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Lived Experiences of Kindergarten Teachers in the Transition of Teaching Delivery from Modular to Full Face to Face Classes

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***Abstract*—** The transition from modular learning to full face-to-face classes posed significant pedagogical, emotional, and organizational challenges for kindergarten teachers, particularly in early childhood settings where learners require close guidance and nurturing environments. This study explored the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers as they navigated this instructional shift in the post-pandemic context, emphasizing their challenges, coping strategies, and the support mechanisms available to them. A qualitative research design was employed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The study was conducted in the Division of Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental, Philippines. Six kindergarten teachers from different elementary schools participated, selected through purposive sampling based on defined inclusion criteria. Data were gathered using a validated semi-structured interview guide focusing on challenges encountered, coping strategies adopted, and administrative support received. Interview transcripts were analyzed through the six phases of thematic analysis to generate meaningful themes. Findings revealed three major thematic areas. First, teachers experienced challenges related to classroom management, limited resources, inadequate institutional support, and the need to modify teaching practices, which affected student adjustment and learning. Second, teachers employed various coping strategies, including peer collaboration, participation in trainings, use of technology, practical classroom demonstrations, and adherence to health and safety protocols. Third, administrative support through orientations and workshops facilitated teachers' adjustment, although participants expressed the need for more sustained training and child-centered support. The study highlights the resilience and adaptability of kindergarten teachers during educational transitions and underscores the importance of strengthened institutional support, continuous professional development, and resource provision to ensure effective teaching and optimal learner outcomes in early childhood education.

***Keywords*—** kindergarten teachers, lived experiences, modular learning, face-to-face classes.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Change in teaching delivery systems, particularly in early childhood education, has been a major challenge and opportunity facing the teachers. Kindergarten teachers have a challenging role of modifying their teaching methods to suit the developmental requirements of young children in response to changing learning conditions.

To shift away from modular learning, which is highly reliant on technology and does not necessitate constant employee-teacher interaction, to classes taught face-to-face, not only the areas of instruction will have to be changed, but also the feelings and interpersonal skills of both a teacher and a student.

This variable shows how difficult educational transitions are, and how teachers need to be resilient and flexible in their effort to establish effective and nurturing learning environments despite the ever-changing environment.

The current literature has discussed the changing nature of education in the context of the global pandemic, aiming at the changes in classroom education changing to online and modular learning platforms (Smith and Johnson, 2021). Studies have indicated that these changes have significantly impacted the teaching methodologies and student interactions (Brown and Green, 2020). The problems are especially high in early childhood education because it requires hands-on and interactive learning experiences (Peters and Davis, 2019). Although the challenges of remote teaching are documented in literature, in the form of challenges in managing the effective learning environment, as well as student motivation (Gray, Johnson, and Thomas, 2020), there is also the acknowledgement of the emerging challenges of returning to face-to-face learning, which necessitates a reconsideration of the teaching approach, as well as classroom management strategies.

Although this has increased literature, there is an apparent gap in the literature on the actual lived

experiences of kindergarten teachers with regards to shifts in modular teaching to full face-to-face teaching, especially within a local context of localized settings, such as the Division of Oroquieta City. Although the full implications of the pandemic on education have been discussed on a broad level (Taylor, Christensen, and Lawrence, 2020; Bennett, Dawson, and Bearsley-Smith, 2021), one has not paid much attention to the impact that this shift had on the day-to-day activities and emotional health of kindergarten teachers in particular socio-cultural contexts (Green, Thomas, and Tappan, 2020; Escobar and Gonzales, 2022). Such a lack restricts the capacity to offer individual assistance and policy direction to educators trying to negotiate these shifts.

The proposed study will examine and report the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in Oroquieta City during the transition of modular to full face-to-face teaching. With the targeted group and context, the study aims at identifying the fundamental issues and experiences the said teachers encounter in the process of this monumental pedagogical transition. Finally, the results will be added to a more contextualized and deeper knowledge that can be applied to educational policy, support, and further transitions of teaching delivery, and acknowledging the flexibility and commitment in kindergarten teachers to adapt to changing educational requirements.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) to explore the experiences of kindergarten teachers in Oroquieta City during the transition from modular to face-to-face classes. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth and nuanced understanding of teachers lived experiences, including the challenges they faced, the coping strategies they employed, and the support they received, while also capturing the emotional and subjective aspects of these experiences. Data were analyzed through the six phases of thematic analysis—familiarization, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme defining and naming, and report writing—using a systematic yet flexible and recursive process that enabled continuous refinement of insights.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in the Division of Oroquieta City, located in Misamis Occidental, Northern Mindanao, Philippines, a key unit of the Department of Education responsible for ensuring access, equity, and quality in basic education, including kindergarten. The Division oversees both public and private schools and places strong emphasis on educational development, innovation, and responsiveness, particularly during challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As a city that values education as a driver of socio-economic growth, Oroquieta City provides a rich and relevant context for examining the experiences of kindergarten teachers transitioning from modular to face-to-face instruction. The Division's commitment to excellence and adaptive educational practices makes it a suitable setting for generating meaningful insights that are not only locally significant but also informative for other educational divisions undergoing similar post-pandemic transitions.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were six kindergarten teachers from six different elementary schools within the Division of Oroquieta City. They were chosen because they directly experienced the transition from modular to face-to-face instruction during the academic year 2022–2023, making them the most appropriate sources of firsthand and relevant data for the phenomenon under investigation. Kindergarten teachers were specifically selected because they were at the frontline of implementing both learning modalities for young learners, requiring significant instructional, emotional, and managerial adjustments during the transition.

The six participants were intentionally selected to allow for in-depth exploration rather than breadth, as qualitative research prioritizes rich, detailed understanding over large sample sizes. This number was deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation, where no new themes emerged, as supported by qualitative research standards. Teachers who did not handle kindergarten classes during the transition period or who did not directly experience both modular and face-to-face teaching were excluded to ensure that all respondents had relevant and comparable experiences. By selecting these participants, the study ensured the collection of focused, credible, and meaningful insights into the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers during the post-modular transition.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide to explore the post-pandemic

transition experiences of kindergarten teachers from modular to full face-to-face instruction. This instrument was chosen because it allowed the collection of in-depth, flexible, and context-rich data directly from teachers who experienced the phenomenon. The interview guide focused on three key areas: challenges encountered during the transition, coping mechanisms employed by teachers, and the support provided by school administrators. It was validated and approved by the thesis panel and the Graduate School Head of Medina College, Ozamis City, ensuring its relevance and alignment with the study objectives. The guide was organized into three sections corresponding to the study dimensions and was designed to elicit detailed and reflective responses. Ethical considerations were integrated through a preamble explaining the study purpose, ensuring confidentiality, and emphasizing voluntary participation, while the concluding portion expressed appreciation and invited additional insights from participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure was conducted systematically in three phases: pre-data collection, data collection, and post-data collection. In the pre-data collection phase, the researcher developed and refined a semi-structured interview guide aligned with the study's objectives, secured approvals from the thesis panel, the graduate school dean, and the Schools Division Superintendent of Oroquieta City, identified eligible kindergarten teacher participants based on set criteria, and obtained their informed consent while arranging interview schedules. The data collection phase involved conducting voluntary, confidential, and recorded semi-structured interviews in a respectful and relaxed manner. In the post-data collection phase, the interviews were carefully transcribed and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis through iterative coding, theme development, and refinement, after which the findings were compiled into a comprehensive report and validated through participant feedback to ensure credibility and accuracy of the interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted with strict adherence to ethical principles to protect the rights, privacy, dignity, and well-being of the participants. Ethical clearance and permission were obtained from the thesis defense panel, the Dean of the Graduate School of Medina College–Ozamiz City, and the Schools Division Superintendent of Oroquieta City. Informed consent was rigorously observed by fully informing participants about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to participate voluntarily or withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through the use of participant codes, secure storage of interview recordings and transcripts accessible only to the researcher, and the proper disposal of all data after the study. The interviews were conducted in a respectful and nonjudgmental environment, with sensitivity to participants' emotional well-being and readiness to provide support if needed. Finally, the researcher committed to reflexivity and integrity by acknowledging potential biases and presenting the findings objectively and truthfully and in accordance with the trust placed by the participants in the research process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this qualitative study followed the thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006), chosen for its flexibility and suitability in capturing the nuanced experiences of kindergarten teachers transitioning from modular to face-to-face classes. The process began with verbatim transcription of interviews and repeated reading of the data to achieve familiarity and generate initial ideas. The researcher then systematically coded meaningful data segments, organized these codes into potential themes, and reviewed them for coherence both at the level of coded extracts and across the entire dataset. Subsequently, themes were refined, clearly defined, and appropriately named to represent the essence of the data. The final phase involved synthesizing the analytic narrative with relevant data excerpts and interpreting the findings in relation to existing literature. Throughout the analysis, the researcher engaged in a recursive and reflexive process, moving back and forth between phases to refine insights, thereby ensuring the credibility, depth, and richness of the findings.

III. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

SOP 1: What are the challenges faced by kindergarten teachers during the transition to full face-to-face classes in the post-pandemic era?

The qualitative analysis of the Problem Statement 1 showed that there were a few major themes related to what kindergarten teachers struggle with upon returning to full face-to-face classes in the post-pandemic environment.

Theme 1: Challenges in Classroom Management

The classroom management aspect proved to be a major challenge among kindergarten teachers in the process of transitioning to full face-to-face classes. The challenges faced by the people in the study have also been clearly stated with one of the respondents indicating, "I had a problem managing the class" (Appendix C, Line Number 2) and the other one stating, I had problems with handling the children (Appendix C, Line Number 8). Moreover, one of the teachers disclosed the challenge of distributing attention in a proper manner to all the students, saying, I had trouble paying attention to all the children (Appendix C, Line Number 11). One more respondent also mentioned how difficult it is to provide overall care to the kids since she said, I had a hard time taking care of all the kids (Appendix C, Line Number 17).

All these experiences indicate that the teachers will require further assistance and training to adapt to the new classroom management dynamics that became prominent during the post-pandemic period. The transition to the remote or blended classes to full face-to-face classes has unavoidably transformed the educational environment and affected the way teachers organize the classroom greatly.

This feeling replicates the results of the study conducted by Reinke et al. (2013) that examined the impacts of classroom management in elementary schools. In their study, classroom management was also found to be a major contributor to the learning environment, as well as job satisfaction and burnout rates of the teachers. On the same note, the present research points to the pressure that educators experience during the transition they struggle to manage with new classroom dynamics.

Also, as a study by MacSuga-Gaye and Simonsen (2018) suggested, effective classroom management necessitates the teacher skills of setting expectations, distributing attention equally in the classroom, and managing classroom disruptions. These competencies are especially significant and difficult to implement in the conditions of the new classroom dynamics, as reported by the participants of the current study, and should therefore be supported further in the teachers.

The critical role of teacher preparation and professional development in classroom management has also been highlighted in the review by Evertson and Weinstein (2006) in a detailed way. They proposed in their review that systematic training of professionals could have significant effects in enhancing the ability of teachers to handle the various and dynamic situations in the classroom. This suggestion is especially applicable in terms of the situation in the ongoing study when teachers are dealing with changes that have never been witnessed before.

Based on these results and other associated material, it can be seen that classroom management problems must be dealt with holistically. The solutions to these challenges include provision of specific professional development opportunities to the teachers, and provision of institutional support to adapt and succeed in the dynamic environment in which the teachers operate. This will not only enhance the experience of the teachers, but it will also maximize the learning environment of the students.

Theme 2: Challenges in Resources

This has seen the resource availability and management become a critical issue among the teachers as they shift to full face to face classes. The respondents demonstrated the level of these difficulties by their answers. One teacher mentioned the struggle by saying, "Struggled with returning to classes because of being without resources" (Appendix C, Line Number 1) and another one said that physical distance with students became an issue, "The distance with students became a problem" (Appendix C, Line Number 13). These words highlight that resource management strategies are required to help the teachers through this change process.

The shortage and the difficulties of physical distance between teachers and students are indicators of more systemic and logistical problems. Such issues could be explained by the sudden transition to remote or hybrid education and then the face-to-face classes, where the distribution of resources and their redistribution had to be done radically and rearranged. The result is also consistent with the study by Vermeulen (2017), which states that the efficacy of teachers can be extremely impacted by the accessibility and appropriateness of instructional materials.

Moreover, another issue associated with physical distance of learners echoes other research findings that have explored the effects of the classroom organization and design on instruction and learning outcomes. An example is a study by Barrett et al. (2015) which has

shown that the physical layout of a classroom and such aspects as being close to students can greatly influence the academic performance. This compares to the sentiments of the teachers involved in the present research, who felt that the physical distance between the students was a challenge.

Besides, the problem of the lack of resources in the classroom has been well-reported in the literature. To illustrate, as Guo et al. (2012) report, the inability to access the required teaching tools may negatively affect the morale of teachers and student performance. On the same note, the research conducted by Ingersoll (2001) established that the low level of resources may also result in an increase in the rate of teacher turnover hence indirectly influencing student learning.

Within the framework of these findings, it is urgent that educational institutions should have sufficient allocation of resources and resource management strategies. This may include this provision of required teaching resources, textbooks, technology, and properly organized classes among others. By tackling the issue of resources, the institutions can assist the teachers in establishing favorable learning conditions, and hence, the transition to face-to-face classes entirely. To sum up, transition to face-to-face education has highlighted the significance of proper and effective management of resources. The emphasis on the areas, guided by the experience of the teachers and facilitated by the existing literature, can be of quite great help to provide a smoother transition and more efficient classroom settings.

Theme 3: Challenges in Institutional Support

The results of the current research revealed that there is a clear absence of institutional assistance, which was often brought to the fore by the teachers. The lack of support provided by the school itself was specially mentioned by one of the participants (Appendix C, Line Number 10). The other teacher emphasized the issue of lack of support at the school administration (Appendix C, Line Number 16). These statements highlight a dismal loophole in the organizational support that is given to teachers, which implies a necessity of intensified involvement of school administrations, especially at the time of significant change as the one in question.

This finding is consistent with the literature in general on the importance of institutional support in education. As a crucial element of successful teaching and classroom management, institutional support can play the crucial role in influencing the motivation of the teacher, his or her well-being, and general job satisfaction (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011). It is even more crucial when there is a major change in the system like the shift to in-person teaching, when the conditions in this scenario can introduce new challenges and stress factors to the teachers (Putwain and von der Embse, 2022).

In addition, the current literature highlights the central role of school administration in this facilitating institutional support. According to a study conducted by Grissom and Loeb (2011), effective leadership in schools would have a great influence in teachers job satisfaction and effectiveness because teachers will be in a conducive environment. Regrettably, the feelings of the teachers mentioned in the present study argue otherwise indicating a gap in this aspect.

Furthermore, lack of administrative assistance may adversely affect the teachers as well as the learning environment. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) argued that in the absence of proper institutional support, teachers may be undermined and demotivated to teach effectively and may affect student results. Therefore, the issue of the under-institutionalization as voiced by the teachers in the current study is an important facet that must be dealt with. In addition, these results suggest the need to learn more about the specific types of support which teachers need, which can be the possibilities of professional development, classroom management, or teaching and learning-facilitating resources.

Theme 4: Challenges in Teaching Practices

The online to full in-person classes have also required teachers in the given study to alter their teaching methods (Appendix C, Line Number 5) and their approach towards the general way of teaching classes (Appendix C, Line Number 14). The connotations of the statements are two-fold: First, they emphasise the influential nature of systemic transitions on the approaches to teaching. Second, they highlight the necessity of having full resources and professional development opportunities to help teachers adapt in the new classroom setting.

The need to change teaching methods and classroom instruction reflects the results of the more general research on education. The changes in remote to in-

person teaching, such as one, may require adjustments in the method of instruction used by teachers to meet the needs of students and the new requirements of the new learning environment (Kim, 2020). The teachers are usually required to adjust their techniques to ensure that they cope with the changing situations and ensure that they offer an effective learning experience to their students.

Available literature also suggests that teachers might need some help in the exposure and adoption of these new instructional strategies. This can be of great importance in terms of training and professional development. Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) explain that professional development can be effective and assist teachers to modify their practice to serve the needs of their students better. This is consistent with the implications of the current study findings which indicate the necessity of support on the change in teaching practices. Besides, Desimone and Pak (2017) state that the successful professional development must be content-based, with active learning, collaboration-enhancing, expert-assisting, and long-lasting. The words used by the teachers in this research can suggest that such types of focused, continuous assistance can be helpful.

Theme 5: Impact on Student Learning

The general theme that strikes through the stories of the kindergarten teachers is how these challenges affect the students that they teach. Some of the teachers stated that they were influential to their students due to the lack of resources (Appendix C, Line Number 3), the growing level of anxiety caused by the new system (Appendix C, Line Number 6), the inability to adapt to the entire face-to-face classes (Appendix C, Line Number 9), the perceived alterations in the quality of provided education (Appendix C, Line Number 12), and the physical fear because of the new arrangement in the classroom (Appendix C, Line Number 18). Not only does this point out the huge responsibility that is taken by teachers in this transitional phase, but it also brings out the high priority of coming up with measures to curtail these problems not only to the benefit of the teachers, but also the learning systems of the students.

The problem of the lack of resources and its influence on learning process of students, which is mentioned by the teachers (Appendix C, Line Number 3), is similar to the results of the previous studies. In an experiment carried out by Sims (2017), the fact that the absence of sufficient teaching resources has a disastrous impact on the learning environment, hinders the learning objectives attainment, and lowers the academic performance of students was noted. This is in line with the issues that the teachers raised in the current study and supports the importance of sufficient provision and proper management of educational facility in order to facilitate an optimal learning environment.

Another observation made by the teachers is the anxiety and the fear of students caused by the introduction of the new system (Appendix C, Line Numbers 6 and 18). This view has been echoed in previous literature, where it has been pointed out that the emotional well-being of students can be seriously affected in case of transition, particularly it can be greatly affected in case of a shift between remote and in-person education (Cohen, 2020). These results confirm the observations of the teachers and reveal the significance of taking some steps to alleviate the anxiety of students undergoing such transitions.

With regards to the issues students have adapting to full in-person classes (see Appendix C, Line Number 9), it has been researched that transition periods in the educational process including the one that occurred in this case is especially difficult among students. Researchers have indicated that a supportive school environment has a major role in alleviating the negative impact of such transitions (Rutter, 2013). This supports the importance of administrative support noted above and the necessity of schools to make sure that the relevant support mechanisms are established.

Lastly, the fact that the quality of education concerns teachers (Appendix C, Line Number 12) is an indication of a wider debate within the education research world. As the COVID-19 pandemic forced a drastic change in the mode of teaching, the discussions on the possible watering down of the quality of education have been raised (OECD, 2020). This highlights the need to have a smooth transition and also to sustain or even improve the quality of education provided.

The numerous issues and consequences identified by the teachers in this paper highlight the significant consequences of the switch between remote and full in-person classes on the teachers and students. The findings have raised serious concerns on the need to approach responses to the issues in a comprehensive, strategic, and empathetic manner so that the educational

experience can be positive, interesting, and useful to all stakeholders concerned.

SOP 2: What coping strategies do kindergarten teachers employ to address the challenges encountered during the transition to full face-to-face classes?

When thematically analyzing problem statement 2, a number of themes were found that pertained to the strategies teachers use to adjust to the transition to full in-person teaching, and the different sources that teachers used to acquire knowledge and insights that helped with the process of adjustment.

Theme 1: Various Sources of Learning

The responses of the teachers were analyzed to reveal the importance of different sources of learning that teachers exploited when they started the process of returning to full-in-person instructional activities. This was particularly realised by the words, I learned from my colleagues (Appendix D, Line Number 3). This is the priceless input of peer learning because teachers tend to exchange experience, resources, and strategies to support the overall development in their profession. It is a well-known fact that peer learning leads to the professional growth, the enhancement of the knowledge, and the promotion of innovation in the educational environment (Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran, 2007).

Furthermore, formal learning resources, including seminars and webinars, were the necessity too, as can be seen in the following statements, I learned through seminars (Appendix D, Line Number 6), and I learned through webinars (Appendix D, Line Number 9). These platforms allow teachers to have exposure to wide number of perspectives, practices and theories that enhance their professional knowledge base. They also serve as the channel to familiarize the educators with the new approaches to pedagogy and the technological devices; thus, increasing their ability to adjust to the changing educational environment (Carpenter and Krutka, 2015).

Superior guidance was also a purported source of learning as the utterance, I learned with my superior (Appendix D, Line Number 12) shows. This observation highlights the role of leadership and mentorship in learning institutions. Administrators or superiors are usually regarded as sources of knowledge, providing directions and assistance in terms of their vast experience and understanding (Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins, 2008).

According to the theories of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), personal experience turned out to be another important source of learning based on the statement, I learned my experience (Appendix D, Line Number 15). This brings into focus the significance of reflective practice whereby the teacher reviews their experiences, learns out of their successes and failures then proceeds to refine their teaching practices. Finally, academic materials, such as books and research, were also used as the statement revealed, I learned books and research (Appendix D, Line Number 18). Use of academic literature helps teachers to interact with research in education; this allows them to have well grounded strategies of guiding their teaching methods (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006).

Overall, the plurality of these sources of learning is an indication that there is complexity in the way that teachers develop professionally. It implies that adjustment to new instructional settings is not a unitary event but is composed of tapping a vast array of learning resources. The experience accrued through colleagues, seminars, webinars, superiors, personal experience, books, and research can bring about a strong base to teachers who are attempting to manoeuvre through the maze of changing teaching environments.

Theme 2: Practical Implementation

The theme of Practical Implementation was also quite prevalent in the answers of teachers, which demonstrated the definite tendency to the choice of the practical way of going through the transition into the new teaching settings. It is worth noting that one of the teachers replied, "I gave examples in the classroom (Appendix D, Line Number 2). The statement makes a point of emphasis on experiential learning during the teaching process wherein the theory and practice merge together to inculcate a more in-depth perception and use of teaching concepts. This strategy is also reminiscent of the philosophy of experiential education formulated by Dewey (1938), which implies that concrete experiences are the foundations of the learning process.

Demonstrations in the classroom as pointed out by the teacher enable the teacher to model teaching methodologies and therefore create an environment where learning can take place through observation. This approach is related to the Social Learning Theory (1977)

offered by Bandura that states that individuals have an opportunity to learn new behaviors through observing the actions of other people and the outcomes of those actions. As educators, teachers tend to model their way thus acting as an example to the students to copy and learn.

The importance of practice in the process of adaptation was also expressed by another teacher who said, we practiced the new system (Appendix D, Line Number 5). Active learning, such as practice, also gives the educators the chance of perfecting their teaching strategies, adapting to the new system and becoming more proficient with time. It coincides with the Deliberate Practice Theory (1993) developed by Ericsson, which assumes that the deliberate and intentional practice in a specific field might result in acquisition of expert performance.

These practical, experience-oriented learning activities are very important in helping the teachers adapt to new teaching conditions. They do not only allow teachers to understand new pedagogical strategies but also internalize them. This process makes their learning more practical and based on practical skills other than a theoretical knowledge of what was taught in the classroom thus facilitating more effective implementation of new strategies in their teaching activities. What is more, the utility of professional development programs which allow teachers to implement what they have learned is also in question as the results of this research show. Workshops, simulative or microteaching activities would provide teachers with an opportunity to practice and rehearse their skills in an environment that is supportive and rich in feedback (Garet et al., 2001).

Overall, the focus on Practical Implementation clarifies the relevance of activities of hands-on, practical learning in assisting teachers in their relocation to new teaching settings. The practical use of theoretical knowledge also enables teachers to comprehend, embrace, and adjust more new pedagogical strategies and approaches better to improve their effectiveness and flexibility in the constantly-changing education environment.

Theme 3: Technological Solutions

The thematic aspect of Technological Solutions significantly appeared in the stories that the teachers told, which points to a strong involvement in the use of technology as one of the components of teaching practice in the transitional period. This was supported by the fact that they made such statements like We gave assignments online (Appendix D, Line Number 8) and I used online resources (Appendix D, Line Number 17), which is how they actively applied technology to their pedagogical process.

The line "We assigned assignments online" (Appendix D, Line Number 8) gives an impression of being aligned with the overall trend of integrating digital technology in the teaching processes. Online assignments are not only responsive to the modern digital literacy abilities of learners but also provide flexibility, instantaneity, and interactivity, which are also part of an enhanced learning process. Moreover, the described method of assigning tasks is perfectly integrated into the construct of blended learning where traditional and digital learning environments are bound together (Staker and Horn, 2012). Blended learning can be used to address the various learning styles to facilitate inclusive learning (Poon, 2013).

In addition, the fact that online resources are utilized, as stated by the other teacher (Appendix D, Line Number 17) highlights the process of complementing traditional teaching materials with online versions. Multimedia content, digital libraries and educational platforms are online resources that can substantially increase the richness and range of the learning content (Hew & Brush, 2007). The same can be used to support self-directed learning, engagement and individualized instruction, thus meeting the needs of the diversified learners (Mishra and Koehler, 2006).

The rise of technology as the main feature of modern classroom as emphasized by the stories of the teachers can be viewed as the evolving trend in education in the digital era. It goes beyond the concept of technology as a means of delivering educational content, and puts it in a significant role in organizing and administration of pedagogical processes. Digital technology offers new ways of interacting with learners, assessing student progress, delivering feedback, and conducting communication and as such would be central in ensuring good and efficient learning experiences (Ertmer and Ottenbreit Leftwich, 2010).

Moreover, educators actively using technology during the process of transition in the educational institutions also conforms to the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra and Koehler,

2009). This framework argues that successful use of technology in teaching is necessitated by the knowledge that is comprised of three main types, content (CK), pedagogy (PK), and technology (TK), in a complex interplay. The use of technological solutions by the teachers implies their continued progress and implementation of TPACK whereby the teachers are creatively incorporating technology into their content and pedagogical knowledge.

Finally, the appearance of Technological Solutions as an important theme of narratives of teachers supports the rising role of technology in the contemporary classrooms. Technology is not an additional tool anymore, it has developed into being a part and parcel of teaching and learning processes. The use of technological solutions by the teachers implies that they are proactive in the process of adjusting to the changing educational environment, thus, making it through the transitional period strong and resourceful.

Theme 4: Health and Safety Measures

Health and Safety Measures emerged as a significant theme within the teachers' narratives, suggesting their concerted focus on maintaining a safe and healthy classroom environment during the transition. Such a focus was exemplified by statements like "I implemented social distancing in class" (Appendix D, Line Number 10) and "I showed the children how to wash their hands" (Appendix D, Line Number 11). These responses accentuate the crucial role teachers undertake in adhering to and enforcing public health guidelines within the educational setting, reinforcing their responsibility not only as educators but also as custodians of student well-being.

The statement "I implemented social distancing in class" (Appendix D, Line Number 10) underscores a conscientious effort on the part of the teacher to align with public health protocols in response to the global pandemic context. Social distancing has been identified by the World Health Organization (2020) as a key strategy to mitigate the spread of airborne infections, including COVID-19.

For teachers, implementing this measure within the classroom setting involves the reconfiguration of physical spaces, reconsideration of classroom routines, and modification of student interactions to ensure safety without impinging upon the instructional process.

In adopting such a strategy, teachers contribute to creating a learning environment that is cognizant of the health risks and responsive to the safety needs of students. This aligns with research asserting that a safe and secure environment is a fundamental prerequisite for effective learning (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). Moreover, the implementation of social distancing strategies requires a considerable degree of communication and negotiation with students, encouraging them to take on shared responsibility for their health and safety (Lee, 2020).

Similarly, the utterance "I showed the children how to wash their hands" (Appendix D, Line Number 11) reflects another significant health measure instilled by teachers. Hand hygiene, especially through effective handwashing, is widely recognized as a fundamental protective strategy against various infectious diseases, including COVID-19 (CDC, 2020). Teachers, in this scenario, serve as role models and health educators, imparting essential health knowledge and skills to their students. Such practical demonstrations of health measures not only ensure adherence to safety protocols but also contribute to the long-term health literacy of students, a vital component of their overall educational development (Nutbeam, 2000).

Beyond the immediate context of classroom instruction, these health and safety measures speak to the wider role of schools in fostering a culture of health and well-being. According to the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model advocated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ASCD, health and education are mutually reinforcing entities, with healthy students proving to be better learners (Lewallen et al., 2015). Teachers, in adhering to and enforcing health and safety measures, are instrumental in cultivating a school environment that promotes both academic and health outcomes.

In conclusion, the explicit emphasis on Health and Safety Measures within the teachers' narratives suggests an integrated approach to education, where learning and health are considered interdependent aspects of the school experience. This underscores the multi-faceted role of teachers in contemporary education, extending beyond academic instruction to encompass the safeguarding of student health and well-being. It further illuminates the resilience and adaptability of teachers as they navigate through transitions, addressing not just

pedagogical challenges but also the health implications within the educational context.

SOP 3: What support do school administrators provide to kindergarten teachers during the transition to full face-to-face classes?

The thematic analysis of Problem Statement 3 gives an idea on the supports that were given to the teachers who had to change to the new system, their effect and recommendations on improving the same.

Theme 1: Educational Support

The Educational Support theme of this research highlights the importance of focused instructional intervention which helps teachers to transition in the educational environment. Some of the things that were asserted in the collected stories included, "We were oriented about the new system" (Appendix E, Line Number 4), and, DepEd gave us workshops (Appendix E, Line Number 13). These stories suggest the inherent worth of systematized learning programs in the development of understanding and application of new systems by teachers.

To take the discussion further on the first utterance, the following line, "We were given an orientation about the new system" (Appendix E, Line Number 4) gives some clue of the preparatory actions the education authorities had taken to ensure that the transition would go smoothly. The fact that a transition to a new system includes the provision of an orientation program is a testament to the fact that to achieve a successful transition to a new system, one should have a strong ground of understanding. This is a realization that is impossible without a preliminary, good and comprehensive perspective of the system mechanisms. The need of such early orientation programs can be argued out with the help of such studies as that of Guskey (2002), who argues that the entry into any system of new instructional paradigm should be preceded by the elaborate orientation process that would familiarize teachers with the underlying assumptions and practices of the system.

Equally, the fact that DepEd gave us workshops (Appendix E, Line Number 13) shows us how important the ability to build capacity amidst teachers is. Workshops are the interactional platforms where teachers have an opportunity to interact with new ideas and test their skills and get real-time feedback. Workshops allow teachers to not only learn new systems theoretically but also to learn the real functioning of these systems. The effectiveness of workshops in developing teacher competencies is also supported by the findings of Joyce and Showers (2002) who note that workshops are effective in new teaching methods acquisition, which leads to better strategies in the classroom by the teachers.

The educational support, including the provision of orientation and workshops, does not only complement the existing knowledge and skills of the teachers but promotes the culture of life-long learning. In a school environment that is constantly changing and developing with new pedagogical theories and instructional technologies and student needs, this culture plays a significant role. The rationale of continuous professional development is supported by the studies carried out by Villegas-Reimers (2003) who claims that a cyclic process of learning and training is the cornerstone of the successful accommodation to new systems by teachers. Overall, the adaptation to a new system is not a one-time process but an ongoing journey that involves the regular process of learning and unlearning, acquisition of new skills, and the constant reaffirmation of new instructional techniques.

Therefore, it is clear that the Educational Support as the theme which is analyzed in the frames of the orientation programs and workshops is of central importance in increasing the knowledge base of teachers, perfecting their instructional abilities and eventually, leading to effective integration into the new educational systems. This theme reasserts the necessity to have systematic, engaging and ongoing professional development programs in order to negotiate the changing educational environment. It also highlights the fact that though transitioning may be a difficult process, proper support systems are able to reduce the challenges, which may support effective and efficient teaching practices.

Theme 2: Impact of Support Given

The most dominant theme of the “Impact of Support clearly displays how various supportive interventions were found to have significant help to the teachers. To emphasize on this, some response of the participants, like this highly assisted us to adapt (Appendix E, Line Number 2) and this helped us handle stress (Appendix E, Line Number 17) is mentioned. The two answers are also evidential to the overriding sentiment of the participants in that the support mechanisms has not only a positive impact, but also a complex one, at least in the

sense that the responses seem to indicate that the support mechanisms influences many different facets of the professional lives of the teachers.

These words of the teachers resonate with the rest of the academic discussion of the effects of support systems on the welfare of teachers, their adaptation, and the work performance in general. Based on these words, it is possible to understand that all support measures that were introduced in the period under investigation supported greatly the capabilities of the teachers to overcome some difficulties, especially, the stress caused by the workplace environment. Without the support mechanisms that were established, the level of this pressure could have been too intense to an extent that it would have interfered with the job satisfaction, emotional well-being, and, eventually, the capacity of teachers to deliver the knowledge efficiently.

The observations made by the researcher are consistent with the available scholarly findings on the topic. As an example, Leithwood (2006) in her seminal study explains the need to have strong support systems among educators. According to Leithwood, these mechanisms have a beneficial effect on the effectiveness of teachers and their negotiation and change management skills. In this study, the researchers reference particular situations that present themselves as teachers attempt to negotiate their professional responsibilities that primarily leads to a high degree of stress due to the dynamic, ambiguous situations they might encounter during their work. Proper support structures are hence a life line in such cases that can alleviate these demanding factors and enable the teachers to remain effective in the view of change.

Besides the efforts made by Leithwood, there are other studies which support the findings made by the researcher. As an illustration, the powerful study by Bryk and Schneider (2002) on relational trust within schools highlights the importance of support system in determining the working environment of the teachers. They state that positive work environment, which is expressed in relational trust among school members affects teacher morale and teacher motivation greatly and, thus, and teacher performance. On the same, Epp and Sullivan (1996) discovered that when teachers feel that they are supported, they are likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment thus providing high levels of job satisfaction and productivity.

In addition, the study by Collie, Shapka, and Perry (2012) expounds on the fact that the effects of the support mechanisms are not restricted to the immediate effect of stress reduction. They argue that these structures are also able to impact on the professional growth and development of teachers making them engage in their jobs and encouraging resilience. These results are insightful, and they contribute to the overall understanding of the responses of the teachers to the present research, which highlighted the alleviating nature of the support measures to stress. In addition, the article by Ingersoll (2001) on teacher turnover brought to the fore the fact that insufficient support structures can result in low job satisfaction and stress levels and ultimately, higher rates of teacher attrition. This also supports the significance of support structures, not only to the short-term well-being and performance of teachers, but also in the long-term consequences like staying in the profession.

Considering these existing literatures and empirical results, it can be seen that the concept of the Impact of Support that was articulated by the teachers in this study is not a standalone occurrence. Instead, it echoes with a rich body of academic literature that highlights the beneficial role of having proper support mechanisms in affecting the well-being of teachers, their process of adjustment and their performance at work in general. It is hence of paramount concern that policymakers, administrators and any stakeholders in the educational sector must be aware and contribute towards the establishment of effective, strong support systems to teachers hence enabling them to perform best and have complete job satisfaction.

Theme 3: Suggested Improvement

The last theme discovered in the study is called Suggested Improvement, which is the summary of the meaningful feedback provided by the teachers themselves and their further demand of the extension of the supportive measures.

They made their suggestions in different manners two of these being: "It would be better they provided us with more training" (Appendix E, Line Number 3) and "More support is required by the children" (Appendix E, Line Number 15). Embedded in such utterances is a strong appeal - of having a consistent, multi faceted, purposeful support systems which can service the needs of both the teachers and that of the students who are under their care.

The expression of the respondent in stating that it would be beneficial to provide them with more training supports the need to have holistic professional development of teachers. This has been supported by other research works that show that sustained training and professional growth improves the competency, self efficacy and finally, the general quality of teaching of a teacher (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Borko, 2004). Avalos (2011) says that an effective professional development does not only prepare the teachers with the competencies needed to cope with the shifting educational environments but also creates a culture of life long learning. This feeling resonates with the words of the respondent and, therefore, the necessity to focus on the improvement of teacher training interventions.

In the second phrase, More support is needed with the children, there is a call to action done towards the creation of more efficient support systems to the students. The importance of support systems aimed at students is a well-known aspect of academic research, as the interdependence of the efficacy of the teacher and the results of the students is observed (Caprara et al., 2006). This is a variety of such measures as academic assistance, i.e. learning materials and guidance programmes, psychological assistance, i.e. counselling service. Such accommodations play a critical role in ensuring the establishment of an environment that will allow students to learn and develop optimally (Suldo et al., 2014).

In addition to personal remarks, the general appeal to sustained, multi-dimensional and tailored assistance that is observable in these reactions reflects the scholarly opinion of the topic. Interestingly, in a recent study, Bryk et al. (2010) highlighted the necessity of continuous multi-faceted assistance of teachers, especially in the time of change. They assume that sustained and multiple support systems have a significant impact on the professional development of teachers and their ability to cope with change. This incorporates tangible resources, i.e. more funding or materials, and intangible resources, i.e. leadership, collaboration and positive school climate. All these aspects have a resilience effect on teachers, which helps them to overcome difficult situations more easily. More studies by Desimone (2009) give further confirmation to this idea with a detailed model of successful professional development comprising of content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. This model also agrees with the recommendations of the teachers provided in the study, that more training is necessary, but that the multi-dimensional approach to professional support is also essential.

To sum up, the theme of the Suggested Improvement as stated by the teachers in the current study rings deafeningly close to a plethora of scholarly literature. Their demand of an unremitting, multi-dimensional, and focused assistance reiterates the agreement among educational researchers and scholars regarding its urgent necessity in the educational ecosystem.

The statistics indicate that the current support systems would be improved by incorporating them in ways which are more responsive to the needs of teachers, including the needs of the students whom they serve which would create more constructive and rewarding learning situations. Therefore, these pieces of information should be considered by policymakers and other stakeholders to influence the educational practices and policies in a more useful, teacher-student oriented way.

SOP 4: What structural representation can be made out from the central themes revealed in the study?

Figure 1 provides an in-depth analysis of the main themes which arose during the study conducted by the researcher on the issue of transition to full face-to-face classes in kindergarten classroom.

The figure is separated into three major parts, and each brings illumination on the various facets that are relevant to this transition. The first part is the various issues encountered by kindergarten teachers which are grouped by the Classroom Management, Resources, Institutional Support, Teaching Practices, and Impact on Student Learning.

The second section describes the coping interventions that the teachers have used, which were identified and defined as Various Sources of Learning, Practical Implementation, Technological Solutions, and Health and Safety Measures.

The last section is a presentation of the kind of support that school administrators offer through this transition which is broken down into Educational Support, Impact of Support Given, and Suggested Improvement. The given structure is a clear and informative chart of the main results of the research conducted by the author.

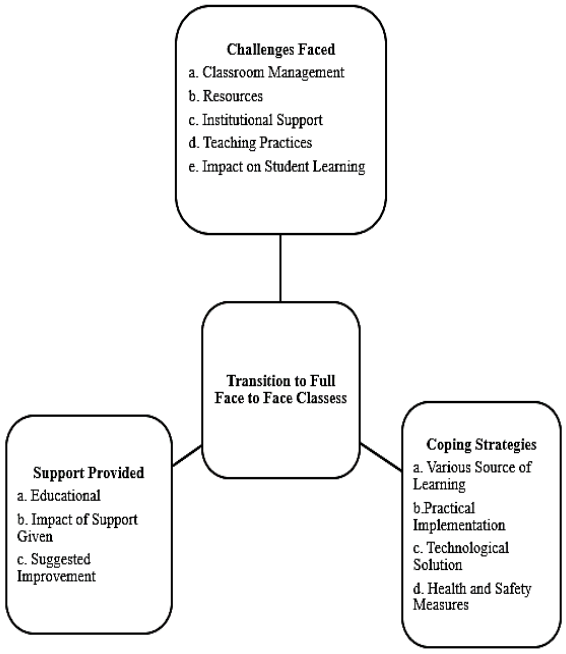

Figure 1. *Structural Representation of the Themes Revealed*

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION

Summary of Findings

The first part of the study tackled the challenges faced by kindergarten teachers (SOP 1). The findings indicate that teachers grapple with issues related to classroom management, resource allocation, institutional support, teaching practices, and the impact of these factors on student learning. Teachers reported difficulty in managing their classes and giving attention to all children. The lack of resources and institutional support also posted significant challenges. Moreover, they had to modify their teaching practices, which brought about changes in the quality of education and affected students' adjustment to the new system.

The second segment of the study focused on the coping strategies employed by kindergarten teachers (SOP 2). Teachers demonstrated a willingness to learn from various sources, including colleagues, seminars, webinars, superiors, personal experiences, and scholarly resources. Additionally, practical implementation, technological solutions, and adherence to health and safety measures were also used as coping mechanisms during the transition. Teachers found it effective to demonstrate examples in class and practice the new system. The use of online resources for assignments and the implementation of social distancing measures in class was also highlighted.

Lastly, the study examined the support provided by school administrators during the transition (SOP 3). The data revealed that teachers received educational support such as orientation sessions and workshops. This support positively impacted their adjustment process and stress management. However, the teachers suggested improvements such as the provision of more training and support for the children, indicating a desire for continued and enhanced assistance during transitions.

Conclusions

This paper illuminates the complexity of the shift between virtual to the full face-to-face classes of kindergarten facilities in the post-pandemic period. It de-packages the complex issues and coping techniques and ends by giving a major insight into the assistance required by school administrators to facilitate this transition. The research implications are far-reaching in depth. It highlights the importance of more institutional support systems that are sensitive to unique needs of kindergarten teachers when teaching methods are changing radically. Moreover, it highlights the importance of holistic resources, professional growth, and technology to support the flexibility and the capacity of teachers to withstand change in an ever-changing educational environment. And finally, it puts emphasis on the need to keep the focus on the welfare of students and their learning outcomes in the face of such systemic transitions. The results of this research therefore can be a good source of reference in terms of policies formulation and intervention strategies to improve the quality of early childhood education in the event of future disruptions.

Recommendations

- ***Kindergarten teachers:*** It is suggested that the teachers continue developing their knowledge of the mentioned challenges and coping mechanisms to be more ready to experience similar transitions in the future. The resilience and capacity to be flexible in response to disruptions to their teaching environment may be facilitated with the continued professional development and sharing of experiences with peers.
- ***School administrators and policymakers:*** Due to the gaps in institutional support identified, it is important that the administrators and policymakers

should make proactive actions towards in the direction of having comprehensive and context specific systems of support. Periodic policy reviews and updates should be made according to teacher feedback in order to have a more successful transition, better teacher satisfaction and better student learning.

- ***Scholars, researchers, and academicians:*** Due to the great insights brought about by this work, scholars in the education sector are advised to further research on the effect of the pandemic on education transitions. Future research may address other aspects such as the psychological and emotional impact of such transitions on teachers and students.
- ***Parents and guardians:*** The research indicates the need to have parents understanding and support during the transitional stages. It is also advisable that parents and guardians should have open channels of communication with teachers and one must be aware of any change that occurs in the teaching environment and work closely with the teachers to help their child learn effectively.
- ***Kindergarten pupils:*** While the recommendations cannot be adopted directly by pupils, the study points at the need of all stakeholders of the school including teachers, administrators, parents, and researchers to consider the learning experience of the students and their general well-being when making decisions and taking actions. The implications of the study on the pupils provide an appeal to the stakeholders in order to merit seamless transition, continuous academic growth and quality education of these young learners.

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