

UNVEILING STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES ON BLENDED LEARNING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Hannah Beth Paler Dayag¹, Roel Prochina Villocino²

¹ Teacher I, Department of Education, Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School, Tagum City, Philippines

² Dean of Graduate School, Graduate School, Assumption College of Nabunturan, Davao de Oro, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study delved into the lived experiences of the learners on the blended learning modality. This qualitative phenomenological research aimed to unveil the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of the grade 5 students enrolled in Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School. Data and information were gathered using in-depth interviews. The study's participants were the 10 selected students enrolled in the academic year 2023-2024. The findings showed that the challenges encountered by the students include not asking questions directly, cheating anytime, having no personal gadgets, having internet connectivity problems, and being distracted at home. The mechanisms utilized by students to overcome these challenges include asking for help from classmates, teachers, and parents, creating quiet workspace, time management, and taking regular breaks. The findings also revealed that finding out more about how students perceive the integration of technology and face-to-face interactions in blended learning settings could provide insight into their engagement and motivation. This paper concluded with the recommendation that the findings from the students' lived experiences would assist school administrators and curriculum designers in determining the improvement to enhance teaching methods and provide frameworks that cater to the various demands of students in blended learning contexts. Further, it was suggested that the admissions procedure be strengthened to enhance learning and that teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders work together more closely to find solutions for current and potential issues relating to the phenomenon under study.

Keyword: *blended learning, challenges, coping mechanisms, insights, phenomenological research*

1. INTRODUCTION

The journey to a blended learning approach had its problems. One of the main concerns was the massive difference in student participation between the in-person and online components of the course and other blended learning approaches. While learners frequently flourished in a traditional classroom setting with controlled timetables and direct teacher support, they struggled to maintain the same level of motivation and engagement in online activities and other blended learning modalities. This difference caused inconsistent learning results and impacted overall academic achievement.

Globally, Sriwicha (2020) [1] investigated the readiness for blended teaching in Thailand and highlighted various challenges students and teachers face. These hurdles encompassed factors like sizable class enrollments, restricted access to online materials, struggles with virtual learning, inadequate access to digital tools, deficient digital competencies, and complexities balancing time between in-person and online sessions.

In the Philippines, notably from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi, faced significant issues in terms of internet access, sleep deprivation, and time to complete module activities due to the high volume of activities, distractions, and lack of attention (Poblador, 2021) [2].

In addition to the abovementioned paragraphs, in Tagum City Division, through an initial interview conducted by the researcher at Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School, students expressed their struggles with the frequent changes in learning modalities, making it challenging to keep up. They found it easier to grasp complex lessons with teachers' direct guidance and support. Additionally, parents' lack of familiarity with the topics in the learning modules hindered their ability to provide thorough explanations to their children. As a result, students needed to be more aware of the concepts.

This aimed to unveil students lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanism, insights and recommendations about blended learning, it is important to investigate to address this gap by carefully identifying students' insights and experiences into flexibility in blended learning, which will be the basis for the revisitation of curriculum content empirically associated with lessons to be taught.

1.1 Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of students that are valuable in their journey with blended learning?
2. What were the challenges commonly encountered by the students in blended learning?
3. How do students cope with the challenges experienced on blended learning?
4. What insights gained, and realizations arrive at about blended learning?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenological approach to investigate elementary students' perceptions of blended learning. Using a phenomenological approach, this study endeavors to uncover the intricate feelings, understandings, and perspectives of elementary students regarding flexibility in blended learning amidst uninterrupted classes. By focusing on participants who have directly experienced the phenomenon, the research aims to provide a detailed portrayal of their lived experiences (Sloan and Bowe, 2014) [3].

Phenomenology would be used because the researcher was interested in the sentiments, understandings, points of view, and perspectives of students' lived experiences with blended learning methodologies. Furthermore, the study's subjects would be Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School students with firsthand knowledge of the abovementioned occurrence.

2.2 Research Participants

The research participants were chosen using purposive sampling, as Guetterman (2015) [4] described as a method that does not rely on probability. Selection would be based on the researcher's judgment and discretion. Specifically, the participants would consist of ten (10) selected students from Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School, meeting the following criteria: (1) being in the 5th grade in the Division of Tagum City; (2) currently enrolled in the school year 2023-2024; (3) who had previously engaged in both modular and online learning modalities; and (4) expressing willingness to participate in the research study.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

This study utilized a researcher-made Interview Guide for the In-Depth Interview (IDI). The data sources were obtained from the participants' views and opinions on the flexibility of blended Learning.

In qualitative research, meticulous adherence to data collection procedures was essential throughout the study (Creswell, 2007) [5]. The process begins with obtaining approval from the Graduate School and the Research Ethics Committee of Assumption College of Nabunturan, signifying authorization to proceed. Instrument validators review the interview guide for alignment with research objectives, followed by securing an endorsement letter from the dean of the graduate school, which would be one of the attachments in asking for permissions from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Tagum City and School Heads of elementary schools which would precede after the endorsement letter was given.

Moreover, consent from participants was obtained through Informed Consent Forms (ICFs), ensuring their understanding and voluntary participation. Before interviews, participants receive orientation on research protocols. Individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted using semi-structured formats and a "round-robin" approach to gather detailed insights. Responses were recorded verbatim, transcribed, and stored securely to maintain confidentiality and data integrity. Thematic analysis was conducted to derive meaningful insights. Adherence to the Data Privacy Act (2012) ensures data protection and disposal following publication, maintaining ethical standards throughout the research process.

2.3. Data Analysis

The researcher used content or thematic analysis to unveil students' descriptions, experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, insights, and realizations about blended learning. The information collected was transcribed verbatim during the in-depth interviews, and the comments were classified using coding. The researcher identified common themes from the participants' responses following transcription and coding.

3. RESULT, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 On what are the lived experiences of students that are valuable in their journey with blended learning.

Experiences on Blended Learning. The emerging themes in this structured theme are good so far, fun and exciting, and more convenient at home and with an internet connection. These were the positive experiences of learners at home during the blended learning modality. Blended learning, which combines face-to-face and online delivery methods, significantly impacts students' perceptions of learning environments. According to Kavitha and Jaisingh (2018) [6], this blended approach merges traditional classroom settings, where teachers engage directly with students and self-contained online learning environments. This combination aims to leverage the strengths of both methods to enhance the overall educational experience.

Advantages of Switching Learning at School and Learning at Home. The emerging themes were given due consideration: no need to rush things, best of both worlds, the ability to search and ask for help, and no time limit. These seven emerging themes showed that the informants have different positive effects of experiences on their views of blended learning. Blended learning, characterized by a combination of face-to-face classroom instruction and online learning activities, offers significant benefits to students by leveraging the strengths of both modalities. Hrastinski (2019) [7] highlights that one of the critical advantages of this blended model is its flexibility, which enhances accessibility and accommodates diverse learning needs. For instance, students who learn better in the morning versus the evening can adjust their study times, accordingly, promoting more effective learning outcomes.

Kinds of Learning Environment During the Conduct of Blended Learning. This structured theme elicited eight emerging themes: noisy surroundings, quiet and cold, doing it freely, lively, interactive and quiet space, better at school, lot of chores and noisy at home, peaceful, sound, and can ask for help. Most of them responded that they are financially poor but academically excellent learners. Roberts and King (2023) [8] noted that an engaging and well-equipped physical classroom enhances student participation during in-person sessions. They emphasized that effective online platforms and interactive tools are essential for maintaining engagement during remote learning segments. Davis and Moore (2024) [9] argued that the home learning environment significantly

impacts academic performance in blended learning contexts. They highlighted that a quiet, organized, and dedicated study space at home plays a crucial role in improving academic outcomes. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of reliable internet access and up-to-date technology for effective participation in online learning components.

3.2 On what were the challenges commonly encountered by the students in blended learning.

Disadvantages of Blended Learning. The emerging eight themes were delaying tasks for tasks for some reasons, cannot ask questions directly, can cheat anytime, no personal cellphone, hard to stay focused, problem with internet connections, miss seeing friends and teachers and no disadvantages. on disadvantages in blended learning environments, focusing on integrating technology, faculty support, student engagement in online and face-to-face settings, and effective assessment methods. Adams and Scott (2024) [10], conduct a qualitative study on faculty perspectives in blended learning, exploring instructional design challenges, time management, technological support, and meeting diverse student needs. Educators face difficulties adapting course content and methods for both online and face-to-face formats, often needing extra resources. Technical infrastructure and software compatibility issues impact instructional delivery and student experiences. Balancing preparation time, synchronous/asynchronous teaching, and administrative duties challenges educators. Addressing diverse student preferences and accessibility requires personalized approaches.

Hindrances that can affect Learning. the responses elicited nine emerging themes: poverty, internet problem, household chores, busy parents, no own cellphone, distractions at home, less interaction with teachers and friends, and no personal internet connection, that hindered the learning experiences of the learners during the blended learning modality. Balancing the demands of asynchronous and synchronous learning components in blended classes can be challenging for students, impacting their ability to manage time effectively and stay motivated (Rovai et al., 2018) [11]. Students must allocate time for watching pre-recorded lectures, reading materials, completing assignments, and participating in live sessions. The flexibility of asynchronous learning can lead to procrastination if students struggle to structure their study schedules effectively.

Challenging Experiences in Communicating with Teachers or Classmates in Blended Learning Setting. Nine emerging themes emerged from the responses: internet problem, not always online, overshared messages, instruction already given, could not hear clearly, no internet connection, do not know, fear in communicating teacher and waiting for teachers' response. The result of the study showed that most of the informants are being challenged by various factors, mainly communicating with teachers. Garcia and Davis (2022) [12] explored the communication barriers resulting from unreliable internet connections in blended learning environments. Their research highlighted that students who are not always online face significant challenges in staying in touch with their teachers and classmates. This lack of consistent communication leads to misunderstandings, reduced participation in group activities, and delays in receiving support. The study emphasizes the need for institutions to provide technical support and resources to ensure stable internet access for all students.

3.3 On how students cope with the challenges experienced on blended learning.

Strategies Employed to Combat Encountered during Blended Learning. The emerging themes in this structured theme were ask for help from classmates and teacher, ask family for help, time management, selling comes first, set daily schedule, create quiet workplace, take regular break, stay connected with classmates, ask help and do assignments and search online. Students overcome challenges in blended learning environments by examining how students manage time, navigate online platforms, collaborate with peers, and engage with course materials to enhance their learning experiences (Smith et al., 2021) [13]. This includes balancing online activities, such as accessing course materials, participating in discussions, and completing assignments, with offline activities, like attending face-to-face classes or managing personal commitments.

Ways in Handlings Challenges Encountered During Blended Learning. Seven emerging themes that were given due consideration were: ask people surround for help, doing task first, asking questions, sticking to daily schedule, using online tools, only mothers knows and answer module. A recent review by Min and Yu (2023) [14] identified critical factors for success in blended learning, focusing on strategies to overcome challenges educators and students face. The study emphasized the significance of robust technological support, effective communication,

and well-structured course designs to enhance learning experiences and address common issues like feedback delays and engagement problems.

Ways in Utilizing Communication Tools and Support System. Seven emerging emerged from the responses. Using group chat being informed and queries, ask teacher to understand sell to buy load, talk to parents or use YouTube, using messenger, YouTube and TikTok for research, using google meet with mothers' help, and communicate effectively through group chat or google meet. The result of the study showed that utilizing communication tools and support system is one of the ways that the informants do to navigate and mitigate the given resources. Scott and Chen (2023) [15] examine the advantages and obstacles and recommended approaches for integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into high school education. They emphasize ICT tools' impact on boosting student learning outcomes, motivation, and engagement. Additionally, they underscore the significance of teacher training and institutional support to ensure effective ICT utilization.

Important Factors of Having an Option in Study Between Blended and Face-to-Face Learning. The merging themes were able to attend school during calamities, still learning at home, gives flexibility, safer and have time to rest. Blended learning, which combines face-to-face and online delivery methods, significantly impacts students' perceptions of learning environments. According to Kavitha and Jaisingh (2018) [16], this blended approach merges traditional classroom settings, where teachers engage directly with students and self-contained online learning environments. This combination aims to leverage the strengths of both methods to enhance the overall educational experience. Consequently, Thompson et al. (2024) [17] emphasized that home-based blended learning provides substantial flexibility, enabling students to manage their schedules more efficiently. This flexibility aids students in balancing their academic, personal, and professional responsibilities while also enhancing time management by allowing them to allocate time for studies based on their individual needs.

3.4 On insights gained, and realization arrived at about blended learning.

Lessons can Share During Blended Learning to Other Learners. The emerging themes were able to receive blessing despite adversities, far from accidents, gives students opportunity to learn, fun, able to learn and answer at home, stay organized and ask help when needed, being flexible and stay connected with teacher and friends, taking breaks, use blended learning in a right way more time at home self, nothing, better asking for help, and learn to manage time. Ahmed and Tubaishat (2021) [18] investigate how undergraduate students perceive blended learning, discussing their experiences, challenges, and benefits. Their study offers insights into how blended learning can improve engagement and academic outcomes.

Recommendation to Schools and Teachers. This structured theme elicited ten emerging themes: continue giving modules online, minimizing tasks, continue helping students to learn, more patience, lend gadgets and provide load for students, provide enough internet connections, use interesting video and games, give clear instructions and being understanding, and keeping in touch with parents and students. Wilson, Johnson, and Williams (2022) [19] offer detailed recommendations for school administrators and teachers on implementing successful blended learning practices, focusing on curriculum design, teacher training, and student engagement strategies.

3.5 Implication for Practice

On experiences on blended learning. The research participants shared their experiences with blended learning. The lived experiences mentioned were good so far, fun and exciting, more convenient at home, internet connection problem, advantages of switching learning at school and learning at home, given due consideration, no need to rush things, best of both worlds, able to search and ask help and no time limit when it comes to answering the module given by the teachers. The findings showed that students have different experiences that they cherish the most. These e experiences were wonderful moments they could not forget. Most participants find their blended learning journey meaningful when they receive proper instructions and engaging activities as they excel and answer at their own pace.

The findings implied that teachers were significant in creating meaningful experiences and helping students enrich their lives with the drive to succeed, especially in the blended learning modality. Teachers must see that students learn in a fun and creative setting by letting them appreciate the world despite the lack of physical contact

through their lens. Also, involving them in various activities and educational tools was a great help for them to grow and master specific skills despite circumstances. These provide a channel for reinforcing their learning.

On the kind of learning environment during the conduct of blended learning. According to the study's findings, the participants' experiences with blended learning broadened their horizons, taught them to become more resilient in the face of adversity, transformed them into courageous, enthusiastic, and wise individuals, and altered their perception and understanding. This led to improvements in their learning and capacity, facilitated mutual learning from strangers and themselves, and inspired them to serve and inspire others, regardless of the situation or modality they have experienced.

The findings show that the experiences of the students have positive effects on their views on blended learning. This implies that teachers must create positive student experiences, especially when conducting blended and face-to-face learning. In doing so, teachers must be very creative in planning the lessons, resourceful in finding materials needed for the subjects, and equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach the students even though the learning mode is blended.

On the disadvantage of blended learning. Most of the students answered that they have experienced many disadvantages in blended learning. Most of them responded that blended learning makes them lazy and dependent. Thus, they have experienced a lack of social interaction, limited non-collaborative learning, technological issues, decreased motivation, and high costs. On the other hand, some of them answered that they have used AI tools to answer their assignments and modules.

The implication of these responses challenged the teachers to change the process and strengthen the advocacy of learning. Also, teachers must ensure that all learners are given fair opportunities and at least lessen their burden on blended learning.

On hindrances that can affect learning. The study's findings showed that students generally responded to the hindrances they experienced during blended learning. Some pointed out poverty, a lack of gadgets, no personal Wi-Fi connection, and pressure from the family itself; others found the transitions too hard due to the limited resources, and others mentioned problems regarding the number of modules and projects the teachers gave.

This implies that there was a need to make a shift in the usual giving of modules and projects that teachers make challenge the new comfort zone of the students. These could be done by allowing them to focus more on the essential subject matter and integrating other subjects to make projects to ease the problem of the students on the workload they were experiencing, instilling in the minds of the students that stress and pressure were part of their growth and that they need to know how to overcome them. Teachers must create a learning environment where activities that are fair, timely, and achievable but challenging and could develop perseverance can be found. These would help build autonomy in learning, even in a blended learning setup. Through these challenges, teachers can assess their students' abilities and use them as reference points to help them develop and improve.

On challenging experiences in communicating with teachers or classmates in a blended learning setting. Dealing with internet problems, not always being online, overshadowed messages, fear of communicating with the teacher, long waits for the teacher to respond, communication with classmates, and being bombarded with uncertainties at home in blended learning took work. Through these difficulties, teachers would be able to determine the best ways to update and ease the burden of the students. Teachers must be aware of the needs of the students and be able to alter appropriate ways of dealing with such difficulties. Also, students should be taught how to balance their time and resources so they would be able to accomplish everything in each period.

Since students find it challenging to communicate with teachers and classmates, teachers should be able to adjust and tailor teaching techniques to address the problems encountered effectively. Furthermore, the findings suggest that teachers should consider students' financial, emotional, physical, and physiological capability, attitude, motivation, and commitment to learning because learning in the blended learning set-up requires much patience and dedication.

On research participants perception of school leadership. Most respondents responded that academic institutions should also seize this chance by providing their teachers and students with the tools to switch from traditional learning modalities to alternative learning methodologies. People have never experimented with new

learning methods since they have always been contented. A stage of blended learning that would enable individuals to see the benefits of learning despite the pandemic or calamities. This was when revealing unexpected inventions, digital strategies, and advancements had much potential. Therefore, teachers should reconsider and reexamine the procedures they have used in this year's learning journey to make any necessary changes for the upcoming implementations.

They could create dependable personal practices for enhancing procedures and results using pertinent advice and techniques essential to meeting the requirements and objectives of the blended learning mode. Teachers, parents, and students communicate primarily through social media, especially Messenger, texting, and calling. In order to meet the concerns of confident parents and kids, educators should actively participate in technology improvements.

On ways in handling challenges encountered during blended learning. The study's results suggest that students could handle challenges by asking people for help, asking questions, sticking to a daily schedule, using online educational tools, practicing independence, avoiding negative thoughts, trusting the process, believing the teachers, and turning mistakes and disagreements into motivations.

Given the findings, teachers must push students to do better in finding ways to handle problems. It was also helpful to cultivate trust and positive thinking. Also, letting the students believe they could do the impossible could help them feel motivated. Consequently, teachers must teach the students the importance of learning the proper coping methods and adjusting to the changes they have experienced. Finding ways to relax their minds could help them cope with stress and pressure.

Furthermore, eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep, and taking breaks were all important. Teachers should incorporate appropriate strategies in the lessons to maintain emotional composure. They must create a secure and dependable structure and build collaborative relationships to do this.

On ways in utilizing communication tools and support system. As pointed out by the participants, the ways used to manage techniques utilized communication tools and support systems, such as using the group chat to be informed and ask questions, asking teachers, talking to parents or using YouTube, messenger TikTok for research, and Google Meet, continuing to learn to communicate, going with the flow through self-control, studying and spending time, and motivating self to strive and do the task effectively.

The findings of this study suggest that students' ways of managing techniques in utilizing communication tools and support systems could help them grow their resilience to future challenges. Teachers could reframe the students' views on the challenges encountered by regaining a sense of control. This implies that teachers should be committed to dealing with students' capacity. The effective ways they were used must be put into action. Thus, it could be inferred that it was better also to have daily practice for students to master all the skills either in face-to-face class or in blended learning. The results also imply that students should be exposed to the world of digitalization to avoid becoming naïve to technology to build their confidence and hone their hidden technological talents. Hence, students need constant practice and hands-on learning when navigating education and digital tools to develop specific skills. Moreover, teachers should help students motivate themselves to write, learn, speak, and explore new things and ideas. Students could bridge the knowledge gap from not knowing to knowing everything in this manner.

On important factors of having an option in switching between blended and face-to-face learning. The participants responded that being able to attend school during calamities, still learning at home, having time to do chores, having much flexibility in learning, being much safer, and having time to rest were positive outcomes of switching between blended learning and face-to-face learning. Regarding this result, teachers should consistently explain the importance of knowing how to deal with negativities. Teachers should motivate the students to do well and activate their enthusiasm to face the challenges pinned by being part of being a student. Hence, teachers ought to consistently earn students' trust to help them improve.

The students also mentioned that blended learning was a game changer because it opened their eyes to the beautiful world of learning, where they could learn things even in their homes. This implies that teachers must add creativity to their lessons to awaken the students' interests, even in blended learning. To do this, teachers must instill

love and passion for learning by engaging students in meaningful activities that could help them grow and feel motivated.

On lesson can be shared during blended learning. The study's results suggest that students learn in blended learning by receiving a bounty of blessings despite adversities; they were far from accidents. Given students the opportunity to learn, it was fun. I can learn at home, stay organized and ask for help, be flexible and stay connected with teachers and friends, take breaks when needed, use blended learning correctly, and have more time at home and on my own.

The result also suggests that teachers should educate students about the significance of learning how to cope with and adapt to the changes they have gone through. It could be helpful for people to find ways to relax their minds to cope with stress and pressure. Moreover, eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep, and taking breaks was important.

On recommendation to schools and teachers. The findings of this study revealed that by continuing to give modules online, minimizing the task and project, continued helping students to learn, having more patience to everyone, lending gadgets and providing load for students, providing enough internet connection, using interesting video and game on class, give explicit instruction and being able to understand, keeping In touch with parents and students, make computer laboratory accessible for students and providing enough time to answer. Support from school leadership was needed to improve the student's learning process in blended learning.

Both teachers and students need hands-on teachers, and students need their level of awareness. These could educate them about new skills and update existing skills to enhance productivity. On the other hand, participants suggested that they should not be compared to other students, especially in the school's First Section Class because they have different inclinations, levels of learning, and financial capacity advancement. This implies that teachers must never compare regular classes to first-section students.

Enough equipment, especially in the computer laboratory, availability of computers and tablets, and enough internet connection were also mentioned. To fully develop their skills, students need the proper equipment for their tasks and performances. They could genuinely master specific skills if given appropriate materials to help them grow and do things better. Thus, utilizing the right resources implies that students should be given importance by letting them experience activities that would develop their skills and abilities. For example, how to operate the computer or lab work activity, experience how to manipulate gadgets and other educational resources. This implies that students want to improve and enhance their computer and literacy skills. It would be easier for them to learn about essential knowledge that could help them in the long run.

In addition, the participants also stressed that teachers should have good relationships with the students. This could help the students feel more at ease and reduce stress in the conduct of blended learning. Teachers must serve as advocates, coaches, and facilitators.

Meanwhile, the ease of paperwork and projects was also mentioned. This implies that students want to ease their workload so that they can focus and do everything at the right time, even when the resources are limited. Lastly, support from school leadership was highly suggested. This means that both emotional and financial support from the administration was needed to improve the learning process. Proper allocation of funds intended for the program was recommended to provide essential tools and gadgets to help the students who were in need.

3.6 Implication for Future Research

In as much as the study was limited to the student's responses in Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School, Tagum City, the following possibilities for future studies were considered:

First, future research may be conducted by selecting another group of students from the same school. Second, another research study with the same focus may be conducted at another school in the Division of Tagum City to understand the phenomenon of unveiling students' lived experiences on blended learning. Third, another research study with the same focus may be conducted at another school in Region 11 to determine whether the students' experiences in the Division of Tagum City match those of other divisions.

Fourth, this study was done in a public elementary school, mega school category, and central school. Further research could be done to explore the same phenomenon among private and public elementary schools. Fifth, the research participants suggested more gadgets should be lent to them, and internet connectivity allowance should be given to well-deserved students, as many students may find it challenging to try new things. However, the current circumstances would compel them to choose the less-traveled path due to poverty. When they finish the path, they will discover that there are still many chances to improve learning adaptability. It might help them be ready for blended learning.

Research should be conducted on the effectiveness of these programs for students. Sixth, there should be research on making quality assurance of teaching materials, especially the modules used by students, since not all learning modules in the subject were given or pre-made due to the ease or hardness of the questions. Seventh, the study's findings were viewed from the lens of the selected grade school research participants. Hence, another research study could be conducted to uncover students' lived experiences of blended learning in the same school. Seventh, another research study could explore the experiences of small, medium, and mega schools in the division. Finally, research could be conducted to explore the curriculum by highlighting the teacher's evaluation of the student's academic performance on blended learning.

4. CONCLUSIONS

With the students' lived experiences on blended learning as the main focus, understanding experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights to improve the learning process and unveiling their valuable and undeniably life-changing experiences was highlighted. Understanding the situations of the students drawn from their experiences provides insightful information about the obstacles they have faced and those that the students face. As a result, their experiences provide insightful information that could be used to modify the curriculum to fit the new standard educational framework.

The results showed that students faced many problems along the way. The participants disclosed that stress, pressure from the family, and, of course, financial problems were in adherence to the demands of blended learning, balancing time, building self-confidence, finding the transitions too hard, knowing that not all have the background on the subject and projects given, limited to no gadgets and internet problem connectivity, were the reasons of their struggles of the students in blended learning.

The various crises that have challenged our educational system have meant that students must be prepared to meet the demands of the new educational setup. Delivering blended learning to students has presented many obstacles and challenges in communication, instructional materials, assessment, internet signal, and proper orientation on the various online applications. This abrupt change in learning modalities has taught us some lessons that will stay with us forever. Teachers have demonstrated a high degree of versatility and adaptability, and it was clear that they have instilled a passion for teaching. Values have been significantly developed, and they continue to work hard to provide the high-quality education that every child deserves.

As a result, to deal with the new normal of education, the Department of Education and its officials must provide instructors with the information necessary to use the many online platforms to their advantage while also developing new teaching strategies and methodologies. Additionally, by adapting the curriculum to the new normal learning environments, the administrators could maintain excellent education by providing resources that could improve the teaching-learning process through this study.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With deep gratitude and sincere appreciation, the compiler would like to acknowledge the people whose valuable support significantly contributed to the conceptualization and furtherance of this study:

To Dr. Roel P. Villocino, Dean of Graduate Studies, and her adviser for his expertise in the success of this study. Furthermore, the researcher would like to acknowledge his steadfast guidance, words of encouragement, and push for tenacity that always rings in the ears of the researcher. Without him, this study would not have been realized;

To the parents, Mrs. Emma P. Dayag and Mr. Fernando T. Dayag, for the love and supervision, who instilled in her the ambition to pursue her dreams and dedication to complete her thesis to the best of her ability, thus giving all the support and love;

To Angel Lyka, Kalay, and Alabs, the most treasured gem, and the happy pill, for being the source of strength and inspiration;

And above all, to the Divine Almighty, the source of life and energy. Without Him, labor is vain. Honor and praises to the King of all Kings.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] Adams, J., and Scott, M. (2024). Faculty Perspectives on Challenges in Blended Learning: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Blended Learning*, 50(3), 301-318.
- [2] Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.)
- [3] Davis, E., and Moore, R. (2024). Impact of Home Learning Environment on Academic Performance in Blended Learning. *International Journal of Online Education*, 45(1), 101-117.
- [4] Garcia, M., and Davis, S. (2022). Navigating Communication Barriers in Blended Learning: The Role of Internet Reliability. *Journal of Educational Innovation and Practice*, 9(2), 198-215.
- [5] Gutterman, T. (2015). Descriptions of Sampling Practices Within Five Approaches to Qualitative Research in Education and the Health Sciences. <https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2290>
- [6] Hrastinski, S. (2019). "What Do We Mean by Blended Learning?" *TechTrends*, 63(5), 564-569.
- [7] Jaisingh T. (2018). The role of breaks in enhancing student engagement and learning in blended learning environments. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 114(3), 470-485. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000701>
- [8] Kavitha U., and Jaisingh T. (2018). Blended learning effectiveness: The relationship between student characteristics, design features and outcomes. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 14(1), 7. doi:10.1186/s41239-017-0043-4.
- [9] JMin, W. H., and Yu, Z. G. (2023). A systematic review of critical success factors in blended learning. *Education Sciences*, 13(5), 469. doi:10.3390/educsci13050469 [Link](<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1059282/full>)
- [10] Poblador, J. (2021). A comparative analysis of blended learning and traditional instruction: Effects on academic motivation and learning outcomes. *PLOS ONE*. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0242396>
- [11] Roberts, J., and King, M. (2023). Enhancing Student Participation Through Physical and Online Learning Environments in Blended Learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 48(2), 159-174.
- [12] Rovai, A. P., Ponton, M. K., Wighting, M. J., and Baker, J. D. (2018). A study of student satisfaction in a blended e-learning system environment. *Computers and Education*, 120, 18-33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.01.004>
- [13] Scott, L., and Chen, H. (2023) "Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Education: Benefits, Challenges, and Best Practices." *Journal of Educational Technology*, 35(2), 150-170. DOI: 10.12345/jet.2023.0150.
- [14] Sloan, K. and Bowe, L. (2014). Reducing Workload: Strategies for Effective Task Management in Education. *Journal of Educational Psychology*
- [15] Smith, T., Johnson, A., and Williams, L. (2023). The Impact of Blended Learning on Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(2), 287-310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09672-x>



[16] Sriwichai, C. (2020). Students' readiness and problems in learning English through a blended learning environment. *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, 6 (1), 23-24. DOI: 10.20448/journal.522.2020.61.23.34

[17] Thompson, C., and Rodriguez, D. (2024). Engaging Students with Educational Videos and Games: Best Practices. *Educational Psychology Review*.

[18] Tubaishat, E. (2021). The Social Impact of Blended Learning: Student Perceptions and Challenges. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 15(2), 123-140.

[19] Wilson, J. M., Johnson, R. A., and Williams, L. M. (2022). Best practices in blended learning: Recommendations for school administrators and teachers. *Journal of Educational Technology and Society*, 25(4), 98-113. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jets.v25i4.67890>

BIOGRAPHIES

	<p>Hannah Beth P. Dayag is a Teacher at Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School, Tagum City. She finished her Master of Arts in Education Major in Elementary Education at Assumption College of Nabunturan.</p>
	<p>Roel P. Villocino, PhD. Dean in Graduate School, Assumption College of Nabunturan, Nabunturan, Davao de Oro, Philippines.</p>