

FROM ISOLATION TO INTEGRATION: TEACHERS' JOURNEY THROUGH A POST-PANDEMIC EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

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Abstract. This qualitative-phenomenological study delved into the teaching experiences of educators at Don Juan dela Cruz Central Elementary School within the context of post-pandemic education. Employing Creswell's thematic analysis, the research used in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as data collection methods, involving 10 elementary teachers with a minimum of three years of teaching experience. These educators navigated the transition from online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic to various post-pandemic education models, including in-person teaching, hybrid, and distance learning. The study revealed that one of the elementary school teachers' struggles was the students' learning loss because of the pandemic disruptions and explores internet and technological disparities that hinder students' participation in online learning. Additionally, the research delved into students' social and emotional unpreparedness, augmenting the struggles of teachers' readjustment. While teachers faced these challenges, their coping strategies were emotional-focused coping strategies, schools and government's interference, and high-speed internet connectivity which benefited the teaching and learning experiences. Lastly, this research provided valuable insights into the experiences of elementary school teachers in a post-pandemic education setting which include the flexibility of post-pandemic education. It is also seen as a time for teachers' technological integration and digital literacy, and opportunity for stakeholders' collaboration between one another. The findings can inform school principals and education policymakers in developing strategies to support teachers, address students' learning loss, and bridge technological disparities. It also underscores the need for ongoing collaboration and support among stakeholders to create a flexible and inclusive post-pandemic education system.

KEY WORDS

1. Post-pandemic education
2. COVID-19 pandemic
3. distance learning

1. Introduction

The first known announcement of the coronavirus outbreak was made by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the 31st day of December 2019. Chinese authorities informed the WHO about a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in the city of Wuhan, located in the Hubei province of China. The cause of the pneumonia was later identified as a novel coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2. The outbreak was initially limited to Wuhan, but it quickly spread to other parts of China and eventually spread throughout different parts of the

world, becoming a global pandemic. This virus was eventually called COVID-19. COVID-19 pushed various establishments—whether in education, commerce, or dining—to shut down. This ravaging pandemic has disrupted all walks of life and facets, and education is not an exemption. Many nations forced institutions to put education on hold, but most adopted new teaching methods—distance or online learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). Months passed by, and online learning became the preferred method of instruction. Teachers had to adapt quickly to this new reality for the continuity of students attending school. After two years, the world gradually healed from the pandemic; however, it brought post-pandemic challenges to the educational sector as schools and institutions transitioned back to face-to-face instruction. Now, the shift of gradual reopening of schools again tests the said sector for both teachers and students as they recover from their recent fine-tuning from the pandemic. Both parties' stay inside their homes was a boon, as they worked and studied in the comfort of their homes, ensuring safety and time well spent with their families. Yet, the bane lies as they grapple with another readjustment—returning to school after two years of feeling stuck. In the international arena, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (2021) called on most countries, including Indonesia, to securely reopen schools and recommence in-person education as quickly as possible after the nationwide shutdown in March 2020, impacting over 60 million students. While 39 percent of schools had resumed limited face-to-face instruction by the 6th day of September 2021, many children still faced major school interruptions. These closures have affected students' education, health, safety, and well-being. However, UNICEF and its partners emphasized initiatives to reintegrate all students into schools. This is to implement refresher

and remedial learning strategies and provide teachers with the necessary support to tackle the disturbing challenge of “learning loss” of the students. In the Philippines, on the 2nd day of February 2022, Education Secretary Leonor M. Briones, under President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr's approval, officially authorized all regional directors to commence the progressive expansion phase of face-to-face classes for both public and private schools. This provided a go-signal for schools to transition to a face-to-face set-up after a long period of online learning. As various schools and institutions complied with this pronouncement, the educational facet has observed that there have been challenges such as unequal access to technology and resources, learning loss and gaps, teachers' adaptation to Education 4.0 and digitalization, and innovation (Sigue-Bisnar, 2022). More so, instructional materials development, school physical environment, students' psychosocial preparation, and teaching strategies were seen as challenges in a post-pandemic classroom, further stressing the teachers' concern about the alarming number of non-reader and socially and mentally unprepared students (Jackaria, 2022). In the locality of Daliaon District, Davao City, specifically in Don Juan Dela Cruz Central Elementary School, the elementary teachers observed this manifested problem as students transitioned from distance and modular learning to face-to-face or hybrid learning. It is in this milieu that this study will be conducted to investigate Don Juan Dela Cruz Elementary School teacher faculty's experiences in teaching in post-pandemic education and its challenges. Previously conducted research concentrated on studies related to education during the COVID-19 pandemic; hence, this research paves the way to identify aspects in post-pandemic education that are useful and challenge-confronted to scrutinize the field of education.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—This study aims to investigate elementary teachers' experiences in teaching post-pandemic education at Don Juan Dela Cruz Elementary School through their challenges, coping mechanisms, and educational insights. This study intends to gain insights from elementary teachers' experiences in post-pandemic education through their challenges, coping mechanisms or strategies, and insights.

1.2. Research Questions—Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of elementary school teachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education?
- (2) How do elementary school teachers cope with the challenges of teaching in a post-pandemic education?
- (3) What are the educational insights learned from the experiences of elementary school teachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education?

Accordingly, this research study recognizes the teachers' challenges in post-pandemic education. Hence, the study is deemed beneficial for the following: Educational Sector. The research findings will offer reliable information regarding teachers' obstacles when transitioning from remote COVID-19 instruction to in-person instruction in a post-pandemic world. This information will help identify strategies to enhance educational delivery and inform decision-making. The educational sector can also use these findings to develop comprehensive steps and procedures for providing education to a diverse student body. School Heads. This research will supply pertinent information and trustworthy data to help administrators establish new policies and procedures. The insights gained from this study can contribute to refining the educational system for the benefit of both teachers and students. Educators. The information collected in this research will heighten teachers' awareness of the challenges they may experience in a post-pandemic educational environment. Parents. This research will act as a resource for parents, enabling them to support their children better as they transition to a post-pandemic educational context. Future Researchers. This study will provide foundational data to inspire additional research on the subject matter under investigation.

1.3. Definition of Terms—The following terms or words are defined in this study for further understanding of the phenomenon under investigation: Elementary school teachers. Early education providers primarily teach children from Grade 1 to Grade 6 (Philippine K to 12 Curriculum). Post-Pandemic Education. This is a type of educational landscape and practices that have emerged or developed after the COVID-19 pandemic. components of teacher knowledge: technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (CK). Also, it emphasizes the interplay among these components and the importance of developing an understanding of their intersections to effectively teach with technology (Kurt, 2019). In the context of teachers' challenges in post-pandemic education, while transitioning from online learning to face-to-face, this theory can be utilized to examine how educators can effectively integrate their knowledge of technology, pedagogy, and content to address the unique challenges of this transition. By focusing on the development of

1.4. Theoretical Lens—This study is anchored on the theory of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Mishra and Koehler (2006). This theory integrates three core com-

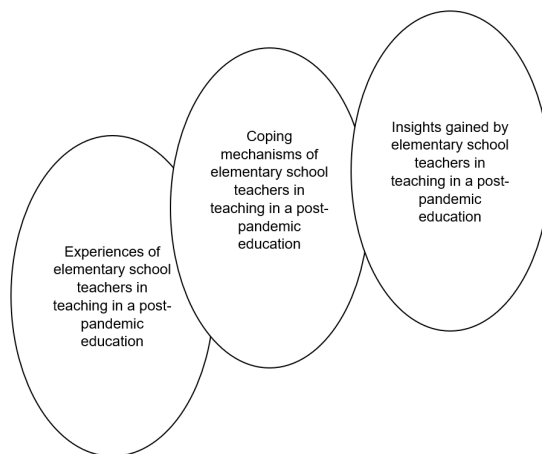


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

this integrated knowledge, teachers can be better prepared to adapt their teaching strategies and utilize appropriate technologies to enhance face-to-face learning experiences. Furthermore, this theory is solidified by Self-Determination Theory developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (1985). This is a motivational theory that focuses on the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theory posits that when these three basic needs are met, individuals are more likely to feel intrinsically motivated and experience greater well-being and growth (Diefendorff Seaton, 2015). Applying the Self-Determination Theory to the research problem of teachers' challenges in post-pandemic education can help identify the factors that foster or hinder teachers' motivation, well-being, and professional growth during the transition from online to face-to-face learning. By understanding the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, educational institutions and policymakers can develop support structures and interventions that address these

psychological needs and empower teachers to effectively navigate the challenges of the transition. Ultimately, Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory further supports the nature of this study. According to this theory, self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to exert control over their behavior, motivation, achievements, and social environment (Bandura, 1995). The theory aims to examine how a person's self-perception and perceived capabilities contribute to successful outcomes. Bandura and Adams (1977) also argued that an individual's self-efficacy can influence their choice of activities, the environments in which they engage, and the duration of their persistence despite obstacles and challenging experiences. In this context, applying Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory will reveal connections between how the study participants view themselves and their abilities within the context of the phenomenon they face, encompassing their challenges, coping strategies, and insights about post-pandemic education.

This study conceptualized the idea of the experiences and the challenges of elementary teachers in post-pandemic education as they transition from distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic to in-person teaching, hybrid learning, or distance learning. The cop-

ing mechanisms encountered by these teachers on the said phenomenon and their corresponding insights will also serve as the basis for others who experience the same situation as most schools and institutions now steer toward a post-pandemic education.

2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the procedures and methodologies employed in the phenomenological research, systematically addressing the study's objectives. It further delineates the research design to be employed, as well as the roles of the researcher in carrying out the study. Additionally, it discusses the research participants, detailing the selection processes and criteria for their inclusion. Lastly, the chapter delves into the data collection, analysis, and other approaches to ensure ethical considerations are upheld throughout the study.

2.1. Philosophical and Qualitative Assumptions of the Study—In research, a study's philosophical and qualitative assumptions play a significant role in guiding the investigation. Four major assumptions underpin the framework of understanding for qualitative research: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological. These assumptions provide a foundation for the research design and inform the researcher's approach to the study. A research paradigm is a set of shared beliefs, values, and practices that inform how researchers view and approach a given inquiry. It serves as a lens through which researchers interpret the world and make sense of the knowledge they seek to create (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). In this research, the paradigm guided the choice of methodology, methods, and techniques, shaping the overall research process and ensuring coherence in the study. *Ontology*. In the context of research, this refers to the study of the nature of reality, existence, and world organization. It addresses questions concerning what exists and the relationships between entities (Crotty, 2003). In this study, ontological assumptions guided the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, influencing her choice of methods and analysis techniques to best represent the reality being studied. *Epistemology*. It is the study of knowledge and its acquisition, focusing on knowledge's nature, sources, and limits. Research concerns the relationship between the researcher and the knowledge they seek to obtain (Moon Blackman, 2017). In this study, epistemological assumptions inform the methods used to collect and analyze data and the criteria for evaluating the validity and reliability of the findings, ensuring that the knowledge produced was grounded in appropriate evidence. *Axiology*. This refers to the study of values and ethics in the research process. It examines the role of the researcher's values, beliefs, and biases in conducting the study and interpreting the findings (Finnis, 1980). *Axiological assumptions* shaped the ethical considerations and the researcher's reflexivity, ensuring that the study adhered to ethical standards and acknowledged the influence of the researcher's values on the research outcomes in relation to this study. *Methodology*. This refers to a research study's overall approach, design, and strategy. It encompasses the methods, techniques, and procedures used to collect and analyze data and the rationale behind a study's selection (Kivunja Kuyini, 2017). With this, the methodology was guided by the research question, the philosophical assumptions, and the research paradigm, ensuring coherence and rigor in this study. *Rhetoric*. In this aspect, research refers to the art of effectively communicating and presenting the findings and arguments of a study. It involves using language, style, and structure to persuade the audience and convey the research outcomes (Gagich Zickel, n.d.). *Rhetoric* was applied in constructing research reports, proposals, and presentations in this research, ensuring the study's results were articulated and accessible to the intended audience.

2.2. Research Design—It is important to define the specific approach set in particular in

a study to tailor the best research design, data collection, and data analysis approach according to its purpose. In this study, the researcher utilized a qualitative research design. According to Hammersley (2023), qualitative research is suitable for studies that characterize verbal rather than statistical analysis. Given that the researcher investigated lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of elementary teachers in post-pandemic education, qualitative design was the most suitable. This means the researcher described and expounded on this phenomenon rather than proving or disproving hypotheses. However, there are specific approaches under qualitative research: ground theory, narrative, case study, phenomenology, or ethnography. As such, the researcher specifically utilized a qualitative-phenomenological research design that investigates the lived experiences of the said participants. The researcher chose this method because the scientific element of phenomenological research is focused on expressing the viewpoint of the people investigated and the meanings they associate with their experiences. Then, the research analyzes these viewpoints via scientific constructs (Aspers, 2009). Furthermore, Creswell (2007) also defines phenomenological study as a research design that describes the common and detailed experiences of individuals (participants) regarding a particular phenomenon. In phenomenology, one of the fundamental principles is to reduce one's perceptions of a given phenomenon down to its universal description. Accordingly, the researcher uncovered a phenomenon centered on the participants' journey in post-pandemic education. The researcher collected data from people with firsthand knowledge of the aforementioned phenomenon to compile extensive data and specific descriptions.

2.3. Research Participants—Qualitative analysis usually necessitates a smaller sample size compared to quantitative analysis. The sample size for qualitative research should be large

enough to gather feedback on most, if not all, perspectives. Achieving data saturation, which occurs when including more participants does not yield additional viewpoints or data, is facilitated by obtaining a comprehensive range of perspectives. Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate for saturation to determine an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Accordingly, Creswell (1998) recommends a sample size of five (5) to 25 for phenomenological studies, while Morse (1994) suggests a minimum of six (6). However, there are no definitive rules for selecting an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Factors such as available time, resources, and study objectives can help determine the optimal sample size for a qualitative study (Patton, 1990). The participants of this study were ten (10) elementary teachers from Don Juan Dela Cruz Central Elementary School, from the District of Daliaon, Davao City. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in service for at least three years; (2) must be elementary teachers; and (3) must have experience in teaching from online classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic but have transitioned to post-pandemic education (in-person teaching, hybrid, or distance learning). The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996).

2.4. Roles of the Researcher—As a facilitator and promoter of unbiased research, a researcher was responsible for ensuring that the research process was conducted fairly, objectively, and free from personal biases or external influences. They created an environment that encouraged the open and honest exploration of ideas and fostered impartiality in the collection and analysis of data. As an expert in qualita-

tive methods, the researcher was well-versed in various qualitative research approaches and techniques, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. They possessed the skills and knowledge required to design, implement, and analyze qualitative research studies, ensuring the research question is adequately addressed and the findings are valid and reliable. As a collector and keeper of data, the researcher was responsible for gathering information from various sources, such as interviews or observations, and ensuring its accurate and secure storage. She adhered to ethical guidelines, maintained participant confidentiality, and ensured that data was organized and accessible for future analysis and interpretation. As a data analyst, the researcher examined the collected information to identify patterns, themes, and insights that address the research question. She employed rigorous qualitative data analysis techniques, such as coding and thematic analysis, to derive meaningful conclusions and contribute to the body of knowledge in her field. Finally, as an organizer and presenter of data, the researcher was tasked with synthesizing and communicating the research findings clearly, concisely, and coherently. They effectively conveyed the study's purpose, methods, results, and implications through written reports, presentations, or other forms of communication, ensuring that the research outcomes are accessible and understandable to the intended audience.

2.5. Research Instrument—It is important to note that qualitative-phenomenological studies have various ways of collecting data. As such, the researcher utilized semi-structured interviews for in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD). According to Boyce and Neal (2006), qualitative studies typically employ semi-structured interviews. This data collection method provides the flexibility of the study data. It generates rich information on an individual's experiences, ideas, and behaviors or desires to discover different, deeper, and com-

plicated topics. This method usually involves a discussion between the researcher and the participant. A flexible procedure for the interview leads this discussion, and it will also include follow-up questions, probes, and remarks. The approach allows the investigator to collect open-ended data, investigate the perspectives, emotions, and opinions of participants towards a certain topic, and delve deeply into personal and, frequently, sensitive matters (Vaughn De-Jonckheere, 2019).

2.6. Data Collection—The study was conducted to determine the teachers' challenges in post-pandemic education. In attaining utmost transparency and clarity in the research study, the researcher described data collection procedures. Detailed descriptions of the process are provided as follows: Securing endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School. The researcher began the data collection process by securing endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School at Rizal Memorial Colleges. This involved submitting a formal letter outlining the research objectives and methodology, along with any supporting documents. This was done for the first two weeks of November 2023. Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon receiving the endorsement, the researcher asked permission from the school's division superintendent. This required a similar formal letter detailing the research proposal and its significance to the educational community. Also, the researcher attached Chapters 1 and 2 together with the research instrument, which explained the study's objectives and the participants' identification. More so, the researcher waited for the response of the SDS before conducting it. This was done for the first week of December 2023. Asking permission from the school heads. Once the permission was granted, the researcher sought approval from the school heads of the selected institutions. This step involved submitting formal request letters to each school head, outlining the research's pur-

pose and the expected data collection timeframe. The researcher asked permission from the first week of January 2024. Obtaining consent from the participants. With the school heads' approval in place, the researcher then obtained consent from the research participants. This was done through informed consent forms that clearly explained the research purpose, participant rights, and confidentiality measures. The researcher obtained consent from the participants on first week of January 2024. Conducting the interview. Upon securing consent from all participants, the researcher scheduled and conducted the interviews using a structured or semi-structured interview guide to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection. The interview took place in the second week of January 2024. Transcribing the responses of the interviewees. After completing the interviews, the researcher transcribed the responses of the interviewees, carefully noting any non-verbal cues and context-specific information. This process involved audio recordings and field notes to capture the full scope of participants' responses. The interviewees' responses were transcribed on the third week of January 2024. Data Coding and Thematic Content Analysis. Finally, the researcher engaged in data coding and thematic content analysis. This entailed systematically organizing the transcribed data into categories, subcategories, and themes that emerged from the interview responses. The researcher drew conclusions and insights that addressed the research objectives by identifying patterns and relationships within the data. This task was done on the third week of January 2024.

2.7. Data Analysis—The researcher employed Creswell's Thematic Analysis in this research. Given that the study entailed multiple interpretations and portrayals of the participant's responses, the researcher utilized thematic analysis to validate the depiction of every aspect and the categorization of observed patterns in the responses. As Alhojailan (2012)

elucidated, thematic analysis ensures precision and complexity. It augments the overall significance of the research and cultivates precise interpretations to assemble pertinent themes. As a qualitative research methodology, thematic analysis is extensively employed across diverse epistemologies and research inquiries. It is a highly versatile method for recognizing, scrutinizing, arranging, delineating, and reporting themes discovered within a data set in research (Herzog et al., 2019; Braun Clarke, 2006). Consequently, the study made use of Creswell's Thematic Analysis, as it necessitated substantial theming and interpretation derived from the collected transcripts. Creswell's Thematic Analysis comprises the subsequent stages: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up (Caulfield, 2020).

2.8. Analytical Framework—In qualitative research, framework analysis is specifically designed to examine qualitative data within applied policy research. This comparative thematic analysis approach utilizes a structured arrangement of inductive and deductive themes (i.e., a framework) to carry out cross-sectional analysis through a blend of data description and abstraction. The primary goal of framework analysis is to pinpoint, characterize, and interpret significant patterns within and across cases and themes related to the phenomenon under investigation. This versatile and robust analytical method has been employed in various data types and applied in multiple ways in practical research. Framework analysis comprises two main elements: the development of an analytical framework and the application of the said framework. The process of framework analysis is broken down into several stages, which include data familiarization, framework identification, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation within a shared dataset (Goldsmith, 2021). The following were the necessary steps taken by the investigator, according to Gold-

smith (2021): Data Familiarization. As the first step in the analysis, data familiarization gave the researcher an initial, purposeful understanding of the data. Through immersion in the data and making notes about key ideas, the researcher began to understand major themes in the data. Items that could be major themes include topics or issues that relate to the research question(s) and recur across the data. The data familiarization step continued until the researcher felt she had arrived at a reasonable initial understanding of the data, including the breadth of variation (Spencer, Ritchie, O'Connor, et al., 2014). Framework Identification. In this stage, the researcher developed a preliminary thematic structure to guide the analysis. While phenomenological research primarily relies on inductive themes emerging from the data, the researcher also drew on existing theories or concepts related to the phenomenon under investigation. This framework served as a guide to organize and interpret the data while staying open to refining or modifying the themes as the analysis progressed. Indexing. Indexing involves assigning codes to data segments corresponding to the framework's identified themes. In this phenomenological study, the researcher carefully examined the transcripts and applied codes to significant statements or experiences that represented the phenomenon's essence. This process

helped to structure the data for further analysis. Charting. During the charting stage, the researcher organized the coded data into thematic charts or matrices, which facilitated comparison and synthesis. In this study, the researcher created separate charts for each theme, listing relevant quotes, experiences, or statements from the participants. This visual representation allowed the researcher to identify patterns and relationships within the data. Mapping. Mapping involves analyzing the thematic charts to identify connections, patterns, and discrepancies within and across themes. The researcher examined the relationships between themes and participants' experiences, considering how these interconnections contribute to the overall understanding of the phenomenon. Mapping also involved refining or reorganizing themes to better represent the essence of the phenomenon. Interpretation. The final stage of the analytical process is interpretation, where the researcher synthesizes and makes sense of the findings. The researcher integrated the themes, patterns, and relationships identified in the previous stages to construct a coherent narrative that captures the essence of the phenomenon. This narrative provided a rich, detailed account of the lived experiences of the participants and the meanings they attribute to the phenomenon under investigation.

2.9. *Trustworthiness of the Study*—Trustworthiness of a study refers to the quality, rigor, and validity of the research findings, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are reliable and accurate. In qualitative research, trustworthiness is often evaluated through four criteria: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Credibility. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), it refers to the extent to which the research findings accurately represent the participants' perspectives and experiences. In other words, it evaluates how believable and authentic

the results are. To establish credibility, the researcher used techniques such as prolonged engagement, member checking (seeking feedback from participants about the findings), triangulation (using multiple sources of data or methods), and peer debriefing (discussing findings with colleagues or experts). Transferability. Transferability is the degree to which the findings of a study can be generalized or applied to other contexts or settings. Unlike quantitative research, where generalizability is a key concern, qualitative research often focuses on the depth of

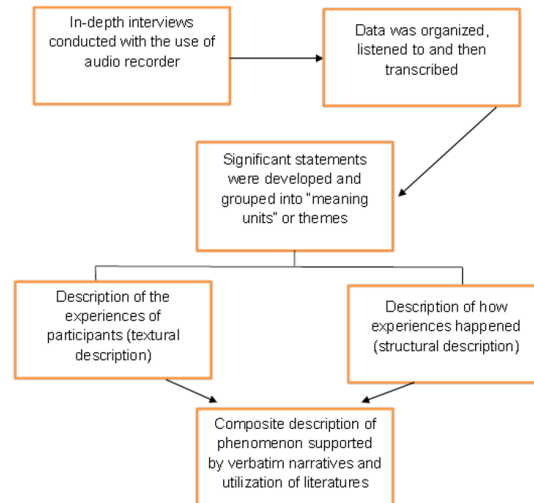


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

understanding within a specific context. To enhance transferability, the researcher provided rich, detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures, allowing readers to determine whether the findings might be relevant to their situations (Tobin Begley, 2004). Confirmability. According to Tobin and Begley (2004), confirmability refers to the objectivity of the research findings, ensuring that the conclusions are based on the participants' experiences and not influenced by the researcher's biases or personal interests. To establish confirmability, the researcher maintained an audit trail (a detailed record of the research process, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation), practiced reflexivity (reflecting on her role and potential biases), and sought external audits (having an independent researcher or expert review the research process and findings). Dependability. It concerns the consistency and stability of the research findings over time and under similar conditions. In other words, it evaluates whether the study could be replicated with the same participants or in a similar context and produce similar results. To enhance dependability, the researcher provided a clear and detailed description of the research design, data collection, and analysis procedures, allowing others to follow and potentially replicate the

study. Additionally, the researcher may conduct a dependability audit, where an independent researcher or expert reviews the research process to assess its consistency and reliability (Moretti et al., 2011).

2.10. *Ethical Considerations*—Ethical considerations, in the simplest terms, refer to the moral principles and guidelines that govern the conduct of research. They ensure that studies are carried out responsibly, with respect for participants, and to generate reliable and valid knowledge. In research, the researcher must adhere to ethical guidelines to protect participants, maintain scientific integrity, and build trust in the research community (Resnik, 2020). Social value. This refers to the potential benefits and contributions that research can make to society, such as solving problems or improving lives. The researcher considered the social value of her study by identifying its potential impact and relevance to the wider community. This helped ensure that resources were invested in research having the potential to yield significant societal benefits. Informed consent. This is the process of obtaining a participant's voluntary agreement to participate in a research study after providing them with sufficient information about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. In this study, the researcher ensured that

participants understood the study and their rights and could make an informed decision about whether to participate, respecting their autonomy and dignity. Vulnerability of research participants refers to their susceptibility to harm, exploitation, or coercion due to factors such as age, cognitive ability, socioeconomic status, or health conditions. The researcher identified and considered the vulnerability of potential participants and took appropriate measures to protect them, such as providing additional safeguards support or modifying research procedures to minimize potential harm. Risks, benefits, and safety. In research, these are involved in evaluating the potential harms and benefits associated with participation in a study and implementing measures to protect participants' well-being. In this study, the researcher carefully assessed and balanced these factors, ensuring that the potential benefits justified the risks and that appropriate safeguards were in place to minimize harm and maximize participants' safety. Privacy and confidentiality in research refer to protecting participants' personal information and assuring their identity will not be disclosed without consent. In this study, the researcher implemented appropriate procedures to safeguard participants' data and maintain confidentiality, such as anonymizing data, securely storing information, and limiting access to authorized personnel only. Justice. This refers to the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of research among different groups in society. In this study, the researcher ensured that her study was inclusive, avoiding exploitation or exclusion of vulnerable populations and that the benefits of the research were accessible to all who might benefit. This promoted equity and fairness in the research process. Transparency in research involves openness and honesty in the planning, conducting, and reporting of research. The researcher provided clear and accurate information about her study, methods, and findings in

this study and was open to scrutiny and feedback. Transparency fostered trust, credibility, and accountability in the research community and among the public. The qualification of a researcher refers to her education, experience, and expertise in a specific field of study, ensuring that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct the research effectively. In this study, the researcher possessed appropriate qualifications, demonstrating her competence to undertake the research, analyze data, and interpret findings. Adequacy of facilities in research refers to the availability and appropriateness of resources, equipment, and infrastructure needed to carry out a study effectively and safely. In this study, the researcher ensured that she had access to suitable facilities to conduct her research, thereby supporting the generation of valid and reliable findings and minimizing potential risks to participants. Community involvement in research refers to the active participation and engagement of community members, stakeholders, or target populations in the research process, from planning to disseminating findings. In this study, the researcher involved the community in one's study to ensure its relevance, acceptability, and potential impact and to promote trust and collaboration between the researcher and the community. Meanwhile, to avoid plagiarism and fabrication, the researcher adhered to academic integrity and honesty principles. This involved properly citing the work of others, presenting original work, and ensuring that data is accurate and authentic. In this study, the researcher used tools such as plagiarism checkers and maintained meticulous records of the research process to ensure that her work was free from plagiarism and that all data and findings were genuine and valid. By upholding these principles, the researcher contributed to the credibility and trustworthiness of the research community.

3. Results and Discussion

This part of the study deals with the research questions and the elementary school teachers' responses based on the said questions. These participants shared their experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights in teaching in a post-pandemic education, specifically in Don Juan Dela Cruz Central Elementary School, Division of Davao City.

3.1. The experiences of elementary school teachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education—As elementary school teachers transition from a pandemic-dominated education to a post-pandemic education, it paved the way for them to experience several things, both positive experiences and demanding challenges, in the field of education. This was proven true through this study's participants by providing the researcher with their responses.

3.1.1. Teachers' readjustment—Transitioning from pure online learning to blended, modular, or face-to-face instruction has made various adjustments for teachers. Some have found it challenging to adapt after being accustomed to online learning for an extended period, while others have readjusted to the school system. Teachers have also had to navigate the unique circumstances of working with new sets of students who have experienced the impact of the pandemic. Additionally, they have had to make personal adjustments, such as dealing with traffic and early mornings, as they return to physical classrooms. The shift has caused changes in work-life balance for some, with the transition from online classes to face-to-face classes bringing different emotions and challenges. Teachers in the post-pandemic education landscape are navigating challenges as they transition back to face-to-face or blended learning. Some struggle to adapt after online teaching, while others adjust to the school system again. Understanding students' unique needs and expectations is a priority. Additionally, teachers face lifestyle adjustments, such as dealing with traffic and early mornings. Balancing work-life dynamics and readjusting to

in-person instruction are also common experiences. Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (2022) believes that in post-pandemic education, teachers need to adjust their instruction and approach to support the students to learn effectively. Raes et al. (2019) also support this demanding challenge, as their study on hybrid learning environments sheds light on the teachers' being obligated to make considerable adjustments to how they teach their classes. They need to be able to offer the same high-quality educational experience to students who attend class in person as well as students who attend class remotely. This also means that there is a need for teachers to adjust to the learning styles of the students. Raes et al. (2019) also underline that the level of technological expertise possessed by teachers is a major factor in determining students' educational experiences. That said, teachers in post-pandemic education face difficulty adjusting to learning methods (Anoda, 2022).

3.1.2. Students' Learning Loss—Elementary school teachers have observed students grappling with learning loss in the post-pandemic education landscape. Due to the distance learning in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, some students now struggle to grasp new concepts and encounter difficulties recalling previously taught topics now that they are back at face-to-face classes or blended learning. The transition from pure online instruction has resulted in their understanding and knowledge retention gaps. The research participants have mentioned several challenges they face in transitioning students from online education to a post-pandemic setting. Many students struggle

to learn the current topics as they struggle to connect them with previously discussed ones and recall important information. Also, English classes pose a specific challenge, as students struggle to construct basic sentences and to read due to their inability to connect words. Another concerning observation is that students in advisory classes cannot answer basic questions, indicating a lack of foundational knowledge. These challenges highlight the need for remedial measures and additional support to address learning gaps in students' education. According to Zhdanov et al. (2022), after the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought school closures, students experienced a loss of knowledge and skills as they were not engaged in academic learning for a long time. This is common for emergencies, and the pandemic was not an exception. It caused a significant disruption in instruction continuity, one of the challenges teachers face in post-pandemic education. UNICEF (2022) also solidified this idea as their study in primary schools in different regions around the globe unveiled those students learned 62

3.1.3. Students' Social and Emotional Unpreparedness—In the post-pandemic education context, elementary school teachers have a notable perception that students appear to be socially and mentally unprepared. They observed that students exhibit fewer social skills, finding it challenging to initiate conversations, maintain eye contact, or actively engage with their peers. Furthermore, there are instances where students seem hesitant to express themselves or participate in class discussions, indicating a lack of confidence or social preparedness. The participants testified that the post-pandemic educational landscape has revealed that students are socially and mentally unprepared. This claim is supported by Jacob (2022), as students decline in educational outcomes due to shortened attention spans and diminished social skills. Teachers have noted students' hesitancy to adapt, reduced attention spans, and fatigue following

the pandemic. Students' social skills have declined, making it challenging to adjust or engage with peers while also showing a decreased interest in learning. Additionally, returning to in-person classes has been overwhelming for many students, impacting their ability to concentrate and engage in academic tasks. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected social and emotional development, with studies from various countries demonstrating the deterioration of children's social skills and attention spans. Particularly affected are girls, those from rural areas, and those already educationally disadvantaged (Hernandez Jabbari, 2022; India Today, 2022; Jacob, 2022).

3.1.4. Internet and Technological Disparities—Elementary school teachers grapple with challenges related to internet connectivity, digital tools, technology, and the digital divide in the post-pandemic education landscape. The transition from distance learning to a hybrid model has highlighted the limitations and disparities in access to reliable internet and essential digital resources. Many students face obstacles due to poor connectivity, impeding their full participation in online classes and access to digital learning materials. The digital divide remains a pressing issue, with some students having access to technology while others lack the necessary devices or internet connection. These hurdles pose significant challenges for teachers as they strive to deliver effective instruction and bridge the gap to ensure equitable access to education for all students in this evolving educational environment. In a post-pandemic education, the research participants faced challenges incorporating technology due to the digital divide and unstable internet connections experienced by students. Also, there were times when they were vulnerable to both technology and internet connectivity. As hybrid or blended learning—as part of post-pandemic education—heavily relies on technology and internet connectivity, it is a widely used approach

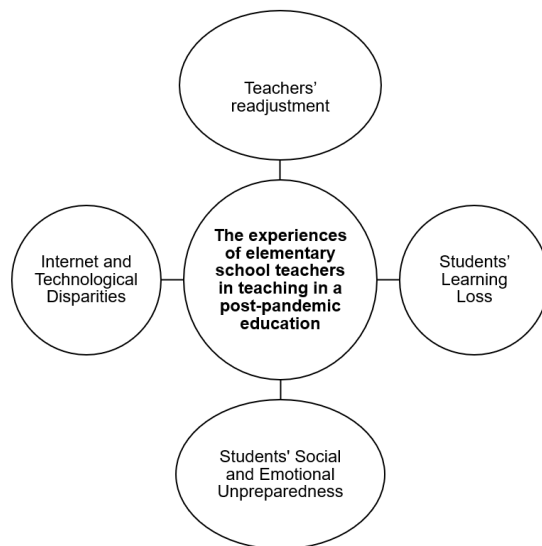


Fig. 3. The experiences of elementary school teachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education

(Heng Sol, 2020). Despite somewhat favorable impressions, such as learning accessibility and expanded learning preferences (Lubis and Dasopang, 2021), most teachers and students encounter difficulties with increased study time and adapting to changing circumstances. Statements mentioned by the research participants

are supported by the research of Erawati et al. (2021), unveiling significant challenges in communication, learning methods, assessment, technology use, network stability, cost of internet data, and online learning in a post-pandemic education.

3.2. *The coping mechanisms of the elementary schoolteachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education*—Elementary school teachers have undeniably had their fair share of both positive and negative experiences in post-pandemic education. These teachers must have felt distressed and drained as they continually do their best to transition to face-to-face, hybrid or blended, pure online, or even modular instruction. Such problems did not hinder the participants as they had their respective mechanisms and strategies to cope with this demanding challenge. The following are the identified themes that emerged from the participants’ narratives.

3.2.1. *Emotional-focused coping*—In the challenging landscape of post-pandemic education, teachers face numerous obstacles that demand effective coping strategies. Alongside the

technical and pedagogical aspects, teachers also navigate the emotional toll of their profession. This includes finding ways to maintain a positive outlook, practicing meditation or prayer, and seeking solace in conversations and shared experiences with fellow educators. In the post-pandemic era, the research participants face numerous challenges in the education system, but they cope through various emotional coping strategies. These strategies encompass maintaining a positive outlook, seeking emotional support, and finding solace in prayer (Pressley, 2021), emphasizing the significance of educators receiving support during this unprecedented time, whether it be academic, technological, or emotional support from school administrators or districts. Furthermore, Soria and Naparan (2022) highlight that teachers’ coping strate-

gies in the new normal are primarily emotion-focused, which includes reorganization, maintaining a positive attitude, and seeking guidance through prayer. Overall, these authors support the notion that elementary school teachers utilize emotional coping strategies to navigate the challenges they face in post-pandemic education.

3.2.2. School and Government's Interference—In the ever-evolving landscape of post-pandemic education, teachers find solace and support by seeking help from their schools and supervisors. Recognizing their immense challenges, teachers have learned to lean on the resources and assistance provided by their educational institutions. Whether through professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, or simply reaching out for guidance, teachers have discovered the power of seeking support in navigating the complex demands of their profession. Meanwhile, the research participants also stated that one way to cope despite the challenges brought by post-pandemic education is to tap into and seek support from their schools and advocate for their schools to seek help from government institutions associated with education. Teachers understand the importance of reaching out to their supervisors, managers, and colleagues for assistance. Accordingly, the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (2022) emphasizes prioritizing teachers' needs and support to empower students effectively. On the other hand, Viner et al. (2022) further highlight the significance of enhancing teacher competencies through new courses and in-service training programs and adapting teaching methods and curricula to ensure successful strategies for learning recovery and long-term improvements. Kibiriege (2023) also underscores the role of information and communication technology (ICT) as a necessary tool in post-pandemic education and emphasizes the need for increased teacher training and support. More so, Hutchinson et al.

(2022), Marshall et al. (2022), and Zamorro et al. (2022) stress that without proper support and consideration of teacher perspectives, there is a risk of teacher shortages and deteriorating mental health. Therefore, institutions must provide manageable workloads, fair instructional approach changes, and teacher support. As Pressley (2021) suggests, teachers should receive support from school administrators and districts through various types of assistance. Through these collaborative efforts, teachers can navigate the challenges of post-pandemic education more effectively.

3.2.3. High-Speed Internet Connectivity—While most schools and institutions transition into hybrid or blended learning, teachers have been compelled to adapt to new teaching modalities and rely heavily on technology to facilitate effective learning experiences. Among the numerous challenges faced, ensuring a high-speed internet connection has emerged as a critical factor in delivering seamless and engaging online instruction. Teachers have recognized the significance of a stable internet connection and sought various measures to cope with this demand. Ultimately, in the realm of post-pandemic education, the research participants confront the challenges of integrating online classes, with a key factor in their coping mechanisms being having access to a high-speed internet connection. Anoda (2022) highlights the importance of teachers ensuring a stable internet connection to effectively adapt to new learning methods and address any problems that may arise. Meanwhile, Lao et al. (2021) emphasize that as post-pandemic education becomes increasingly technology-driven, reliable internet connectivity becomes essential for teachers. They note the need for teachers to position themselves in areas with better internet connectivity and switch to mobile data during power outages, highlighting the hurdles that need urgent attention in the current educational landscape. Thus, the availability of a high-speed internet connection plays a crucial

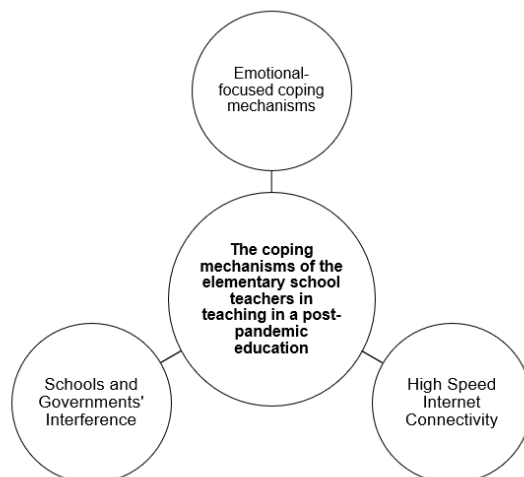


Fig. 4. The Coping Mechanisms of the Elementary School Teachers in Teaching in a Post-pandemic Education

role in elementary school teachers’ ability to cope with the demands of online classes in a post-pandemic education setting.

3.3. *The insights of elementary school teachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education*—This section delves into the valuable insights of elementary school teachers in the context of post-pandemic education. As the world gradually emerges from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers have faced significant shifts and adaptations in their instructional practices, particularly with the transition from pure distance learning to blended learning. These insights offer a glimpse into teachers’ experiences, perspectives, and observations as they navigate the complexities of this new educational landscape. By exploring their valuable perspectives, we gain a deeper understanding of teachers’ opportunities despite their challenges and how they cope with post-pandemic education.

3.3.1. *The Flexibility of Post-pandemic Education*—In the wake of the pandemic, teachers in post-pandemic education have offered detailed and nuanced responses regarding their insights on the transformative nature of education. They perceive the post-pandemic education landscape as one that demands flexibil-

ity and adaptability, where traditional teaching methods merge with innovative approaches to meet the evolving needs of students. These teachers’ unique perspectives shed light on the multifaceted ways in which they embrace change and navigate the challenges of this new educational paradigm. From the participants’ responses, it is evident that as schools gradually reopen, many have adopted hybrid learning models that combine in-person and remote instruction. This approach allows for greater flexibility, as teachers must adapt their lessons to cater to both in-person and virtual learners. They need to develop versatile teaching strategies that can be implemented in different settings, accommodating the needs of students regardless of their physical presence in the classroom (Singh et al., 2021). More so, this type of learning incorporates at least some parts of online course delivery. Learning can also take place both in-person and digitally through the Hyflex paradigm. Students are allowed to participate in person, synchronously online, or asynchronously online for each session and learning activity (Beatty 2019, p. 22; Meydanlioglu

Arikan, 2014). Ultimately, this gives educators flexibility in how they teach their students (Anoda, 2022).

3.3.2. A time for Technological Integration and Digital Literacy—Another theme from teachers' insights is the emphasis on technology integration and digital literacy. Teachers recognize the significance of acquiring and enhancing digital skills to effectively navigate post-pandemic education. They highlight the need for professional development opportunities that focus on integrating educational technologies into their teaching practices. Furthermore, teachers express the importance of providing students with digital literacy skills to participate and succeed in this learning setting. Teachers in post-pandemic education have offered detailed insights into the transformative role of technology in the classroom. They perceive the post-pandemic education landscape as a time when teachers must embrace technological integration and enhance their digital literacy skills to effectively navigate the changing educational environment. The participants' responses showed that technology and digital literacy are essential in shaping a post-pandemic classroom. The elementary school teachers believed these are beneficial to capture their students' attention, expand their teaching strategy, and collaborate with their learners. Conventional classroom teaching methods lack the immediacy of a conducive learning environment, swift evaluations, and high levels of engagement. On the other hand, digital learning tools and technology address these shortcomings effectively. The efficiencies offered by these technologies surpass those of traditional teaching approaches. As smartphones and other wireless devices gain popularity among the public, it is logical for schools and educational institutions to leverage their potential by incorporating technology into

the classroom (Vakaliuk et al., 2021; Cavas, 2009). That said, integrating technology into education offers students an immersive and captivating learning experience, enabling them to maintain a high level of interest in the subject matter while minimizing distractions. Using projectors, computers, and other state-of-the-art technological equipment in the classroom can make studying both fascinating and entertaining for students. Incorporating technology resources, oral presentations, and group participation into classroom tasks makes student learning more dynamic and engaging. Furthermore, participation extends beyond verbal communication, allowing students to participate actively in various ways and leveraging technology to enhance their learning experience (Bilotta, 2021).

3.3.3. An opportunity for stakeholders' collaboration—In the post-pandemic education landscape, collaboration between teachers, students, and parents has taken on paramount importance. Recognizing the interconnected nature of education, fostering a collaborative solid partnership among these stakeholders is crucial for creating a supportive and enriching learning environment. By working together, teachers, students, and parents can ensure effective communication, share valuable insights, and collectively address the challenges that arise in the educational journey. Collaboration allows for a holistic approach to education, where each participant contributes their unique perspectives, experiences, and expertise, ultimately leading to enhanced student engagement, academic success, and overall well-being. The post-pandemic education system can flourish through collaborative efforts, nurturing a sense of shared responsibility and fostering a lifelong love for learning in students (UNESCO, 2020; Varkey Foundation, 2023).

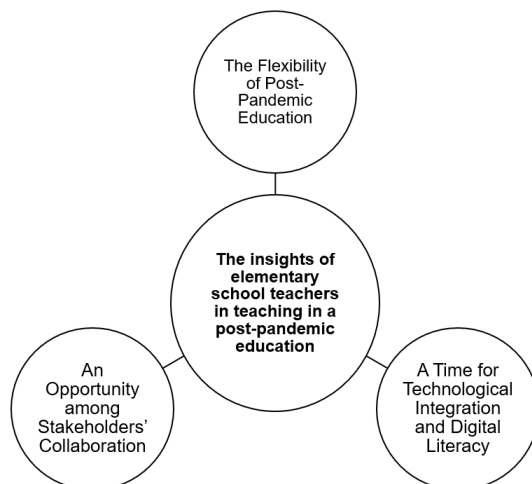


Fig. 5. The insights of elementary school teachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education

4. Implications and Future Directions

In this chapter, the summary of the study is presented; from the summary of the findings, I drew the implications and future directions. My study aimed to discover elementary school teachers’ experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights in teaching post-pandemic education, specifically in Don Juan Dela Cruz Central Elementary School, Davao City. To achieve the research objectives, I utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design using thematic analysis for the data analysis in adherence to Creswell (2007). In the study, I could describe the detailed and common experiences of the research participants who are elementary school teachers in the phenomenon being studied, teaching in a post-pandemic education. I collected data from these people who have firsthand knowledge of the said phenomenon to compile extensive data and specific descriptions related to it.

4.1. Findings—Based on the results of the thematic analysis of the responses from the participants of the study, the following findings and their corresponding themes were revealed: the experiences of elementary school teachers centered on the teachers’ readjustment, students’ learning loss, internet and technological disparities, and students’ social and emotional unpreparedness. The elementary school teachers employed emotional-focused coping mechanisms, school and government interference, and high-speed internet connectivity. Ultimately, the insights drawn from the study’s findings were the flexibility of post-pandemic education, a time for technological integration and digital literacy,

and an opportunity for stakeholders’ collaboration.

4.1.1. Implications—The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. The experiences of elementary school teachers in Don Juan Dela Cruz Central Elementary School teaching in post-pandemic education have revealed several key findings. Firstly, teachers have had to undergo significant readjustment as they transitioned from remote teaching to in-person or hybrid models. This involved adapting teaching methods, managing classroom dynamics, and addressing the challenges arising from disrupted routines and prolonged periods of remote learning. Secondly, teach-

ers observed a noticeable learning loss among students, as the pandemic-induced disruptions impacted their academic progress. This necessitated tailored approaches to address individual learning gaps and promote catch-up strategies. Additionally, internet and technological disparities emerged as a major hurdle, with some students lacking access to reliable internet connections and adequate devices, hindering their participation in online learning. Lastly, teachers noticed a significant increase in students' social and emotional unpreparedness, requiring additional support to address their well-being and foster a positive learning environment. Meanwhile, the coping mechanisms of elementary school teachers in teaching in a post-pandemic education varied widely. Teachers employed emotional-focused coping mechanisms to manage the stress and emotional toll associated with the uncertainties and challenges brought about by the pandemic. They sought colleague support, engaged in self-care activities, and utilized mindfulness techniques to maintain their well-being. However, teachers also faced interference from schools and governments in implementing their teaching strategies. This interference often involved changing guidelines and policies, which created additional stress and confusion. On a positive note, the availability of high-speed internet connectivity emerged as a crucial coping mechanism. It facilitated seamless online teaching and learning experiences, bridging the digital divide and enabling effective communication between teachers and students. Ultimately, the insights gained by these elementary school teachers in teaching a post-pandemic education offer valuable lessons for the future. Teachers recognized the flexibility inherent in post-pandemic education models, enabling them to adapt and personalize instruction to better meet individual student needs. They also acknowledged the importance of technological integration and digital literacy skills, emphasizing the need for comprehensive training

and resources to ensure effective use of technology in the classroom. Moreover, the experience highlighted the significance of collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and education policymakers. This collaboration fostered a collective responsibility and shared decision-making, leading to innovative solutions and improved student outcomes. Overall, the post-pandemic education landscape presents an opportunity for transformative changes and creating a more inclusive and resilient education system.

4.2. Future Directions—Based on the study's findings, the findings must be properly relayed and used by the significant people for whom this research was intended. Department of Education. The Department of Education can benefit from this research by considering the insights and implications when developing policies and guidelines for post-pandemic education. They can use the findings to design comprehensive support programs for teachers, including professional development initiatives and resources to address students' learning gaps and social-emotional needs. Additionally, the department can prioritize the provision of high-speed internet connectivity and devices to ensure equitable access to education for all students. The research can inform decision-making processes and foster collaboration among various educational stakeholders. The school principals or school heads. The findings of this research can have significant implications for school principals or school heads. They can use the insights gained from the experiences of elementary school teachers to inform their decision-making processes and develop strategies for supporting teachers in the post-pandemic education landscape. Understanding teachers' challenges, such as readjustment, learning loss, technological disparities, and students' social and emotional unpreparedness, can help principals implement targeted professional development programs, allocate re-

sources effectively, and create a supportive work environment for teachers. Elementary teachers. By understanding the coping mechanisms employed by their co-teachers, other teachers can also adopt effective strategies to manage the emotional and professional challenges associated with teaching in a post-pandemic education system. They can also leverage insights regarding student learning loss, technological integration, and flexibility to enhance their instructional practices and better meet the diverse needs of their students. Additionally, teachers can use the findings to advocate for necessary support and resources from school administrators and education policymakers. Students. By addressing the learning loss and social and emotional unpreparedness highlighted in the study, schools can implement targeted interventions and support systems to help students catch up academically and foster their overall well-being. Understanding the importance of digital literacy and technological integration, schools can provide students with opportunities to develop these skills, preparing them for future digital demands. Moreover, insights regarding flexibility and collaboration can contribute to creating student-centered learning environments that promote engagement and empowerment. Parents. As important stakeholders, they can utilize the implications of this research to actively support their children's education. Understanding the challenges teachers and students face, parents can collaborate with schools and educators to provide the necessary resources, such as reliable internet connectivity and devices, to bridge the technological disparities. They can also communicate openly with teachers, seek guidance to support their children's social and emotional well-being, and actively participate in their educational journey. Future researchers. Future researchers can build upon this research to delve deeper into specific aspects of post-pandemic education and explore emerging trends and challenges. They can conduct further studies on the long-term impacts of the pandemic on students' academic progress and well-being, evaluate the effectiveness of coping mechanisms employed by teachers, and assess the sustainability and scalability of technological integration in education. The research can serve as a foundation for ongoing inquiry, guiding future researchers in identifying new avenues for improvement and innovation in education.

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