Challenges and Opportunities Encountered by the Public School Teachers in Using Blended Learning Modality during New Normal

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the challenges and opportunities encountered by the public-school teachers in using blended learning towards development of a proposed teacher development program. This study used descriptive research design. The respondents were 50 public school teachers among public secondary schools in the District of Kawit, Cavite and were selected using random sampling. Data were collected using survey questionnaire adopted from Gabatino (2002). Data were analyzed using mean, percentage and rank order. Results revealed that the area of active learning and administration and leadership are the strongest points of the respondents in using blended learning while the respondents are weak in multimedia technology, technological competence and policy enforcement. Meanwhile, self-management, professionalism and ethics, results focus, teamwork, service orientation and innovation considered by all the respondents as opportunities encountered in using blended learning. The study recommended that since the existing problem in using blended learning is the use of technology among the teachers, the school administrators should conduct vigorous and rigid seminars and trainings in the use of technology and online platforms and data system. Also, the school administrators should continue developing the professionalism among the teachers by giving administrative support relative to graduate programs and attending seminars and trainings related to teaching and pedagogy. Teaching an online and modular course requires different methods from the traditional classroom, so it's important that teachers adapt or develop their skills to the online and modular learning environment, to make their materials effective and engaging for learners.

Keywords— **Blended Learning Modality, Public Secondary Schools, Teachers, Descriptive Research Design**

1. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is spreading rapidly around the world, so many countries have closed their schools for a short period of time (UNESCO, 2020). More than 1.2 billion students around the world have been affected by this closure, with more than 28 million students in the Philippines (UNESCO, 2020). As of May 11, 2020, there were 10,794 cases in the Philippines, and the number is expected to rise, with more than four million worldwide (DOH, 2020). (Worldometer, 2020). A number of countries have responded by instituting lockdowns and quarantines, which have led to students and teachers studying and working from home (Crawford et al., 2020).

In response to these situations, educational leaders decided to adopt the new normal in education. At the basic education, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented the Learning Continuity Plan (LCP), which will be in effect School Year 2020-2021 and classes opened on October 5 (DepEd, 2020). Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) adopted multiple learning modalities including the online learning modality, modular learning modality and blended learning modality to be used during this new normal education as an emergency measure to allow instruction amid challenging circumstances.

Schools, colleges, and universities across the country have made the strategic decision to implement remote learning in the face of uncertainty and increasing intensity of the novel coronavirus pandemic. Since many academic institutions lack the necessary digital infrastructure to support remote teaching and learning, this decision has necessitated new transformative learning for all stakeholders and stressful adaptive work (Joaquin, Biana and Dacela, 2020). As stated by Kraft and Simon (2020), teachers in particular may have to undergo radical shifts in their beliefs about how education should be delivered, as well as process improvements, new strategies, and possibly even new ways of doing business. As a result of social distancing practices, leadership practitioners made the decision to transition to remote education quickly. However, some faculty members were dissatisfied because they were not involved. A quick response from leadership was essential for effective crisis management, and it sent a clear message to all stakeholders that leadership understood the coronavirus as he significant problem, and that they were taking it seriously, and were taking steps to deal with it (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020).

The Philippines' education sector has proposed a slew of new programs to help students adjust to this new normal. Teachers and students will not necessarily have to go to school and learn in classrooms, but the Department of Education has devised various modalities to ensure that online, modular, and blended learning is a choice among all others in this new educational environment (DepEd, 2020). As a result, in higher education institutions, blended classrooms will become the new normal. It is, however, a problem for teachers and students with limited internet access, no gadgets, and a limited budget to produce millions of copies of modules. The

Philippines has the worst internet connectivity in Asia, according to Akamai (2017). In addition, there would be issues of equity, safety and security for both students and teachers, as well as a compromised quality of learning and poor assessment results (Winthrop, 2020). Educators should receive specialized training in online instruction, blended learning, and distance learning, among other approaches (Toquero, 2020). An emphasis should be placed on the development of the teacher's pedagogical and technological skills (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

Educators should receive specialized training in online instruction, blended learning, and distance learning, among other approaches (Toquero, 2020). Teachers' technological and pedagogical skills should be strengthened. All institutions of higher education must study how effective online learning is in delivering quality education and outcomes-based education to students in this new normal (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

A growing number of students and teachers are choosing blended learning as a way to further their education and careers. Online and modular courses require teachers to adapt or develop their skills in order to ensure that the material they produce is effective and engaging for students. The digital classroom and modular environment, in comparison to more established teaching methods, opens up a wealth of previously unexplored territory because of their relative youth (Liu, et al., 2016)

Blended learning research has also been organized into an extensive agenda of transformative and innovative research questions, all of which have the potential to improve learning outcomes for students (Tynan et al., 2015). Comparing online and modular learning to face-to-face courses, research shows that both improve student success and satisfaction (Means et al. 2013) and enhance students' sense of belonging (Rovai and Jordan, 2014). Institutional support for course redesign and planning is critical, according to those who have had the most success with blended learning initiatives (Dringus and Seagull 2015).

All teachers face unique challenges in integrating blended learning into their classrooms within the new normal. As a result, this study provides avenues for addressing issues, problems, and trends that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. New normal education is a subject of great interest to this author. It's important to study the consequences of a return to normalcy, Dhawan (2020) argues: what adjustments need to be made; how big the situation is; and how to define basic dimensions of education in formal education systems and organizations in the midst of educational disruptions.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning in terms of:
   1.1. Active learning;
   1.2. Administration and leadership;
   1.3. Multimedia technology;
   1.4. Classroom decorum;
   1.5. Technological competence; and
   1.6. Policy enforcement?

2. What are the opportunities encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning terms of:
   2.1. self-management;
   2.2. professionalism and ethics;
   2.3. Results focus;
   2.4. teamwork;
   2.5. service orientation; and
   2.6. innovation?

2. METHODS

This study used descriptive research design. The respondents were 50 public school teachers among public secondary schools in the District of Kawit, Cavite and were selected using random sampling. Data were collected using survey questionnaire adopted from Gabatino (2002) through google forms. Data were analyzed using mean, percentage and rank order.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What are the challenges encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning in terms of active learning, administration and leadership, multimedia technology, classroom decorum, technological competence and policy enforcement?

AREAS OF CHALLENGES IN USING BLENDED LEARNING	MEAN	INTERPRETATION	RANK
Active Learning	3.91	Much of the Time	1
Administration and Leadership	3.56	Much of the Time	2
Multimedia Technology	3.00	Often	6
Classroom Decorum	3.43	Much of the Time	3
Technological competence	3.08	Often	4
Policy Enforcement	3.05	Often	5
OVER-ALL	3.33	Much of the Time	

With regard to challenges encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning, the area of active learning yielded with the mean of 3.91 with interpretation of much of the time, administration and leadership with 3.56 and much of time, multimedia technology with 3.00 and often, classroom decorum with 3.43 and much of the time, technological competence with 3.08 and often and policy enforcement with 3.05 and often. Over-all the challenges encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning yielded with an overall mean of 3.33 and interpretation of much of time.

Data shows that the area of active learning and administration and leadership are the strongest points of the respondents in using blended learning while the respondents

are weak in the area of multimedia technology, technological competence and policy enforcement.

According to Toquero (2020), in terms of teaching, teacher training to online instruction, blended learning and distance learning is also recommended in order to adjust to the new instructional format including the teacher competencies in both pedagogy and technology should be reinforced. This transition to the new normal, from the four corners of the classroom to the borders of virtual reality, every learning institution needs to study how successful online learning is in providing quality education and outcomes-based education to students.

In addition, according to Kintu (2017), an effective curriculum means interactive learning, both teachers and students. Blended learning, as an innovative trend in education, is linked to various fields of knowledge. Blended Learning has often differentiated between traditional and online. Therefore, blended learning's effectiveness using the relationship between characteristics, design features, and learning outcome showed that technology quality, online tools, face-to-face support, and students' attitudes and self-regulation are significant predictors for learning outcomes. Furthermore, family support is essential in learning outcomes in blended learning's implementation, but learners' workloads lead to students' drop-out. Also, little time to study has a high impact on students' learning.

What are the opportunities encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning terms of self-management, professionalism and ethics, results focus, teamwork, service orientation and innovation?

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITIES IN USING BLENDED LEARNING	MEAN	INTERPRETATION	RANK
Self-Management	3.96	Strongly Agree	1
Professionalism and Ethics	3.90	Strongly Agree	2
Results Focus	3.74	Strongly Agree	4
Teamwork	3.52	Strongly Agree	6
Service Orientation	3.76	Strongly Agree	5
Innovation	3.88	Strongly Agree	3
OVER-ALL	3.	Strongly Agree	

With regard to opportunities encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning, the area of self-management yielded with a mean of 3.96 and interpretation of strongly agree, professionalism and ethics with 3.90 and strongly agree, result focus with 3.74 and strongly agree, teamwork of 3.52 and strongly agree, service orientation with 3.76 and strongly agree and innovation with 3.88 and strongly agree. Over-all, opportunities encountered by the public school teachers in using blended learning yielded with a mean of and with interpretation of strongly agree.

Data shows that self-management, professionalism and ethics, results focus, teamwork, service orientation and innovation considered by all the respondents as opportunities encountered in using blended learning.

According to Bryan (2016), blended learning model used to teach has the potential to provide a new framework for engagement, a new opportunity to investigate learner perceptions, and the possibility for improved learning outcomes as well as professional development for the teachers.

4. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the area of active learning and administration and leadership are the strongest points of the respondents in using blended learning while the respondents are weak in the area of multimedia technology, technological competence and policy enforcement. Meanwhile, self-management, professionalism and ethics, results focus, teamwork, service orientation and innovation considered by all the respondents as opportunities encountered in using blended learning.

Moreover, this study made an impact on revealing various problems and challenges and various factors affecting the public school teachers in using blended learning during new normal that will assist the school administrators to make better decisions to promote teacher-friendly school system. Thus, this study made it clear that the degree of the school administrative support, social and educational acceptance of the teachers to the existing problems and challenges relative to blended learning, professional growth and development including enrolment in graduate programs and attending seminars and trainings relative to strategies in using blended learning are the factors that contribute to the success of the implementation of blended learning in a school. If this will happen, effective implementation of blended learning modality will not just be a mandated concept but can become a reality.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations of the study:
1. Since the existing problem in using blended learning is the use of technology among the public school teachers, the school administrators should conduct vigorous and rigid seminars and trainings in the use of technology and online platforms and data system.
2. The school administrators should continue developing the professionalism among the public school teachers by giving administrative support relative to graduate programs and attending seminars and trainings related to teaching and pedagogy.
3. For future research, other researchers may conduct the challenges, opportunities and experiences of teachers in using different modalities such as

modular and online learning modalities for cross examination of results of the study.

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