022) argued that improving student engagement requires not only strategies from educators but also a collaborative effort from parents to create a conducive learning environment.

***Managing Teacher Workload and Stress***

Teachers face increased workloads due to the need to prepare for both online and face-to-face classes. Managing time effectively and reducing unnecessary administrative tasks can help lessen teacher burnout.

Here are some of the insights drawn from the findings:

*“Ang workload karon mas bug-at kay kinahanglan andamon ang duha ka pamaagi sa pagtudlo” (P2).*

*“The workload is now heavier because we have to prepare for both modes of teaching” (P3).*

*“Time management training is important because handling multiple responsibilities is becoming more difficult” (P5).*

*“Dapat pagaanon sa DepEd ang mga admin tasks aron mas maka-focus ang magtutudlo sa pagtudlo” (P8).*

*“DepEd should reduce administrative tasks so that teachers can focus more on teaching” (P9).*

This finding aligns with the research of Pollock and Tolone (2020), which discussed how the dual demands of preparing for both online and face-to-face classes have significantly increased teachers' workloads. Their study emphasizes the need for schools to streamline administrative tasks to allow teachers more time to focus on lesson planning and student engagement. Similarly, Suldo et al. (2020) found that effective time management training is essential for teachers, as it helps them juggle their responsibilities more efficiently and reduces the risk of burnout. Moreover, Viac and Fraser (2020) also highlighted the impact of excessive administrative duties on teacher well-being, noting that teachers are often overwhelmed by paperwork, leaving them with less time to prepare quality lessons. Furthermore, Rashid et al. (2022) argued that addressing workload issues requires not only reducing administrative tasks but also providing teachers with support in balancing their teaching duties.



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***Figure 3.* Insights Can be Drawn Based from the Findings**

4. FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present the summary of the study, including the findings, implications, and future directions. The purpose of my study was to explore the experiences, challenges, and insights of teachers in implementing mixed-mode instruction in public elementary schools. To achieve the research objectives, I employed a qualitative phenomenological method using thematic analysis. In adherence to Creswell’s (2012) guidelines, I conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences. This approach allowed participants to share their personal insights and perceptions regarding the challenges and benefits of mixed-mode instruction. Based on the results of the thematic analysis of the responses from teachers, the following findings and corresponding themes were identified:

The experiences of teachers in mixed-mode instruction revealed three key themes: technological adaptation and digital competency, student engagement and learning gaps, and workload and time management struggles.

The challenges encountered by teachers in delivering mixed-mode instruction focused on issues related to technological difficulties, student participation issues, and the need for institutional support.

The insights shared by the participants emphasized three main points: the importance of technological support and training, enhancing student engagement strategies, and managing teacher workload and stress.

**5. IMPLICATIONS**

One of the key experiences of teachers in implementing mixed-mode instruction was technological adaptation and digital competency. The rapid advancement of technology requires teachers to continuously update their skills to effectively integrate digital tools into their teaching. This highlights the need for ongoing training and support to help educators navigate various learning platforms, troubleshoot technical issues, and maximize the use of available digital resources.

The second theme that emerged from the teachers' experiences was student engagement and learning gaps. While some students were able to adjust to mixed-mode instruction, others struggled due to distractions at home, lack of access to learning materials, and minimal parental support. This suggests a need for strategic interventions that enhance student participation, such as interactive teaching methods, parental involvement programs, and flexible learning options that cater to students' diverse learning needs.

The third theme was workload and time management struggles. Teachers expressed that balancing face-to-face and online instruction significantly increased their workload, affecting their efficiency and well-being. This underscores the importance of time management training and workload reduction initiatives, such as streamlining administrative tasks and implementing policies that allow teachers to focus more on instruction rather than excessive paperwork.

The challenges faced by teachers in delivering mixed-mode instruction also revealed three significant issues: technological difficulties, student participation issues, and the need for institutional support. Technological difficulties, such as unstable internet connections and limited access to devices, demonstrate the urgency of improving digital infrastructure in schools. Student participation issues, including lack of motivation and disengagement, point to the necessity of designing more engaging and inclusive teaching strategies. Lastly, the need for institutional support highlights the role of school administrations in providing resources, training, and policies that ease the burden on teachers.

One of the key insights drawn from this study was the importance of technological support and training. Teachers must receive consistent technical assistance and professional development to strengthen their digital competencies and improve their confidence in using educational technology. Another insight was the need for enhanced student engagement strategies, emphasizing that both teachers and parents should work together to create a supportive learning environment. Finally, managing teacher workload and stress should be a priority, as ensuring a manageable workload will lead to better teaching performance and overall job satisfaction.

The findings of this study are supported by several theoretical frameworks that explain the challenges and opportunities teachers experience in implementing mixed-mode instruction.

Dewey’s (1938) Community of Inquiry (COI) Framework, as cited by Beckett (2019), emphasizes the importance of social, cognitive, and teaching presence in an effective learning environment. In the context of this study, teachers struggled with student engagement and learning gaps, which aligns with the COI framework’s concept of cognitive presence—students must actively engage in the learning process to construct knowledge. The findings suggest that improving student-teacher interaction and fostering a more supportive learning environment could enhance engagement and learning outcomes in mixed-mode instruction.

Similarly, Shea’s et al. (2022), Grounded Model of Online Learning, highlights the importance of institutional support, faculty development, and student readiness in ensuring the success of online and blended learning. The challenges teachers faced, particularly technological adaptation and digital competency, reflect the need for better training and institutional support to help educators navigate digital platforms effectively. Schools and educational institutions must provide structured professional development programs to equip teachers with the necessary skills to deliver quality mixed-mode instruction.

Moreover, McSporran & King’s (2005) Generic Framework of Blended Learning, as cited by Pichkov et al. (2023), also provides insights into this study’s findings. Their framework suggests that successful blended learning requires a balance between flexibility, engagement, and resource availability. The workload and time management struggles experienced by teachers align with the framework’s emphasis on the need for effective workload distribution and support systems. Addressing these concerns through strategic planning, reducing unnecessary administrative tasks, and offering time management training can help teachers handle the demands of mixed-mode instruction more efficiently.

**6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The findings of this study must be properly communicated and utilized by the key stakeholders involved in the implementation of mixed-mode instruction. Their roles in addressing the challenges identified in this study are crucial in ensuring a more effective and sustainable blended learning environment.

First, for Department of Education (DepEd) officials, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the difficulties teachers encounter in delivering mixed-mode instruction. This means that DepEd may focus on sustaining learning management systems (LMS) by providing continuous training for teachers on handling blended classrooms. Furthermore, DepEd officials may consider gathering feedback from educators to refine policies and address specific concerns in the implementation of blended learning.

Second, for school heads, being the primary implementers of blended learning, it is important that they provide the necessary support to teachers and students. This means ensuring that teachers receive adequate training, resources, and assistance in managing their workload. Additionally, school heads may recognize the struggles of students who lack technological literacy and implement measures to help them adapt to digital learning platforms.

Third, for teachers, their experiences highlight the need for ongoing professional development and institutional support. This means that their challenges in technological adaptation, student engagement, and workload management may be addressed through training programs and collaborative efforts among educators. Schools may also provide avenues for teachers to share their best practices and strategies in handling blended learning, fostering a more supportive teaching environment.

Moreover, for parents, their role in the blended learning setup is essential in ensuring student success. This means that they must be aware of the difficulties teachers face and actively participate in their children's education. Schools may conduct orientation programs and provide instructional resources to help parents guide their children in online and face-to-face learning.

Finally, for future researchers, this study serves as a reference for further exploration of blended learning in public elementary schools. Future studies may consider expanding the scope to different educational levels, examining the long-term effects of blended instruction, and exploring effective interventions to improve digital competency, workload management, and student engagement. This means that further research may focus on developing innovative solutions that will enhance the overall effectiveness of mixed-mode instruction.

Consent (where ever applicable)

All authors declare that ‘written informed consent was obtained from the respondent (or other approved parties) for publication of this case report and accompanying images.

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