

EXPLORING SCHOOL CULTURE IN THE NEW NORMAL: ACCOUNTS OF TEACHERS

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Abstract. This study explored teachers' experiences relative to the school culture in the new normal. The researcher narrowed down the highlights and lowlights of their experiences, their effectiveness, and the teacher's coping practices on the challenges that come along the way. Specifically, this research aimed to answer the following questions about the teachers' experiences as they explored the culture in the new normal and the coping mechanisms for the challenges encountered. To achieve the objectives of the study, I made use of phenomenology. The 10 participants of this study are from Dr. Jovito S. Francisco Elementary School, Talomo A District, Davao City Division. I used a semi-structured online interview using the coding technique to analyze the data. The study, It was discovered the following themes from the participants these are; Adapting to new safety protocols and Navigating hybrid learning models Despite the negativity surrounding temporary or prolonged school closure, it positively impacted health and safety measures. blended learning offers one such opportunity to provide engaging learning opportunities to students by combining face-to-face medium of instruction with online learning opportunities. Other themes that emerge for the coping mechanisms are, Prioritizing Self-Care and Seeking Professional Development, of which It has been reported that immunity can limit the breakout and spread of infection While one has to remain hopeful, it must be noted that extreme caution needs to be undertaken to provide optimal learning.

KEY WORDS

1. School Culture 2. New Normal 3. Hybrid

1. Introduction

In the wake of the pandemic, schools worldwide have undergone significant transformations, necessitating a reevaluation of school culture and its impact on teachers. As educators adapt to the "new normal," characterized by remote learning, hybrid models, and stringent safety protocols, understanding how these changes influence school culture is paramount. This study aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of teachers within this evolving educational landscape. By delving into teachers' accounts, we seek to uncover insights into the challenges, opportunities, and adaptations that shape school culture in the new normal. Through these narratives, we aim to shed light on the resilience, creativity, and dedication of educators as they navigate unprecedented challenges and contribute to shaping the future of education. As the world grapples with the far-reaching effects of the pandemic, educational systems have been thrust into uncharted territory, prompting a fundamental reexamination of school culture. Amidst global issues such as the rapid shift to online learning, the digital divide,

and concerns over student well-being, teachers in the world face unique challenges shaped by the country's socio-economic landscape. One pressing issue is the accessibility of technology and internet connectivity, particularly in remote and marginalized communities. Another significant concern is the capacity of teachers to adapt to online teaching methodologies, given varying levels of technological proficiency and training. Additionally, the mental health and emotional well-being of students and educators alike have emerged as critical areas of focus, amidst the uncertainties and disruptions caused by the pandemic (Amsalu, 2022). In this context, exploring the experiences and perspectives of teachers becomes essential for understanding how school culture is evolving in response to the new normal (Anbesu, 2019). Brown 2022, As the pandemic continues to reshape the global educational landscape, schools in the world grapple with a myriad of challenges that are intricately intertwined with broader global issues. The rapid transition to online learning has laid bare the digital divide that exists within the country, with many students lacking access to reliable internet connectivity and essential devices, Ababa (2020). This disparity exacerbates existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting students from marginalized communities and rural areas. Furthermore, the shift to remote learning has highlighted disparities in educational quality and resources, with some schools better equipped to facilitate online instruction than others, Benishagul (2022). Within the Philippine context, teachers face additional hurdles as they adapt to the new normal. The sudden pivot to online teaching necessitates not only technological proficiency but also innovative pedagogical approaches to engage students in virtual classrooms effectively, Asio (2020). However, many educators lack the necessary training and support to navigate these new challenges, leading to feelings of frustration and inadequacy. Moreover, the pandemic has underscored the importance of addressing the mental health and emotional well-being of both students and teachers, Abdullah (2019). The stress, isolation, and uncertainty brought about by the pandemic have taken a toll on the mental health of educators, highlighting the need for comprehensive support systems and resources, Alvarez (2020) . In exploring the experiences and perspectives of teachers amidst these challenges, we gain valuable insights into the evolving school culture in the Philippines. Their accounts provide a window into the resilience, resourcefulness, and dedication of educators as they navigate uncharted territory and strive to ensure continuity of learning in the face of adversity, Atkins (2022). By understanding the complexities of the new normal from the perspective of teachers, we can identify opportunities for improvement, advocate for policy changes, and foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all stakeholders, Arenas (2019) . Arias 2019, Amidst the global backdrop of the pandemic, the educational landscape in the Philippines is undergoing profound transformations, echoing broader global issues while also reflecting the country's unique socio-economic context. One prominent global issue is the digital divide, which has been exacerbated by the shift to online learning. In the Philippines, this manifests as unequal access to technology and internet connectivity, particularly among students in remote and underserved areas. The disparity in access to digital resources further widens existing educational inequalities, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities and hindering efforts towards inclusive education, Aunion (2020). Additionally, the rapid transition to online learning has revealed disparities in educational quality and infrastructure within the Philippine education system. While some schools are equipped with the necessary technology and resources to facilitate remote instruction, others struggle to adapt, lacking adequate training, infrastructure, and support

systems for teachers and students alike. This disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions and investments to bridge the gap and ensure equitable access to quality education for all learners, Bowen (2019). Furthermore, the pandemic has brought to the forefront the importance of addressing the mental health and well-being of students and educators. The stress, anxiety, and isolation brought about by the pandemic have taken a toll on the mental health of teachers and students alike. In the Philippines, where mental health resources are limited and stigma surrounding mental illness persists, addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach that prioritizes mental health education, support services, and destigmatization efforts.

In exploring the experiences of teachers amidst these challenges, we gain valuable insights into the evolving school culture in the Philippines, particularly in our city. Their accounts offer a nuanced understanding of the complexities of the new normal in education and highlight the resilience, creativity, and dedication of educators in navigating uncharted territory. By listening to and learning from their experiences, we could identify areas for improvement, advocate for policy changes, and work towards building a more resilient and inclusive education system that meets the needs of all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background or geographic location.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement in their pursuit of supporting the overall learning of the learners. This includes the highlights and challenges of their pursuit, and also the coping practices to overcome challenges.

1.2. Research Questions—This phenomenological study aimed to describe the experiences of school heads with regard to the school culture and its role in the success of a learner's education. Furthermore, this study sought to answer the following questions: The study aims to specifically answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the experiences of teachers as they explore the school culture in the new normal?
- (2) How do teachers cope with the challenges of school culture in the new normal?
- (3) What educational management insights are drawn from the findings of the study?

1.3. Definition of Terms—The highlights of this study were significant to the following: School heads, for this, could be a reference as to how to cope with the teacher's challenges and how to go about addressing them as the school leader. Teachers, given the important role that teachers play in the lives of children, young adults, and wider society, it's imperative that learning really takes place in the lives of the children. This was furthermore significant to the students' performance adversely affecting the student's levels of achievement. Lastly, to fellow educational researchers, this study can be a reference to similar and comparative stud-

ies. Classroom Management- actions teachers take to establish and sustain an environment that fosters students' academic achievement as well as their social, emotional, and moral growth School Culture- The guiding beliefs or ethos, underlying assumptions, expectations, norms, and values that give a school its identity, influence the way a school operates and affect the behavior of principals, teachers, support staff, and learners. Effectiveness- the ability of a school or school system to adequately accomplish its stated educational objectives. Studies of educational effectiveness analyze whether specific resource inputs positively affect outputs.

1.4. *Significant of the Study*—The proposition of this study is that the rapid and unprecedented changes brought about by the pandemic have fundamentally altered the dynamics of school culture, significantly impacting both educators and students. The study aims to investigate how these changes have manifested in the everyday experiences of teachers, particularly in the Philippines, and to understand the strategies they employ to adapt to new safety protocols, hybrid learning models, and the lack of personal interaction.

1.5. *Theoretical Lens*—This study was anchored on Alfie Kohn’s work critiques many aspects of traditional education, namely the use of competition or external factors as motivation. Kohn maintains that societies based on extrinsic motivation always become inefficient over time. He questions the hierarchical structures at work in mainstream education. Positions of authority are “unnaturally scarce,” and such systems assume that all people have a competitive nature. He argues that positive enforcement only encourages students to seek out more positive enforcement, rather than truly learn. Kohn believes that the ideal classroom emphasizes curiosity and cooperation above all, and that the student’s curiosity should determine what is taught. Because of this, he argues that standards should be kept very minimal and is critical of standardized testing. Kohn also argues that a strict curriculum and homework are counterintuitive to student needs. When it comes to classroom management, Kohn believes that most teachers rely too heavily on extrinsic motivation rather than more intrinsic factors. He suggests teachers keep cooperation in mind because when curiosity is nurtured, rewards and punishments aren’t necessary. To implement Kohn’s approaches in the classroom, teachers can allow students to explore the topics that interest them most. Students “should be able to think and write and explore without worrying about how good they are,” he suggests. In general, Kohn believes that there is too much emphasis on achievement rather than the learning process. By examining teachers’ narratives, the study proposes that these adaptations are reshaping the educational landscape, necessitating a reevaluation of traditional practices and highlighting the need for enhanced support systems, professional development, and mental health resources. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving school culture in the new normal, offering insights that can inform policy decisions and educational practices to better support teachers and students in navigating this challenging period. Shown in Figure 1 in the conceptual framework of the study, there three interconnected variables. The experiences of teachers regarding positive changes concerning the educative goals of the learning community, a qualitative inquiry that allows the experiences as they explore the school culture in the new normal and their teachers coping with challenges of school culture in the new normal and their intersection would deliver a good insight from the findings of the study.

2. Methodology

Presented in this chapter were the descriptions of the research design, philosophical assumptions, research participants and sampling, ethical considerations, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis. The three most common qualitative methods were participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method was particularly suited for obtaining a

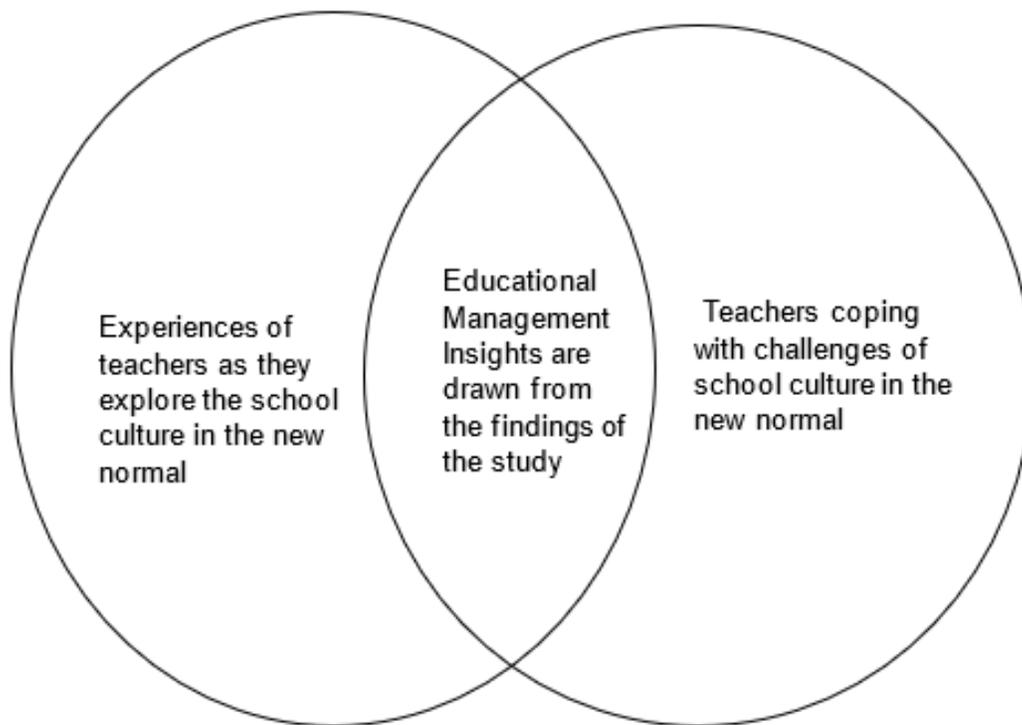


Figure 1. *The Conceptual Framework of the Study*

specific type of data. Participant observation was appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviors in their usual contexts. In-depth interviews (IDI) were optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics were being explored. Focus groups were effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented. Patton (2002) defined phenomenology as an inquiry that asked the question, "What was the structure and essence of the experience of this phenomenon for these people?" The goal of this research worked well with this definition in trying to understand the challenges of the floating teachers. Giorgi (2007) cautioned researchers to be prepared for an investigation that was greater in both depth and breadth than the offered description implied. He suggested that information be viewed as only the tip of the iceberg.

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—The philosophical assumption was a framework used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data collected in a specific field of study. It established the background used for the coming conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions had different types and were elaborated on below. Good research—undertaking started with the selection of the topic, problem, or area of interest, as well as the paradigm. Stanage (2020) traced the 'paradigm' back to its Greek (paradeigma) and Latin origins (paradigm) meaning pattern, model, or example. A paradigm was the patterning of the thinking of a person; it was a principal example among examples, an exemplar, or model to follow according to which design actions were taken. Differently stated, a paradigm was an act of submitting to a view (Stanage 2020). This view was supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2020) who defined a research paradigm as a "basic set of beliefs that guide action", dealing with first principles, 'ultimates', or the researcher's worldview or philosophy. In developing research methodologies, there were three types of philosophical assumptions being used. Epistemological assumptions dealt with subjective evidence that was collected from field studies. Axiological assumptions took into account the biases of the researcher and actively reported them. It was used to establish whether the environment being studied was a product of the behavior that was encountered or if the behavior was a product of the environment (Pring, 2019). Ontological assumptions referred to the nature of the reality of the subject being researched. The latter assumption was best suited to my study as a qualitative researcher, as I believed that these realities were perceived by different individuals and heavily shaped by their experiences. Using phenomenology as a methodology, this proposed study focused on the teachers' opinions, feelings, experiences, and inner thoughts concerning their knowledge, values, and skills acquired. It adopted a realistic ontology in which it followed the physical world, where I, as the researcher, assumed the existence of a world of causes and effects. It was not the ontology of mechanical causes caught in the cause-effect relationships; rather, in this study, I assumed that some realities existed in the world and may affect the way teachers proceeded to the next level. Thus, I believed that as qualitative researchers followed a realistic ontology, they viewed it as a causal reality. Ontology. This part of the research pertained to how the issue related to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2020), reality was subjective and multiple, as seen by the study's participants. The ontological issue addressed the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. Reality was constructed by individuals involved in the research situation. Thus, multiple realists existed, such as the realities of the researcher, those of

individuals being investigated, and those of the reader or audiences interpreting the study. In this study, the realities of the implementation of the online distance learning modality during the pandemic were elaborated on since there were no face-to-face classes. In this study, I relied on the voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes and themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. The answers of the participants to the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct the commonality and discreteness of responses. I made sure that the responses of the participants were carefully coded to ensure the reliability of the result. I upheld the authenticity of the responses and precluded them from making personal biases as the study progressed. Epistemology. This referred to the awareness of how knowledge claims were justified by staying as close to the participants as possible during the study to obtain firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln (1985) as cited by Creswell (2020) stated that on the epistemological assumption, the researcher attempted to lessen the distance from the participants. He suggested that as a researcher he or she collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an “insider.” Based on Davidson (2020) and Jones (2021), I identified phenomenology using thematic analysis as the best means for this type of study. In this regard, individual researchers “held explicit beliefs.” The purpose of this research was to gather important details on the learners’ experiences with regard to tardiness in these new normal face-to-face classes. I assured them that I would establish close interaction with the participants to gain direct information that would shed light on the knowledge behind the inquiry, particularly on learners’ experiences as they went through their teaching activities

during the off-classroom classes.

Axiology refers to the role of values in research. Creswell (2023) averred that the role of values in a study was significant. Axiology suggested that the researcher openly discussed values that shaped the narrative and included their interpretation in conjunction with the interpretation of participants. I upheld the dignity and value of every detail of information obtained from the participants. I understood the personal and value-laden nature of the information gathered from the study. I, therefore, preserved the merit of the participant’s answers and carefully interpreted the answers in light of the participant’s interpretation. Rhetorics. This philosophical assumption stressed that the researcher may write in a literary, informal style using the personal voice and qualitative terms and limited definitions. In the context of the study, I used the first person to explain the experiences and coping mechanisms of the learners and thoroughly discussed their responses during the interview. As a researcher, I agreed with the postmodernism philosophy of Afzal-os-sadat Hossieni (2021). I believed that the aims of education were teaching critical thinking, production of knowledge, development of individual and social identity, and self-creation. In postmodern education, teachers just led students to discover new things. They provided opportunities to discuss different subjects and make creative ways. In this situation, students learned to listen to other voices. They tolerated others’ criticism and tried to think in a critical way. They learned to respect other cultures and nationalities. Also, they emphasized cooperative learning, independent learning, and dialectic, critical, and verbal methods. It was deduced that postmodernism and creativity were embedded in each other and we could find the result of this opinion in postmodern education.

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions—*

The methodology was different from the method. The methodology was a creative and responsive approach to understanding questions and subject matter while the method referred to the exact knowledge and procedure (Cook, 2023). In this study, the experiences and coping mechanisms of the physical education teachers were unleashed from their personal narratives, specifically those learners that came from Don Salvador Lopez Sr. Elementary School, Mati North District, Mati City Division. The researcher's drive in knowing the deeper meaning of the predicaments of the physical education teachers became the basis for doing qualitative research, a means which Kalof and Dietz (2008), as cited from Cook, (2023), considered helpful in looking for "meanings and motivations that underline cultural symbols, personal experiences, and phenomena." By using phenomenology, this need was hoped to be addressed by bringing the stories of the floating teachers in a manner that, as David (2020) wrote, the themes, symbols, and meanings of the experiences would be presented. Phenomeno-

2.3. *Design and Procedure*—This study used a qualitative research design employing a phenomenological approach. According to Hancock, et al. (2019), qualitative research answered questions regarding issues involving problems in society. It raised the question of why people behaved as they did, what were the possible opinions and attitudes formed in a certain situation, how people were affected by society in their ways of action, and how the practices and culture in society developed. Phenomenology, as a philosophy and a method of inquiry, was not limited to an approach to knowing; it was rather an intellectual engagement in interpretations and meaning-making that was used to understand the lived world of human beings at a conscious level. The researcher adopted interviews, observations, and discussions as data

logical research was based on two premises. The first was that experience was a valid, rich, and rewarding source of knowledge. According to Chen (2020), as cited in Morrissey Higgs, (2020), experience was a source of knowledge and shaped one's behavior.

From the definition, human experience was viewed as a cornerstone of knowledge about human phenomena and not as an unreliable source. The second premise of phenomenological research lay in the view that the everyday world was a valuable and productive source of knowledge, and that we could learn much about ourselves and reap key insights into the nature of an event by analyzing how it occurred in our daily lives (Morrissey Higgs, 2020). By doing phenomenology, which concerned the "what" and the "how" (Moustakas, 1995), the researcher projected that the subjective experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of the teachers would be explored and insights would be drawn as the basis for possible future research and policy analysis in relation to this research.

collection strategies within a phenomenological method of inquiry; therefore, phenomenology had both philosophical and methodological stances (Qutoshi, 2018). Phenomenology was an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach was to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2023). Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who had first-hand knowledge of an event, situation, or experience. The interviews attempted to answer two broad questions (Moustakas, 1994): What had you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations had typically influenced your experiences of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013)? Other forms of data such as documents,

observations, and art were also used. The data was then read and reread and culled for phrases and themes that were then grouped to form clusters of meaning (Creswell, 2013). Through this process, the researcher could construct the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experience and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. Some sorts of philosophical assumptions were employed in the development of research methodology. Subjective evidence gathered from field investigations was the subject of epistemological assumptions that dealt with subjective evidence collected from field studies, which had also been used to gain knowledge brought by the accessibility of the place.

Axiological assumptions accounted for the researcher's biases and actively reported them; they were used to determine whether the environment being investigated was a result of the behavior seen. Ontological assumptions re-

ferred to the nature of the reality of the subject that was being researched. The latter assumption was best suited to my study because, as a qualitative researcher, I believed that these realities were perceived by different individuals. I also believed that these realities were heavily shaped by their experiences. The phenomenological design interpreted the experiences or facts by listening to the experiences of the participants and providing the meaning of those experiences (Creswell, 2007). It described the structures of experiences as they presented themselves to consciousness, without recourse to theory, deduction, or epistemology rhetoric assumption from other disciplines. The design examined the phenomena through the subjective eyes of the participants that described the meaning of the experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2023).

2.4. Research Participants—In the selection of the research participants, purposive sampling was applied. Purposive sampling was a sampling technique in which the researcher relied on his or her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study. It was a non-probability sampling method and occurred when elements selected for the sample were chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Researchers often believed that they could obtain a representative sample

by using sound judgment, which would result in saving time and money (Chan, 2020). In this study, suitable samples included teachers who were public school teachers, either male or female, from Don Salvador Lopez Sr. Elementary School, Mati North District, Mati City Division. There were seven informants who were part of the in-depth interview. Moreover, to protect the identity of the participants, coding was used. IDI-FT1 to IDI-FT7 were used for the informants of the in-depth interview.

2.5. Ethical Considerations—Creswell (2007) emphasized that qualitative researchers faced many ethical issues that surfaced during data collection in the field and the analysis and dissemination of qualitative reports. In this study, the researcher dealt with former teachers in public schools. To ensure an authentic response from the participants, the researcher

was responsible for exercising extra caution and maintaining the confidentiality of the study. The rights of the participants were extremely considered. Besides, they were not forced to be part of the study if they refused. In protecting the identity of the participants, Gaddi (2019) suggested that providing and assigning numbers or aliases could protect the anonymity of

the participants. In this study, I used codes to protect the identity of the participants. In addition to this, as the researcher, I explained the purpose and significance of the study. The participants were given the chance to question the researcher about the nature of the study. This certified that the information was clear to the participants. Moreover, the data gathering and the participation of the participants were guided by the Informed Consent Form, which was signed by the chosen participants. Lastly, the results and findings were presented back to the participants for verification. The transcriptions of the recorded interviews were kept private. Furthermore, each of the participants was advised that they had the right to withdraw their information at any time up to the completion of the data collection process and that they could request and be allowed to verify their transcript after the interview was carried out. This provided the participants with the opportunity to amend or remove any information that they felt might identify them. The researcher reserved the right to employ the use of pseudonyms and change names and/or non-significant dates in the interest of protecting the identity of the participant in all subsequent data analysis and reporting. Qualification of the Researcher. The researcher ensured that he or she possessed the needed qualifications to conduct the study. The researcher was completing the academic requirements, passed the comprehensive examination before thesis writing, which was the last requirement to obtain the master's degree, and was qualified to conduct the study physically,

mentally, emotionally, and financially. In addition, the advisee-adviser tandem ensured that the study reached its completion. Adequacy of Facilities. The researcher strived to ensure that the study could be completed successfully at the specified time and that he or she was equipped with the necessary resources. Likewise, the technical committee was helpful in the enhancement of the paper by giving the needed suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the study. Also, the researcher ensured that he or she had enough funds to continue and finish the research. Thus, this study was hoped to be completed on time. Community Involvement. The researcher showed respect to the local traditions, cultures, and views of the respondents in this study. Moreover, this study did not involve any use of deceit at any stage of its implementation, specifically in the recruitment of the participants or methods of data collection. Furthermore, the researcher expressed great pleasure in the wholehearted participation of the interviewees in the conduct of the study. Plagiarism and Fabrication as the researcher. The researcher respected other works by properly citing the author and rewriting what someone else had said in his or her own way. The researcher also always used quotes to indicate that the text had been taken from another paper. Similarly, the researcher assured that honesty was present in working on the manuscript and that no intentional misrepresentation and making up of data and/or results were included, or purposefully putting forward conclusions that were not accurate.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—The role of the researcher in this study was to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants. Thus, it requires asking people to talk about things that may be very personal to them. I was committed to educational institutions to uncover, disseminate, and apply

knowledge. To accomplish this, the researcher assumes the following roles during the investigation: I am a facilitator and Promoter of Unbiased Research. I interviewed the participants and guided them through the process. To avoid the intrusion of bias, the researcher interprets ideas and responses based on exist-

ing literature and related studies, not on the researcher's knowledge, thoughts, and feelings. Expert in qualitative methods. I implemented the qualitative method correctly. To do so, I assessed myself and sought help from the research adviser and other professionals. These help him demonstrate competence in explaining the study without biasing the participants, conducting interviews according to the design, making appropriate field observations, selecting appropriate artifacts, images, and journal portions, and employing Environmental Triangulation and Thematic Content Analysis precisely. I was the data collector and Keeper. I ensured different ways of recording what was said and done during the interview and Focus Group Discussion, such as taking handwritten notes or audio and video recordings. The recordings were transcribed verbatim before data analysis

2.7. Data Collection—Data was collected to reproduce real-life communication scenarios in which the participants made oral or written contributions useful for research purposes and their learning process. Establishing rapport with the participants is an important step that allows them to provide good data. To collect information, I developed protocols or written forms for recording data, such as interviews or observation. Additionally, I anticipated issues that may hinder or contribute to lost information. In this study, I employed the following data-gathering steps. I asked the Schools Division Superintendent for permission to conduct the study in the Don Marcelino district. I secured the superintendent's permission. I sent the superintendent a letter explaining the study's objectives and the participants' identification, with an attached copy of Chapters 1 and 2 and the research instrument. I would only start after I received the Superintendent's approval. I asked for permission from the school heads. After securing approval from the SDS, I sent letters to the principals or

could begin. Records done by the researcher are adequately secured as they contain sensitive information and are relevant to the research. Data analyst. I saw the phenomenon or problem from the participants' perspective by interpreting data, transcribing and checking, reading between the lines, coding, and theming. I ensured that the findings were accurate to the participants and that their voices were heard. I organize and present data, presenting the problem and the related literature and studies that support it. The study's findings were also presented by research question, stating the results for each one using themes to show how the research questions were answered. Moreover, the researcher gives future directions and implications of the study for improving educational policy and practices.

school heads of the identified schools explaining the study to be conducted in their schools. I obtained consent from the participants and considered the participants' consent as informants of the study a priority; thus, I ensured permission from them and their parents/guardians. The participants were adequately oriented about the whole study process and their part as participants. I conducted the interview. I used the interview questionnaire to conduct an in-depth interview. I took participants' profiles, took notes, and recorded conversations using a sound recorder for easy transcription. Likewise, I carefully listened and actively responded during the interviews. I was transcribing the interviewees' responses. The researcher would then precisely transcribe the interviewees' responses by recalling their answers from the sound recorder. Since the participants used their vernacular language, the researcher translated it into English. Data Coding and thematizing. Categorizing and coding the data would come after the transcription process. Themes were extracted, and partici-

pants' data were contrasted and compared. The researcher would then conduct a second round of interviews (FGD) to confirm data requiring more justification and participant feedback. The newly acquired material was carefully analyzed and added to the existing body of knowledge. Then, in order to identify patterns and trends, data were contrasted and compared between the

2.8. *Data Analysis*—In analyzing the qualitative data, I used discourse analysis and thematic analysis. Discourse analysis focused on the language use and the patterning of language used by the informants of the study as reflected in the detailed transcripts of recorded speech (Bueno, 2016). The recorded in-depth interview and focus group discussion were transcribed and analyzed. Part of the analysis was to deter-

2.9. *Framework of Analysis*—The analytical framework for this study was flexible enough to allow the researcher to either gather all of the data and then analyze it or evaluate it while it was being collected. The collected data was then sifted, charted, and categorized in accordance with key topics and themes during the analysis stage. The first step involves thoroughly reading and re-reading all the transcribed interviews. This step was crucial as it allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in the data, ensuring they fully understood the content and context of the participant's responses. By repeatedly engaging with the transcriptions, the researcher began to identify recurring patterns, themes, and nuances that might not be immediately apparent. This process helps in building a comprehensive foundation for further analysis. In the second step, I extracted significant statements from the transcribed interviews. These were specific phrases or sentences that directly pertain to the investigated phenomenon. The goal was to isolate the most relevant and

individuals. To address the validity issues of this design specifically on the method, I asked for help from the experts. My interview guide question tool was checked and validated by the experts. The sampling that I had used for the selection of my participants was following the suggestions of the expert panels.

mine the challenges, coping mechanisms, and leadership behavior of female school leaders. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is a widely used method of analysis in qualitative research. In this study, I looked for patterns and themes that were generated in the transcribed in-depth interview and focus group discussion.

impactful parts of the data that would contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject. By focusing on these key statements, I distilled the essence of the participants' experiences and insights. The third step involves giving meaning to the extracted significant statements. During this process, I categorized pertinent quotes into broader themes. This involves interpreting the statements to understand the underlying meanings and implications. By organizing the data into themes, I began to see how different aspects of the participants' experiences relate to each other and the overall phenomenon being studied. In the fourth step, I repeated steps 1 to 3 for each interview. This iterative process ensures that all interviews were analyzed in the same thorough manner. By treating each interview individually and then comparing the themes across interviews, the researcher identified commonalities and differences in the participants' experiences. This step was essential for building a robust and comprehensive analysis. After completing the initial analysis of all interviews, I compiled an

exhaustive description of everything generated in the previous steps. This comprehensive summary included all significant statements, their meanings, and the themes identified. This step aimed to create a detailed and holistic representation of the data, capturing the full complexity of the participants' experiences. In the sixth step, I summarized the exhaustive description to identify the phenomenon's fundamental structure. This involves distilling the detailed descriptions into a more concise and coherent narrative that highlights the core elements of the participants' experiences. The goal was to clarify the phenomenon's essential features and how they manifest in the participants' lives. The

final step was to ensure the credibility of the data through discussions with experts and independent reviewers. By seeking external validation, the researcher confirmed the accuracy and reliability of their findings. These discussions helped identify any potential biases or gaps in the analysis, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were well-supported by the data. This step was crucial for enhancing the trustworthiness and validity of the research. By following these steps systematically, I conducted a thorough and credible phenomenological analysis that provided deep insights into the phenomenon under study.

2.10. Trustworthiness of the Study—The concepts of validity and reliability are relatively foreign to the field of qualitative research. Instead of focusing on reliability and validity, qualitative researchers substitute data trustworthiness. Trustworthiness consists of the following components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Harts, 2016). Credibility contributes to a belief in the trustworthiness of data by observing the attributes of prolonged engagement. To address the issue of credibility, interviewed as many research participants as possible or up to the point of saturation. Transferability was concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. In positivist work, the concern often lies in demonstrating that the results of the work at hand can be applied to a wider population since the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of

particular environments and individuals. It is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions apply to other situations and populations. Therefore, to ensure transferability, I acknowledged that it was my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual transformation about the fieldwork sites is provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer. Confirmability associates objectivity in science with the use of instruments that were not dependent on human skill and perception. It was, however, difficult to ensure real objectivity since, as even tests and questionnaires are designed by humans, the intrusion of the researcher's biases was inevitable. Here, steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher.

3. Results and Discussions

Presented in this chapter were the results generated from the analysis of the data from the interview. It presented themes that emerge from the analysis. Along with the themes were comprehensive discussions which answer the objectives of the study. Before I begin my discussion, I established the symbols I used as I presented the quotations based on the responses of the participants of the study. In reference to the transcriptions of the conducted interviews, I used pseudonyms to refer

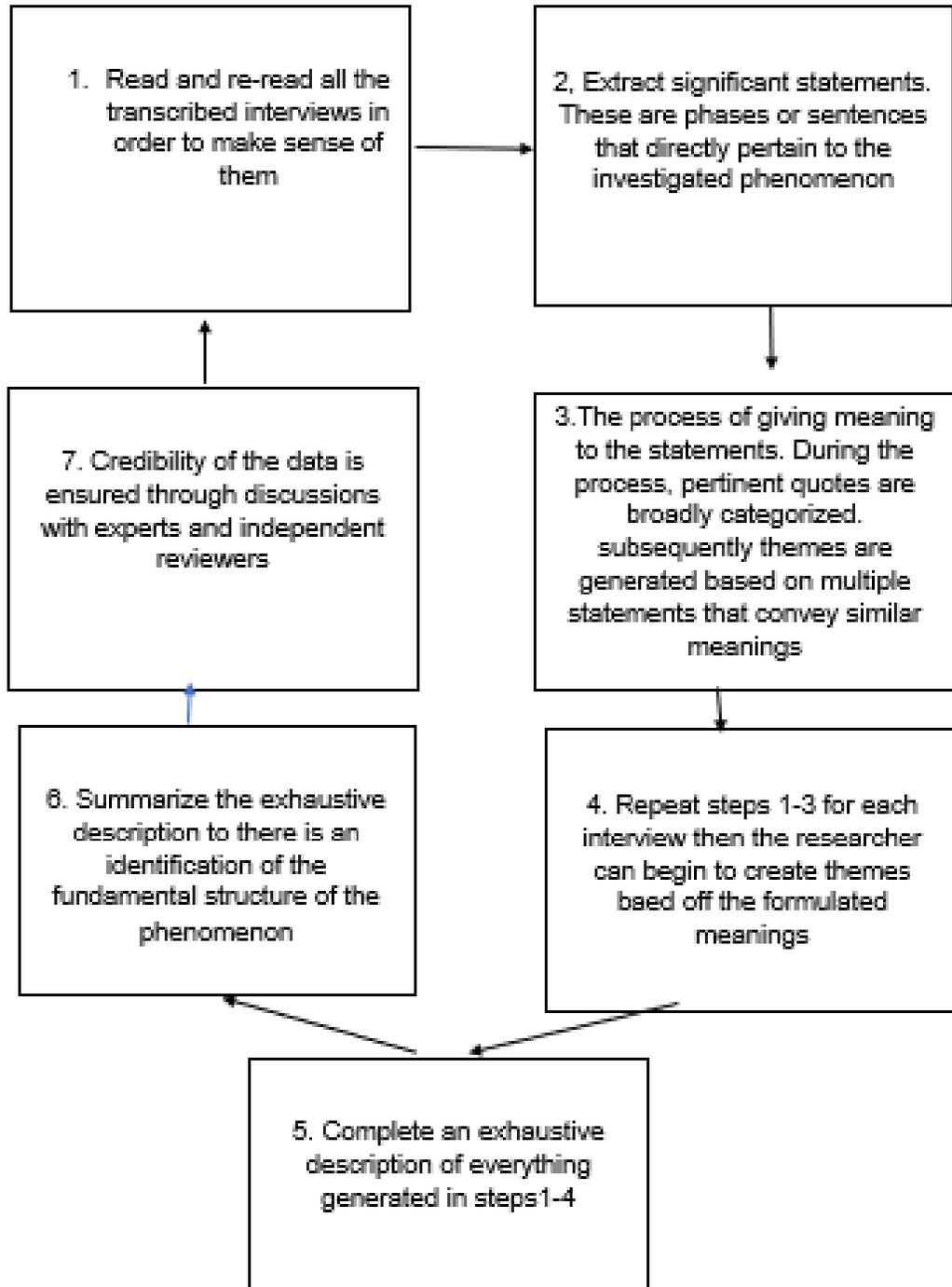


Figure 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

to participants of the research.

3.1. Experiences of Teachers in the Exploration of School Culture in the New Normal—The first objective of the study is to explore the teachers' experiences in exploring school culture in the new normal. The interviews con-

3.1.1. Adapting to New Safety Protocols.—The first theme under the teachers' challenges in exploring school culture is adapting to new safety protocols. This was revealed during the participants' T01, T02, and T03 responses. Schools have implemented new safety protocols to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Teachers may need to adapt to the protocols, which could include wearing masks, maintaining social distance, and changing the way they interact with students. People must continue to dig deep and aggressively minimize transmission, responding to every case, cluster, and evidence of community transmission. But to complement such measures, we must also adapt our cities and surroundings, especially as public health and social interventions – including physical distancing – are relaxed or reapplied based on local epidemiological evidence. The need of the hour is for us all to think innovatively, and to retool our environments to meet the many demands of our new normal. For example, hand hygiene facilities can be installed at the entrance to public or private commercial buildings, and all transport locations. Workplaces can stagger hours, increase ventilation and encourage staff to work from home as much as possible. And we can all take

3.1.2. Navigating Hybrid Learning Models—The second theme under the experiences of teachers in the exploration of School Culture in the new normal is navigating hybrid learning models. Some schools have adopted hybrid learning models, which combine in-person

ducted have revealed several themes. Firstly, the teachers experienced difficulties in adapting hybrid learning models and new safety protocols and had difficulty with technological challenges.

personal measures to minimize the risk of bringing an infection home, which is especially important in multi-generational households. Based on the participants, Proactive efforts to protect vulnerable groups, including internal and returning migrants, are especially needed. Challenges associated with inadequate housing and access to water exacerbate the risk of the disease spreading. So, too, does inadequate community engagement and communication, like wearing masks was very important. Guidance on protecting and engaging vulnerable groups can help local authorities implement high-impact measures that are equity-oriented and can be integrated into emergency planning ahead of the monsoon and flu seasons. Health services, too, should be modified and strengthened, not only to treat crises but also to address the many indirect health impacts the virus is having, quite apart from its adverse effect on the provision of essential health services, which WHO is vigorously supporting Member States to minimize. The uncertainty the pandemic is causing, in addition to the fear of contracting the disease, has increased the prevalence of mental health issues, which may be exacerbated by substance use or difficulties accessing mental health services and psychiatric medicines

and remote learning. Teachers may need to adjust their teaching strategies to ensure that all students are engaged and supported. Participants T01, T02 and T03 revealed that The term “hybrid” emerged as a common descriptor of pandemic-modified schooling configurations.

Yet this umbrella term insufficiently captures the variations among hybrid models, particularly as it pertains to the structure of teacher workdays and related workload demands. Teachers' experience teaching during a pandemic, this brief introduces and explicates three terms specifying structural hybrid models—parallel, alternating, and blended—and their implications for teachers' work. Differentiating among the models facilitates future analysis of the implications of

hybrid schooling for teacher and student experience. Initial analysis indicates teachers experienced one model, blended hybrid, as more challenging than others. This teacher perception highlights the need to discern among the three hybrid models more closely when analyzing schools' responses to the pandemic. Differentiating among hybrid models may prompt future analysis of hybrid schooling for teacher workload and student learning.

3.1.3. Lack of Personal Interaction—Online learning have reduced face-to-face interactions with students and colleagues. This lack of personal connection has made it difficult for teachers to build relationships and maintain a sense of community, impacting their morale and job satisfaction. It was revealed from the participant's narrations, based on the above responses, that, in the transition to online teaching, the lack of personal interaction has emerged as one of the most significant challenges I've encountered. In a traditional classroom setting, the ability to see and respond to students' body language and immediate reactions is invaluable. These non-verbal cues provide instant feedback, allowing me to adjust my teaching on the fly, address confusion, and engage students more effectively. Online, this dynamic is lost; the virtual barrier often obscures students' engagement levels and comprehension. The absence of face-to-face interaction has necessitated a shift in my approach, requiring more proactive measures to ensure students are following along and grasping the material. Despite the efforts to create interactive and supportive online environments, the immediacy and depth of personal connections in a physical classroom are difficult to replicate. This experience has underscored the vital role that personal interaction plays in

teaching and the need for innovative strategies to bridge this gap in online education. A literature review on hybrid and blended learning revealed that hybrid learning increased student engagement, achievement, and a positive view of the learning process for K-12 students. Hybrid learning also incorporates these proven student engagement methods: Personalized learning has been shown to improve students' academic performance in math and reading and can be incorporated more easily in hybrid classrooms. Blended learning has a positive impact on students' communication skills. Benefits of hybrid learning include: Accessibility Hybrid learning offers accessibility to students and teachers, on a local and global level. During the pandemic, a short-staffed school district in Georgia turned to a company that supplied remote teachers who taught lessons virtually, while local students tuned in to live classes on their laptops in school. With hybrid learning, students can access lessons regardless of physical ability or location, and virtual learning is a more cost-effective option for many learners. Figure 3 shows teachers' experiences exploring school culture in the new normal. The three emerging themes observed during the discussions were Adapting to new safety protocols, navigating hybrid learning models, and a lack of personal Interaction.

3.2. Coping Mechanism of Teachers to Address their Challenges of the School Culture in the New Normal—

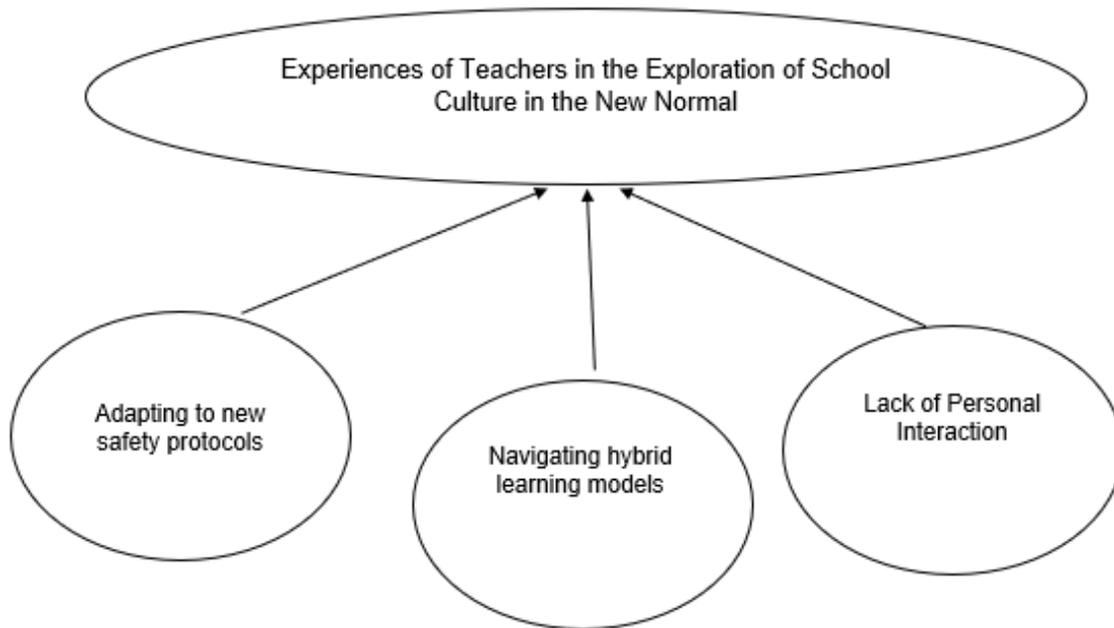


Figure 3 *Experiences of Teachers in the Exploration of School Culture in the New Normal*

Another object of this study is to explore the different coping mechanisms that teachers employ to address the challenges of the school culture in the new normal. From the interviews,

the teachers shared that the coping mechanisms they employed were to prioritize self-care and seek out professional development.

3.2.1. Prioritize self-care—One of the coping mechanisms that teachers employ to address the challenges of the school culture in the new normal is to prioritize self-care. Teachers should prioritize their own self-care and well-being. This can include activities such as exercise, meditation, journaling and spending time with loved ones. They have shared that being healthy is the wealthiest thing that they have ever done during the pandemic. Prioritizing self-care during the pandemic is not just a suggestion; it's a necessity. The unprecedented challenges and uncertainties brought about by the pandemic have underscored the importance of maintaining one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Amidst the disruptions to daily life, it can be tempting to neglect self-care in favor of addressing immediate concerns. However, neglecting self-care can lead to burnout, increased stress, and decreased resilience, ultimately compromising one's ability to cope effectively with

the challenges at hand. By prioritizing self-care, individuals can better manage stress, maintain a sense of balance, and nurture their overall health and well-being. This may involve setting boundaries to protect personal time and space, engaging in activities that promote relaxation and enjoyment, seeking support from friends and loved ones, and practicing mindfulness or meditation to cultivate inner peace. Ultimately, prioritizing self-care is not selfish; it's an act of self-preservation that enables individuals to navigate the uncertainties of the pandemic with greater resilience and strength. Reflecting on the participants responses, that the pandemic is a blessing, I find myself contemplating the unexpected silver linings that emerged amidst the challenges. The forced slowdown and increased time spent at home provided a unique opportunity to rekindle and strengthen family relationships. In the hustle and bustle of pre-pandemic life, quality time with loved ones often took a backseat to work and other commitments.

3.2.2. Seek out Professional Development.—Another coping mechanism that teachers employ to cope with the challenges in the school culture in the new normal is seeking out professional development. The new normal in school culture require teachers to adapt to the new technologies and learning models. Seeking out professional development opportunities can help teachers build their skills and confidence in these areas. The participants shared that because of this hybrid learning model, they are compelled to adopt the technology. During their experiences with the new teaching setup, participants were immensely grateful for their

family's unwavering support. Their understanding and encouragement have been invaluable as they navigate the challenges of adopting new teaching strategies in response to the pandemic. Despite initial apprehensions, they found out embracing the opportunity to learn and explore new technologies, including various gadgets that have become essential tools in the virtual classroom. As a teacher, adapting to this new technological landscape presented its share of struggles, particularly for someone like themselves who may not be as tech-savvy as others. However, they quickly realized that learning is a continuous process, and age should never be a

barrier to acquiring new skills. With each passing day, they embraced the mantra of "learning by doing," gradually gaining confidence in navigating and maneuvering the gadgets for student learning. While the transition to the new normal posed its challenges, it also presented opportunities for personal and professional growth. Through perseverance and determination, they

discovered that stepping out of my comfort zone opened doors to new possibilities and expanded my capabilities as an educator. As I continue to adapt to the ever-evolving educational landscape, They were reminded that with the support of my family and a willingness to embrace change, I am capable of overcoming any obstacle that comes their way.

3.2.3. Establish a Structured Schedule— Establishing a structured schedule during the pandemic is essential for maintaining a sense of normalcy, productivity, and overall well-being. In times of uncertainty and upheaval, having a routine provides a sense of stability and control over one's daily life. A structured schedule helps individuals allocate time effectively, ensuring that essential tasks are completed while also allowing for breaks and leisure activities. This can be particularly important during the pandemic when many are juggling multiple responsibilities, such as remote work, childcare, and household chores. By establishing a structured schedule, individuals can better manage their time, reduce stress, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, a consistent routine can help regulate sleep patterns, improve focus and concentration, and boost overall mental health. While the pandemic has disrupted many aspects of daily life, establishing a structured schedule provides a framework for navigating these challenges with resilience and adaptability. The participants revealed the importance of balancing work and personal time, particularly when working from home; they find that setting clear boundaries is essential for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. By designating specific hours for work-related tasks and personal activities, such as spending time with family, pursuing hobbies, or simply relaxing, they create a framework that allows me to prioritize both

professional responsibilities and personal well-being. These boundaries serve as a reminder to switch off from work at the end of the day and fully engage in leisure activities, fostering a sense of rejuvenation and fulfillment. However, sticking to these boundaries requires discipline and self-awareness, as the lines between work and personal life can easily blur when working remotely. Yet, by consciously adhering to these boundaries, I prevent work from encroaching on personal time and vice versa, ultimately contributing to a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle. Several theories and frameworks support the importance of balancing work and personal time for maintaining overall well-being. One such theory is the Effort-Reward Imbalance Model, which suggests that when there is a significant disparity between the effort expended at work and the rewards received, individuals are at increased risk of experiencing stress, burnout, and negative health outcomes. By setting clear boundaries between work and personal time, individuals can mitigate the effects of this imbalance, ensuring that they allocate sufficient time and energy to both work-related tasks and personal activities, thereby promoting greater satisfaction and well-being. Figure 4 shows how to cope with the challenges of school culture in the new normal. The emerging themes observed during the discussions prioritize self-care, seeking out professional development, and establishing a structured schedule.

3.3. Educational Management Insights drawn from the Findings of the Study—

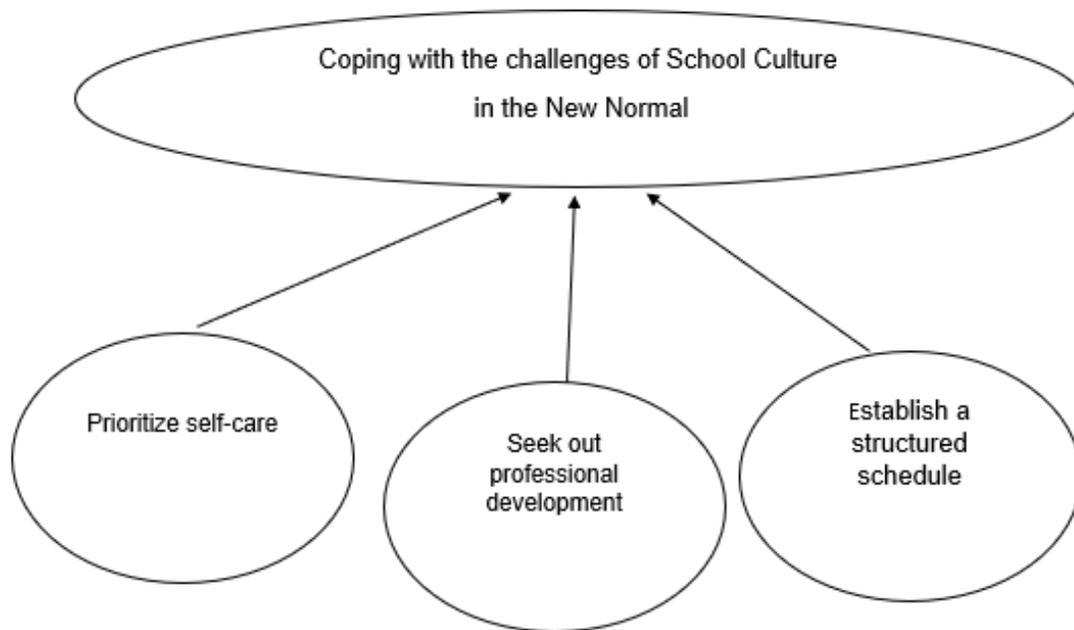


Figure 4 *Coping Mechanism of Teachers to Address their Challenges of the School Culture in the New Normal*

The study of the experiences of teachers as they explore the school culture in the new normal provides several educational insights that can inform future teaching and learning practices. One key theme that emerges is being adaptive and flexible in management practices.

3.3.1. Adaptability and Flexibility in Management Practices—The study highlights the importance of adaptability and flexibility in school management practices. With the shift to the "new normal" due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school leaders had to quickly adapt to remote and hybrid learning environments. This required not only technological upgrades but also a shift in pedagogical strategies and administrative processes. Effective school management in this context involved frequent reassessment of policies, ongoing professional development for teachers, and a responsive approach to the evolving needs of students and staff. Schools that embraced flexible management practices were better able to maintain a positive school culture and support the well-being of their community. When the pandemic hit, the sudden shift to remote learning presented significant challenges, particularly because our school's infrastructure was not fully prepared for such a rapid transition. The immediate need to adapt highlighted gaps in our technological resources and digital proficiency among staff. Recognizing these deficiencies, we quickly mobilized to invest in essential technology, such as laptops, internet access solutions, and educational software. This initial investment was crucial in ensuring that both teachers and students had the necessary tools to engage in online learning effectively. To complement the technological upgrades, we prioritized comprehensive training sessions for our teachers, focusing on the use of various online platforms and digital teaching methods. These training sessions aimed to enhance teachers' confidence and competence in delivering remote instruction. By equipping our educators with the skills to navigate and utilize digital tools, we were able to maintain instructional continuity and uphold educational standards despite the abrupt change. This proactive approach not only mitigated the initial disruption but also fostered a culture of continuous learning and adaptability among our staff, which has become invaluable as we continue to navigate the evolving educational landscape

3.3.2. Enhanced Communication and Collaboration—The findings emphasize the crucial role of enhanced communication and collaboration among all stakeholders—teachers, administrators, students, and parents. The new normal demanded more robust communication channels to ensure that everyone stayed informed and connected despite physical distances. Schools that prioritized open lines of communication, regular virtual meetings, and collaborative platforms found that their school culture remained strong and cohesive. This facilitated a sense of unity and shared purpose, which was essential for navigating the challenges posed by remote learning and ensuring that educational goals continued to be met. When the pandemic forced us into remote learning, we quickly realized that maintaining strong communication was essential. The sudden shift to a virtual environment meant that the usual face-to-face interactions that foster a sense of community were no longer possible. To bridge this gap, we established robust communication channels that included regular virtual meetings. These meetings weren't limited to just the administrative staff; they encompassed teachers, students, and parents. This inclusive approach ensured that everyone was on the same page,

enabling us to address concerns, share updates, and provide support in real-time. By prioritizing open lines of communication, we created a sense of continuity and stability, which was crucial in a time of uncertainty. Theories such as Vygotsky's Social Constructivism highlight the importance of social interaction in cognitive development, positing that learning is inherently a social process. By establishing robust communication channels, schools facilitated the necessary social interactions that contribute to learning, despite the physical distances imposed by remote learning. Regular virtual meetings and the use of collaborative platforms allowed for continuous dialogue and feedback among teachers, administrators, students, and parents, ensuring that everyone remained informed, engaged, and connected. Furthermore, the application of the Distributed Leadership Theory, which advocates for the sharing of leadership roles among various members of the organization, became

more pronounced in this scenario. Schools that prioritized open lines of communication and collaboration effectively distributed leadership responsibilities, empowering teachers and parents to play more active roles in the decision-making process. This collaborative approach fostered a sense of unity and shared purpose, essential for navigating the challenges posed by remote learning. By involving all stakeholders in the conversation, schools were able to create a resilient and adaptive community, ensuring that educational goals continued to be met and that the school culture remained strong and supportive during the transition to remote learning (Leanoon, 2020). Figure 5 shows educational management insights drawn from the study's findings. The emerging themes observed during the discussions include Adaptability and Flexibility in management practice and enhanced communication and collaboration.

4. Implications and Future Directions

Presented in this chapter is the summary of the study. It is followed by implications based on the findings of the study. Future directions in the field of school culture are also discussed here. To meet the research objectives, I employed a qualitative phenomenological method that included topic analysis. To gain a true perspective of people's experiences, Cresswell's (2006) principles were followed, and open-ended interview questions were used. Furthermore, using this interview approach, I urged my participants to share their own definition or meaning of the phenomenon under investigation, which were the narratives of secondary school teachers in a post-pandemic classroom. Reflecting the experiences shared by the teachers in the in-depth interview, three themes were identified. The first one is the Adaptation to new safety protocols. Schools had to

implement stringent measures such as mandatory mask-wearing, social distancing, regular sanitization, and temperature checks to ensure the safety of all individuals on campus. These changes necessitated a shift in daily routines and classroom management strategies. Teachers had to balance the enforcement of these protocols while maintaining an effective learning environment. Additionally, there was a need for continuous communication and education about the importance of these measures to foster compliance and address concerns. The adaptation process also involved logistical challenges, such as modifying classroom layouts and schedules to reduce density. Despite the difficulties, these protocols were crucial in preventing the spread of the virus and safeguarding the health of the school community. The second theme observed during the discussions was navigating hybrid

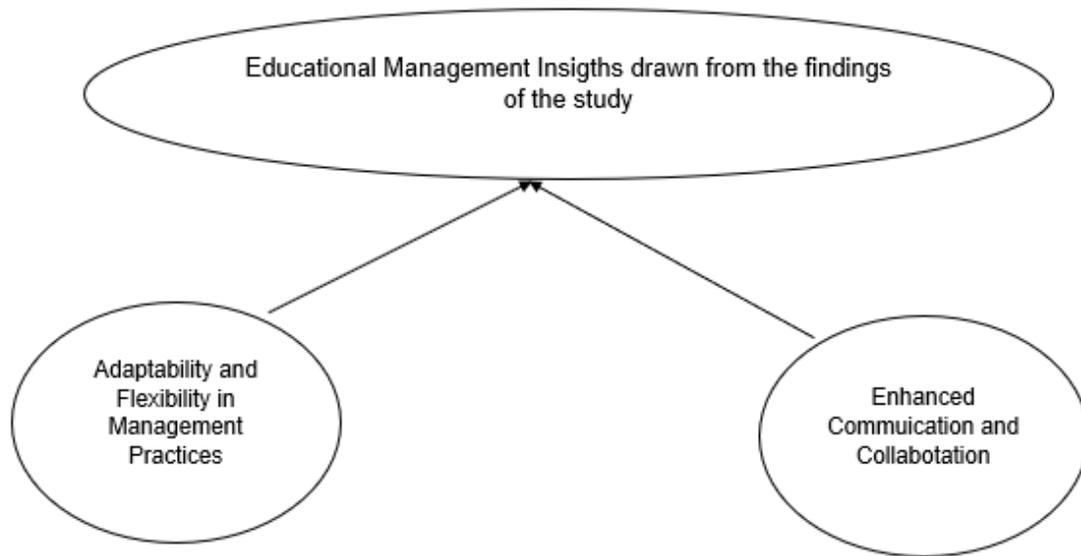


Figure 5. Educational Management Insights drawn from the findings of the study

learning modules. It has demanded a higher level of technological proficiency and adaptability from educators, who must seamlessly integrate digital tools with traditional teaching methods. Students, on the other hand, have had to become more self-disciplined and proactive in managing their learning across different platforms. The third observation was a lack of personal interaction. In traditional classroom settings, personal interaction plays a crucial role in fostering meaningful connections, facilitating learning, and promoting overall well-being. However, with the shift to remote or hybrid learning models necessitated by the pandemic, opportunities for face-to-face interaction have been greatly reduced or eliminated altogether. Three themes have been identified for coping mechanisms for teachers school culture in the new normal. First was prioritized self-care. Prioritizing self-care during the pandemic has become increasingly important as individuals navigate the unprecedented challenges and uncertainties brought about by the global health crisis. The pandemic has disrupted daily routines, increased stress levels, and blurred the boundaries between work and personal life, making it essential for individuals to prioritize their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Self-care involves taking deliberate actions to maintain and improve one's health and well-being, encompassing activities that nurture the body, mind, and soul. Amidst the pandemic, practicing self-care has become a crucial strategy for coping with stress, managing anxiety, and maintaining resilience in the face of adversity. Second was sought out professional development. Professional development involves actively engaging in learning opportunities, training programs, workshops, and conferences that aim to expand one's professional competencies, stay updated on industry trends, and adapt to changing demands. During the pandemic, the landscape of many industries has undergone significant shifts, requiring professionals to adapt to new technologies, remote work setups, and evolving best practices. In such dynamic environments, seeking out professional development becomes essential for staying competitive, relevant, and effective in one's career. Professional development offers numerous benefits, both for individuals and organizations. For individuals, it provides opportunities for skill enhancement, career advancement, and personal growth. By acquiring new knowledge and competencies, professionals can expand their job opportunities, take on new challenges, and increase their earning potential. Additionally, professional development fosters a sense of motivation, confidence, and job satisfaction, as individuals see their efforts translate into tangible results and professional growth. Third was established a structured schedule, a structured schedule allows individuals to allocate time for essential tasks, such as work or studying, as well as for activities that promote relaxation, leisure, and self-care. This balance is essential for preventing burnout and maintaining overall well-being during challenging times. By prioritizing self-care activities such as exercise, meditation, or hobbies, individuals can replenish their energy reserves, reduce stress levels, and enhance their resilience in the face of adversity. Additionally, a structured schedule helps individuals stay organized and focused on their goals and objectives, whether they are related to work, education, or personal development. By breaking down tasks into manageable chunks and allocating specific time slots for each activity, individuals can increase their productivity and efficiency, leading to greater satisfaction and accomplishment. The study's final aim was to gain insights into establishing a unique task during the pandemic that is essential for promoting productivity, balance, and well-being in individuals' lives. By creating a routine that incorporates essential tasks, self-care activities, and opportunities for relaxation and leisure, individuals can navigate the challenges of the pandemic with greater re-

silience and effectiveness, ultimately enhancing their overall quality of life. Seeking out professional development is a proactive and strategic investment in one's career and professional growth. By continuously learning, adapting, and expanding their skills and knowledge, individuals can thrive in today's ever-changing work environment and position themselves for long-term success. In response to these challenges, educators have sought creative ways to foster

personal interaction in virtual settings, such as incorporating interactive activities, breakout sessions, and virtual office hours. However, these efforts can only partially mitigate the loss of in-person interaction. As the pandemic continues to evolve, finding innovative solutions to promote personal connection and support the social and emotional needs of students and educators remains a critical priority in education.

4.1. Findings—The thematic analysis of the study participants' responses unveiled significant insights into the experiences of teachers navigating the school culture in the new normal. Findings highlighted key themes such as adapting to new safety protocols, navigating hybrid learning models, and experiencing a lack of personal interaction. These themes underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by educators as they adjust to the unprecedented changes brought about by the pandemic. Additionally, the study identified coping mechanisms employed by teachers, including priori-

tizing self-care, seeking out professional development opportunities, and establishing a structured schedule. These coping strategies reflect proactive approaches taken by educators to manage the demands of their roles amidst the complexities of the current educational landscape. Overall, these findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics within school cultures and provide valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers seeking to support the well-being and effectiveness of teaching professionals in the new normal.

4.2. Implications—The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. The findings of the study regarding the experiences of teachers in navigating the school culture during the new normal hold significant implications for various stakeholders in the education sector. Understanding the challenges faced by educators in adapting to new safety protocols, navigating hybrid learning models, and coping with the lack of personal interaction sheds light on the complexities of teaching in a post-pandemic environment. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive support

systems and resources to assist teachers in effectively managing these challenges while maintaining their well-being and professional growth. Prioritizing self-care, seeking professional development opportunities, and establishing structured schedules emerge as crucial coping mechanisms for educators in mitigating stress and enhancing resilience amidst the evolving educational landscape. Addressing these implications requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, school administrators, and teacher support networks to ensure that educators are equipped with the necessary tools, training, and support to thrive in the new normal of education.

4.3. Future Directions—

Based on the study's findings, it was essential that the significant people for whom this research was intended relay and use them appropriately. The Department of Education (DepEd) can utilize the study's findings to inform policy development and implementation strategies aimed at supporting teachers in navigating the challenges of the new normal in education. DepEd can prioritize initiatives that promote the adoption of new safety protocols, provide resources and training for navigating hybrid learning models, and address the issue of lack of personal interaction among educators and students. The school principals/school heads. the study's findings offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by teachers and provide guidance on how to support them effectively. School heads can use the findings to develop tailored support systems and initiatives within their schools. This may include implementing training programs to help teachers adapt to new safety protocols, providing resources and guidance on navigating hybrid learning models, and fostering opportunities for meaningful personal interaction among staff members. Other stakeholders. can utilize the insights to inform decision-making and advocacy efforts. can implement strategies to address the identified challenges within their institutions and provide support mechanisms for teachers. Community leaders can support schools and teachers by fostering partnerships and resources within the local community. By engaging with the study's findings, stakeholders can collectively work towards creating a supportive environment for educators and students in the evolving landscape of education. The teachers.. Teachers can use the findings to better understand their common challenges, such as adapting to new safety protocols, navigating hybrid learning models, and coping with the lack of personal interaction. Armed with this knowledge, teachers can proactively seek out support mechanisms and coping strategies to address these challenges effectively. Future researchers serve as a foundation for further exploration and inquiry into the experiences of teachers in the new normal of education. Future researchers can build upon the identified themes and delve deeper into specific aspects of teacher experiences, such as the effectiveness of different coping mechanisms, the impact of specific safety protocols on teaching practices, or the long-term implications of hybrid learning models on student outcomes.

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