

JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES



Volume 3, Issue 4
April 2025

Published monthly by:
The Wise Researcher
www.jippublication.com

JOURNAL OF **INTERDISCIPLINARY** PERSPECTIVES

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Address: Katipunan St, Tisa, Cebu City, Philippines

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Factors Influencing Network Marketers' Entrepreneurial Performance

Irene A. Salvador

University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City, Philippines

Author Email: salvadorirene90@gmail.com

Date received: January 15, 2025

Date revised: February 17, 2025

Date accepted: March 6, 2025

Originality: 89%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 11%

Recommended citation:

Salvador, I. (2025). Factors influencing network marketers' entrepreneurial performance. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 6-16. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.024>

Abstract. Network marketers often face significant challenges that impact their entrepreneurial performance and overall success. This study investigates how self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion influence the entrepreneurial performance of 316 purposively selected network marketers in Region XII, Philippines. Using a survey-based design, data were analyzed through regression to examine these relationships. Results show that self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, and social cohesion positively affect entrepreneurial performance, with entrepreneurial orientation also playing a key role. These factors collectively explain 76% of the variation in entrepreneurial performance, highlighting their critical importance in driving increased production, new business establishment, higher sales, and greater profitability. The findings align with the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Expectancy Theory of Motivation, illustrating how these factors shape effort, persistence, and performance in network marketing. This study provides actionable insights for enhancing network marketers' performance and contributes to understanding the dynamics of multi-level marketing businesses.

Keywords: Business management; Multi-level marketing; Network marketing organization; Philippines; Regression analysis.

1.0 Introduction

Despite its long history, multi-level marketing (MLM), also known as network marketing, faces persistent challenges in gaining mainstream recognition. A key issue lies in the poor entrepreneurial performance of network marketers, with alarming statistics showing that 95% of distributors leave MLM after five years, and nearly 50% quit within a year (Lilyquist, 2021). In the United States, most new members experience financial losses or only break even, with a bankruptcy rate of 18%, higher than that of non-participants (AARP Foundation, 2018; Bennett, 2022). In the Philippines, factors such as inadequate marketing skills, insufficient leads, overemphasis on recruitment, and unrealistic expectations further contribute to the low performance of network marketers (Bowyer, 2021). This issue limits individual success and undermines the broader economic and social benefits that MLM could offer, such as reducing unemployment and mobilizing capital for investments (Choudhary, 2013; Hardon et al., 2019; Lofthouse & Storr, 2020).

The post-pandemic period has amplified these challenges and opportunities. Rising consumer demand for wellness products and the urgent need for employment have made MLM more appealing (Bradley & Oates, 2021; Skander, 2023; Williams & Kleynhans, 2024). However, improving entrepreneurial performance is crucial for NMOs to sustain their impact and ensure network marketers benefit from legitimate income opportunities while contributing to national economic growth (Figueroa, 2018; Go, 2021; Chopra et al., 2023).

Previous studies have identified self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion significant predictors of entrepreneurial performance (Hallak et al., 2012; Dai et al., 2016; Hermiö, 2023). While these relationships have been explored internationally, little research links these factors specifically to network marketers, particularly in the Philippine context. This gap is significant, as the Philippines' unique cultural and economic conditions may influence these dynamics.

This study aims to address this gap by examining how self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion impact the entrepreneurial performance of network marketers in Region XII. The findings will offer valuable insights for NMOs to develop strategies that enhance their marketers' success and contribute to broader economic development. Results will be shared through academic and professional forums to benefit researchers, entrepreneurs, and managers while enriching local literature on MLM practices.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-causal research design. According to Calderon and Gonzales (2018), descriptive research determines the facts and issues within a study while providing accurate interpretations of findings. Causal research, on the other hand, aims to identify whether one or more variables influence or cause changes in other variables. As described by Zikmund et al. (2012), this type of research extends beyond stating relationships between variables to predicting how an independent or set of variables influences dependent variables. In this study, the independent variables include Self-Efficacy, Entrepreneurial Commitment, Entrepreneurial Orientation, and Social Cohesion, while Entrepreneurial Performance is the dependent variable. The descriptive design was appropriate for this research as it explored the factors influencing entrepreneurial performance and described the entrepreneurial performance levels of the respondents. Simultaneously, the causal research design was suitable for examining the significant effects of these factors on entrepreneurial performance levels using statistical and econometric methods.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected network marketing organizations (NMOs) selling health and wellness products, such as food supplements and dietary solutions, in Region XII (SoCCSKSarGen), comprising Kidapawan City, Tacurong City, Koronadal City, and General Santos City. From these areas, 316 respondents were selected. These NMOs were chosen because they are recognized as leading network marketing companies in the Philippines. They are registered with local government units and have operated for over five years. Their contribution to economic and health sectors, particularly during the pandemic, underscores their significance. However, research focusing on entrepreneurial performance among their network marketers in this region remains scarce, making this study a valuable contribution to the literature.

2.3 Research Respondents

The study utilized a combination of quota and purposive sampling to select respondents. The population consisted of network marketers selling health and wellness products for at least one year as members of identified NMOs in Region XII. This yielded a sample size of 316, meeting the minimum required for the study's targeted quota.

2.4 Research Instruments

The research employed a structured questionnaire divided into five sections corresponding to the variables studied. The tool contained 44 items distributed across Self-Efficacy, Entrepreneurial Commitment, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Social Cohesion, and Entrepreneurial Performance.

- Self-Efficacy: Ten items adapted from Krueger (1993) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.926).
- Entrepreneurial Commitment: Eight items adapted from Tang (2008) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.927).
- Entrepreneurial Orientation: Ten items adapted from Bolton and Lane (2012), with three dimensions having Cronbach's alpha values above 0.765.
- Social Cohesion: Four items adapted from Sparks and Schenk (2006) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81).
- Entrepreneurial Performance: Twelve items adapted from Sariwulan et al. (2020) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.771).

Each variable included interpretation matrices to understand the range of responses and their corresponding levels of manifestation or evidence.

2.5 Data Collection

The researcher secured the study's permission from the University of the Immaculate Conception Graduate School and the Research Ethics Committee. Request letters were sent to managers of the selected NMOs for further approval. Data collection involved face-to-face and online survey methods. Respondents provided informed consent after being briefed on the study's objectives, ethical considerations, and their rights. Gatekeepers or enumerators assisted with distributing questionnaires to respondents in off-site locations. Online respondents accessed the survey through a Google Form link. Data collection occurred over two months (March–April 2023).

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to the ten dimensions of research ethics, including social value, informed consent, vulnerability issues, privacy and confidentiality, and justice. The research proposal underwent a full-board review by the Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent forms were provided to respondents, ensuring their voluntary participation and right to withdraw without consequences. All data were anonymized and securely stored, complying with the Data Privacy Act 2012 (RA 10173). Risks associated with COVID-19 were mitigated by observing health protocols during data collection. Respondents received incentives as compensation for their time and effort. The study findings are expected to benefit NMOs and other stakeholders by providing insights into factors influencing entrepreneurial performance. The researcher plans to disseminate results through forums, conferences, and academic publications to maximize the study's impact.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Self-Efficacy

The data in Table 1 pertain to the network marketers' self-efficacy level in selected NMOs in Region XII. Self-efficacy had a high overall mean of 3.89 (evident). This result signifies that network marketers exemplify a strong belief in their capability to execute network marketing activities needed to achieve expected performance attainments.

Table 1. *The level of self-efficacy of the network marketers*

Indicators		Mean	SD	Description
Perceived Degree of Difficulty				
1	Ease in doing their current Network Marketing Business (NMB).	3.82	0.94	High
2	Ease in introducing their current NMB to others.	3.94	1.00	High
3	Ease in recruiting others to participate in their Network Marketing Organizations (NMOs).	3.69	1.05	High
4	Ease in training others to do their NMB.	3.79	1.01	High
5	Ease in leading an NMO.	3.73	1.04	High
6	Ease in selling the products to others.	3.86	1.06	High
<i>Category Mean</i>		3.81	0.90	<i>High</i>
Confidence				
7	Certainty of success in doing their current NMB.	3.91	1.05	High
8	Knowledge in doing NMB.	3.92	1.02	High
9	Surety of communicating effectively with others.	4.04	0.98	High
10	Surety of developing new leaders in their NMO.	3.97	0.97	High
<i>Category Mean</i>		3.96	0.92	<i>High</i>
Overall Mean		3.89	0.87	High

The high level of self-efficacy aligns with the study findings of Hallak et al. (2012), which demonstrated that network marketers with high self-efficacy demonstrated a greater inclination to engage in effective sales activities and perform superior marketing. It also corroborates the findings of Kregar and Antončič (2015), who emphasized that entrepreneurs with high self-efficacy strongly believe that they can efficiently gather and execute activities to attain expected performance. Further, it confirms Simona's (2018) and Ferreira-Neto et al.'s (2023) contention that people who have high self-efficacy and desire to become entrepreneurs feel they have a strong ability to work in entrepreneurial activities.

Perceived degree of difficulty

The first indicator of self-efficacy resulted in a categorical mean of 3.81 (less evident). This implies that network marketers deem it easy to conduct and introduce their current NMB, recruit people to join their NMO, train members to perform their NMB, lead an NMO, and sell products to others. This result of a less evident perceived degree of difficulty contradicts the findings of the AARP Foundation (2018) and Segreto (2023), which disclosed that most network marketers find it challenging to earn money by selling their products or services to others. It also conflicts with the article posts of Martin (2014) and Ladish (2020), who claimed that many multi-level marketing (MLM) members need help recruiting and pitching their NMB to potential clients.

Confidence

The second indicator, on the other hand, scored a high category mean of 3.96 (evident), indicating that network marketers demonstrated high certainty of success and expertise, a conviction of effectively communicating with others, and surety of developing new leaders in their NMOs. The result validates a recent study finding by Pearce (2023) that network marketers who possessed higher levels of self-confidence were more knowledgeable and experts in their NMBs. It also corroborates the study findings of McGee and Peterson (2017) and Rey (2024), which highlighted that individuals gained higher self-confidence as entrepreneurs due to their firm belief in communicating with others and have achieved inevitable success after completing numerous activities effectively.

3.2 Extent of Entrepreneurial Commitment

The data on entrepreneurial commitment presented in Table 2 yielded an overall mean score of 3.82 (evident), which is described as high. This result indicates that network marketers are committed to supporting and participating in their NMBs' new business creation efforts.

Table 2. *The extent of the entrepreneurial commitment of the network marketers*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Affective			
1 Starting an NMB is much more desirable than other career opportunities they have.	3.80	0.99	High
2 Starting an NMB will help them achieve other important objectives in their life.	4.01	1.00	High
3 Having skills and abilities will help them start an NMB.	4.01	0.98	High
4 Being confident can induce setting up the effort required to launch an NMB.	3.99	0.98	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.95	0.90	<i>High</i>
Behavioral			
5 No restriction exists on how long they can devote supreme effort to establishing their NMB.	4.01	0.97	High
6 Their philosophy is to "do whatever it takes" to establish their own NMB.	4.06	0.93	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	4.04	0.91	<i>High</i>
Continuance			
7 If the NMB idea is unsuccessful, they are ready to do a job for another person.	3.48	1.17	High
8 Even if the NMB venture is unsuccessful, it will never work for someone else.	3.17	1.31	Moderate
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.33	0.92	<i>Moderate</i>
Overall Mean	3.82	0.77	High

The result of the high degree of entrepreneurial commitment is consistent with the findings of the studies of Chatzopoulou and Santouridis (2018) and Selamet and Prabowo (2020), which determined that network marketers with higher levels of entrepreneurial commitment support and participate in their business creation efforts, such as achieving superior sales performance and accomplishing business objectives. It also agrees with the assertions made in a study by Jaeger and Schultz (2017) that entrepreneurs with a high degree of commitment advance their new business creation efforts, which include outlining the development of core ideas and new products, spotting market opportunities, forging strong bonds with investors, fostering a contemporary environment, and preparing entrepreneurs to respond to remarkable market trends.

Affective Commitment

This dimension generated a high category mean of 3.95 (evident). It denotes that when network marketers start their NMBs, their core motivation, self-assured passion, goal-oriented values, and jovial personalities impact their commitment. This result supports Alqudah et al.'s (2022) and Yuh's (2022) finding that affectively committed employees usually display positive organizational personalities and attitudes. It also corresponds with Jiang and Johnson's (2018) and Pahos and Galanaki's (2022) studies, which found that individuals' core motivations at work will stimulate and develop high affective commitment and genuine concern for their organization.

Behavioral Commitment

In terms of the second dimension, behavioral commitment acquired a high category mean of 4.04 (evident), signifying that network marketers' commitment is indeed shaped by their devoted maximum efforts and responsibility, which are considered in their NMBs. The result of a high degree of behavioral commitment reinforces Cordell's (2018) and Williams' (2018) findings that network marketers tend to exhibit a high level of behavioral commitment in their full efforts devoted to their NMBs. It also supports the claims of Wang et al. (2017) and Purcaru et al. (2022) that entrepreneurs' strong behavioral commitment is evidenced by the responsibility they consider in achieving their goals and long-term success in the MLM business.

Continuance Commitment

Interestingly, out of the three dimensions of the variable entrepreneurial commitment, only continuance commitment displayed a moderate category mean of 3.33 (fairly evident). This analysis indicates that respondents had an acceptable degree of continuance commitment, further suggesting that network marketers are willing to work for or not for others if their NMB idea fails. Consequently, the network marketers in this study are just as reasonably invested in their NMBs. The result of an average level of continuance commitment infers that when the studies of Radosavljevic et al. (2017) and Kasogela (2019) are mirrored by this study's finding, network marketers will only neutrally stay with their NMOs and put forth mere time, effort, and resources into MLM success, which increases the likelihood that they may commit or not commit themselves to their NMBs.

Moreover, this result explication is probably because continuance commitment is more frequently the result of a more rational cost-benefit analysis, according to Fernández-Mesa et al. (2020). It reflects the findings of the studies by Uppal (2017) and Zainuddin and Noor (2019) that those employees with scarcer employment choices may develop higher continuance commitment, or otherwise, the claims of Li et al. (2015) that individuals who usually exhibit lesser continuance commitment have higher organizational experiences and are thus more willing to explore alternative career paths.

3.3 Level of Entrepreneurial Orientation

Furthermore, the figures in Table 3 refer to the level of entrepreneurial orientation demonstrated by the network marketers. As it stands, the entrepreneurial orientation level reached a high overall mean of 3.82 (manifested). This data means network marketers are inclined to engage in risk-taking, innovation, and proactive opportunity-seeking. This result of a high level of entrepreneurial orientation amplifies the study findings of Covin and Wales (2019) and Huang et al. (2022) that people with high levels of entrepreneurial orientation frequently possess the three traits that make up the components of being proactive, being innovative, and being risk-takers. In addition, this result supports the findings of Mulyana and Hendar (2020) that persons with high levels of risk, innovation, and proactiveness attributes had higher degrees of entrepreneurial orientation.

Table 3. *The level of entrepreneurial orientation of the network marketers*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Risk-Taking			
1 Like to bravely step into the unknown.	3.68	1.01	High
2 Spend a lot of time and/or money on something that might yield a high return willingly.	3.86	0.97	High
3 Tend to respond "boldly" in risky circumstances.	3.69	1.00	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.74	0.88	High
Innovativeness			
4 Like to participate in unique, unconventional, albeit not necessarily risky, activities.	3.71	0.93	High
5 A place to capitalize on original, one-of-a-kind ideas in projects rather than reusing previously utilized, tried, and effective approaches.	3.75	0.86	High
6 Desire to explore with their special approach rather than following what others are doing when learning anything new.	3.90	0.88	High
7 They favor exploration and innovative alternatives instead of utilizing other people's strategies to solve their issues and problems.	3.73	0.90	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.77	0.77	High
Proactiveness			
8 Perform in expectation of forthcoming problems, needs, or changes.	3.77	0.91	High
9 Tend to plan on tasks.	3.98	0.94	High
10 Urge to "step up" and initiate tasks rather than wait for others to do it.	4.09	0.96	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.95	0.85	High
Overall Mean	3.82	0.76	High

Risk-Taking

The first domain, risk-taking, garnered a high category mean of 3.74 (manifested), deducing that network marketers are willing to take risks and usually invest a lot of time and money into their NMBs, which they perceive will yield them high returns and great rewards. This result of a high level of risk-taking behavior mirrors the research of Durand (2014) and Chechi (2024), which found that an entrepreneur would be willing to take high risks in chasing opportunities that would generally provide them with more time freedom and a high profit. It likewise underpins the findings of the studies of Josien (2012) and Putniņš and Sauka (2020), which revealed that entrepreneurs' high and significant risk propensity emulates their willingness to invest in trade-offs that will greatly reciprocate them with high financial returns.

Innovativeness

Regarding the second domain, innovativeness obtained a category mean of 3.77 (manifested), which is considered high. This suggests that network marketers are highly predisposed to introducing new products and services and creating unique problem-solving methods. This result of a high level of innovativeness conforms to the studies of Rafiei (2014) and Putniņš and Sauka (2020), which reported that highly innovative entrepreneurs were more likely to show a high tendency to create unique and advanced solutions for solving complex problems. It also supports the study finding of Choi and Williams (2016) that a highly innovative mindset among entrepreneurs is achieved through developing new ideas based on knowledge, such as introducing new products and services, and the emergence of new skills or the upgrading of existing ones. The result further strengthens the emphasis of Patel et al. (2015) and Manzano-García and Ayala-Calvo (2020) that it is due to entrepreneurs' highly innovative behavior that entrepreneurial orientation can also result in significant gains despite the potential for losses.

Proactiveness

It can be observed that the third domain, proactiveness, acquired the highest category mean of 3.95 (manifested). It connotes that network marketers explicitly act in anticipation of future issues, needs, or changes and subsequently tend to plan. They also prefer to "step up" and start tasks rather than wait for someone else to do them. This high average result of proactiveness behavior fortifies the research finding of Liang et al. (2019) that MLM sales executives' high level of proactiveness increases their tendency to plan. It also confirms the claims of Lee and Chu (2013) and Saihood and Al-Jader (2021) that organizations with a high level of proactive behavior usually act by sensing future needs and changes and seizing business opportunities. Equally, the result reiterates the notion made by Walter (2021) in her article, who stated that being highly proactive will help network marketers step ahead and anticipate future problems in running NMBs successfully.

3.4 Level of Social Cohesion

The data in Table 4 illustrate the level of social cohesion among the network marketers. The collected data exposed a high overall mean of 3.99 (evident), which indicates a great deal of trust, cooperation, dependability for advice regarding distributorships, and support for each other's work among the network marketers in NMOs.

Table 4. *The level of social cohesion of the network marketers*

Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1 There is much mutual trust among members.	3.92	0.99	High
2 Cooperation amongst NMO members is quite strong.	3.97	0.96	High
3 NMO members feel they can rely on one another for guidance and advice in their distributorships.	3.98	0.93	High
4 NMO participants support one another in their work.	4.09	0.92	High
Overall Mean	3.99	0.87	High

The result on the high level of social cohesion concurs with the studies of Alshwayat et al. (2021) and Kumar and Kumar Satsangi (2021), which identified that teams with a high level of social cohesion are more likely to engage in network marketing, enjoying a significant level of trust, collaboration, and support for each other. Subsequently, it ratifies Blackman's (2021) research, which found that NMBs emphasizing a strong level of social cohesion, which includes encouraging friendships among salespeople and regular communication between a distributor and their upline, transform MLMs into primarily social activities with high dependability for advice and support from one another regarding distributorships. Contrariwise, the high-level social cohesion result refutes the findings of Delfgaauw et al. (2020), which exposed that team support and cooperation have no bearing on social cohesion in and of themselves.

3.5 Level of Entrepreneurial Performance

The data provided in Table 5 relates to the network marketers' level of entrepreneurial performance. The data resulted in a total mean of 3.91 (favorable), which is considered high. This result implies that network marketers are experiencing increased production, creating new business units, raising sales, and generating profit.

Table 5. *The level of entrepreneurial performance of the network marketers*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Increased Production			
1 The acceptance of their NMBs has increased in the last 3 years.	3.85	1.00	High
2 Their NMBs are experiencing increased production capacity.	3.89	0.96	High
3 Their NMBs are experiencing an increase in sales volume.	3.94	0.97	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.89	0.90	<i>High</i>
Business Unit Development			
4 They are adding NMB unit/s.	3.47	1.16	High
5 They can achieve the target amount and quality of production.	3.87	0.98	High
6 Their NMBs have new product innovations.	4.06	0.95	High
7 Their loyal customers increase.	4.09	0.95	High
8 Their NMB production capacity can meet consumer demand with inventory.	3.98	0.97	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.89	0.83	<i>High</i>
Increase in Sales Amount			
9 They provide after-sales service for customer satisfaction	3.98	0.96	High
10 Many new clients are purchasing their products.	4.00	0.98	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.99	0.92	<i>High</i>
Business Profit Earned			
11 The annual sales quota they set was achieved.	3.84	1.00	High
12 The significant increase in customers has increased operating profit.	3.93	0.99	High
<i>Category Mean</i>	3.89	0.96	<i>High</i>
Overall Mean	3.91	0.84	High

The result of the high level of entrepreneurial performance aligns with the articles written by AARP (2018) and Skander (2023), which show that network marketers' high level of performance is proven, with most members turning a profit within their start-up months and top performers generating impressive revenue earnings. It similarly supplements a 2016 study by Uppalury and Vedulla, which indicated that network marketers who exhibited higher entrepreneurial performance experienced launching new business units, growing sales volumes, and acquiring greater monetary rewards. Moreover, the finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Grade (2019) and Uzochukwu (2021), which discovered that a positive indication of high-performing network marketers is foremost manifested with a significant increase in customer loyalty; thus, statement 7's compelling rating of 4.09 pinned increased customer loyalty.

Increased Production

The first indicator resulted in a category mean of 3.89 (favorable), which appears to be high. This data hints that network marketers are experiencing increased production, sales, and market acceptance. The high level of increased production supports the findings of Sariwulan et al. (2020), which revealed that entrepreneurs experiencing higher production capacity benefit from increased business acceptance and sales volume. It also adheres to the conclusions of Ezekiel O's research (2018) and Teruel-Sánchez et al. (2021), which underscore that improving an entrepreneur's performance is seen as increasing production capacity and producing more.

Business Unit Development

The overall mean for the second indicator, business unit development, generated a category mean of 3.89 (evident), regarded as high. This result implies that network marketers are expanding their commercial operations, meeting targeted amounts and quality production capacities, developing new product innovations, and increasing customer loyalty. The result of a high level of business unit development parallels the article by Rioux (2020), which claims that organizations that heavily invest in business unit development ultimately achieve their goals of meeting sales targets, encouraging customer loyalty, and retaining customers. It also bolsters the conclusions of Gallo (2014), Freedman (2023), and Holland (2023) that a high level of business unit development, along with product innovation and client-based growth, resembles optimizing customer retention rates through customer loyalty.

Increase in Sales Amount

Regarding the third indicator, the increase in sales amount, we obtained a high categorical mean of 3.99 (favorable). This finding implies that network marketers' sales increased due to more satisfied customers and new customers buying more products. The result of a high level of increase in sales amount stands in line with the realization from the studies of Sebikari (2019) and Sariwulan et al. (2020) that a high amount of sales in entrepreneurship – which can be gauged by ROI, market share percentage, profitability ratios, and sales growth – proves high customer satisfaction. In the MLM context, this result also corresponds to Rezvani et al.'s (2017) research findings that network marketers' high-performance levels manifest sales increases in urging new clients to purchase their offered goods and services.

Business Profit Earned

The fourth indicator, business profit earned, got a category mean of 3.89, proving that network marketers' high entrepreneurial performance was sufficiently remunerated with the achievement of their annual sales targets and a significant increase in customer base, leading to a much higher operational profit. This result complements Sebikari's (2019) and Jayathilaka's (2020) emphasis on performance nearing the company's financial targets, which is evident in improved production, sales, and operating profit. Similarly, it also harmonizes with the International Res Jour Managt Socio Human's (2014) discovery that top sales performers receive compensation for their sales and the income generated by recruited salespeople, resulting in significantly higher business profit earned.

3.6 Correlation between Variables

The correlation analysis results are shown in Table 6. This study's independent variables – self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion – are statistically correlated with entrepreneurial performance ($p < .05$). When these factors improve, entrepreneurial performance behavior is also enhanced.

Table 6. *Correlation between variables*

Variables Paired with Entrepreneurial Performance	R	p-value	Remarks
Self-Efficacy	.79	.00	Significant
Entrepreneurial Commitment	.82	.00	Significant
Entrepreneurial Orientation	.76	.00	Significant
Social Cohesion	.8	.00	Significant

This statistically significant correlational result verifies several studies. For instance, the result supports the studies of Hallak et al. (2012), Kregar and Antončič (2015), and Hermiö (2023), which revealed a strong correlation between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial performance, recognizing that a great deal of attention should be put on increasing an entrepreneur's self-efficacy. It also reinforces earlier research investigations by Ezekiel (2018) and Labausa (2018) that found a direct relationship between entrepreneurial commitment and performance.

Meanwhile, the result also supports the studies of Lindsay et al. (2014), Bucktowar et al. (2015), and Liang et al. (2019), which reported a positive relationship between network marketers' entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial performance outcomes. More so, as to the inquiry on the association of social cohesion with the entrepreneurial performance of network marketers in the MLM industry, the result of this study's correlational analysis affirms the study findings of Dai et al. (2016) and Blackman (2021) that network marketers who experienced higher social cohesion achieved better performance results, including sales volume and team success; hence, there is a significant connection between social cohesion and entrepreneurial performance. Collectively, this study's findings jive with those of prior studies, proving that network marketers' entrepreneurial performance is significantly correlated with their self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion.

3.7 Influencers of Entrepreneurial Performance

The regression analysis results, as shown in Table 7, revealed that among the four independent variables, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion could significantly affect entrepreneurial performance in their singular capacity ($p < .05$). It implies that self-efficacy needs the assistance of other variables to influence entrepreneurial performance. These factors, with beta coefficients of .25, .37, .19, and .36, indicate that a unit increase in self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and

social cohesion results in a .25, .37, .19, and .36 improvement in the entrepreneurial performance of the network marketers, respectively.

Table 7. *Influencers of entrepreneurial performance*

Variables	B	p-value	T	Remarks
Self-Efficacy	.25	.00	5.01	Significant
Entrepreneurial Commitment	.37	.00	6.66	Significant
Entrepreneurial Orientation	.19	.00	3.84	Significant
Social Cohesion	.36	.00	7.42	Significant

Note: $r^2 = .763$, $p = .00$, $F = 254.62$

The statistically significant influence of self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion on network marketers' entrepreneurial performance accords with the findings of several studies. For example, it resonates with the study findings of Kregar and Antončič (2015), Khalil et al. (2021), and Hermiö (2023) that self-efficacy had been proven to be a strong predictor of entrepreneurial performance. Similarly, the result of a significant influence of entrepreneurial commitment on entrepreneurial performance affirms the studies of Clouse (2014), Murnieks et al. (2014), and Ahmad et al. (2022), which concluded that an entrepreneur's commitment is one of the most significant antecedents of the best possible entrepreneurial performance. Furthermore, the result of a positive impact of entrepreneurial orientation on entrepreneurial performance aligns with the study reports of Cuevas et al. (2019), Mulyana and Hendar (2020), and Huang et al. (2022), which found that entrepreneurial orientation is considered an independent variable influencing the performance of entrepreneurs and that the risk-taking, innovative, and proactive' components of entrepreneurial orientation serve as the key drivers of entrepreneurial performance.

Nonetheless, the significant influence of social cohesion on entrepreneurial performance supports the studies of Dai et al. (2016) and Blackman (2021), which identified social cohesion as a significant determinant that advantageously motivates entrepreneurs' performance in the NMO sector. Regarding the regression model, the r^2 of .763 indicates that 76.3 percent of the variation in network marketers' entrepreneurial performance could be attributed to the combined influence of self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion.

4.0 Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion are critical factors influencing the entrepreneurial performance of network marketers. Network marketers with high self-efficacy are better equipped to achieve challenging goals, persist through difficulties, and apply effective marketing strategies, ultimately boosting sales and entrepreneurial success. Their strong entrepreneurial commitment—encompassing affective, behavioral, and continuance commitment—further enhances their likelihood of succeeding in MLM ventures. The study also highlights the importance of entrepreneurial orientation, with network marketers showing a propensity for risk-taking, innovation, and proactive behaviors, all of which contribute positively to their entrepreneurial performance. Similarly, social cohesion within network marketing teams plays a crucial role, as strong bonds, trust, and effective communication foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving, leading to improved outcomes.

The results reveal a high level of entrepreneurial performance among network marketers, reflected in increased production, new business creation, higher sales, and profitability. The correlation analysis confirms that self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion are significantly related to entrepreneurial performance. These findings align with Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action, which emphasizes the role of attitudes, intentions, and social norms in driving positive outcomes. Moreover, regression analysis underscores the combined influence of the four variables, explaining 76.3% of the variation in entrepreneurial performance. This supports Vroom's Expectancy Theory, highlighting how self-efficacy, commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion enhance effort, persistence, and performance toward achieving desired rewards. This study establishes that the interplay of self-efficacy, entrepreneurial commitment, entrepreneurial orientation, and social cohesion significantly impacts network marketers' entrepreneurial performance, offering valuable insights for optimizing success in MLM ventures.

5.0 Contributions of Author

The author indicates contributions to each section. The author confirms to have conceptualized, designed, analyzed, drafted, and revised the manuscript.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest about the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researcher extends heartfelt gratitude to her mentor, Dr. Joseph Elmer G. Noval, for his invaluable guidance and expertise throughout this research. She also thanks Dr. Emma V. Sagarino, Dr. Rowenna Mae C. De Jesus, Dr. Dunhill Z. Bilog, Dr. Mary Jane B. Amoguis, and Dr. Presentacion C. Acosta for their critical insights and encouragement. Appreciation is given to the network marketing organizations for providing essential resources and data access. More importantly, the researcher expresses profound gratefulness to her family, Nanay Fe, Kuya Ontong, and Manang Ampy, for their unwavering support and understanding. Above all, she offers all praises to our Father God for His boundless grace and love.

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A Dive into the Experiences on Menopause and Andropause

Cherry Faith Y. Carmona*, Ivan B. Bancil, Maedane Loise B. Beberino,
Marc Ceasar Nastor, Darwin F. Ignacio
Notre Dame of Dadiangas University, General Santos City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: cherryong19@gmail.com

Date received: February 5, 2024

Date revised: February 18, 2025

Date accepted: March 6, 2025

Originality: 93%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 7%

Recommended citation:

Carmona, C. F., Bancil, I., Beberino, M. L., Nastor, M. C., & Ignacio, D. (2025). A dive into the experiences on menopause and andropause. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 17-31.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.063>

Abstract. Menopause and andropause are significant biological transitions that individuals experience, yet they are often surrounded by misunderstanding and stigma. For women, menopause signifies the end of reproductive capability, while men typically undergo a gradual decline in reproductive function. This study sought to explore the experiences of individuals undergoing menopause and andropause, focusing on their biological, cognitive, psychological, and social experiences. The researchers employed a qualitative phenomenological research design, conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews with twelve (12) participants: six (6) women experiencing menopause and six (6) men experiencing andropause, selected through purposive sampling. The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The results indicated that individuals experiencing menopause and andropause encounter a range of experiences, including managing health issues, adapting to physical changes, handling personal relationships, coping with heightened emotions, and changed social dynamics. Additionally, the findings revealed the interconnectedness of biological changes, cognitive difficulties, psychological effects, and social dynamics. Recognizing these diverse experiences is essential for understanding their impact on well-being. The study's findings could serve as a foundation for developing interventions to enhance individuals' welfare and provide strategies to address these multifaceted challenges.

Keywords: Andropause; Lived experiences; Menopause; Philippines.

1.0 Introduction

Menopause and andropause, representing universal biological transitions bound to be experienced by all, mark a change from the reproductive years often veiled in mystery and stigma. For women, menopause marks the end of fertility, while most men typically do not undergo a similarly dramatic decline in reproductive function, impacting cognitive changes (Goldstein, 2021; Martelli et al., 2021; Price, 2021). Although physical symptoms and cognitive changes are slowly recognized, the psychological impact of menopause remains underexplored, especially in diverse cultural settings, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (2022). Similarly, the terminology surrounding andropause has undergone several changes over the years, including terms such as male menopause, male climacteric, and androclise, indicating a lack of exploration of the transition itself, providing little indication for deeper inquiry into this life stage (Singh, 2013, as cited in Çetin et al., 2023). Thus, a deeper understanding of these transitions' biological experiences, cognitive, psychological, and social experiences is needed.

As individuals age, they undergo biological changes, including a natural decline in hormone production in men and hormonal shifts during menopause in women. Menopause and andropause, typically occurring between the ages of 45 and 55, are natural parts of aging that often coincide with the working age, underscoring the intersection

between occupational and life transition experiences (Bacelonia, 2023; Gurarie, 2023; Khan, 2023). Although menopause and andropause can share similar symptoms such as irritability, fatigue, mood swings, and more, the severity and impact of these experiences may vary, with women experiencing severe menopausal symptoms expressing more negative attitudes toward menopause, whereas some men may never experience any significant symptoms (Ali et al., 2020; Krans, 2023; Schwalbe, 2023; Talaulikar, 2022). Therefore, the depth of the biological experiences from which all other experiences will stem emphasizes the need for focused research.

In addition to the need to comprehend hormonal shifts and biological changes, it is crucial to grasp the cognitive functions stemming from the biological aspect. During menopause and andropause, hormonal changes, particularly estrogen in women and testosterone in men, profoundly affect brain function, impacting memory, concentration, and overall cognitive abilities (Burch, 2024; Conde et al., 2021; Goldstein, 2021; Van Der Berg, 2023). Building upon the idea that the severity and impact of experiences may vary between men and women, true enough, it is more of the women who report forgetfulness, lack of focus, and mental clarity (Abootalebi et al., 2019; Maki & Jaff, 2022; Marcin, 2018; Schwalbe, 2023). The interplay of biological changes and cognitive experiences necessitates a more profound inquiry to grasp their implications for cognitive health in this life stage.

Alongside the shifts and changes are psychological experiences that significantly impact everyday life. Given that the mind and body have an interconnection, the shifts mentioned can significantly impact mental health, leading to frequent encounters with issues such as anxiety, depression, and fatigue among men and women undergoing this life transition (An et al., 2022; Amini et al., 2023; Chiu et al., 2020; Hersh, 2020; McDowell, 2023). The variation of the existing and possible experiences highlights the need for a nuanced and expert approach to effectively understand the complex symptoms associated with this stage of life (Bromberger & Epperson, 2018). Acknowledging the interconnection between physical shifts and mental health is crucial to having a balanced understanding of this life stage.

Building upon psychological experiences are interpersonal relationships, society, and social experiences that play a significant role. The dive into social experiences supports the idea of interconnection: our mental growth is influenced by our interactions with our society (National Academies Press, 2019; Huang & Lajoie, 2023). Menopause and andropause occur during the working years, highlighting the overlap between work and this life stage (Ali et al., 2020; Krans, 2023; Schwalbe, 2023; Talaulikar, 2022). This involves social dynamics as people outside their homes surround individuals; therefore, reported attitudes vary, with women experiencing severe menopausal symptoms expressing more negative attitudes toward menopause, whereas some men may never experience any significant symptoms (Bacelonia, 2023; Gurarie, 2023; Khan, 2023). This life stage further illustrates how all experiences intersect, affecting our social dynamics.

Research on menopause and andropause has been extensive globally, yet local studies that delve deeper into the biological, cognitive, psychological, and social experiences, while providing qualitative insights, remain scarce. Christina Metcalf, Ph.D., from the University of Colorado School of Medicine, emphasizes that this life stage is crucial for addressing psychological needs and advocates for focused studies to understand these experiences better, highlighting the need for widespread education and psychoeducation initiatives during these biological transitions (DeAngelis, 2023). By advancing research beyond academic inquiry, we can enhance awareness and develop tailored programs to support individuals navigating menopause and andropause.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative-phenomenological research design to focus on understanding individuals' experiences, particularly regarding menopause and andropause. A qualitative research design delves into real-world issues, providing deeper insights and the necessity of understanding to explain and provide solutions (Hailey, 2024; Tenny et al., 2022). Also, this research design provides understanding by collecting non-numerical information, avoiding generalization, and aiming for a deeper understanding of phenomena (Levitt, 2021; Nassaji, 2020). Thus, the qualitative research design enables researchers to better understand individuals' experiences during menopause and andropause.

The research design highlights the experiences of the participants. According to Delve et al. (2022), a phenomenological approach is used to understand the universal essence of a phenomenon by exploring the perspectives of individuals who have directly encountered it. Additionally, using the phenomenological approach effectively explores lived experiences, for it helps acquire a more profound understanding of human thinking and expands researchers' knowledge about a particular phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019). This research design enabled the researchers to explore and understand the experiences of individuals undergoing menopause and andropause, with a specific focus on providing detailed descriptions of their biological, cognitive, psychological, and social experiences.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in General Santos City, where individuals undergoing menopause and andropause currently reside. The researchers interviewed participants through onsite visits at their locations.

2.3 Research Participants

In this study, the researchers interviewed twelve (12) participants. Six (6) women participants were interviewed based on their experiences with menopause, while the other six (6) participants were men experiencing andropause. Participants were within the age range of 45-55, which is typical for those experiencing menopause and andropause. They had also been residents of General Santos City for at least ten years, as long-term residency and the local environment could impact health, experiences, and attitudes (Davis et al., 2023; Lindberg, 2023; Samipoor et al., 2017; Staff, 2023; Su & Zhou, 2022; Toruńczyk-Ruiz & Martinović, 2020). Lastly, respondents were eligible to participate in the study regardless of their marital status, as menopause and andropause are biological processes. However, the researchers excluded participants with cognitive impairments or psychiatric conditions that could affect the accuracy of their self-reports related to menopause and andropause. Participants with a history of major surgeries or medical interventions that may impact hormone levels were also excluded, such as those using pills or contraceptives, as researchers aimed to reduce the risk of potential confounding factors.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researchers gathered the necessary data through individual interviews, specifically semi-structured face-to-face interviews. A semi-structured interview was one of the safety protocols used to collect data and guide the researchers during the interview process. It helped ensure that the questions asked did not cause harm to the participants (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Mutudi (2022) stated that a semi-structured interview involved a series of open-ended questions and strategies for conducting face-to-face interviews. This served as a guide to inform participants about the flow of the interview session. A researcher-made interview guide questionnaire consisting of twelve (12) questions served as the primary investigative tool for the study. In qualitative research, it is recommended to start with collecting a small amount of data before diving into data analysis (Belk, 2013, as cited in Fischer & Guzel, 2022). A local gynecologist, a licensed psychologist, and a licensed psychometrician validated the questions. Moreover, the researchers conducted face-to-face interviews at a secure and accessible venue for the participants and themselves.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researchers employed various steps to gather the needed data. The procedures, in detail, were as follows:

The researchers initially secured the study's approval from their thesis adviser and college dean. Following this, they drafted a letter addressed to selected individuals through heterogeneous purposive sampling to initiate the collection of preliminary participant information using a pre-survey. An initial assessment was conducted using messenger, an online communication platform to gather essential information from participants, such as their contact details. Subsequently, the researchers compiled and analyzed all received responses to establish inclusion and exclusion criteria. Next, the researchers created an interview guide questionnaire to explore the experiences of individuals undergoing menopause and andropause. This questionnaire, comprising approximately twelve (12) questions, served as a tool to facilitate data collection and enhance understanding of the difficulties encountered by individuals in these stages. Before implementation, the research instrument underwent validation by experts in the field, specifically a local gynecologist, a psychologist, and a psychometrician.

Afterward, the researchers prepared a letter of approval signed by the thesis adviser and college dean, authorizing research activities. They also drafted a parental permit to ensure awareness and consent for participation in data-gathering procedures conducted in General Santos City. Participants had to sign informed consent forms to confirm their voluntary participation and understanding of the study's key aspects. A pilot interview involving four (4) participants was conducted to test the effectiveness and clarity of the interview questions and procedures. This pilot phase helped refine the interview protocol before proceeding with complete data collection. Research participants then responded to the researchers' questions using the validated instrument during individual semi-structured interviews conducted in their homes.

2.6 Data Analysis

To interpret the data effectively, the researchers utilized Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, renowned for its accessibility and flexibility in psychology. This qualitative method involved identifying the data's patterns, themes, and meanings to gain insight into participants' experiences. The analysis followed a structured process that included familiarizing with the data, coding, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the analysis. The researchers immersed themselves thoroughly in the data by reviewing interview transcripts to understand the experiences of individuals with menopause and andropause, laying a solid foundation for analysis. They systematically coded meaningful text segments to identify key concepts and experiences, organizing the data into categories for more straightforward analysis and pattern recognition.

Building upon the coded data, the researchers identified common patterns to generate overarching themes that represented recurring ideas across the dataset, providing a framework for interpretation. They reviewed and refined these themes to ensure accuracy by revisiting transcripts and employing peer debriefing to validate the integrity of the thematic analysis, aiming for transparency and rigor. Themes were clearly defined with descriptive names that articulated their content and meaning, facilitating understanding for researchers and readers while ensuring alignment with research questions and objectives. In the final stage, researchers synthesized the thematic analysis into a coherent narrative for publication, adhering to scholarly conventions to present findings transparently, clearly, and rigorously. This process contributed valuable insights into participants' experiences. Through thematic analysis, the researchers aimed to uncover rich insights into the experiences of menopause and andropause, thereby enhancing understanding of these significant life stages.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Maintaining anonymity in research is a critical consideration. Anonymity in research, as emphasized by Hoft (2021), is a crucial aspect as it entails ensuring that the identity of research participants remains undisclosed throughout the study process, including data collection, analysis, and reporting. Ensuring anonymity involves the protection of participants and shielding them from potential consequences or societal stigmatization associated with their personal experiences regarding menopause and andropause.

Confidentiality and the privacy of the participants were essential to the researchers. Retaining accuracy and integrity was crucial in the collection of data. Confidentiality was vital to protecting participants' personal information, especially in cases where their identity was known (Hoft, 2021). Also, the rights of the participants to their data should be respected and given the utmost importance (Shaughnessy, 2020). The researchers followed the instructions, ensuring that all collected data, including personal profiles and responses, remained confidential. Confidentiality protected participants from potential stigma or discrimination related to their hormonal health, ensuring that individuals felt secure in sharing their experiences regarding menopause and andropause.

Providing all necessary information is a priority. Informed consent outlines the research's main aim and essential details for prospective participants (Kunz et al., 2020). This information enhances participants' understanding of the study, allowing them to make informed decisions about their involvement and recognize any potential risks (Bazzano et al., 2021). Researchers view informed consent as crucial for ensuring that participants can fully comprehend and voluntarily engage in the study without coercion.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The identified themes are presented based on the experiences of individuals with andropause and menopause. The data have been organized to highlight both andropause and menopause in terms of biological experiences, cognitive experiences, psychological experiences, and social experiences.

3.1 Biological Experiences of Individuals with Andropause

This section outlines several key themes that reflect the diverse biological experiences of individuals undergoing andropause. The identified themes include: (1) physical exhaustion, (2) decreased physical energy, (3) changes in eating behavior, (4) decrease in immune system, and (5) reduced sexual motivation. These themes are further supported by the participants' responses, illustrating the impact of andropause on their daily lives.

Theme 1: Physical Exhaustion

During andropause, individuals often report significant physical exhaustion, which manifests in many forms such as bodily exhaustion and work-related exhaustion. Bodily exhaustion, characterized by a constant sense of tiredness and reduced physical capability that makes daily tasks more difficult, is closely linked to declining testosterone levels that decrease by about 1% each year (Haque et al., 2016; Hogan et al., 2020). This decline is associated with fatigue, mood swings, and decreased energy, negatively impacting work efficiency (Bhasin et al., 2010). Addressing these issues through appropriate interventions, including hormone therapy and lifestyle modifications, may help alleviate some of the burdens associated with physical fatigue during andropause (Haque et al., 2016; BodyLogicMD, 2022). As men experience these physiological changes, they may find it increasingly difficult to engage in physical activities, leading to a cycle of inactivity that can worsen their overall health and well-being.

Theme 2: Decreased Physical Energy

Decreased physical energy is common for men experiencing andropause, significantly affecting their daily lives. As testosterone levels decline, many men report increased fatigue and reduced energy, making engaging in physical activities or completing everyday tasks difficult (Bhasin et al., 2006; Buvat et al., 2010). Low testosterone is closely linked to fatigue in aging men, highlighting the hormonal changes' impact on energy levels, which often leads to decreased motivation to exercise and creates a cycle of inactivity that worsens fatigue, further affecting work performance and personal relationships. (Bonci, 2009; McBride et al. 2015). Restoring testosterone through healthier lifestyle choices, such as regular exercise and balanced nutrition, can improve energy levels and overall quality of life during andropause (Mawer & Ajmera, 2023; Fischer, 2024). Decreased energy during andropause impacts physical health and overall well-being, underscoring the importance of early intervention and lifestyle changes to manage its effects.

Theme 3: Changes in Eating Behavior

Changes in eating behavior can result from various factors, including lifestyle shifts and emotional influences, with stressful events such as job changes or personal challenges often leading to altered eating patterns and affecting appetite (Hill et al., 2021). Both men and women experience physiological and psychological changes that negatively impact their eating habits and may lead to adverse long-term health outcomes if not managed properly (Versele et al., 2021). Participants have reported a preference for avoiding unhealthy foods. Regular exercise and balanced nutrition are essential for improving energy levels and overall quality of life during andropause, highlighting the importance of addressing these changes to enhance well-being.

Theme 4. Decreased in the Immune System

Andropause, as described by participants, often weakens the immune system, making them more susceptible to illnesses. Shields et al. (2020) emphasize that immune system processes are influenced by social, neurocognitive, and behavioral factors, challenging the traditional view that immune function is solely regulated by pathogen exposure and physiological processes. The author notes that chronic stress, poor nutrition, lack of sleep, and underlying health conditions can further impair immune function. While individual immune responses may vary, Brodin and Davis (2016) highlight that they generally remain stable over time. Even minor health issues can compromise the immune response during andropause, increasing susceptibility to illness (Weng & Pawelec, 2019). Therefore, addressing these challenges through balanced nutrition and proactive health measures is essential for improving immune health during this critical life stage.

Theme 5. Reduced Sexual Motivation

Reduced sexual motivation during andropause is a significant concern for participants, impacting their quality of life and intimate relationships. As testosterone levels decline, men may experience symptoms such as decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, and reduced sexual satisfaction (Chawla, 2024). Psychological factors, including stress, can exacerbate low libido, creating a cycle where reduced sexual motivation leads to increased emotional distress (Shields et al., 2020). Addressing this issue requires a holistic approach, including medical evaluation of testosterone levels and lifestyle changes like regular exercise, stress management, and healthy eating, which can boost well-being and improve sexual motivation (Khoo et al., 2013; Brodin & Davis, 2016). Understanding and addressing these factors is essential for maintaining fulfilling relationships during andropause.

3.2 Cognitive Experiences of Individuals with Andropause

Several themes reflect the cognitive experiences of individuals undergoing andropause, with a total of four (5) themes related to their cognitive challenges encountered. These (5) themes will be discussed in the following paragraph:

Theme 1. Cognitive Decline

Participants reported struggling with cognitive decline, often misplacing items and having difficulty recalling tasks due to exhaustion, with this issue perceived as more significant among older individuals, reflecting ageist assumptions about cognitive decline (Cherry et al., 2020). The impact of cognitive decline on daily life was exacerbated during andropause, where fatigue from work-related challenges made it even harder to remember tasks or locate items. Participants often reported absent-mindedness, memory gaps, and memory lapses, especially in the workplace. The mentioned are generally defined as bothersome impairments in recalling information known to be stored in memory, while these issues can accompany various physical and neurological conditions, they are also common in depressive states (Förstl et al., 2001). Overall, experiencing cognitive decline is a frequent human experience that can manifest in everyday situations, such as struggling to remember names or specific details, highlighting the need for understanding and support during this transitional phase.

Theme 2. Mindset Shifting

Participants shared that they consciously shift their mindsets to engage positively with challenges, focusing on solutions rather than stress. This transformation fosters personal growth and resilience, as they believe that abilities can be developed through effort rather than viewing them as fixed traits (Kouzes & Posner, 2019). By embracing a growth mindset, individuals learn to see challenges as opportunities for development, significantly enhancing their leadership capabilities, work efficiency and overall effectiveness (Heifetz, 2020). This adaptive thinking enables them to align their values with the realities they face, ultimately leading to improved decision-making and problem-solving.

Theme 3. Decisions Prioritizing Family Needs

Participants emphasized a collaborative approach in family-focused discussions, where members engage in decision-making that impacts the entire unit, fostering open communication and mutual respect while considering each member's perspectives and needs. Although family-focused practices (FFP) are recognized for their importance in adult mental health services, evidence shows they are not routinely implemented (Tuck et al., 2022). Effective family communication enhances relationships and promotes shared responsibility, improving overall satisfaction. Additionally, involving trained family members in educational roles has been shown to increase the preparedness of medical trainees in core communication competencies (Parham et al., 2019). By prioritizing family involvement, families can strengthen their bonds and better support one another through challenges.

Theme 4. Changes in Cognitive Agility

Participants noted challenges with quick thinking during andropause, often feeling that their cognitive speed was diminished. Despite this, they strive to complete tasks efficiently, demonstrating a commitment to their responsibilities even when fatigued. They expressed determination to work effectively despite the difficulties associated with this life stage, reflecting an understanding of the cognitive processes involved in decision-making, where quick thinking may not always be feasible. However, effort and intention can lead to satisfactory outcomes (Hoerl & McCormack, 2018). Participants aim to prove their capability and resilience during this period by focusing on their family's future.

3.3 Psychological Experiences of Individuals with Andropause

The psychological experiences of andropause encompass a range of challenges that men may face during this period. Five (5) key themes emerged from the gathered data, highlighting the various struggles associated with andropause. These themes are discussed in the following paragraphs:

Theme 1. Prone to Stress

Stress during andropause is a crucial aspect of maintaining mental and emotional well-being. Panigrahi (2016) noted that stress is often viewed as a disruption to the normal functioning of the body and mind, and excessive stress can lead to harmful effects on both physical and psychological health. Many individuals describe feelings of losing control and reacting impulsively due to stress. While various factors contribute to this stress, one notable factor is financial instability, which participants have also mentioned ("Stress in America 2020: A National Mental Health Crisis," 2020; Zito et al., 2023). In light of this understanding, Worthen and Cash (2023) emphasize that effective stress management techniques, including mindfulness practices, regular exercise, and adequate sleep, can help mitigate these negative impacts. Thus, effectively managing stress during andropause is essential for maintaining mental health, especially in the face of parenting challenges and financial pressures.

Theme 2. Irritable Mood

Increased irritability and difficulties in anger management were prominent among participants, marking a significant psychological challenge during andropause. Many reported that heightened irritability affected their daily lives, expressing feelings of losing control and reacting impulsively, which underscores how stress can hinder emotional regulation and lead to angry outbursts. This increased irritability, commonly associated with hormonal fluctuations and psychological stressors experienced by men during andropause, can lead to conflicts in personal relationships, as Zito et al. (2023) indicate that changes in testosterone levels contribute to mood disturbances, including irritability and frustration. Such heightened irritability and anger can lead to conflicts in personal and professional relationships, further complicating social interactions and overall well-being (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Addressing these emotional challenges is essential for improving quality of life during this life stage.

Theme 3. Dealing with Emotional Struggles

Participants revealed that significant life events, such as the death of a loved one and infidelity, create heavy emotional burdens that profoundly affect their overall well-being during andropause. According to Franco et al. (2017), unexpected losses can lead to intense emotional distress and overwhelming grief. Similarly, the pain from infidelity represents a significant emotional struggle, as participants expressed feelings of betrayal and hurt, illustrating how infidelity can break trust and cause deep emotional pain. Zito et al. (2023) highlight that infidelity not only impacts relationships but also severely affects an individual's self-esteem and emotional health, resulting in feelings of anger and worthlessness. These experiences underscore the need for understanding and support in coping with such significant emotional challenges.

Theme 4. Mental Exhaustion

The cycle of stress can trap individuals in a state of fatigue that makes it difficult to recharge, especially during andropause. Participants reported feeling drained and overwhelmed due to mental exhaustion, mainly stemming from excessive workloads, highlighting how demanding work environments can lead to significant mental fatigue. This aligns with the findings of Sonnentag and Fritz (2015), who emphasize that heavy workloads can result in burnout and negatively impact mental well-being, noting that consistently pushing beyond one's limits fosters fatigue and a growing sense of disengagement from work. Additionally, Maslach and Leiter (2016) indicate that chronic work stress adversely affects both productivity and emotional health, leading to increased frustration and diminished job satisfaction, which contributes to a downward spiral of mental fatigue and decreased motivation. This cycle can be incredibly intense during andropause, as the cumulative effects of stress may worsen feelings of helplessness and disengagement, making it harder to cope and recharge, highlighting the need to address these challenges to improve overall well-being through interventions.

Theme 5. Mental Distress

The interview results highlight the complexities of the theme Mental Distress, encompassing anxieties related to one's thoughts and apprehension about negative influences from external sources. Participants expressed significant anxiety regarding their internal thought processes, particularly concerning their loved ones. The fear of thinking differently or harboring unacceptable thoughts about one's spouse illustrates the profound emotional conflict individuals experience, reinforcing the idea that personal relationships heavily influence mental states. This aligns with existing literature on the internal struggle associated with cognitive dissonance in intimate relationships as men may also worry about how their thoughts or behaviors will be perceived by peers, leading to increased social anxiety (Nicholson & Lutz, 2017). Barmanpek (2020) notes that individuals often fear negative judgment from others, which can hinder their willingness to express themselves and seek support. This significant fear can contribute to emotional distress and impede effective communication with others, underscoring the need for understanding and support in navigating these challenges.

3.4 Social Experiences of Individuals with Andropause

Several themes capture the social experiences of individuals going through andropause. Four (4) themes related to their social interactions and support systems during this transition. The first theme of social experiences is increased involvement in society:

Theme 1. Community Engagement

Active social interaction is critical in fostering community engagement through inclusive behaviors and kindness, particularly for older men experiencing andropause. Engaging in social interactions has been linked to improved mental health outcomes, helping to reduce feelings of loneliness and depression prevalent during this period, as research indicates that social networks and regular interactions with peers significantly enhance emotional resilience among older adults (Bhatta et al., 2020; Cohen & McKay, 2020). This suggests that altruistic actions, such as showing kindness to others, can create a positive feedback loop that enriches social experiences and promotes overall mental health during andropause.

Theme 2. Selective Socialization

Individuals experiencing andropause often engage in selective socializing, opting for fewer social interactions. To support this, Vitale and Smith (2022) say that hormonal changes can lead to altered mood states, resulting in a preference for solitude or familiar social settings, so this social reservation is a common response during andropause, as older individuals may grapple with feelings of inadequacy or vulnerability. Additionally, men often feel pressure to conform to societal expectations of masculinity, which can lead to withdrawal from social engagements (Cooper et al., 2023). This pressure fosters feelings of isolation and hinders meaningful connections, ultimately affecting emotional well-being and social support networks. Understanding these social challenges is essential, as addressing them can promote healthier coping strategies and enhance overall well-being during andropause.

Theme 3. Having a Social Support System

Community support plays a vital role in enhancing social well-being during andropause. Participation in community activities fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, effectively counteracting the loneliness often experienced during this transition (Dadswell et al., 2017). Also, the stress-buffering model proposed by Liu et al. (2023) suggests that social support is crucial in reducing social stress and promoting physical health in response to external stressors. These elements highlight the interplay between external support and individual characteristics in mitigating stress. Engaging with community resources and support groups can help men build new social connections and reinforce existing relationships, further promoting their mental and emotional health during this transitional phase.

Theme 4. Open Peer Communication

Open communication is vital for fostering understanding and support among peers throughout andropause. Participants noted that transparency strengthens relationships and helps individuals navigate the changes of this life stage, creating a supportive environment where shared experiences and concerns can be openly addressed. One example is the tendency to quickly apologize to peers, which reflects a heightened awareness of interpersonal dynamics and a desire to maintain harmony in social relationships, as noted by a participant. Lewis et al. (2015)

suggest that successfully resolving conflicts and expressing remorse can enhance social connections, particularly during challenging times. This is further supported by Palmer et al. (2019), who said that open lines of communication are closely associated with improved emotional adjustment and effective coping strategies. For men with andropause, open communication facilitates sharing feelings and concerns, encourages mutual support, and creates stronger connections with peers, ultimately reducing feelings of isolation.

3.5 Biological Experiences of Individuals with Menopause

The biological experiences of menopause present a range of challenges that individuals encounter during this transition. Analysis reveals four key themes that illustrate the various difficulties related to menopause. These themes will be discussed in the following paragraphs:

Theme 1. Physical Exhaustion

The theme of physical exhaustion during menopause significantly impacts individuals' daily lives, as participants reported exhaustion directly linked to menopausal symptoms. This aligns with findings that identify fatigue as a prevalent issue severely affecting daily functioning and the author also highlights the necessity for comprehensive evaluations of its causes, including psychological and lifestyle factors (Maisel et al., 2021). Additionally, MacDonald (2003) explored the relationship between job demands and stress-related fatigue, noting that work pressures can exacerbate menopausal fatigue. Participants expressed how balancing work responsibilities with menopausal symptoms contributed to their overall exhaustion. Together, these studies underscore the critical interplay between menopausal symptoms and external stressors, justifying the need for targeted support and interventions during this period.

Theme 2. Changes in Physical State

Participants mentioned changes in physical state during menopause that encompass various symptoms affecting health and well-being including headaches, vaginal dryness, dizziness and more. The common complaints linked to hormonal fluctuations associated with menopause are dizziness, headaches hot flashes, nocturnal sweating, mood swings, and vaginal discomfort (Davis et al., 2023; World Health Organization, 2022). In specific, Walker and Barnes (1998) also provide a comprehensive overview of linked to hormonal fluctuations associated with menopause in which dizziness and headaches are part of the many changes. Similarly, a longitudinal study by Waetjen et al. (2018) identifies several factors associated with the development of vaginal dryness symptoms in women with menopause in which can greatly impact sexual health and overall quality of life during this phase. By pinpointing key factors contributing to this condition, the findings emphasize the necessity for lifestyle changes and targeted interventions aimed at addressing these physical changes and improving health outcomes for menopausal women.

Theme 3. Increase in Body Weight

Many participants reported experiencing notable weight changes that can affect their physical health, self-esteem, and overall quality of life. Studies by Wing et al. (1991) and Davis et al. (2012) explore these issues in depth, highlighting significant weight changes during menopause. Wing et al. (1991) found that this transition often coincides with notable weight gain driven by physiological and hormonal factors, underscoring the importance of understanding these changes for effective weight management. Similarly, Davis et al. (2012) emphasized that hormonal fluctuations, lifestyle changes, and aging contribute to weight gain during menopause, advocating for a comprehensive approach to address these multifaceted issues. Together, this theme highlights the presence of increased body weight as a factor that could impact physical health, self-esteem, and overall quality of life.

Theme 4. Nutritional Awareness

Nutritional awareness emerged as a significant theme among participants, highlighting their awareness and understanding of food choices, nutritional value, and health impacts. This concept is particularly relevant for individuals navigating significant life transitions, such as menopause. The article by Dog (2005) reviews various botanical dietary supplements that may support health during menopause, encouraging individuals to be mindful of dietary choices that affect their well-being during this life stage. Similarly, Slavin and Lloyd (2012) emphasize the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, reinforcing the notion that conscious consumption of these foods can lead to improved health outcomes. Together, these studies underscore the importance of informed dietary choices

as a critical component of food consciousness, suggesting that a proactive approach to nutrition can enhance overall health during menopause.

3.6 Cognitive Experiences of Individuals with Menopause

The cognitive experiences of individuals during menopause present a range of challenges that can affect daily functioning and overall well-being. Analysis reveals three key themes that illustrate the various cognitive difficulties associated with this transition. These themes will be discussed in the following paragraphs: hormonal influences, psychological factors, and lifestyle impacts.

Theme 1. Cognitive Challenges

Research indicates that menopause is linked to cognitive challenges primarily due to declining estrogen levels, which can affect memory, attention, and executive function. Conde et al. (2021) emphasized the variability of these experiences based on genetics, lifestyle, and mental health, calling for more research and interventions such as lifestyle changes and cognitive training. Similarly, Goldstein (2021) noted that while memory lapses may occur, they are often temporary and can be mitigated through a healthy lifestyle and mental engagement. As brain fogs were also mentioned by the participants, Maki and Jaff (2022) discuss "brain fog" and provide guidance for healthcare professionals to support women experiencing cognitive changes, highlighting the importance of understanding these challenges for effective management. Overall, a proactive approach is encouraged to help women navigate the cognitive impacts of menopause, ensuring that they receive the necessary support and resources during this life stage.

Theme 2. Struggles in Making Decisions

The struggle with decision-making is a daily challenge influenced by various factors, as expressed by participants. Understanding the complexities of decision-making is crucial, especially since participants have mentioned frustrations and impulsivity alongside this process. Jönsson et al. (1977) propose a framework for understanding how frustration can disrupt decision-making, suggesting that emotional states significantly impact choices. Similarly, Russa et al. (2013) explored how frustration affects decision-making in contexts such as physical discipline, highlighting its influence on the interplay between past experiences and disciplinary attitudes. Hinson et al. (2003) delve into the relationship between impulsive decision-making and working memory, indicating that limitations in cognitive resources can lead to more impulsive choices. Together, these studies underscore the complex dynamics of frustration, cognitive capacity, and past experiences in shaping decision-making struggles.

Theme 3. Shift in Perspective

Participants often experience significant changes in perspective during menopause, particularly toward more positive outlooks. Scheier and Carver (1993) highlight the substantial benefits of positive thinking and optimism for mental and physical health, noting that optimistic individuals tend to have better coping strategies, resilience, and overall well-being. They further suggest that such individuals are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors and persevere through challenges, leading to improved life outcomes. Conversely, Levinson (1998) underscored the importance of focusing on one's strengths to achieve success, especially in fields like biotechnology. He argues that leveraging individual talents fosters innovation and effectiveness, advocating for a mindset that maximizes strengths rather than attempting to improve weaknesses. Together, these perspectives emphasize the value of optimism and strength-based approaches in enhancing health and achieving success.

3.7 Psychological Experiences of Individuals with Menopause

The psychological experiences associated with menopause encompass a variety of challenges that individuals encounter during this period. From the analyzed data, four key themes have emerged, reflecting the diverse difficulties linked to menopause. These themes will be discussed in the following paragraphs:

Theme 1. Increased Emotional Sensitivity

Participants often experience increased emotional sensitivity which impacts their daily lives. The studies by Gordon et al. (2020) and Umeh et al. (2011) highlight the intricate connections between emotional sensitivity, hormonal changes, and decision-making. Gordon et al. (2020) demonstrated that increased mood sensitivity during menopause is linked to a higher likelihood of depressive symptoms, emphasizing the need for personalized mental health interventions for women in this transition. Meanwhile, Umeh et al. (2011) reveal that

individuals with greater emotional vulnerability face more challenges in decision-making, suggesting that fostering emotional resilience and adaptive coping strategies can improve conflict resolution. Together, these findings underscore the importance of understanding emotional dynamics and coping mechanisms in mental health contexts.

Theme 2. Heightened Anger

Anger is a common emotional response that can significantly influence individuals' stress levels and overall well-being. The studies by Mills et al. (1989) and Schieman (2007) shed light on the complex nature of anger and its substantial impact on stress and well-being. Mills et al. (1989) demonstrated that individuals with heightened anger reactivity are more susceptible to stress-related symptoms, underscoring the necessity of assessing anger in clinical contexts to tailor effective stress management strategies. Schieman (2007) further explored the psychological and social dimensions of anger, revealing how social factors and cultural norms influence emotional experiences and interactions. These findings highlight the importance of understanding anger both as an individual emotional response and a social phenomenon.

Theme 3. Relationship Doubts

Doubts in terms of relationships is a common emotional response among participants. Farrell (1980) explored the philosophical dimensions of jealousy, delving into its emotional and moral implications within relationships. He argues that jealousy reveals deeper issues of insecurity and possessiveness, raising ethical questions about its effects on interpersonal dynamics and prompting reflection on its broader social implications. In contrast, Guerrero et al. (1996) focused on the experience and expression of jealousy in romantic relationships, highlighting how it is influenced by individual differences, relational contexts, and cultural factors. They analyze the triggers of jealousy, such as perceived threats to the relationship, and the various ways individuals express their jealousy, from confrontation to withdrawal. These studies provide valuable insights into jealousy, emphasizing the need for understanding and managing this complex emotion to enhance both personal well-being and relationship health.

3.8 Social Experiences of Individuals with Menopause

The social experiences related to menopause involve a range of challenges that individuals face during this significant transition. From the analysis, four main themes have emerged, highlighting the varied complexities associated with menopause. These themes will be explored in the subsequent paragraphs:

Theme 1. Social Participation

Participants often surround themselves with a community, which can significantly influence their well-being and interpersonal relationships. Kaplan et al. (2010) emphasize the importance of creating a culture of mutual respect in healthcare settings to enhance collaboration and improve patient outcomes, advocating for strategies like open dialogue and constructive conflict resolution. Similarly, Zubiri-Esnaola et al. (2020) highlight the role of inclusivity and collaboration in educational environments, noting that these elements encourage active participation and enhance the overall learning experience. Participants also mention that community plays a vital role in their lives, which aligns with Baumeister et al. (2004), who explored gossip as a significant mechanism for cultural learning within social groups, arguing that it helps individuals navigate social dynamics by providing insights into norms and behaviors. Additionally, Ahmed (2008) examines how meaningful social interactions contribute to happiness, positing that these connections significantly enhance overall well-being. These studies underscore the necessity of fostering respectful, inclusive, and engaging environments to enhance collaboration, learning, and personal fulfillment.

Theme 2. Selective Social Interaction

Participants often experience challenges in socialization and express avoidance towards community. Betz et al. (1975) examined how the characteristics of voluntary associations influence selective attraction and socialization among members by emphasizing that shared goals, values, and activities attract individuals with similar interests, thereby fostering interpersonal connections and community cohesion. Similarly, Burger (1995) explored individual differences in the preference for solitude, revealing that while some individuals, especially those with introverted traits or a strong need for autonomy, thrive in solitary environments, others may experience discomfort and loneliness, highlighting the complexity of solitude and its implications for personal well-being.

and social behavior. The interplay between social avoidance and community engagement is particularly relevant during significant life transitions such as menopause.

Theme 3. Dealing with Family Interactions

Participants often navigate complex family dynamics that can significantly influence their personal development and well-being. Conger and Little (2010) investigated the dynamics of sibling relationships during the transition to adulthood, highlighting that while positive connections provide essential emotional support and a sense of belonging that contributes to overall well-being, conflicts can have negative repercussions, underscoring the importance of fostering healthy sibling relationships for a smoother transition into adulthood. Griesemer et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study to explore how different relationship patterns among couples affect physical activity behaviors and motivations, identifying distinct couple types based on support, shared goals, and communication styles, and stressing the importance of understanding these factors when designing tailored interventions to promote active lifestyles and healthier behaviors. Together, these studies illuminate the complex interplay of family dynamics in both sibling and couple relationships, highlighting their impact on personal development and health behaviors.

4.0 Conclusion

This study explored the diverse experiences of individuals going through menopause and andropause, highlighting significant challenges across biological, cognitive, psychological, and social aspects. Participants reported issues such as physical fatigue and hormonal fluctuations that affected their daily lives and contributed to emotional distress. Many experienced cognitive difficulties, including forgetfulness and slower processing speeds, which hindered their ability to perform everyday tasks effectively. Psychologically, increased stress and emotional difficulties related to significant life events highlight the need for strong support systems and open communication to help individuals navigate these challenges. Socially, while some sought greater involvement in their communities to reduce feelings of loneliness, others felt societal pressures that led them to withdraw from social interactions.

A notable difference between menopause and andropause emerged in the specific challenges reported by participants. Women often expressed greater concerns related to physical changes, such as more pronounced symptoms like hot flashes and weight fluctuations. Additionally, they reported feelings of jealousy and insecurity that impacted their emotional well-being. In contrast, men frequently voiced concerns about work-related stress and financial pressures during this transitional period. These differences highlight how societal expectations and personal experiences shape the challenges faced by each gender. While women navigated complex emotional landscapes influenced by physical changes, men tended to focus more on external pressures related to career and financial stability. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for developing targeted interventions that address the unique needs of individuals experiencing menopause or andropause. By tailoring support systems to these distinct experiences, practitioners can better assist individuals in navigating their respective transitions while promoting overall mental health and well-being.

Despite these differences, both menopause and andropause share common experiences that underscore the universal nature of aging. Individuals in both groups may encounter emotional fluctuations, such as mood swings and feelings of irritability, which can affect their interpersonal relationships. Physical symptoms, including fatigue and changes in body composition, are also prevalent in both transitions; women may experience weight gain and decreased energy levels during menopause, while men often report similar issues during andropause. Furthermore, both genders may grapple with a sense of loss regarding their youth and vitality, leading to increased anxiety about aging and its implications on their identity and self-worth. Recognizing these shared experiences can help foster empathy and understanding between genders, paving the way for more inclusive support strategies that address the holistic challenges associated with these life stages.

The findings emphasize the importance of recognizing the diverse experiences associated with menopause and andropause. Throughout the study, the interconnectedness of biological, cognitive, psychological, and social aspects during this phenomenon became evident among participants. This recognition allows individuals to enhance their resilience and improve their overall quality of life, as reflected in Engel's Biopsychosocial Model

(1977), which acknowledges the interplay of these dimensions. This highlights the critical role of balanced support in all aspects to foster overall well-being.

This study is significant for its potential impact on community stakeholders by addressing the challenges of menopause and andropause. It provides valuable insights for both men and women, enhancing their understanding of these life stages. Healthcare professionals can use the findings to tailor care strategies that effectively support patients during these transitions, while policymakers are encouraged to develop targeted programs that address related issues, promote mental health awareness, and reduce stigma. Ultimately, this research serves as a vital resource for improving understanding and support for individuals experiencing these significant life changes, contributing to overall community well-being.

To build upon this foundational work, future research should focus on specific areas such as longitudinal studies examining the long-term psychological impact of menopause and andropause. Additionally, investigating cultural variations in experiences related to these life stages would provide deeper insights into how sociocultural factors influence perceptions and coping strategies. By emphasizing these directions for future studies, this research not only contributes to improving individual well-being but also serves as a critical resource for fostering community-wide awareness and support for individuals navigating these significant life transitions.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors divided the work equally to produce this research. Cherry edited the entire document, gathered related literature, interviewed participants going through menopause, and led the conduct of the study. Maedane regularly checked the paper's formatting, edited various research sections, and interviewed participants going through menopause. Meanwhile, Ivan and Marc assisted by interviewing participants experiencing andropause, gathering relevant literature, and editing certain study sections. Lastly, the research adviser, Darwin, oversaw the entire research process.

6.0 Funding

The research does not receive any funding in its whole conduct from any organization.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest in the conduct of the study.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to acknowledge the individuals who made this study possible: the panel of examiners who helped polish the research, the research experts and professionals who evaluated the validity of the research instruments, the researchers' families and significant people for their support throughout the study's conduct, and most of all, the participants who willingly and actively participated in the study.

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Employee Sustainable Intervention Program for the Department of Social Welfare and Development: The Case of Regional Office V

Jinky A. Mangampo

University of Santo Tomas – Legazpi, Legazpi City, Philippines

Author Email: jinky.mangampo@ust-legazpi.edu.ph

Date received: February 3, 2025

Date revised: February 18, 2025

Date accepted: March 7, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Mangampo, J. (2025). Employee sustainable intervention program for the Department of Social Welfare and Development: The case of Regional Office V. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 32-55.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.055>

Abstract. Human resource management faces rapid changes due to societal and technological shifts, impacting workplace dynamics. In the public sector, voluntary resignations disrupt service continuity and performance, challenging agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development Regional Office V (DSWD RO V) in the Philippines. This study addresses a critical gap in understanding and addressing employee turnover in public sector organizations by designing an intervention program focused on improving retention, job satisfaction, and workplace support in alignment with the agency's mission of service excellence. The study used a mixed-method approach to collect data from surveys and interviews with DSWD RO V employees, management, and former staff. Results revealed key turnover drivers, including poor work-life balance, job insecurity, limited career growth, insufficient recognition, uneven workloads, and inadequate resources. The study recommends implementing integrated retention strategies to address these factors and promote a sustainable, employee-centered environment. The findings contribute significantly to the field by offering actionable solutions for public sector organizations facing similar challenges. Implementing these strategies will strengthen DSWD RO V's workforce and enable it to achieve its mission more effectively. Furthermore, this study provides practical implications for organizational policy and enriches the broader discourse on human resource management in the public sector.

Keywords: Employee retention; Intervention program; Public sector workforce; Work-life balance.

1.0 Introduction

The public sector is essential for a country's economic growth, functioning as the backbone of national progress. It encompasses a diverse range of government organizations, including National Government Agencies (NGAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), Government Financial Institutions (GFIs), and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). These entities handle key responsibilities such as policymaking, infrastructure development, and delivering vital services like education, healthcare, and public safety. With over 1.7 million employees in 2021, the public sector represents the country's largest workforce. However, it faces a significant challenge: high voluntary turnover rates among employees, which disrupt service delivery, lower service quality, and increase costs.

Despite the perceived job security and benefits of public sector roles, turnover persists, as noted by recent studies. Sowa (2021) highlights the importance of understanding why employees leave and the potential of effective human resource management (HRM) policies in addressing this issue. Similarly, Cregård and Corin (2019)

identify inadequate administrative support and unmet expectations as critical factors driving turnover. Hur's (2019) meta-analysis emphasizes the influence of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement on employees' intentions to stay or leave. These findings suggest that current HRM strategies in the public sector may not fully address employee expectations and organizational alignment.

The Philippine government has implemented initiatives to improve retention, such as the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Memorandum Circular No. 6, series of 2022, which introduced flexible work arrangements to promote employee well-being during emergencies. Another significant measure is Executive Order No. 64, series of 2024, which revises salary structures to ensure fair compensation for government employees. Additionally, HRM policies now emphasize creating supportive work environments that prioritize employees' physical, emotional, and social well-being. However, persistent turnover rates suggest that these measures may not address underlying issues such as poor working conditions, limited career growth opportunities, and misaligned organizational goals (Har & Hawley, 2020; Scussiato et al., 2019).

This study seeks to address these challenges by examining sustainable strategies to improve employee retention, motivation, and performance within the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Regional Office V. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for enhancing HRM practices in the broader public sector, ultimately strengthening employee commitment and improving public service delivery. Moreover, the research will support the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in refining policies to stabilize the government workforce. On an academic level, it will inform curriculum improvements at the University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi, offering case studies for organizational behavior and HRM courses. Ultimately, this study aspires to contribute to the well-being of public sector employees, advance the DSWD's mission, and promote sustainable public service delivery nationwide.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative research design methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Ishtiaq, 2019). By combining these two approaches, the study explored existing conditions, relationships, opinions, ongoing processes, and emerging trends with greater depth and breadth. The quantitative component utilized a structured survey questionnaire to collect numerical data, which was analyzed using statistical techniques to draw objective conclusions and generalize findings from the respondents' responses. Complementing this, the qualitative aspect employed an open-ended interview guide to gather detailed insights into specific organizational contexts and events. Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative method focused on understanding particular cases and generating rich, descriptive data, rather than aiming for generalization. By employing both methods, this study achieved a balance between objectivity and contextual understanding, enhancing its overall relevance and reliability. This mixed-methods approach allowed the researchers to address the research problem holistically, leveraging the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

2.2 Research Participants

The study involved a total of 438 participants divided into three groups: DSWD RO V Management, including heads of various sections, offices, and units; rank-and-file employees; and former or separated employees. The participants were selected through a stratified random sampling technique to ensure an ideal representation of each area of assignment. Of the 438 participants, 378 responded, resulting in an 86.30% response rate. For the quantitative phase, all 378 participants completed the structured survey questionnaire, providing numerical data for statistical analysis. Simultaneously, the qualitative phase also involved the same group of respondents, who answered the open-ended interview questions included in the instrument.

2.3 Research Instrument

The instruments used in this research are survey questionnaires and an open-ended interview guide. Two sets of instruments were prepared for three distinct sets of respondents: DSWD RO V Management and Heads of Divisions, Sections, and Offices, rank-and-file employees, and former or separated employees of the Department. The first set of instruments combines the survey questionnaire and interview guide, intended to be answered by the first and second groups of respondents. The researcher has adapted Part I from the exit interview form utilized

by DSWD RO V, with necessary modifications. All other sections or parts of the questionnaire are derived from the researcher's conceptualizations, drawing from a synthesis of multiple research studies analyzed during the research process. The questionnaire is composed of five (5) parts. Part I includes the evaluation of the respondents based on their perception or experience of the status of DSWD RO V human resource management practices or conditions along various indicators using a Likert Scale rating. Part II uses a checklist to determine the positive indicators that the respondents perceived as either absent, inadequate, or needs improvement that contribute to factors influencing employee turnover at DSWD RO V. Part III identifies the level of agreement of the respondents regarding the effects of employee turnover on various areas within DSWD RO V using a Likert Scale. Part IV is an open-ended interview questionnaire to gather suggestions and recommendations from the respondents as to the necessary fundamental components of an employee sustainable intervention program or initiative for DSWD RO V to address the underlying causes of employee turnover and enhance employee retention, thereby facilitating the delivery of more effective and client-responsive services.

Another instrument used in this study is a combination of a survey questionnaire and an interview guide, specifically designed for former and separated employees of DSWD RO V. Adapted and modified from the Vanderbilt Human Resources Exit Interview, this instrument aims to collect detailed insights into the separation experiences of these employees. It includes closed-ended and open-ended questions to evaluate various aspects of their employment experiences and perceptions of their reasons for leaving. To ensure the instrument's validity and reliability, it underwent a thorough review by the institution's panel members and was tested before its dissemination to the identified respondents. The researcher conducted a dry run with ten (10) rank-and-file employees, who were not part of the final sample. These employees provided valuable feedback, comments, and recommendations on the clarity, relevance, and structure of the survey and interview questions. The feedback from the dry run helped identify any ambiguities or potential biases in the instrument. Based on these inputs, the researcher made necessary revisions to improve the instrument, ensuring it accurately addressed the research objectives and measured the intended variables. After incorporating the recommendations, the refined instrument was submitted to the institution's review panel for final approval. Once approved, the instrument was reproduced and administered to the intended respondents.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Before distributing the instruments, the researcher obtained permission from the Regional Director of DSWD RO V and followed the DSWD research protocol by submitting the necessary documents to the Research Evaluation Committee. Following approval, the researcher worked with the Human Resource Management and Development Division (HRMDD) to obtain the contact information of the identified participants. Participants were informed about the study via email and messenger, including details about the questionnaire, interview guide, and consent form. Given the geographical distances of the participants, the researcher chose to distribute the instruments using Google Forms, which allowed for efficient and accessible data collection. The HRMDD assisted with the distribution process, ensuring the instruments reached the intended participants. Participants were provided with a two-week window to complete the instruments, allowing ample time for thoughtful responses. Throughout this period, the researcher remained available to clarify any questions or concerns regarding the instruments. Additionally, follow-up communications were conducted to remind participants of the deadline. While awaiting responses, the researcher also reviewed additional data provided by the HR Department and other publicly available sources, enriching the study and adding further depth to the analysis and interpretation of the results.

2.5 Data Analysis

Various statistical tools were applied to analyze the data, including frequency counts to summarize scores and identify patterns, percentages to compare different figures, and ranking to determine the relative importance of options – weighted means evaluating respondents' perceptions and work experiences across various job aspects. Additionally, thematic analysis was employed to interpret and analyze the responses to the open-ended interview guide from both groups of respondents. This involved systematically coding the data to extract key ideas and concepts and identifying patterns and themes, ensuring that significant insights and meanings from the responses were accurately captured and incorporated into the development of the employee sustainable intervention program.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

To ensure ethical standards, the researcher first sought approval from the Regional Director of DSWD RO V by submitting a formal request to conduct the research and obtain relevant data, adhering to the DSWD research protocol and fulfilling all requirements before starting the study. After receiving approval, survey questionnaires with incorporated consent forms were distributed to the respondents via Google Forms. A copy of the final paper will also be submitted to DSWD RO V upon approval by the panel, serving as a reference for potential future policy development and enhancement and fulfilling the requirements of the Department's Research Evaluation Committee. During the data collection process, strict adherence to research protocols was maintained, ensuring that all data collected from DSWD RO V remained confidential and was used solely for research purposes, in compliance with the Data Privacy Act. Respondent information and responses were securely handled, with participants given the option to remain anonymous. The researcher ensured that no information collected would be used against the respondents, and all data would be used exclusively for research purposes.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Status of Human Resource Practices

Organizational Leadership

Table 1 evaluates the respondents' perceptions regarding the status of DSWD RO V human resource practices, conditions, and organizational leadership. The findings indicate that the leadership at DSWD RO V is generally perceived as effective, with strong strategic planning and communication scores. Most respondents agree that the Department provides clear vision and direction, fostering engagement and motivation (Breau et al., 2018). Communication of goals scored an overall mean of 4.18, resonating strongly with rank-and-file employees who are well-informed and follow directives effectively. For fostering transparency and open communication, the rating was "good" but with room for improvement, especially among management, who gave a mean score of 3.92. Management seeks greater transparency and openness. Support for professional development was rated positively, but budget constraints hinder full implementation of development mechanisms. Aligning with Ozdemir (2024), leadership's commitment to employee growth is vital for retention and effectiveness.

Table 1. *Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Organizational Leadership*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Demonstrates a clear vision and direction.	4.24	4.41	4.32	Good
2. Effectively communicates organizational goals and expectations to employees.	4.06	4.31	4.18	Good
3. Fosters a culture of transparency and open communication.	3.92	4.19	4.06	Good
4. Support for professional development.	4.10	4.24	4.17	Good
5. Concern with quality and excellence.	4.18	4.33	4.25	Good
6. Practice coaching and mentoring to address skills gaps.	3.73	4.14	3.93	Moderate
7. Decision-making processes are transparent and inclusive.	3.67	4.08	3.87	Moderate
8. The organization's leadership fosters a positive work environment.	3.73	4.21	3.97	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.95	4.24	4.10	Good

Legend: 4.50-5.00 = Very good, 4.00-4.49 = Good, 3.00-3.99 = Moderate, 2.00-2.99 = Poor, 1.00-1.99 = Very Poor

Quality and excellence scored highly, with a mean of 4.25, reflecting strong organizational standards and accreditation. However, coaching and mentoring practices received a mean score of 3.93, the lowest among indicators. Limited time and heavy workloads hinder supervisors from adequately supporting newly hired employees, an issue management acknowledges. Institutionalizing these practices could address skills gaps, as emphasized by Ramamoorthy (2022). Transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making scored 3.87, highlighting a need for improvement. Transparent decision-making fosters employee engagement and a sense of ownership (Bedi et al., 2022). Similarly, perceptions of the work environment were generally positive, though management rated it lower than rank-and-file employees, likely due to greater awareness of organizational challenges. A positive environment is crucial for job satisfaction and retention (Ghani, 2022). While leadership is rated positively, areas such as coaching and mentoring, decision-making transparency, and work environment require attention. Rank-and-file employees rated leadership more favorably than management, reflecting differing

perspectives on organizational challenges. Addressing these issues could enhance leadership effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and organizational performance.

Compensation

Table 2 illustrates the evaluation of the perceptions of the same group of respondents regarding the status of DSWD RO V human resource practices or conditions along with compensation.

Table 2. *Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Compensation*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Competitive compensation package.	4.35	4.40	4.37	Good
2. Presence of competitive bonuses/premiums.	4.39	4.34	4.36	Good
3. Efficient/on-time salary schedule.	4.59	4.49	4.54	Very Good
4. Efficient/on-time reimbursement processing for travel expenses and allowances.	3.43	3.41	3.42	Moderate
5. Benefits provided by DSWD RO V meet the needs and expectations of the employees (based on the employee's role).	3.96	4.09	4.02	Good
6. Salary ranges and scales for different job levels.	4.26	4.32	4.29	Good
7. Compensation adjustments and raises are handled fairly and transparently.	4.39	4.34	4.36	Good
Overall Mean	4.20	4.20	4.20	Good

The Competitive Compensation Package at DSWD RO V received a "Good" rating with an overall mean score of 4.37, indicating that employees perceive the package as competitive and aligned with or exceeding industry standards due to compliance with the Salary Standardization Law for government agencies (EO No. 64, s. 2024). Bonuses and premiums were also rated "Good," with management scoring 4.39 and rank-and-file employees slightly lower at 4.34, averaging 4.36. COS workers receiving monthly premiums contributes to the competitiveness of these benefits. Efficient and timely salary schedules received the highest rating of "Very Good" (overall mean 4.54), reflecting strong satisfaction. Salaries are paid five days earlier than typical cut-offs, reinforcing literature on the importance of reliable compensation (Breaugh et al., 2018). However, the processing of reimbursements for travel expenses and allowances scored lower at 3.42, indicating inefficiencies and delays often due to incomplete submissions and complex approval processes, consistent with Lazear's (2019) findings on delays diminishing satisfaction.

Benefits provided by DSWD RO V were rated "Good" (4.02 overall), with rank-and-file employees scoring higher (4.09) than management (3.96). Management's lower score highlights issues such as "ad hoc" roles with insufficient compensation. The fairness of salary ranges scored "Good" (4.29 overall), indicating success in maintaining equitable pay scales. Similarly, compensation adjustments and raises were rated "Good" (4.36 overall), reflecting these processes' perceptions of fairness and transparency. While DSWD RO V's compensation practices are generally well-regarded, addressing areas for improvement, such as reimbursement delays and the formalization of leadership roles, could enhance satisfaction, retention, and organizational performance.

Job Functions

Table 3 shows the respondents' perceptions of the current human resource practices or conditions along job functions. The evaluation of job functions at DSWD RO V reveals varied perceptions across key indicators. Regarding clearly defined roles and responsibilities, management and rank-and-file employees provided ratings of 4.12 and 4.30, respectively, with an overall "Good" score of 4.21, highlighting effective job structuring and alignment (Khan et al., 2019). However, workload manageability scored lower, with management at 3.59 and employees at 3.83, resulting in a "Moderate" score of 3.71, reflecting concerns about high demands and burnout common in public organizations (Maslach, 2021). Employee empowerment in decision-making was rated 3.90 by management and 4.07 by employees, yielding a "Moderate" 3.98, suggesting some autonomy but room for improvement.

Table 3. *Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Job Function*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Employees have clearly defined job roles and responsibilities within DSWD RO V.	4.12	4.30	4.21	Good
2. The workload assigned to employees is manageable and reasonable within the time allocated.	3.59	3.83	3.71	Moderate
3. Employees feel empowered to make decisions within their job functions.	3.90	4.07	3.98	Moderate
4. Job functions met expectations.	3.94	4.08	4.01	Good
5. Alignment of job functions with organizational goals and objectives	4.12	4.21	4.16	Good
6. Alignment of job roles with the skills and qualifications of the employees.	3.79	4.16	3.97	Moderate
7. Availability of resources and tools to perform job functions.	3.65	3.93	3.79	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.87	4.08	3.98	Moderate

Job functions meeting expectations received a "Good" rating of 4.01, though lower management scores pointed to challenges like overburdened roles with insufficient compensation. Alignment with organizational goals achieved a "Good" score of 4.16, reflecting strong strategic alignment (Lee et al., 2020). However, job role alignment with skills and qualifications scored "Moderate" at 3.97, with management emphasizing the need for career pathing programs. Resource availability, rated at 3.79 overall, highlighted performance shortages consistent with public sector resource challenges (Schoeman et al., 2023). DSWD RO V's HR practices earned a "Moderate" mean of 3.98, with significant opportunities to improve workload management, empowerment, skill alignment, and resource provision to enhance effectiveness and satisfaction.

Working Conditions

Table 4 presents the respondents' perceptions of current human resource practices related to working conditions. The assessment of working conditions at DSWD RO V highlights several key indicators, emphasizing strengths and improvement areas. The physical work environment received a moderate rating (mean = 3.82), suggesting acceptability but with opportunities to enhance factors like lighting, space, and employee density, as confirmed by observations of inadequate ventilation and space in Municipal Operation Offices (MOOs) due to reliance on LGU-provided facilities (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Resources and equipment also garnered a moderate score (mean = 3.96), with issues like supply delays and budget constraints leading to gaps in meeting employee needs, consistent with findings by Chuang et al. (2019) on the importance of effective supply management.

Table 4. *Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Working Conditions*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. The physical work environment at DSWD RO V (assigned area of assignment) is conducive to productivity and well-being. (lighting, cubicle position, office employees' volume, etc.).	3.71	3.93	3.82	Moderate
2. Employees are provided Necessary resources and equipment to perform their jobs effectively (tables, chairs, computers, office supplies, etc.).	3.92	4.00	3.96	Moderate
3. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure the health and safety of its employees.	3.88	4.05	3.96	Moderate
4. Safety protocols or compliance with health and safety regulations.	3.88	4.15	4.01	Good
5. There are policies for work-life balance or grievance procedures for addressing workplace concerns.	3.94	4.04	3.99	Moderate
6. The work environment is free from discrimination and harassment.	4.06	4.33	4.19	Good
7. Localization of the area of assignments is being implemented.	3.67	3.94	3.80	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.86	4.06	3.96	Moderate

Health and safety measures scored moderately (mean = 3.96), with room to mitigate payouts and field activities risks. In contrast, adherence to safety protocols earned a slightly higher rating (mean = 4.01), reflecting the organization's commitment to RA 11058 and awareness programs. Work-life balance policies and grievance

procedures were rated moderate (mean = 3.99), with potential improvements needed in implementation and funding to align these programs with organizational mandates (Handayani et al., 2023). The work environment's inclusivity was rated "Good" (mean = 4.19), supported by compliance with RA 11313 and anti-discrimination measures, although minor enhancements are possible. Localization of assignments scored moderately (mean = 3.80), with challenges stemming from applicant distribution and the prioritization of employees' health and safety needs. While DSWD RO V's working conditions are generally acceptable, focused efforts on these key areas are essential to further support employee productivity and well-being.

Growth and Development

Table 5 presents the mean distribution regarding the status of current human resource practices related to growth and development experienced by both DSWD RO V management, including heads of various offices, and rank-and-file employees.

Table 5. *Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Growth and Development*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. DSWD RO V provides adequate opportunities for professional growth and career advancement.	4.15	3.85	4.00	Good
2. Employees receive adequate training and development programs to enhance their skills.	4.23	3.92	4.08	Good
3. The organization supports continuous learning and development of employees to achieve their career goals and aspirations.	4.12	4.18	4.15	Good
4. Employees have access to mentoring or coaching programs.	3.82	3.99	3.90	Moderate
5. Availability of interventions for identifying and addressing skills gap among employees.	3.67	3.96	3.82	Moderate
6. Availability and execution of career path planning initiatives (Individual Development Plan).	3.65	4.00	3.82	Moderate
7. Career goals are aligned with the opportunities provided by the Department (career pathing).	3.55	3.99	3.77	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.88	3.98	3.94	Moderate

The assessment of growth and development practices at DSWD RO V reveals generally positive perceptions with significant areas for improvement. Opportunities for professional growth, such as scholarships and short-term courses, received an overall mean rating of 4.00 ("Good"). However, rank-and-file employees rated these opportunities lower (3.85) compared to management (4.15), indicating challenges in accessibility due to constraints like limited slots and demanding workloads (Medaris, 2023). Training and development programs also scored well (4.08), but gaps persist, particularly for lower-level employees such as COS workers, who face restrictions on specialized training eligibility. Organizational support for continuous learning was rated similarly across all levels (4.15), reflecting positive perceptions of initiatives like advanced studies and study leave provisions. However, COS workers must balance these with their duties.

Mentoring and coaching programs were rated as "Moderate" (3.90), reflecting limited utilization due to heavy supervisor workloads, with existing tools primarily used reactively rather than proactively. Research supports the value of effective mentorship in bridging skill gaps and fostering career growth (River, 2023). Similarly, initiatives to identify and address skill gaps were rated 3.82 ("Moderate"), hindered by budget and time constraints, consistent with findings that structured training programs enhance employee performance (Birou et al., 2019). Career path planning also scored 3.82, indicating a lack of effective monitoring and execution due to funding limitations. Lastly, alignment of career goals with organizational opportunities received a "Moderate" rating (3.94), with administrative roles particularly affected by mismatched assignments. At the same time, regulated professions like social workers and lawyers generally align better with career paths. Overall, the mean score of 3.94 suggests that while growth and development practices are acceptable, there are notable discrepancies in access and implementation, particularly for rank-and-file employees. Enhanced mentoring, career planning, and more equitable program accessibility could improve the consistency and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Supervisor-Subordinate Relationship

Table 6 presents the perceptions and experiences of the DSWD RO V management, including heads of various offices and rank-and-file employees, on human resource practices, mainly focusing on the supervisor-subordinate relationship.

Table 6. *Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Supervisor-Subordinate Relationship*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Supervisors within DSWD RO V effectively support and guide their subordinates.	4.12	4.28	4.20	Good
2. Supervisors promote teamwork and collaboration among team members.	4.18	4.34	4.26	Good
3. There is open and constructive communication between supervisors and subordinates.	4.10	4.24	4.17	Good
4. Supervisors provide regular feedback and recognition for their subordinates' work.	3.94	4.18	4.06	Good
5. Supervisors treat employees fairly and respectfully.	4.20	4.27	4.24	Good
6. Supervisors encourage professional growth and development among their subordinates.	4.24	4.28	4.26	Good
7. Supervisors are approachable and available to address concerns and issues.	4.22	4.31	4.26	Good
Overall Mean	4.14	4.27	4.20	Good

The data illustrate that all aspects of the supervisor-subordinate relationship are rated as “Good.” This suggests that both management and rank-and-file employees perceive that supervisors are generally effective in providing support and actively promoting a collaborative work environment, the communication channels between supervisors and subordinates are relatively strong, feedback is generally provided, there is a strong foundation in how supervisors treat their employees, supervisors support and encourage their employees in terms of professional growth and development, and they are approachable and available to address concerns and issues being raised by their subordinates. However, the lowest rating of 4.06 on whether the supervisors provide regular feedback and recognition for their subordinates' work suggests that while feedback and recognition are generally provided, it may not be as frequent or impactful as they could be. This is possibly due to a lack of time because of the heavy workloads assigned to the supervisors. Research by Grote (2020) shows that timely and constructive feedback is critical for employee development and satisfaction, indicating a need for supervisors to improve in this area. The overall mean of 4.20 or “Good” presents a positive but not perfect picture of the supervisor-subordinate dynamics in DSWD RO V. There remains room for improvement, particularly in feedback and recognition practices that could be enhanced to minimize employee turnover and improve job satisfaction. This aligns with the study of Bateman et al. (2019), which emphasizes the importance of effective leadership in employee productivity and morale.

Organizational Culture

Table 7 evaluates the status of organizational culture within the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Regional Office V, as perceived by both management and rank-and-file employees. The organizational culture within DSWD RO V is generally perceived as positive, with an overall mean rating of 4.15, falling within the “Good” range (4.00–4.49). This indicates strengths in fostering teamwork, diversity, innovation, and inclusivity. Employees feel that their contributions are valued, ethical behavior is upheld, and collaboration is effective. However, areas for improvement exist, particularly in enhancing employees' sense of belonging and loyalty, which received the lowest overall score of 4.00 and a management rating of 3.78. This finding aligns with Meyer et al. (2021), who emphasize the importance of belonging in improving retention and job satisfaction. Recognition of employee contributions also needs attention, with a score of 4.04 overall and 3.92 from management, suggesting that while mechanisms for appreciation exist, they may be inconsistently applied, especially at leadership levels. Enhancing recognition practices could significantly boost morale, as highlighted by Aguinis et al. (2019), who found that even small gestures of acknowledgment can improve engagement and retention. Ethical behavior scored 4.08 overall, with a management rating of 3.88, indicating that while integrity is generally upheld, occasional lapses may occur. Addressing these gaps could further strengthen the department’s culture, which is already well-regarded for promoting collaboration, creativity, and inclusivity, positioning it for sustained growth.

Table 7. Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Organizational Culture

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. The organizational culture within DSWD promotes teamwork and collaboration.	4.10	4.29	4.20	Good
2. Diversity and inclusion are valued and respected within the Department.	4.12	4.37	4.24	Good
3. Appreciation of employee contributions are highly valued by the Department.	3.92	4.15	4.04	Good
4. DSWD RO V fosters a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.	4.22	4.33	4.28	Good
5. The Department promotes ethical behavior and integrity in all its practices.	3.88	4.27	4.08	Good
6. Employees feel a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the DSWD RO V.	3.78	4.22	4.00	Good
7. The Department effectively communicates its values and mission to all employees.	4.10	4.33	4.22	Good
Overall Mean	4.02	4.28	4.15	Good

Work-Life Balance

Table 8 illustrates the status of human resource management practices or conditions at DSWD RO V and work-life balance from both management and rank-and-file employees' perspectives.

Table 8. Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Work-Life Balance

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. DSWD RO V promotes employee well-being and engages in various health and wellness activities and initiatives to achieve work-life balance.	4.12	4.16	4.14	Good
2. The Department respects the personal time of employees outside working hours.	3.49	3.79	3.64	Moderate
3. The organization offers flexible work arrangements (e.g., WFH, flexitime) to accommodate employees' needs.	4.14	3.99	4.06	Good
4. Employees feel supported in managing their personal and professional responsibilities.	3.98	4.04	4.01	Good
5. The Department provides adequate leave options (e.g., vacation, sick leave) to support work-life balance.	4.38	4.27	4.32	Good
6. Employees are not expected to work beyond their scheduled hours unless necessary.	3.86	3.94	3.90	Moderate
7. The Department offers support services, such as counseling or stress management programs, to help employees maintain work-life balance.	3.65	3.79	3.72	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.94	4.00	3.97	Moderate

The Department of Social Welfare and Development Regional Office V (DSWD RO V) received a "Good" rating (mean of 4.14) from both management and rank-and-file employees for promoting well-being through health and wellness initiatives. However, some staff struggle to participate due to workload demands. The department's respect for employees' time was rated "Moderate," reflecting challenges during critical operations, such as disaster response, when employees must prioritize work, even outside office hours, compromising their time. This aligns with the findings by Kelly et al. (2021), who noted that work-life conflict arises when organizational demands infringe on personal time, leading to stress and burnout. Flexible work arrangements were also rated "Good" (4.06).

However, full implementation remains limited to the Regional Office, with lower ratings (3.99) from rank-and-file employees, echoing Waizenegger et al.'s (2020) assertion of the importance of flexibility for work-life balance. Organizational support for balancing personal and professional responsibilities scored a "Good" (4.01), though management and employees agree there is room for improvement. Leave options received a 4.32 "Good" rating, with adequate provisions for permanent, contractual, and casual employees. However, COS workers rely on compensatory days off or overtime pay, underscoring Allen et al.'s (2022) emphasis on the necessity of leave for well-being. However, the "Moderate" ratings for boundaries on work hours and support services like counseling

highlight the impact of high workloads and the underutilization or lack of awareness of available resources. The overall mean of 3.97 suggests that while DSWD RO V has commendable initiatives, significant gaps in workload management, personal time respect, and support services need addressing to improve work-life balance and employee well-being.

Recognition and Reward

Table 9 describes the responses from management and rank-and-file employees regarding the status of human resource management practices or conditions at DSWD RO V, along with rewards and recognition.

Table 9. *Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Recognition and Reward*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. DSWD FO V provides adequate recognition and rewards for employees' contributions.	3.96	4.08	4.02	Good
2. The Department links organizational goals to recognition.	4.04	4.11	4.08	Good
3. It encourages peer-to-peer recognition.	3.80	3.99	3.90	Moderate
4. The supervisors provide commendation in IPCR to their respective employees.	3.80	4.14	3.97	Moderate
5. Recognition practices are consistently applied across all levels of the Department.	3.80	4.02	3.91	Moderate
6. The Department celebrates achievements and milestones in a meaningful way.	3.92	4.17	4.04	Good
7. Employees feel their efforts are valued and appreciated by the organization.	3.65	4.04	3.84	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.85	4.08	3.96	Moderate

The recognition and rewards system at DSWD RO V, with an overall rating of 4.02, indicates that while a program is in place, there is room for improvement. The annual PRAISE program recognizes employees for excellence and is limited by strict criteria that may exclude many. Recognition could be more personalized and inclusive, focusing on individual achievements across all employment types. Management's slightly lower rating reflects the need for more frequent and simple acts of appreciation, particularly for those in leadership roles (Brun et al., 2018). The alignment between recognition and organizational goals, rated 4.08, shows employees appreciate how recognition is linked to broader objectives. However, they suggest more transparent communication of how individual contributions support these goals.

The PRAISE program's use of the Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) system, which requires employees to demonstrate significant contributions and strong work ethics, supports this connection (Williams et al., 2019). Peer-to-peer recognition, with a rating of 3.90, suggests that while efforts are made, it is not consistently embraced. The lack of formal mechanisms for peer recognition limits its effectiveness, though McCarthy et al. (2020) highlight its value in fostering collaboration. Similarly, the practice of supervisor commendations in the IPCR, rated 3.97, suffers from inconsistency. However, recent changes to the form may improve feedback quality, aligning with Saks & Gruman's (2021) emphasis on supervisor recognition. The moderate rating of 3.91 for consistency across levels suggests that recognition is not uniformly applied, requiring standardization to ensure all employees feel equally valued.

While the department celebrates achievements and milestones with an overall rating of 4.04, management feels these celebrations could be more meaningful. Despite these strengths, the overall sense of being valued, rated 3.84, points to a gap between recognition efforts and employee experiences, particularly among leaders who report feeling under-recognized. Personalized and simple gestures could significantly impact, aligning with Gallup's (2022) findings on the importance of feeling valued for employee engagement. DSWD RO V's recognition and rewards practices are foundational but require enhancements to improve consistency, peer recognition, and personalized appreciation, which could lead to greater employee satisfaction and engagement (McCarthy et al., 2020; Saks & Gruman, 2021).

Security of Tenure

Table 10 evaluates the status of DSWD Regional Office V's human resource management practices regarding tenure security as perceived by both management, including heads of various offices and rank-and-file employees.

Table 10. Current Status of Human Resource Practices in Terms of Security of Tenure

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. The Department demonstrates a commitment to employee welfare and job security.	3.80	4.00	3.90	Moderate
2. Employees feel secure in their positions and prospects for long-term tenure within the Department.	3.61	3.79	3.70	Moderate
3. The work in DSWD FO V gives a sense of purpose.	4.39	4.41	4.40	Good
4. There is a feeling of personal and professional fulfillment in the Department.	4.04	4.32	4.18	Good
5. The Department provides clear communication about career advancement opportunities.	3.86	4.05	3.96	Moderate
6. Policies regarding layoffs and terminations are transparent and fair	3.73	4.06	3.90	Moderate
7. The Department offers comprehensive retirement and pension plans to support long-term security.	3.88	4.03	3.96	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.90	4.09	4.00	Good

The data reveals that management and rank-and-file employees at DSWD FO V rated the Department's commitment to employee welfare and job security as "Moderate," with an overall mean of 3.90. This suggests that while the organization is somewhat committed to employee welfare, job security policies are underdeveloped, particularly for Contract of Service (COS) workers, who often face uncertainty due to the project-based nature of their positions. The "Moderate" rating indicates a need for stronger and clearer job security policies to boost employee confidence, as job security is vital for retention and motivation (Zatzick & Iverson, 2019). The perception of job security and long-term tenure also received a "Moderate" rating, indicating that short-term contracts and budget constraints contribute to uncertainty among employees, especially COS workers, who may leave for more secure opportunities.

On the other hand, work at DSWD RO V is seen as purposeful and fulfilling, with ratings of 4.40 and 4.18 for personal and professional fulfillment, respectively. This suggests that employees find meaning in their work, which aligns with their personal and professional goals and provides motivation despite job insecurity. This is consistent with Lee et al. (2020), who found that employees with a sense of purpose tend to be more engaged and productive. However, indicators related to career advancement, transparency in termination policies, and retirement plans were also rated as "Moderate," indicating room for improvement in communication and clarity, especially in times of organizational change. Strengthening transparency in career progression and long-term benefits would enhance employee trust and security.

The overall rating of 4.00 for security of tenure reflects a positive work environment. However, it highlights the need to address concerns about job security and career advancement to improve employee satisfaction and retention. The findings also underscore the need to address gaps in HRM practices, with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizing the importance of meeting employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness to foster motivation and productivity. Challenges such as limited job autonomy, inadequate mentoring, and poor work-life balance hinder employee engagement and organizational performance.

3.2 Factors Influencing Employee Turnover

Organizational Leadership

The data in Table 11 provide valuable insights into the factors influencing employee turnover concerning organizational leadership, as viewed by both management and rank-and-file employees. The data reveals that the most critical issue identified by employees at DSWD RO V is the organization's failure to address skills gaps, with 70.23% of respondents highlighting this concern. Despite the Department offering Learning and Development Interventions (LDIs) to permanent and key contractual employees, growth opportunities are limited for those under a Contract of Service (COS), and budget constraints prevent the effective implementation of Individual Development Plans (IDPs). This lack of development opportunities leads to dissatisfaction and higher turnover

rates, as research by Li et al. (2020) suggests that growth opportunities contribute to job satisfaction and retention. The second major issue is the lack of adequate support and feedback mechanisms, with 65.32% of employees reporting this concern. Feedback is essential for employee engagement and morale, and without it, employees may feel undervalued, leading to higher turnover, as Grote (2020) supports.

Table 11. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Organizational Leadership*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. The organization has a clear vision and goals	7	105	112	32.37%
2. Decision-making processes are effective and inclusive	15	168	183	52.89%
3. Communication within the organization is open and transparent	25	191	216	62.43%
4. Leaders demonstrate ethical behavior and integrity	20	175	195	56.36%
5. Employees receive adequate support, and there are effective feedback mechanisms	26	200	226	65.32%
6. The organization actively addresses skills gaps among employees	29	214	243	70.23%
Overall Mean				56.6%

Another key issue is the lack of open and transparent communication, cited by 62.43% of respondents. Poor communication undermines trust and affects employee satisfaction, as shown by Men and Yue (2019). Additionally, 56.36% of employees expressed dissatisfaction with their leaders' ethical behavior and integrity, which can negatively impact workplace culture and retention, as noted by Bedi et al. (2018). The decision-making process also requires improvement, with 52.89% highlighting the need for more inclusive and effective decision-making to foster employee engagement and reduce turnover, as Bella et al. (2023) emphasized. The least pressing issue is the organization's unclear vision and goals, affecting 32.37% of employees, with Kumar and Singh (2020) noting that a clear vision aligns employees' efforts and reduces turnover. Addressing skills development, feedback, communication, ethical leadership, and inclusive decision-making is crucial for improving employee retention and overall organizational effectiveness. Management should prioritize leadership development, communication strategies, and training programs to create a supportive and ethical workplace.

Compensation

Table 12 analyzes how management and rank-and-file employees perceive various compensation-related factors at DSWD Regional Office V that may influence employee turnover.

Table 12. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Compensation*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. Salaries are competitive compared to industry standards	19	165	184	53.18%
2. The compensation structure is fair and transparent	17	165	182	52.60%
3. The benefits package (e.g., health insurance, retirement plans) is comprehensive	19	123	142	41.04%
4. Employees receive performance-based incentives or bonuses	17	179	196	56.65%
5. There are opportunities for salary increases and career advancement	23	176	199	57.51%
6. Reimbursements for travel expenses, allowances, and other benefits are processed efficiently.	30	198	228	65.90%
Overall Mean				54.4%

The survey responses from DSWD Regional Office V employees highlight several pressing concerns regarding compensation, which affects employee satisfaction and retention. The most significant issue, identified by 65.90% of respondents, is the inefficiency of processing reimbursements and allowances, which can take up to six months due to multiple offices involved, incomplete documentation, lack of quality control, and insufficient personnel. This reimbursement delay contributes to employee frustration and dissatisfaction, as timely financial processing is crucial for morale and retention (Baker & Murphy, 2019). The second concern, noted by 57.51% of employees, is the lack of opportunities for salary increases and career advancement. The limited number of promotional

openings and the stringent qualification requirements for key positions create a bottleneck, making many employees feel stagnant in their careers. Additionally, salary increases mandated by the Salary Standardization Law have a ceiling, which may not be sufficient to keep up with inflation and rising living costs. However, government salaries remain competitive compared to the private sector. Research indicates that limited career growth opportunities significantly drive turnover (DeLuca & Wright, 2019).

A third issue, expressed by 56.65% of employees, is the lack of performance-based incentives, particularly affecting the large Contract of Service (COS) workers ineligible for these incentives. Furthermore, 53.18% of employees cited concerns over the competitiveness of salaries relative to industry standards, believing their workloads and experience merit higher compensation. Millan et al. (2020) also emphasize the importance of competitive salaries for employee retention. Transparency and fairness in the compensation structure were a concern for 52.60% of respondents, mainly due to discrepancies between the benefits received by COS employees and those with permanent or contractual status. Lastly, 41.04% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the benefits package, particularly regarding health insurance and retirement plans, especially for COS workers excluded from such benefits. While this issue ranks lowest, addressing these concerns in the compensation framework is essential to improve employee retention at DSWD RO V, with the efficiency of reimbursement processing being the most urgent factor to address.

Job Functions

Table 13 outlines various aspects of job functions and how they influence employee turnover at DSWD Regional Office V from both management and rank-and-file employees' perspectives.

Table 13. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Job Functions*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. Job descriptions and responsibilities are clearly defined	21	203	224	64.74%
2. Workload and tasks are distributed fairly	21	160	181	52.31%
3. Employees have the autonomy to make decisions within their roles	9	110	119	34.39%
4. Necessary resources and support are available to perform job duties effectively	20	220	240	69.36%
5. Job roles align with employees' skills and interests	18	175	193	55.78%
6. Job functions align with the organization's goals and objectives	10	78	88	25.43%
Overall Mean				50.34%

A prominent concern among respondents is the lack of resources and support necessary for effective job performance, with 69.36% highlighting insufficient office equipment, supplies, information, and managerial assistance. This issue is often a result of budget constraints and logistical challenges, particularly for geographically distant offices. Employees are sometimes forced to purchase supplies themselves, leading to frustration and stress, contributing to turnover (Nguyen & McGuire, 2021). Another concern, raised by 64.74% of respondents, is the lack of clarity regarding job descriptions and responsibilities, leading to unrealistic expectations. Despite the presence of tools like the Individual Performance Commitment (IPC) and Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS), these do not fully capture the scope of employees' roles. This misalignment calls for better coordination of job roles to ensure realistic targets and prevent overload (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Additionally, 55.78% of respondents feel their roles do not align with their skills and interests, leading to decreased engagement and increased turnover intentions. Implementing job rotations may help employees find more fulfilling roles (Smith & Lewis, 2020).

Fair workload distribution is also a concern for 52.31% of respondents, with some employees experiencing excessive stress and burnout due to imbalanced task allocation. Proper workload management is essential to maintain morale and reduce turnover (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Although 34.39% of employees feel a lack of autonomy, most can make decisions within their roles. Still, some feel micro-managed or require supervisor approval for key decisions, indicating a need for more decision-making freedom (Breugh, 2019). Lastly, 25.43%

of respondents feel their job functions are misaligned with the organization's goals, suggesting that most employees believe their roles support the organization's vision. However, a small group struggles to see the connection, which may impact their engagement (Carter et al., 2021). Addressing these concerns could potentially reduce turnover rates within the organization.

Working Conditions

Table 14 presents insights into how different working conditions influence employee turnover at DSWD Regional Office V based on responses from the management team and rank-and-file employees.

Table 14. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Work Conditions*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. The physical work environment (e.g., office space, equipment, facilities) is adequate	36	181	217	62.72%
2. Safety and health protocols are in place and followed	22	164	186	53.76%
3. Necessary tools and equipment are available	23	165	188	54.34%
4. There is flexibility in work arrangements (e.g., remote work options)	16	159	175	50.58%
5. The work location is accessible and the commute is manageable	19	183	202	58.38%
6. The organization has policies to support work-life balance and address workplace concerns	21	173	194	56.07%
Overall Mean				55.97%

The most significant factor contributing to employee turnover related to working conditions in DSWD RO V is the physical work environment, with 62.72% of respondents expressing dissatisfaction. This includes issues like limited office space, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient facilities, particularly in municipal offices where staff depend on Local Government Units (LGUs) for space. Budget constraints further exacerbate this problem. De Korte et al. (2020) research links inadequate workspaces to lower job satisfaction and higher turnover. Another primary concern is the accessibility of the work location, with 58.38% of respondents facing difficulties with commuting, especially for community workers who deal with long travel times and limited transportation. Chatterjee et al. (2019) suggest that long commutes increase stress and decrease retention. Work-life balance is also a significant issue, with 56.07% of employees noting insufficient policies to manage their personal and professional lives despite existing initiatives. Cruz et al. (2020) found that organizations promoting work-life balance have higher employee retention.

Additionally, 54.34% of employees cite a lack of essential tools and equipment, which affects job performance, with delays in supply delivery exacerbated by budget issues. Reddy et al. (2020) highlight the importance of adequate resources for job satisfaction and retention. Safety and health protocols also received concern from 53.76% of respondents, particularly in fieldwork where community workers face health risks. Nasidin et al. (2020) stress the importance of adequate safety measures to prevent turnover. Lastly, 50.58% of respondents reported a lack of flexible work arrangements. Although some policies exist, their inconsistent application across offices contributes to dissatisfaction. With 55.97% of respondents indicating that these working conditions influence turnover, addressing these issues is crucial for improving employee retention.

Growth and Development

Table 15 reflects how different aspects of growth and development influence employee turnover at DSWD Regional Office V, as perceived by both management, including heads of various DSWD RO V offices, and rank-and-file employees. The data from the study indicate that the primary concern among employees at DSWD RO V is the lack of mentorship and coaching programs, identified by 73.51% of respondents. This suggests a strong desire for more structured guidance and growth opportunities. Despite the availability of resources, mentorship programs are often neglected due to the heavy workloads of leadership, which leaves employees feeling unsupported. The importance of mentorship is underscored by Mullen et al. (2018), who highlighted its role in employee engagement and retention. Furthermore, 61.56% of respondents emphasized the need for professional development and training, which is hindered by budget limitations. Contract workers are restricted to in-house

or free training, resulting in stagnation. Ozdemir (2024) stresses that continuous training is essential for employee retention, especially in government sectors.

Table 15. Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Growth and Development

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. There are opportunities for professional development and training	20	193	213	61.56%
2. Mentorship and coaching programs are available	26	228	254	73.51%
3. Employees have chances for career advancement and promotion	21	183	204	58.96%
4. The organization supports continuing education or certifications	18	169	187	54.05%
5. Employees are exposed to challenging and meaningful work	19	122	141	40.75%
6. Good performance is recognized and appreciated	18	160	178	51.45%
Overall Mean				56.71%

Career advancement also ranked a concern for 58.96% of employees, indicating limited upward mobility. This issue, exacerbated by a high employee-to-position ratio and strict promotion criteria, aligns with Luna-Arocas and Morley (2020), who linked career stagnation to increased turnover. While 54.05% of employees expressed dissatisfaction with the support for continuing education and 51.45% with the recognition of performance, the study found that such opportunities are limited, particularly for non-permanent employees. Rana and Sharma (2022) emphasize that recognition is vital for job satisfaction and retention. On a more positive note, only 40.75% of employees felt their work lacked challenge or meaning, with many perceiving their roles as fulfilling due to the organization's mission to improve lives. Overall, the findings reveal that over half of respondents feel growth and development opportunities are insufficient, directly impacting retention at DSWD RO V. Addressing these concerns could significantly reduce turnover and enhance employee satisfaction.

Supervisor-Subordinate Relationship

Table 16 outlines the perceptions of both management and rank-and-file employees regarding factors influencing employee turnover in the supervisor-subordinate relationship at DSWD Regional Office V.

Table 16. Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Supervisor-Subordinate Relationship

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. Communication and feedback from supervisors are frequent	24	168	192	55.49%
2. There is a high level of trust and respect between supervisors and employees	17	125	142	41.04%
3. Supervisors provide adequate support and guidance	21	174	195	56.36%
4. Supervisors are fair and impartial in their treatment of employees	20	87	107	30.92%
5. There are effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts	31	145	176	50.87%
6. Supervisors recognize and appreciate employees' contributions	17	166	183	52.89%
Overall Mean				47.93%

The study highlights several factors in supervisor-subordinate relationships influencing employee turnover at DSWD RO V. The top-ranked issue, cited by 56.36% of respondents, is a perceived lack of supervisory support and guidance, attributed to factors like overwhelmed supervisors, skill gaps, strained relationships, and the "complete staff work" (CSW) culture. This aligns with Nitafan (2020), who underscores the importance of strong supervisory support in enhancing job satisfaction and retention. Communication and feedback, noted by 55.49% of respondents, emerged as another critical area. Men and Yue (2019) emphasize that effective communication fosters engagement and lowers turnover rates. Recognition of employee contributions, with 52.89% of responses, indicates a need for more personalized acknowledgment, consistent with Rana & Sharma's (2022) findings that

regular recognition boosts satisfaction. Conflict resolution mechanisms, identified by 50.87% of respondents, require improved implementation, particularly at provincial levels, as unresolved conflicts increase turnover (Wall & Dunne, 2022). Trust and respect, highlighted by 41.04% of respondents, remain significant, as Bedi et al. (2022) argue that trust is vital for a healthy work environment. Lastly, perceived fairness, cited by 30.92%, suggests most supervisors are impartial, though improvements are needed to address residual concerns. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara (2020) links perceived unfairness to higher turnover. With 47.93% citing supervisor-subordinate relationships as a turnover factor, leadership training is recommended to address these gaps.

Organizational Culture

Table 17 highlights the perceived deficiencies (absence, insufficiency, or areas needing improvement) in various indicators related to the organizational culture at DSWD RO V, which may contribute to employee turnover.

Table 17. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Organizational Culture*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. The organization's values align with employees' personal values	21	95	116	33.53%
2. There is strong teamwork and collaboration among employees	17	101	118	34.10%
3. The organization practices diversity and inclusion	14	108	122	35.26%
4. Work-life balance policies are promoted and practiced	37	213	250	72.25%
5. Employees are recognized and appreciated for their contributions	22	215	237	68.50%
6. The organization encourages innovation and creativity	10	89	99	28.61%
Overall Mean				45.38%

A survey identified several significant factors contributing to employee turnover, with a deficiency in work-life balance policies leading to the concerns (72.25%). Despite existing wellness initiatives, high workloads and unrealistic targets undermine these efforts, resulting in burnout, a known issue in community development work. Addressing workload management could mitigate turnover, aligning with findings by Casper et al. (2020) highlighting the importance of work-life balance for employee well-being. A lack of personalized recognition was also significant, noted by 68.50% of respondents. While regional recognition programs exist, employees lack tailored approaches, leading to dissatisfaction. Rana and Sharma (2022) emphasize the role of personalized recognition in enhancing engagement and reducing turnover.

Diversity and inclusion were seen as needing improvement by 35.26% of respondents, suggesting gaps in the effective implementation of Gender and Development initiatives, despite police presence. Shore et al. (2018) stress that genuine inclusivity fosters retention by creating a sense of belonging. Teamwork, a core strength, was flagged by 34.10% of respondents for minor issues, underscoring its critical role in community development efforts. Perceived misalignment between organizational and personal values (33.53%) and limited support for innovation and creativity (28.61%) also emerged as concerns, pointing to gaps in embodying values and fostering employee creativity. Addressing these issues could enhance satisfaction and reduce turnover, consistent with research by Amabile and Pratt (2018). While 45.38% of respondents viewed the organizational culture positively, the study recommends improving workload management, diversifying recognition programs, and addressing cultural gaps to enhance retention.

Work-Life Balance

Table 18 highlights the perceived gaps (such as absence, insufficiency, or areas needing improvement) in various work-life balance indicators at DSWD RO V, potentially leading to employee turnover. A study of workplace challenges revealed that 73.41% of respondents identified workload management as the most deficient area, with many employees feeling overburdened by numerous program requirements and unrealistic targets, leading to burnout and turnover. Respect for employees' time ranked second, with 58.96% citing the impact of after-hours demands on work-life balance as a significant concern. Support for family and personal commitments, identified by 53.76% of respondents, is hindered by urgent operational demands, which often require prioritization of work

over personal obligations, even during leave. Stress management and well-being programs were flagged by 49.13% as insufficient, with employees too overwhelmed by workloads to participate in these initiatives.

Table 18. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Work-Life Balance*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. Employees have flexibility in their work schedules	14	150	164	47.40%
2. There are sufficient leave options (e.g., vacation, sick, personal)	8	137	145	41.91%
3. The organization supports employees' family or personal commitments	22	164	186	53.76%
4. Workload management practices are effective	26	228	254	73.41%
5. The organization offers stress management and well-being programs	20	150	170	49.13%
6. The organization respects employees' time off and after-work hours	24	180	204	58.96%
Overall Mean				54.09%

Flexibility in work schedules was highlighted by 47.40% as needing improvement, with inconsistent implementation of flexi-time policies and exclusion of Contract of Service (COS) workers contributing to dissatisfaction. Lastly, while leave options were the least deficient factor at 41.91%, COS workers' lack of entitlement to leave benefits under the "no work, no pay" system affects job satisfaction. Overall, 54.09% of respondents perceived work-life balance as deficient, suggesting the need for improved workload distribution, flexible schedules, wellness programs, and respect for personal time to enhance employee retention and well-being. Research by Masuda et al. (2018), Sonnentag and Fritz (2021), and Allen et al. (2020) supports the importance of family support systems, effective stress management, and flexible work arrangements in reducing turnover.

Recognition and Reward

Table 19 outlines the deficiencies in indicators related to recognition and rewards.

Table 19. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Rewards*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. The performance evaluation and feedback processes are effective	21	185	206	59.54%
2. Employees have opportunities for public recognition or awards	17	152	169	48.84%
3. Non-monetary rewards or incentives are available	23	178	201	58.09%
4. Achievements and milestones are celebrated	21	150	171	49.42%
5. Employees are given opportunities for increased responsibility or leadership roles	23	100	123	35.55%
6. Peer recognition and appreciation are encouraged within the team	20	222	242	69.94%
Overall Mean				54.56%

The study reveals that a lack of peer recognition and appreciation is the most significant issue, with 69.94% of respondents identifying it as a significant deficiency. This reflects a substantial gap in fostering a culture of mutual acknowledgment within DSWD RO V, where the absence of a formal peer-to-peer recognition system exacerbates feelings of undervaluation and contributes to employee turnover. While informal celebrations occur, the lack of structured recognition for professional achievements undermines motivation and satisfaction, increasing the likelihood of turnover. Research by Park et al. (2019) underscores the positive impact of peer recognition on morale and workplace belonging. Performance evaluation and feedback processes rank as the second most deficient factor, with 59.54% of respondents expressing concerns. Despite using the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF), feedback is perceived as insufficient and often linked to violations rather than support, leading to disengagement. Grote (2020) emphasizes that constructive feedback enhances performance and strengthens employee-supervisor relationships, reducing turnover.

Additionally, 58.09% of respondents highlight the absence of non-monetary rewards, suggesting missed opportunities to recognize employees' efforts beyond financial compensation. Kuvaas et al. (2019) affirm that non-monetary rewards, such as public acknowledgment and career development opportunities, are critical in reducing turnover. Public recognition and awards are marked as deficient by 48.84% of respondents, and celebrations of milestones (49.42%) are seen as impersonal and superficial, lacking meaningful and individualized gestures, as Eisenberger et al. (2019) noted. Opportunities for leadership roles ranked lowest, with only 35.55% of respondents identifying it as a concern, suggesting relative strength in this area. However, clearer leadership pathways could address feelings of stagnation. 53.56% of respondents consider recognition and rewards inadequate, highlighting the need for improvements to enhance employee retention, satisfaction, and motivation.

Security of Tenure

Table 20 below illustrates the deficiencies in indicators related to tenure security as perceived by both management and rank-and-file employees.

Table 20. *Factors Influencing Employee Turnover in Terms of Security of Tenure*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
1. Job stability and security are assured	23	203	226	65.32%
2. Promotion and transfer policies are fair and transparent	18	205	223	64.45%
3. The organization's termination or layoff practices are fair	12	107	119	34.39%
4. Retirement and pension plans are in place	7	142	149	43.06%
5. There are mechanisms for resolving grievances and disputes	28	171	199	57.51%
6. Contract renewals and employment agreements are handled transparently	18	82	100	28.90%
Overall Mean				48.94%

The study identifies significant factors contributing to employee turnover in DSWD RO V, with the most critical being the lack of job security and stability (65.32%). This issue is especially acute among contract-of-service (COS) workers, who represent over half the workforce. Their reliance on temporary contracts tied to program funding and performance creates a sense of instability and aligns with Green's (2018) findings that job insecurity drives turnover in contract-heavy sectors. Perceived unfairness in promotion and transfer policies (64.45%) also undermines employee trust, as employees believe non-meritocratic factors influence decisions, echoing Liu et al. (2020) on the negative impact of perceived unfair practices on job satisfaction. Additionally, 57.51% of respondents reported deficiencies in grievance resolution, particularly at the municipal level, exacerbating dissatisfaction and turnover. Termination, layoff practices (34.39%), and pension plan gaps (43.06%) are less pressing but still problematic, especially for COS workers without pension entitlements, consistent with Blanchflower and Bryson (2022) on the importance of long-term benefits for retention. Lastly, while most respondents find contract renewals transparent, 28.90% perceive a lack of clarity, reinforcing findings by Afonso et al. (2020) on the insecurity faced by contract workers without clear advancement pathways. Overall, the study highlights critical areas for improvement, including job security, promotion transparency, and grievance mechanisms, which disproportionately affect COS workers. Using Human Resource Theory and Social Exchange Theory, the findings underscore the need for DSWD RO V to address gaps in employee support and organizational practices to build trust, enhance engagement, and reduce turnover.

3.3 Effects of Employee Turnover

Personnel

Table 21 presents the level of agreement regarding the effects of employee turnover at DSWD RO V on personnel aspects. The analysis reveals that employee turnover significantly impacts organizations, with an overall mean score of 4.10 indicating strong agreement among respondents that turnover increases workload and stress for remaining employees, often resulting in exhaustion and burnout, consistent with findings by Kim and Fernandez (2021). A mean score of 4.04 underscores the consensus that turnover leads to a loss of institutional knowledge and expertise, negatively affecting organizational performance and necessitating increased training costs, echoing the research of Hancock et al. (2018). Moderate agreement (mean 3.58–3.64) was observed regarding turnover's

effects on team dynamics, morale, recruitment challenges, and project disruptions, suggesting these impacts are present but not pervasive or severe. High turnover was also associated with increased training costs and prolonged onboarding, as Weller et al. (2020) supported. Overall, with a mean score of 3.77, the findings highlight that while the most significant concerns revolve around workload, stress, and knowledge loss, other areas, such as team morale and recruitment, experience only moderate and sporadic effects, varying across organizational contexts.

Table 21. *Effects of Employee Turnover in Terms of Personnel*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. The turnover of employees has resulted in increased workload and stress for remaining employees.	4.16	4.03	4.10	Agree
2. Employee turnover has led to a loss of institutional knowledge and expertise.	4.28	3.81	4.04	Agree
3. The turnover of key personnel has negatively impacted team dynamics and collaboration.	3.69	3.48	3.58	Moderately Agree
4. Employee turnover has affected the morale and motivation of remaining employees.	3.49	3.41	3.45	Moderately Agree
5. The organization has faced challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified replacements for departing employees.	3.59	3.62	3.60	Moderately Agree
6. Employee turnover has disrupted ongoing projects and delayed the achievement of organizational goals.	3.73	3.56	3.64	Moderately Agree
7. The frequent turnover has increased training costs and the time required to onboard new employees.	4.00	4.02	4.01	Agree
Overall Mean	3.85	3.70	3.77	Moderately Agree

Budget

Table 22 presents the level of agreement regarding the effects of employee turnover at DSWD RO V on budget aspects.

Table 22. *Effects of Employee Turnover in Terms of Budget*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Employee turnover has resulted in increased recruitment and training costs.	3.84	3.75	3.80	Moderately Agree
2. The organization has accrued costs associated with severance packages or compensation for departing employees (payment of terminal leave credits, and other benefits).	3.39	3.64	3.52	Moderately Agree
3. High turnover impacts the budget allocation for new hires and onboarding processes.	3.60	3.67	3.64	Moderately Agree
4. Employee turnover leads to loss of productivity and efficiency, affecting budget performance.	3.67	3.53	3.60	Moderately Agree
5. Budget constraints resulting from turnover have affected the implementation of strategic initiatives or projects.	3.73	3.60	3.66	Moderately Agree
6. Employee turnover has increased overtime expenses for remaining staff due to understaffing.	4.02	3.98	4.00	Agree
7. The financial impact of turnover has necessitated budget reallocations from other critical areas to cover turnover-related costs.	3.71	3.60	3.65	Moderately Agree
Overall Mean	3.71	3.68	3.70	Moderately Agree

The overall mean score of 3.70 reflects a moderate agreement among all respondents that employee turnover creates a financial burden for the organization. This implies that respondents do not hold strong views on the established effects of turnover on organizational finances, as it is not consistently experienced, and the organization has managed it effectively to mitigate its impact. Respondents may not have an extensive opinion on the broader financial repercussions of turnover due to infrequent experiences with significant turnover events and the organization's effective strategies to handle these challenges. This analysis highlights an opportunity for the

organization to inform staff about the implications of turnover further and strengthen strategies to reduce its financial impact, ensuring better alignment between management and employee perceptions.

Policy

Table 23 presents the level of agreement regarding the effects of employee turnover on the organizational policies of DSWD RO V. The overall mean score of 3.66 concerning organizational policy suggests that respondents perceive the effects of employee turnover on policies as somewhat evident, although not consistently present. This implies that the challenges related to turnover's impact on organizational policies must be addressed promptly to reduce any further significant effects. This aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes that employee turnover can ripple effect on organizational effectiveness, particularly in public sector institutions (Alvarez & Wiggins, 2018; Klein et al., 2020). Effective policy communication and adherence are critical in fostering a cohesive work environment. Furthermore, the need for continual policy assessment and improvement, especially in retention strategies, echoes findings from recent studies, highlighting that organizations must evolve to address the challenges posed by employee turnover (Bhatnagar et al., 2019).

Table 23. *Effects of Employee Turnover in Terms of Policy*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Turnover has necessitated revisions or updates to organizational policies and procedures.	3.45	3.52	3.48	Moderately Agree
2. Employee turnover may lead to inconsistencies in policy implementation and enforcement.	3.47	3.45	3.46	Moderately Agree
3. Turnover has highlighted areas where existing policies may need improvement to address retention issues.	3.69	3.68	3.68	Moderately Agree
4. Due to turnover, The organization has faced challenges maintaining consistency and continuity in policies.	3.47	3.60	3.54	Moderately Agree
5. High turnover affects the effectiveness of policy communication and adherence among employees.	3.75	3.65	3.70	Moderately Agree
6. Frequent turnover has led to gaps in policy knowledge among new employees, requiring additional training and clarification.	4.08	3.98	4.03	Agree
7. Employee turnover has exposed weaknesses in existing retention and succession planning policies.	3.90	3.59	3.74	Moderately Agree
Overall Mean	3.69	3.64	3.66	Moderately Agree

Programs

Table 24 presents the level of agreement regarding the effects of employee turnover on the organizational programs of DSWD RO V.

Table 24. *Effects of Employee Turnover in Terms of Programs*

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Employee turnover disrupts the continuity and progress of ongoing programs and initiatives.	4.02	3.69	3.86	Moderately Agree
2. High turnover hinders the successful implementation of new programs and projects.	3.96	3.74	3.85	Moderately Agree
3. Turnover has impacted the effectiveness of employee engagement or wellness programs.	3.69	3.62	3.66	Moderately Agree
4. The organization has faced challenges sustaining long-term projects or programs due to turnover.	3.59	3.56	3.58	Moderately Agree
5. Employee turnover has hindered the achievement of organizational goals or milestones.	3.57	3.54	3.56	Moderately Agree
6. Turnover has disrupted mentorship and training programs, reducing their effectiveness.	3.57	3.50	3.54	Moderately Agree
7. Frequent turnover has caused program evaluations and reporting delays, affecting decision-making processes.	3.80	3.74	3.77	Moderately Agree
Overall Mean	3.74	3.63	3.69	Moderately Agree

The responses reveal that both management and rank-and-file employees at DSWD RO V "moderately agree" with the statements regarding the effects of employee turnover on various programs, reflecting uncertainty or ambivalence rather than a strong consensus. The overall mean score of 3.69 indicates that turnover is perceived to have a noticeable effect on organizational programs, though this impact is not uniformly felt across all areas. Respondents strongly agree that employee turnover disrupts the continuity and progress of ongoing programs and initiatives. It also hampers the successful implementation of new programs and projects. Additionally, turnover has affected the effectiveness of employee engagement or wellness programs. Respondents also acknowledged challenges in sustaining long-term projects or programs, hindering the achievement of organizational goals or milestones. Turnover has also disrupted mentorship and training programs, diminishing their effectiveness. Moreover, frequent turnover has caused program evaluations and reporting delays, impacting decision-making processes. These responses indicate that while the majority does not always experience these effects, turnover sometimes impedes the overall implementation of programs and services. These findings align with existing literature, which suggests that high turnover rates can significantly affect program stability and effectiveness, particularly in public sector organizations (Klein et al., 2020; Bhatnagar et al., 2019).

Organizational Performance

Table 25 presents the level of agreement regarding the effects of employee turnover on DSWD RO V's organizational performance.

Table 25. Effects of Employee Turnover in Terms of Organizational Performance

Indicators	Management Team & Heads	Rank-and-File Employees	Overall	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Interpretation
1. Turnover has affected the overall productivity and efficiency of the organization.	3.84	3.69	3.76	Moderately Agree
2. The departure of key personnel has negatively impacted the quality of work or service delivery.	3.76	3.64	3.70	Moderately Agree
3. Employee turnover has influenced stakeholder perceptions of the organization's stability and reliability.	3.59	3.52	3.55	Moderately Agree
4. The organization has experienced declines in customer satisfaction or client outcomes due to turnover.	3.45	3.33	3.39	Moderately Agree
5. Turnover-related disruptions have hindered progress towards strategic objectives or targets.	3.49	3.49	3.49	Moderately Agree
6. High turnover has led to increased errors or rework, affecting the organization's performance metrics.	3.71	3.65	3.68	Moderately Agree
7. Employee turnover has strained leadership capacity, impacting strategic decision-making and organizational direction.	3.57	3.54	3.55	Moderately Agree
Overall Mean	3.63	3.55	3.59	Moderately Agree

The overall mean score of 3.59, or "moderately agree," regarding the effects of employee turnover on organizational performance indicates that both management and rank-and-file employees at DSWD RO V perceive turnover as having a noticeable, though not significant, impact on performance. Respondents generally appear uncertain or neutral, suggesting that the effects of turnover on performance are not consistently felt but are experienced occasionally.

3.4 Necessary Fundamental Components of an Employee Sustainable Intervention Program

Table 26 displays the suggestions and recommendations from the management teams and rank-and-file employees regarding the key components of a sustainable employee intervention program. These recommendations, derived from responses to the interview guide, highlight critical elements that DSWD RO V should prioritize to address frequent turnover and its underlying causes effectively.

Table 26. *Necessary Fundamental Components of an Employee Sustainable Intervention Program*

Themes	Description
Work-Life Balance and Wellbeing	Emphasis on promoting work-life balance, wellness programs, flexible working hours, and minimizing weekend/holiday work to ensure employee well-being.
Workload Management	Better distribution and management of employee workload and caseload to reduce burnout and ensure manageable responsibilities across different roles and teams.
Job Security and Stability	To reduce turnover and increase retention, focus on providing more plantilla positions and ensuring job security, particularly for COS workers.
Training and Skills Development	Continued training is aligned with job roles, opportunities for skill development, coaching, and mentoring to address skills gaps and support professional growth, enhancing retention.
Promotion and Career Development	Highlighting the need for structured career paths, fair promotion opportunities, and professional development programs.
Rewards and Recognition	Emphasizing the importance of recognizing employee contributions through rewards, recognition programs, diversified appreciation activities, or monetary/non-monetary incentives.
Positive Organizational Culture	Emphasis on fostering a supportive and transparent work environment that aligns with organizational values and supports employee engagement and job satisfaction.
Effective Leadership and Management	To foster a positive work environment, better leadership training, management skills, transparency, trust-building among supervisors, and strong management support are needed.
Employee Engagement and Participation	Involving employees in decision-making processes, gathering feedback (e.g., exit interviews, regular check-ins), and fostering a participatory work culture.
Conducive Work Environment	Improving the physical workplace, equipment availability, office space, and support for field workers, especially in remote or island areas.
Proper Resource Allocation	Emphasizes the need for adequate resources and timely processing of reimbursements and allowances.
Fair Compensation Structure	Stresses the need for competitive pay and benefits to attract and retain employees.
Competency-Based Hiring	Focus on transparent and merit-based hiring and promotion processes to build trust and eliminate favoritism, ensuring equity in the workplace.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the current HRM practices at DSWD RO V do not significantly affect employee retention, satisfaction, productivity, or organizational efficiency. However, key factors influencing employee turnover include unmet needs and an imbalanced employer-employee relationship, which must be addressed to improve retention. The lack of professional growth opportunities has also contributed to former employees leaving the organization. Adequate human capital remains crucial for the effective functioning of the DSWD RO V. In response, the study recommends a comprehensive, inclusive employee intervention program that addresses the needs of all employees, including targeted interventions for COS workers. Future research could explore the effectiveness of such programs and investigate how different HRM practices might impact employee outcomes in similar organizations.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The author declares this paper as an original work, incorporating previously published material that has been properly cited. The author contributed to the study's design, data analysis, and interpretation, ensuring all external sources were appropriately acknowledged.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

I am deeply grateful to God for His guidance and strength throughout this journey. My heartfelt thanks go to my adviser, Dr. Harley G. Peralta, and my dissertation committee, particularly Dr. Rosy Azupardo-Cantara, Dr. Elenita L. Tan, Dr. Ma. Christine R. Boduan, Dr. Michelle Maddela, and Dr. Maria Shane S. Del Rosario, for their invaluable support and feedback. I also appreciate Dr. Sylvia Elena B. Payonga, Mr. Rey B. Bongon, and the respondents from DSWD Regional Office V for their contributions. My deepest gratitude goes to my family, especially my husband, for their unwavering support, love, and encouragement throughout this endeavor. I am profoundly thankful for their presence in my life and for being my source of strength.

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Nanay na si Nene (A Journey to Early Motherhood): Understanding Pregnancy Through the Lens of Teenage Mothers

Colleene Shaey M. Aldaba*, Rysa Cassandra M. Malasan, Emmanuel Jerald U. Salazar,
Carissa Isobel A. Teaño, and Joseph A. Villarama
Central Luzon State University, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: colleeneshaey@gmail.com

Date received: January 13, 2025
Date revised: February 18, 2025
Date accepted: March 7, 2025

Originality: 85%
Grammarly Score: 99%
Similarity: 15%

Recommended citation:

Aldaba, C.S., Malasan, R.C., Salazar, E.J., Teaño, C.I., & Villarama, J. (2025). Nanay na si Nene (A journey to early motherhood): Understanding pregnancy through the lens of teenage mothers. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 56-63. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.022>

Abstract. Teenage pregnancy is considered one of the problems in the Philippines, which shows the necessity of understanding the frustrating implications. Employing a phenomenological research design, this research provides an overview of the emotional and social impacts that young mothers as teenage pregnancy may create, giving light on how it affects their psychological and life pursuits. This was achieved by utilizing semi-structured face-to-face interviews with eight (8) identified teenage mothers from Luzon, involving ten (10) self-developed and expert-validated questions designed to determine the impact of early motherhood on the emotional and social well-being of teenage mothers and the impact of early motherhood on aspirations and self-perception of teenage mothers. Their experiences and problems during pregnancy and the early phase of parenthood were analyzed. The findings highlighted the difficulties experienced by the youth, including their academic failure and the broad discrimination they face in society. Despite every mental, emotional, and investment difficulty, they also could reach strength from their families and partners. Inadequate comprehensive sex education, which creates a vicious circle, has a devastating impact on this issue. Albeit the adverse outcomes of teenage pregnancy, the results underline the importance of adequate sex education and support systems for teenage mothers. Such interventions are critical in averting unwanted adolescent pregnancies and ensuring healthier upbringing for future generations. Contrasting what teenage mothers go through and incorporating it into the policies, minimizes the kind of stigma faced by teenagers who fall victim to early pregnancies and creates a favorable and welcoming society for future generations.

Keywords: Adolescence pregnancy; Early motherhood; Sex education; Teenage mothers.

1.0 Introduction

In the Philippines, along with some developing countries, adolescent pregnancies remain to be a serious societal issue, despite efforts to minimize its prevalence. With many teenagers still having completely unintended pregnancies or intended with a lack of preparation and knowledge on how to handle it, this leaves high risks of health complications, emotional and mental instability, and social damages because of the stigma resulting from adolescent pregnancies and motherhood and carrying substantial physical, psychological, and mental ramifications for individuals impacted, in addition to a more significant chance of additional health issues among young women compared to later pregnancies, such as eclampsia, puerperal endometritis, and systemic infections (Pepito et al., 2021). This is especially true for those affected under the poverty line, having worse diets and

constrained access to obstetric treatment, increasing the risk and impact of prenatal complications (Marti-Castaner et al., 2022).

The psychological, mental, and social effects of the numerous obstacles and experiences adolescent mothers confront are substantial and long-lasting. They become physically and psychologically exhausted due to mounting duties, a persistent shortage of time and energy, and less time spent on self-interest. Most of the time, considering they are teenagers, they cannot cope with the workloads (Villarama et al., 2022; Mangeli et al., 2017). Further, it is well-recognized that, compared to adult mothers, teen mothers are much more vulnerable to struggle with postpartum depression; nonetheless, social support remains essential for the psychological and emotional well-being of all sorts of mothers (Villarama et al., 2022). Due to their early age, teenage mothers face several challenges associated with nursing, childbirth, conflicting emotions about caring for the child, a greater need for social support, and pressure on their income, healthcare, and educational opportunities (Villarama et al., 2024; Erfina et al., 2019).

The educational and professional paths of adolescent mothers in particular are challenging given that adolescent pregnancy negatively impacts their academic performance, which can result in school dropout. Adolescents who experience early pregnancy have a lower probability of finishing their studies, which results in low-paying, unfulfilled professions. Only those with adequate family financial support and financial standing can pursue their education and fulfill their life goals (Villarama et al., 2023). Among young Filipino women, no established path results in teenage pregnancy, each road to motherhood is defined by a specific set of adversaries and circumstances. Still, the main pathways that lead to teenage pregnancy are intended pregnancy from early unions, pure accidents in romantic and sexual relationships, and prior adversaries and difficulties in life (Harbito et al., 2021). Actions leading to teenage pregnancy are affected by many variables, including age, income and social standing, degree of education, and work situation (Rohmah et al., 2020).

Studies delving deeply into the psychological and societal ramifications of teenage pregnancy remain fragmented; thus, this research examines the influences that adolescent pregnancy had on the psychological and social well-being of the teenagers who went through it, as well as the effects it had on the aspirations and self-worth of those teenage mothers. This study is significant as it dissects the experiences and challenges of teenagers transitioning into a parent and their effect on their being, through the lens of being a teenage mother. It seeks to shed light on its challenges, hardships, and lasting impacts. By understanding these, society and various sectors can vigorously promote sex education policies and form better ways and policies to care for teenage mothers' physical and emotional health.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

Based on Critical Pedagogy and Social Contract Theory (Bernabe et al., 2022), the study utilized phenomenological research, a qualitative research method, to distill the essence of participants' experiences with concepts or phenomena (Creswell, 2007). This study examines, from a qualitative perspective, early motherhood's consequences on teenage mothers, the social issues that these mothers face, and how these issues impact their emotional and social well-being, self-worth, and aspirations.

2.2 Research Locale

This study took place in different provinces of Luzon, mainly in Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Rizal, and Pampanga, to give a more valuable representation of the teenage mothers in Luzon, Philippines.

2.3 Research Participants

This study utilized a phenomenological approach to explore and understand the individualized experiences of eight (8) Filipino teenagers, 15 to 19 years old, who gave birth and raised children throughout Luzon, Philippines. The researchers used a purposive sampling technique to guarantee that the study comprises an adequate and diverse sample of adolescent mothers, considering the participants' varying roots and circumstances. With the implementation of this approach, the researchers selected volunteers for the study according to predetermined standards including age, location, and life experiences.

2.4 Research Instruments

In the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, researchers prepared ten (10) validated self-developed guide questions, focusing on two parts: (1) impact of early motherhood on the emotional and social well-being of teenage mothers; and (2) impact of early motherhood on the aspirations and self-perception of teenage mothers. The instrument was reviewed and validated by three (3) experts: a language teacher, a psychologist, and a social science researcher.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedures

This research, approved by the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) Ethics Research Committee (ERC), with protocol approval code 2024-185, dated March 14, 2024, aims to delve into the experiences, challenges, and transformations faced by eight (8) teenage mothers from different areas of Luzon, Philippines, who became pregnant between the ages of 15 to 19. The researchers obtained consent forms and ensured the participants were well-informed and agreed to share their stories voluntarily. Interviews were scheduled within four weeks during the second semester of the academic year (AY) 2023-2024. A one-hour session of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews per participant was conducted following the ten (10) self-developed guide questions. The researchers conducted the interviews at locations convenient to the participants, either at their residences or nearby community centers. The participants' responses and experiences were analyzed, classified, and thematically interpreted. Colaizzi's Method (1978) was followed in the study. Data triangulation and cross-checking guarantee the findings' accuracy, reliability, and validity.

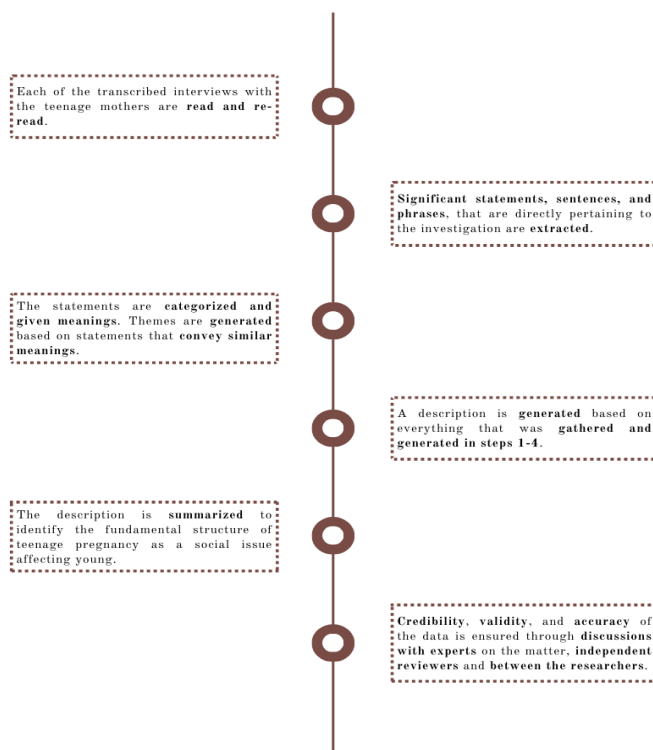


Figure 1. *Modified Steps of Colaizzi's (1978) Phenomenological Data Analysis*

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 Coping with Motherhood: Exploring Emotional Diversity on Teenage Mothers

Most teenage mothers experience mixed emotions as their initial reaction upon discovering that they are carrying a child. Some teenage mothers expressed various reactions such as happiness, excitement, nervousness, disappointment, extreme rage, regret, fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. Teenage mothers are often controlled by their relational strife and emotional highs and lows that often come after the fetus is born, which is commonly called

postpartum depression (Bah, 2016). Some of them were not ready for motherhood and had second thoughts about the pregnancy. Their only options are illegal abortion or carrying the baby.

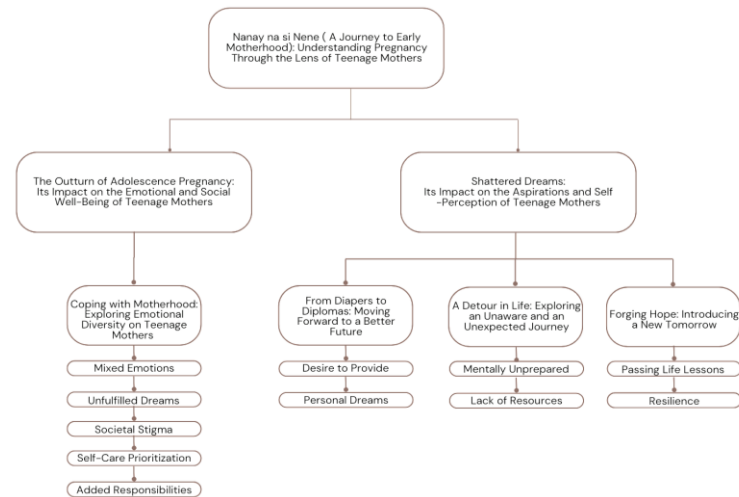


Figure 2. Research Findings

"I was nervous during that time and was reluctant if I should continue my pregnancy or result in a miscarriage. I continued it even if I was an overthinker who was considering all the responsibilities that come with it." (R2)

"I was very disappointed with myself during that time, especially because it was unexpected, the disappointment that I felt resulted in extreme rage and a mix of emotions." (R3)

"I felt that I got pregnant too early. At first, I was scared, of course, I did not know how to tell my parents and how to give my soon-to-be child a proper future." (R6)

Although several teenage mothers may argue that they faced a fair share of difficulties, two respondents revealed that happiness was their initial reaction when they found out about their pregnancy.

"I was delighted and shocked after knowing that I was pregnant. I cannot contain the excitement I felt." (R1)

"I found happiness in my heart as I felt contented even if I had encountered it at an early age." (R8)

Unplanned pregnancies among adolescents present a significant societal concern, as they abruptly interrupt the typical trajectory of teenage years and thrust young individuals into the realm of parenthood before they are emotionally, socially, and psychologically prepared (Okine et al., 2020).

"I was very discouraged by the people around me due to the things I have done, I always receive sermons and life lessons that they thought could make my life better but it affected my mental health more in a bad way, and I was kept reminded that it was my fault since I did not listen to my mother." (R2)

"When I look in the mirror, I see that so much has changed. It is like I do not even recognize myself anymore. It is hard to care about my health and appearance when I am juggling so much." (R3)

"I felt like my family dumped me; however, I had to continue life for my child." (R4)

However, the process of bringing babies into the world at such an early age is because of the additional problem that goes beyond the act of giving birth, which most mothers think of as the physical stress of childbirth. Teenagers, who are often ill-prepared for the responsibilities of parenthood, must navigate a complex landscape of emotions, relationships, and societal expectations as they embark on this journey (Tetteh et al., 2020).

"I realized that no matter what has happened, may it be positive or negative, I could teach that to my son knowing that I could explain to him the consequences and the benefits of dealing with it even if it should not be done at a young age, due to the bulk of responsibilities it brings." (R2)

"I slowly learned what my parents were trying to say to me. It was hard to be a spouse, and it was clearly not the right time to do so. Here I'll learn how to be a strong and responsible mother." (R6)

"I cared for myself more as I knew that I had a child living inside me during that time; I started living healthier, as I continued to lessen my stressors, ate healthy foods on time, and made sure that I was able to get plenty of sleep than the usual to keep my baby healthy." (R8)

The journey to motherhood necessitates physical readiness and psychological, social, and cognitive preparation, elements many teenage mothers lack (Tetteh et al., 2020). While there are a lot of rainbows and bursts of sunshine, teen mothers simultaneously face a sea of unforeseen difficulties. These challenges include grappling with the sudden shift to adulthood, managing the criticism and disappointment of parents and relatives, contending with the disruption of their education (Villarama et al., 2024), and navigating the complexities of relationships with partners, friends, and relatives (Aparicio et al., 2015).

"My child having no father while he was growing up has the biggest impact on my mental health." (R2)

"I was being treated coldly by my parents since they believed that it is a sin to have premarital sex, knowing that I was at an early age when it happened." (R4)

"I was frequently tired and frustrated to the point where I could not sleep, eat, or function well." (R7)

Amid these uncertainties, teenage mothers shockingly demonstrate a lot of endurance and strength, which it takes them to manage both the pressure of motherhood and the compound problems of adolescence. Notwithstanding, the many difficulties they encounter on the way, many young mothers, whose objective is to lift the bar in their lives, decide to go forward. The experience that they describe is a mixture of diverse and sometimes, conflicting emotions, such as boundless joy and overwhelming love, on the one hand, and fear, worry, and a sense of loneliness, on the other.

"It was my choice to welcome him into my life; therefore, I take full responsibility to take good care of him throughout his life. Moreover, it struck me, how could I care for him if I could not even care for myself?" (R1)

"I continued life, and I still went out from time to time because I was just thinking about the good things, I had experienced." (R8)

Exploring the emotional diversity among teenage mothers provides observers with a deeper understanding of the myriad experiences associated with early motherhood. Through empathy, assistance, and understanding, it is possible to create a more supportive and inclusive platform for teenage mothers to navigate the joys and challenges of parenthood at a young age.

3.2 From Diplomas to Diapers: Moving Forward to a Better Future

The teenage years are some of the most important periods of a person's life regarding education and professional opportunities for the future. The participants expressed their stories of personal and professional aspirations pre-pregnancy, and how early pregnancy and motherhood prevented them from achieving those goals.

"Long before I became a mother, I wanted to be a professional chef as I love cooking and serving the people I love. However, as a teenage mother, I became skeptical about pursuing my dreams, especially due to the lack of time and financial resources." (R1)

Due to the financial and mental burdens of being a teenage mother, all the participants weren't able to finish college and gain a degree initially. This reflects the overall experience of being a teenage mother in the country, as in the Philippines, the rate of teenage mothers dropping out of school is as high as over 60% (Ruta-Canayong, 2020).

Despite the challenges, many of the participants expressed their desires to continue their pursuit of education to gain decent and stable jobs and better provide for their families through financial support from their families and their own strength and resilience (Suhardi et al., 2023).

"Even if I already have a two-year-old son, I could achieve the dreams I planned before. I continued my studies while raising my child, and I was not struggling too much financially. I know that all these things would not have been possible without

the help of my family.” (R2)

Some aim to continue their educational pursuits to provide a brighter future for their children and families, some aim to start businesses, and others completely focus on raising and helping their children grow and develop.

“I want to have a business that I could consider as one of my financial resources in supporting my family.” (R3)

“I want to conquer all the problems that life would throw at me, to continue to be strong for my family and to guide my children. I want them to grow up as smart, god-fearing, and respectful children.” (R7)

The mothers also shared their specific personal life goals and desires before and even after becoming teenage mothers. Many aspired to have fruitful professional careers, provide luxuries for their loved ones, and travel around the world.

“I dreamed of being a nurse in the US, as I have an aunt who was based there before. I know that life would be good if I could achieve my American dream.” (R4)

3.3 A Detour in Life: Exploring an Unexpected and Unaware Journey

Turning from a typical teenager and student into a mother is a significant transition. The participants shared their feelings of distress, shock, and uncertainty about their transitioning into young mothers. Many admitted how they were mentally unprepared, acknowledging that they initially lacked the knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed to carry the burdens and responsibilities of motherhood, as well as the lack of resources to provide the needs for raising and nurturing a child.

“I was not prepared for it. I was shocked, unknowing what I would face upon accepting him.” (R1)

“As of the moment, I can admit that I am not financially stable without the help of my family. That is why I could not start my own life that includes only me and my son.” (R2)

Teenage mothers are highly vulnerable and face many challenges, due to their circumstances and young age. The participants’ experiences mirror that of many teenage mothers around the world, they face many physical, psychological, mental, and social challenges, which makes support extremely crucial (Mangeli et al., 2017). Teenage mothers are also more likely to be impoverished and disadvantaged economically, making the mother’s education and child-raising incredibly difficult, as such financial assistance from family members or the government is important (Hodgkinson et al., 2014).

3.4 Forging Hope: Introducing a New Tomorrow

Extreme challenges and problems can give significant life lessons that could be passed down to the younger generations so they would not make the same decisions that led to those situations. The challenges and problems given by early pregnancy and motherhood gave the participants important personal growth, development, knowledge that they pass down to their children, and the need to be strong and resilient in life despite any unexpected challenges.

“I will make her understand that it is so much better to study and have a decent job for her child's future, because it is hard to be a young mother, like me, who was not able to finish college and have a permanent job.” (R6)

“My experiences as a teenage mother have taught me the importance of adaptability, patience, and resilience in parenting.” (R5)

Teenage mothers initially lack the skills needed to raise a child properly. As such, they need guidance and instruction from those who have the knowledge to do so, from their parents, grandparents, siblings, and other relatives with parental experience (Watts et al., 2015). These mothers would give the same guidance and act as a warning to their children in order for them to make better life decisions.

The mothers emphasized continuously learning, improving, and developing as a mother. They also became better and more conscious decision makers, planning things out carefully beforehand, first thinking about how it could affect other people, especially their children.

"Being a mother, not only deciding for herself but also for the family she created." (R3)

"This experience has taught me to make more thoughtful and considerate decisions, taking into account the well-being of my child and myself." (R5)

The mothers aim to use their experiences of teenage pregnancy to develop their children into well-rounded and responsible people, who would not make the same grave mistakes and decisions they did, through sharing their experiences, instilling valuable lessons, and being open to communication about sensitive topics related to their pregnancy and life that led to it.

"As someone who got pregnant early, I want my child to be better than me in all aspects. I want to raise my son with the fear of God, including the conviction in all the actions that he will take." (R3)

"I aim to be an open and honest communicator, encouraging open dialogue and mutual respect." (R5)

4.0 Conclusion

This qualitative research employed a phenomenological approach to delve into the outcomes of adolescent pregnancy, unraveling the emotional and social impacts on young mothers while analyzing the ways their aspirations and self-perception were affected. The findings showed many experiences, such as intense emotions and relentless hindrances in earning an education and careers. Related to historical times wherein children endure emergency circumstances to show a high level of human endurance and resolution to improve their lives regarding the generation to come. Further, the results revealed the need for sex education measures that would help to alleviate teenage pregnancies and provide support to teenage mothers, as they are much more likely to experience the consequences of early parenting, such as mental and psychological. The study renders the history of teenage pregnancy in the Philippines for decision and policy-making processes. This is a very crucial statement, and, understandably, teenagers' sexual knowledge should be comprehensive to eliminate negative impacts that may be due to wrong or insufficient sexual health knowledge. However, the study pointed to the significance of providing systems to be agitated and removing societal discouragement and stigmatism in the teenage matter. Future researchers, in this way, by raising the voices of teenage mothers and providing empathy-based systems, may contribute to building an inclusive society where every person feels heard and empathized with.

5.0 Contribution of Authors

CSMAldaba, RCMMalasan, EJUSalazar, CIATeaño, JAVillarama – Conceptualization of the Study; CSMAldaba, RCMMalasan, CIATeaño, JAVillarama – Literature Review; CSMAldaba, JAVillarama – Research Design; CSMAldaba, RCMMalasan, EJUSalazar, CIATeaño, JAVillarama – Development of Guide Questions; CSMAldaba, RCMMalasan – Gathering of Data; CSMAldaba, RCMMalasan, JAVillarama – Data Interpretation; CSMAldaba, RCMMalasan, EJUSalazar, CIATeaño, JAVillarama – Results and Discussion; CSMAldaba, RCMMalasan, EJUSalazar, CIATeaño, JAVillarama – Writing and Editing; CSMAldaba, CIATeaño, JAVillarama – Formatting; JAVillarama – Supervision

6.0 Funding

This study received no specific financial support.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that they do not have any competing interests.

8.0 Acknowledgement

The researchers acknowledge the participants for their support in the successful conduct of this research. Likewise, thanks to the CLSU Ethics Research Committee for reviewing and making sure that the study is conducted properly. The researchers are grateful to the Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives (JIP) for publishing this research.

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A Structural Equation Model on Teacher's Self-Efficacy in Education for Sustainable Development in Higher Education

Leonardo Jr., S. Rulida

Holy Cross of Davao College Inc., Davao City, Philippines

Author Email: leonardo.rulida16@gmail.com

Date received: February 4, 2025

Date revised: February 19, 2025

Date accepted: March 7, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Rulida, L. (2025). A structural equation model on teacher's self-efficacy in education for sustainable development in higher education. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 64-74.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.059>

Abstract. In the academic milieu, several persistent problems often challenge the teachers' self-efficacy in optimizing education for sustainable development (ESD). This empirical pursuit aims to scrutinize a comprehensive best-fit model that explains the complex relationship between the transformational leadership style of school heads, teachers' attitudes, teachers' participation in professional development, and teachers' self-efficacy in education for sustainable development. SPSS v.26 and AMOS software were used to evaluate 400 valid cases in a quantitative descriptive-correlational predictive research design utilizing structural equation modeling. After stratification of the hypothesized models based on the analysis and theoretical relevancy, Model 3 was the best-fit model to divulge the predictive link among transformational leadership of school heads, teachers' attitude, and teachers' self-efficacy in ESD, which affirms the theory of Social Cognitive Theory. The result suggests transformative leadership and fostering positive attitudes are crucial in enhancing teachers' self-efficacy in the ESD context in promoting advancement to prioritize the accessibility and equitability of quality education while bolstering lifelong learning opportunities, as conveyed in SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) 4.

Keywords: Self-efficacy; Transformational leadership; Teachers' attitudes; Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

1.0 Introduction

In the academic milieu in the context of education for sustainable development, several persistent problems often weaken the teacher's self-efficacy. The core foundations of high-quality learning among students from varying academic levels are that teachers in higher education are significantly pressed to cope with ESD demands (Durrani et al., 2019; Kang, 2021). Amidst their demanding roles, transformative growth in diverse aspects has been progressively required, and among those expected adjustments is centered on their self-efficacy (Hussain & Khan, 2022). Despite its steady gaining prominence in academic settings, the factors shaping the teachers' self-efficacy in ESD in higher education on its consequential nature in this area are less investigated both in the local and international arenas (Tang & Zhu, 2024; Vare, 2023; Palomino, 2022). Alongside this notion, the scarcity of theory-driven modeling to curate positive changes in ESD self-efficacy among teachers exacerbates the need to augment support on related empirical endeavors (Handtke et al., 2022; Choi & Kang, 2021).

In the global setting, urged by these fast-evolving global expectations, researchers from different countries have been increasingly committed to assessing and enhancing teachers' self-efficacy in ESD (Lyu, 2023; Mokski et al., 2023). Substantiating this, in Greece, 267 educators who partook in pertinent ESD training or implemented ESD projects at their institutions to probe their Self-Efficacy Scale for ESD (Malandrakis et al., 2019). In Pakistan, Nousheen et al. (2024) unveiled the ESD teaching efficacy of 419 teaching interns regarding pedagogical knowledge parameters. Aligned with this, in Korea, Choi and Kang (2021) constructed a structural equation modeling to indicate how teachers' self-efficacy, stances toward ESD, and collaborative career advancement are indirectly impacted by transformational leadership (TL). Encapsulating the latter research attempts, it is still notable for clarifying that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) worldwide are actively pressed to cope with the fast-evolving expectations to prioritize the enhancement of teachers' self-efficacy in ESD (Berchin et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, almost no research explores teachers' self-efficacy in ESD in higher education. Although HEIs in the country have joined the fray in discussing ESD, most published studies revolve around documentary analysis of national and international laws that strengthen the implementation of ESD. However, when scrutiny is diverted to the limited local studies, teachers' self-efficacy is also vastly credited to transformational leadership influences (Duran & Mariñas, 2024; O'beid, 2023). Exemplifying this, Nicdao (2019) inferred from their qualitative findings that university presidents who adhered to the best transformational leadership practices had spurred motivation in their administration, as reflected among the sampled renowned state universities in the country.

Numerous pieces of research evidence worldwide reinforce the notion that the high level of teachers' self-efficacy, if not addressed, will incapacitate them from embracing innovative teaching methods, setting ambitious goals, demonstrating improved organizational skills, concentrating their efforts on addressing academic challenges, and excel in collaborating with other stakeholders (Yang & Du, 2024; Ho, 2021; Lazarides & Warner, 2020; Wu et al., 2019). As the education system continually remains abreast with technological innovations, designing reliable models that seek to authenticate mechanisms in which transformational leadership and other salient determinants in addressing teachers' self-efficacy in ESD contexts become imperative (Akin & Calik, 2023). A crucial gap among research endeavors that elucidates the predictive link between teachers' self-efficacy in facilitating ESD in higher education remains predominant in the Philippines. Driven by these facts and circumstances, the researcher promptly perceives the requisite nature to undertake this study. Eyeing to cater to research-oriented perspectives and guidance, this empirical attempt is centered on intensifying initiatives toward enhancing the adoption of ESD and higher education teachers' efficacy in this domain through a structural equation model.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This quantitative descriptive–correlational predictive study utilized a structural equation modeling approach. Complementing its research design, the quantitative approach investigates an idea by creating precise hypotheses and collecting data to either validate or disprove the hypothesis (Creswell, 2021). Employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in predictive research design provides a versatile and advanced method for examining intricate correlations among variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) enables examining causal relationships among variables. It improves predicted accuracy via its measurement and structural model framework and facilitates a thorough analysis of inter-variable connections while accommodating measurement error and offering robust predictive modeling methodologies.

Moreover, this study applied descriptive methods to quantitatively assess variables such as the level of transformational leadership, teachers' ESD-inclined attitudes, self-efficacy, and professional development participation. Enriching these statistical resonances, correlational analysis corroborated the critical connection between two or more variables. Upon estimating and evaluating the effects, the interrelationship between transformational leadership (TL), teachers' attitudes (TA), participation in professional development (PPD), and self-efficacy (SD) in ESD contexts. The researcher also employed multiple regression analysis to examine the structural relationship among observed variables and underlying constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

2.2 Research Locale

The geographical context focused on in this research endeavor is Region XI. This spatial boundary is ideal as this region is home to several State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) offering various programs and degrees. Adding

to its credence, the target higher institutions mirror their reliability and prominence through competitive academic standards, highly trained educators, and inclusive learning environments. Regarding ESD, they had substantial efforts reflecting their commitment to providing their teachers with knowledge on sustainable development to give students the best education for success. The study respondents were sourced from various state universities and colleges in Region XI, which consented to permit the researcher to survey within their institutions to support the continuous commitment to excellence.

2.3 Research Participants

The selected respondents to this empirical endeavor were teachers from the different State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region XI with at least one year of experience in teaching, regardless of whether they are regular or part-time teachers. The total number of respondents was obtained using the Quota sampling technique. In operational understanding, this non-probability selection framework deliberately identifies respondents gleaned from predetermined qualities to ensure that they accurately represent specified attributes in proportion to their occurrence throughout the population (McLeod, 2019). The quota for the respondents of this study was 400 college instructors. The study involved participants from various State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region XI, with 400 college instructors distributed across 5 SUCs. The respondents were evenly distributed across these institutions to ensure equal representation and a comprehensive analysis of teachers' self-efficacy in education for sustainable development.

2.4 Research Instrument

In aggregating quantitative data to substantiate the objectives of this study, a four-part survey questionnaire was constructed and administered among the quota-sampled respondents. For Part I of the data gathering tool, school heads' transformational leadership (TL) became the focus of the assessment. Concurrently, Part II of the survey instrument delved into evaluating teachers' attitudes toward ESD, and Part III concentrated on weighing their PPD and self-efficacy related to ESD. Diverging into a reliable reference for data collection, the researcher adapted a survey questionnaire from Sunaengsih et al. (2021) to gather data for the independent variable, transformational leadership. Elaborating on the data gathering for the first mediating variable, teachers' attitudes toward ESD, the researcher contextually captured salient parts of the survey tool by Peedikayil et al. (2023). With this, the coherent adoption of the Likert Scale is central to examining this variable. Denoting the metrics to assess the second mediating variable, a structured questionnaire originally by OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) (2014) has capacitated a detailed examination of the teacher's participation in professional development (PPD) in ESD. Cohesive with the previous usage, this variable also used a similar evaluation grid as a five-point Likert Scale at which one (1) remains the lowest and five (5) is maintained as the highest. For the dependent variable, the survey questionnaire reflected and applied in the research venture by Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) has efficiently navigated an objective analysis of the teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. Collectively, the researcher's instrument entails 45 items. Each part embodies the comprehensive variable being studied. For instance, Part I is anchored in the structured data collection about the independent variable, the school heads' TL, as discerned by teacher-respondents. It is stretched from a survey questionnaire by Sunaengsih et al. (2021), comprising twelve (12) items, with questions for diverse indicators, namely idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation.

Expounding teachers' attitudes towards ESD, a survey instrument stemming from the empirical pursuit by Peedikayil et al. (2023), has enabled crucial evidence accumulation for the first mediating variable. Contextually, it consists of nineteen (19) items, with questions in each indicator for implementation, limitations, and adequacy. Supplementing a holistic accent, the focal interest in teachers' participation in professional development in ESD was met in Part III of the survey, which used the six (6) item questionnaires with indicators of engagement and collaboration adapted from OECD (2014). Following this data gathering for the second mediating variable, the last section, Part was immersed in the extensive data acquisition regarding the dependent variable. Employing the eight-item questionnaire with indicators of teaching and student involvement referenced from Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001), the objectives inputs showcasing teachers' self-efficacy in ESD within the established research locale were efficiently gathered. Culminating the quantitative nature of this research, a five-point Likert Scale application was deemed valuable in assessing each variable. Ergo, distinctive interpretations in defining the teachers' perceived extent of TL, attitudes, PPD, and self-efficacy in ESD were concisely established among all data collection tools.

On account of validity and reliability, the consultant reviewed the questionnaires that had undergone validation by specialists. Reliability result demonstrates a rule that follows the recommended threshold typically suggested by researchers (Asif et al., 2022). Meanwhile, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) indices confirmed its construct validity for each variable under investigation. As deduced from empirical assertions, the CR is considered appropriate when it exceeds 0.7, and the AVE is deemed acceptable above 0.5 (Qing et al., 2020). Further heightening uniformity, Cronbach's alpha was utilized to evaluate and solidify the internal homogeneity of the research instrument. A 0.70 or above Cronbach's alpha coefficient is satisfactory in the generic threshold.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Distributing the Informed Consent Forms before disseminating the survey instrument to the respondents allowed them to ask all the questions they had in mind related to the research. With the absence of additional queries and areas demanding clarifications, the Informed Consent Form was processed for due signing to guarantee their willing approval. After this, proper scheduling was arranged, and survey forms were carefully distributed among the respondents. The researcher thoroughly explained how to answer the questionnaires given to college instructors working in different state tertiary institutions with the approval and full support of the school heads. The questionnaires are distributed to respondents via Google Forms. Although some participants did not provide their e-signatures, their engagement and responses demonstrate their voluntary participation in the survey. After the respondents had provided the relevant data and answered the Google form honestly, the researcher extracted all completed questionnaires. After the survey questions had been successfully administered and retrieved online, the results were gathered and tallied. Data was collected using appropriate statistical methods to interpret the result and further analysis.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Upholding ethical standards in research is essential in fostering honesty, safeguarding participants, and bolstering the credibility of scientific progress (Bhandari, 2021). The researcher adhered to and implemented specific ethical standards and concerns set by the HCDC-SMILE. Respondents were given informed consent forms to ensure their willingness to participate, essential for safeguarding participants, preserving research integrity, and cultivating trust among the scientific community and society. There was no potential harm to the respondents. To meet the quota per State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) while ensuring anonymity, the researcher assigned code names to each SUC. This allowed the researcher to track the distribution of respondents without compromising their confidentiality. The researcher's dedication to ethical principles strengthens the basis of responsible research, facilitating the quest for knowledge while honoring human rights and dignity.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

As shown in Table 1, school heads' overall transformational leadership style obtained 4.25, a mean value of a "very high level." It signifies that the transformational leadership style of school heads is always observed. Among all the four indicators, Intellectual Stimulation yielded a 4.38 mean score or a "very high level," showcasing school heads always provide references in self-development to educators/staff, provide opportunities for them to also improve training and overall education, involve them in policy development and assessment for higher education, solve problems innovatively, and offers beneficial solutions for stakeholders. Contrarily, the individualized considerations have the lowest mean, 4.14, or a "high descriptive level," implying that the school head frequently praises faculty and staff achievements, invites recommendations for improvement, and provides support and training to individuals facing challenges. They usually advise reviewing evaluation outcomes to address deficiencies and understand the needs of lecturers regarding classroom teaching and learning activities while also attending to the grievances of lecturers and staff for collective well-being.

Diverting into the teacher's attitude towards ESD, the 4.25 composite mean value or "very high" denotes that the teacher's attitudes toward ESD always manifest, indicating a positive and consistent attitude towards ESD. Adequacy attains the highest of the three indicators at a 4.47 mean score or a "very high descriptive level." As gleaned from the figure, a conclusion is that teachers consistently exhibit a positive attitude towards ESD, believe that ESD effectively enhances students' awareness of sustainability, find it adequately integrated into the

curriculum, and consider themselves sufficiently knowledgeable about ESD. Also evidenced from the findings, the 3.82 mean value or a "high descriptive level" for Limitations implies that teachers' attitudes towards ESD are frequently manifested. Likewise, they regard ESD as a contentious pillar that must be pedagogically articulated in higher education. It is a realistic approach and easy to integrate into their teaching pedagogy, which may increase students' motivation and ability to understand.

Table 1. Level of transformational leadership style of school heads, teachers' attitude towards ESD, teacher's participation in professional development in ESD, and teacher's self-efficacy in ESD

Variables	Mean	Descriptive Level
Transformational Leadership of School Heads		
1. Idealized Influence	4.24	Very High
2. Individualized Considerations	4.14	High
3. Inspirational Motivation	4.24	Very High
4. Intellectual Simulation	4.38	Very High
Overall Result	4.25	Very High
Teacher's Attitude Towards ESD		
1. Implementations	4.44	Very High
2. Limitations	3.82	High
3. Adequacy	4.47	Very High
Overall Result	4.24	Very High
Teacher's Participation in Professional Development in ESD		
1. Engagement	4.35	Very High
2. Collaboration	4.44	Very High
Overall Result	4.39	Very High
Teacher's Self-Efficacy in ESD		
1. Teaching	4.63	Very High
2. Student Involvement	4.45	Very High
Overall Result	4.54	Very High

Drawing upon the teachers' participation in professional development in ESD, the garnered 4.39 mean score or "very high level" reflects that the teachers' involvement in professional development is always manifested. This reveals the teacher's commitment to professional development and personal growth in the ESD context. Between the two indicators, Collaboration with a mean score of 4.44 or "very high level" resonated with teachers' proactive Collaboration with their colleagues. On the other hand, Engagement's 4.35 mean score or "very high level" supports the personal active Engagement of the teachers in training, joint activities, and professional learning communities in pursuit of professional development in ESD.

Lastly, the teacher's self-efficacy in ESD 4.54 mean value or a "very high level" distinguishes the frequent manifestation of teacher's self-efficacy in ESD. With this, it can be inferred that their confidence and competence in Teaching and integrating ESD context positively and consistently demonstrate their efficacy. Contrasting the two indicators, Teaching has a mean score of 4.63 or "very high level", suggesting that the teacher's teaching efficacy in integrating ESD in their pedagogy is highly demonstrated. On another note, Student Involvement with a mean score of 4.45 or "very high level". Mirroring how teachers can integrate ESD lessons in the teaching and learning process into their classrooms while actively involving their students.

3.2 Correlational Analysis

Table 2 shows the inferential analysis of the correlation among all variables.

Table 2. Test of significance on the relationship between transformational leadership of school heads, teacher's attitude towards ESD, teacher's participation in ESD, and teacher's self-efficacy in ESD

	Teacher's Self-Efficacy in Education for Sustainable Development			
	r – Value	p – Value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership of School Heads	.371	.000	Reject	Significant
Teacher's Attitude Towards ESD	.494	.000	Reject	Significant
Teacher's Participation in Professional Development in ESD	.763	.000	Reject	Significant

Transformational leadership of school heads is correlated with ESD teacher self-efficacy with an r-value of .371 and a p-value of .000. This shows a significant low positive correlation between the variables. Additionally, teachers' attitude toward ESD and self-efficacy in ESD have a correlation r of .494 with a p-value of .000. This

suggests a substantial positive correlation between these variables. Teacher participation in professional development and ESD self-efficacy have a correlational r value of .763 and a p -value of .000. This indicates a strong positive relationship between variables. So, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

3.3 Regression Analysis

The inferential analysis of all variable regression is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Test of significance on the influence of transformational leadership style of school heads, teachers' attitude towards ESD, teachers' participation in professional development in ESD on teachers' self-efficacy in ESD*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Decision	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.		
Constant	1.84	.119		15.4	.000		
Transformational Leadership of School Heads	.173	.033	.264	5.23	.000	Reject	Significant
Teacher's Attitude Towards ES	.149	.040	.188	3.67	.000	Reject	Significant
Teacher's Participation in Professional Development in ESD	.639	.033	.805	19.2	.000	Reject	Significant

$R = .781$; $R^2 = .610$; F - value = 206.104; p - value = .000

A multiple linear regression was done to examine how transformational leadership of school head, teacher's attitude towards ESD, and teacher's participation in professional development in ESD predict teacher's self-efficacy in ESD. The relationship between transformational leadership of school head, teacher's attitude towards ESD, teacher's participation in professional development in ESD, and teacher's self-efficacy in ESD was positive and linear and did not reveal any bivariate outliers. The table shows that all the variables significantly influence teacher's self-efficacy in ESD, with a p -value of .000, .000 and .000, respectively. With an R -value of .781 and an F - value of 206.104, $p = .000$, which shows that there is a significantly strong predictive relationship between the predictors and the outcome variable, saying that the model works and with an R^2 - value of .610 accounting for 61% of the variability in teachers' self-efficacy was predictable from the level of transformational leadership of school heads, teachers' attitude towards ESD, and teachers' participation in professional development in ESD. The slope confidence interval to predict teacher's self-efficacy from transformational leadership of school heads, teacher's attitude towards ESD, and teacher's participation in professional development in ESD was a 95% confidence level with a Beta of .173, .149 and .639 respectively. Hence, the second null hypothesis is rejected.

3.4 Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

Establishing the best model is important in research involving Structural Equation Modeling. The last objective for this research is to identify the optimal model that elucidates the influence of transformational leadership of school heads, teachers' attitudes towards, and teachers' participation in professional development on teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. This paper section examines the interconnections among the research study's variables. Five proposed models were evaluated to identify the optimal model for teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. One is a model that quantifies the load on each factor about their latent constructs. The structural model delineates the relationships among latent variables. Evaluating each model's suitability determines whether to accept or reject it. In establishing the best-fit model, the researcher sought to demonstrate a causal relationship among latent variables. A correlation between exogenous and endogenous variables was also discovered. The structural model achieved an adequate fit that satisfied the stipulated criteria, indicating the consistency of empirical connections among the variables. Table 4 shows the fit indices for measurement models for each construct.

Table 4. *Test of Best-Fit Model on teachers' self-efficacy in ESD*

Index	CMIN/DF	p-value	NFI	TLI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	p-close
Criterion	< 5	> 0.05	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	< 0.05	> 0.05
Model 3	.352	.881	.999	1.008	1.000	.999	.000	.983

The best-fit SEM model does not incorporate all possible connections. Instead, the model balances goodness of fit with parsimony, accurately representing the data with the fewest necessary parameters. After stratification of the models based on theoretical relevancy, the following table proves how the null hypothesis is rejected as Model 3 was the best-fit model to elucidate the direct influence of transformational leadership of school heads and teacher's

attitudes on the teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. Also, model 3 explains the interrelationships between transformational leadership of school heads and teacher's attitude towards ESD.

According to modeling fitting requirements, Model 3 has the best goodness-of-fit model indices, as shown in Table 4. The model has values of indices Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom (CMIN-DF) of .352 which implies a adequate fit index of the model, Probability Value (P-VALUE) of .881 indicating the statistical significance of the tested model, Normed Fit Index (NFI) of .999 which implies the goodness-of-fit of the model, Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) of 1.008 which shows the evaluation of the fit model accounting to the models complexity, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) 1.000 which shows the model fitting of the observed data in comparison to the null model which provides insights to the relative improvement of the model fit, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) .999 indicating that the model aligns with the observed data which shows the assess fraction of the variance elucidated by the model, Root Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) of .000 which describes how well the model approximates the true underlying data structure and Probability Close (P-CLOSE) of .983 indicating that the model's likelihood is associated with the parameters which conforms the robustness of the hypothesized model in which the result of the analysis conforms to the standard criterion used in identifying the best fit model.

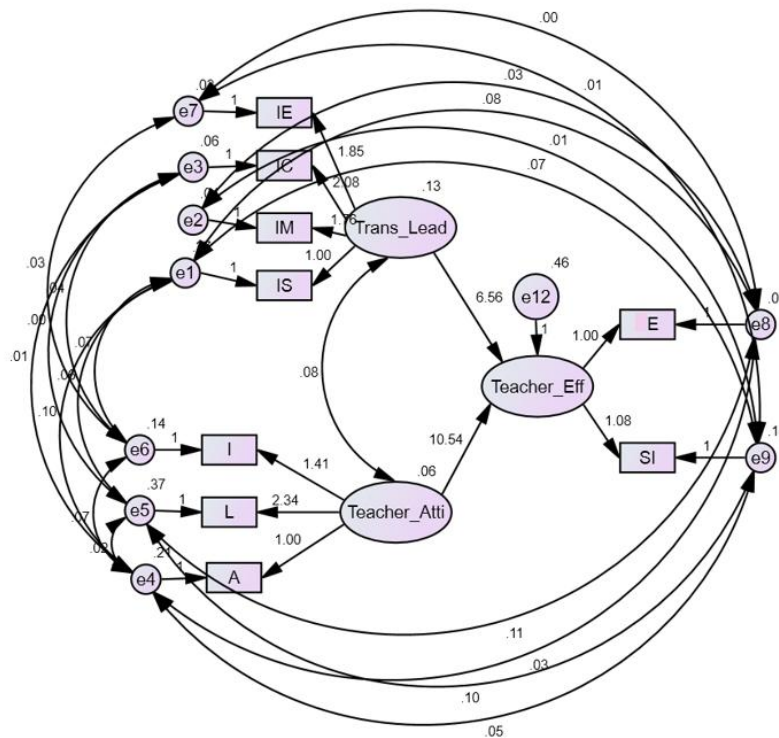


Figure 1. Best-fit Model

Figure 1 shows the best-fit model for teacher's self-efficacy in ESD. The model estimates the effects between measured and latent variables using regression weights. The model indicates the direct or unmediated effect of transformational leadership and the teacher's attitude on ESD teacher's self-efficacy with an estimated degree of influence of beta 6.56 or 7 and 10.54 or 10.5, with an error of .13 and .06, respectively. This means that when transformational leadership of school heads decreases by one unit, teacher's self-efficacy decreases by 6. 56 plus or minus .13. The same way with teacher's attitudes towards ESD when increased by one unit, the teacher's self-efficacy also increases by 10.54 plus or minus .06. With the p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the estimated effect is significant at alpha 0.05 level of significance. In addition, the model also illustrates the total indirect or mediated effect of transformational leadership of school heads on the teacher's attitude towards ESD with a covariance estimate of beta .082 or .08 degree of relationship, which is significant at alpha 0.05 level of significance

as evidenced by p – value of .000. Moreover, the regression coefficients are statistically significant for all the values that meet the requirement of a minimum of 0.3, which indicates that the variance is explained by latent factors or latent variables, which is good news for the model.

Moreover, Model 3, the best-fit model, is significantly supported by the paradigm of Social Cognitive Theory (1986), asserting that individuals learn and develop skills through interaction with their environment, encompassing social influences, personal factors, and behavioral elements. In education settings, particularly regarding ESD, the interplay of social cognitive theory highlights the interconnection of transformational leadership, teachers' attitudes towards ESD, and their self-efficacy in ESD. Transformative leaders are pivotal in cultivating a supportive and innovative atmosphere, fostering sustainable education. Through positive modeling, goal setting, and fostering collaborative practices, school heads can significantly improve teachers' attitudes towards ESD, enhancing teachers' self-efficacy. The interplay of Social Cognitive Theory illustrates the interconnectedness of transformational leadership, teachers' attitude, and teachers' self-efficacy in the ESD context. Hence, the third null hypothesis is rejected.

Transformational leaders are known for enhancing teachers' self-efficacy by providing the necessary support and development opportunities. When school leaders effectively motivate and inspire their staff, teachers tend to believe more in their capabilities, enhancing their professional performance and commitment to their roles (Ahamad & Kasim, 2016; Ibrahim, 2022). The findings of this study posited the strong correlation between school heads' TL (as discerned by teachers) and teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. Corroborating this outcome, Sunaryo et al. (2023) assert that when school leaders demonstrate inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, they cultivate an environment conducive to job satisfaction, significantly impacting teachers' performance. It was also discovered that the school heads' TL significantly influences teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. Parallel to the claim, a study by A'yun and Sulisworo (2024) contended that transformational leaders enhance teachers' self-efficacy by offering essential support and development opportunities, directly influencing teachers' innovative behavior and performance. The result also corroborates with Duran & Mariñas (2024) and O'beid (2023), claiming that teachers' self-efficacy is also vastly credited to transformational leadership influences. The benefits of a strong leadership style utilizing transformational leadership in educational institutions demonstrate that investing in leadership development is crucial for enhancing educational environments and outcomes. Fostering a supportive, engaging, and innovative school culture highlights the transformative influence that effective leaders can exert in academic institutions.

Second, teachers' attitudes toward ESD significantly hone their self-efficacy, which refers to their confidence in effectively teaching sustainability concepts and practices (Milama et al., 2019). The findings indicated a substantial correlation between teachers' attitudes toward ESD and their self-efficacy. Correspondingly, findings discovered that teachers' attitudes toward ESD strongly impact self-efficacy in this area. Conforming to this, Chen et al. (2023) indicate that favorable attitudes toward ESD enable educators to explore creative teaching techniques and integrate sustainability across diverse subjects. Further worth noting, Sigiyuwanta (2024) expounded that teachers with favorable attitudes toward ESD are more likely to be involved in related professional development and effectively integrate ESD practices into their teaching, influencing their self-efficacy. When educators acknowledge the significance of sustainability, they have better tendencies to be more equipped in teaching topics with enhanced initiatives, creating innovative lesson plans, and engaging students in sustainability-oriented projects (Pamuk et al., 2022). This approach helps enhance teaching efficacy and fosters professional fulfillment, strengthening their self-efficacy. Comprehending this link can significantly influence teacher training and professional development initiatives to strengthen the integration of ESD into educational curricula.

Third, teachers' participation in professional development initiatives centered on Education for Sustainable Development markedly improves their self-efficacy and confidence in effectively imparting sustainability concepts and practices (Murphy et al., 2020). This study's results revealed a significant correlation between teachers' participation in professional development and their self-efficacy in ESD, with PPD substantially impacting self-efficacy. Augmenting on similar assumption, Du et al. (2022), assert that involvement in professional development programs furnishes educators with critical knowledge and competencies pertinent to ESD. This also corroborates with the study of Kang (2021), asserting the importance of encouraging teachers to participate in a professional development program in the context of ESD. Alongside this, Uchacz (2024) suggests

that professional learning communities are also seen as a significant factor between the leader and the teacher, significantly contributing to the acquisition and efficacy of instructional development. Coherent with their empirical contentions, Rogalska-Marasinski (2021) points out that educators who partake in ESD-focused professional development frequently encounter innovative pedagogical methods that improve their instructional practices. These programs frequently provide educators with current perspectives on sustainability issues, instructional strategies, and vital resources for integrating ESD into their teaching. Meanwhile, Boeve-de Pauw et al. (2022) argue that teachers' participation in professional development is crucial for enhancing their competencies in ESD. As educators gain more profound knowledge, their confidence in tackling intricate sustainability issues is enhanced, increasing their self-efficacy. Henceforth, as educators enhance their pedagogical approaches through these professional experiences, their confidence in facilitating significant learning experiences grows, favorably impacting their self-efficacy.

Lastly, structural equation modeling (SEM) is a vigorous statistical solution enabling scholars from diverse fields to scrutinize intricate relationships among distinctive variables simultaneously. SEM can provide valuable insights into how these constructs interrelate in educational settings, particularly concerning transformational leadership, teacher attitudes, and self-efficacy in ESD. After stratification of the models based on the analysis and theoretical relevancy, Model 3 is the optimal model in elucidating the influence of the school head's TL and teachers' attitudes on their self-efficacy in ESD. From a socio-cognitive perspective, it could be justified that favorable experiences and successful implementation of ESD by transformative leaders foster positive attitudes, which, in turn, reinforce teachers' self-efficacy (Wang & Shao, 2024). Coherent with this theoretical association, Kang (2021) robustly endorsed the predictive link among transformational leadership, teachers' attitudes, and teachers' self-efficacy in ESD after applying a structural equation model in his research pursuit. Similarly, Min & Kwon (2023) emphasized that TL significantly influences teachers' attitude regarding their profession and self-efficacy toward ESD (Kang, 2021; Sigiyuwanta, 2024). The findings revealed that SEM is crucial for understanding the complex interrelationships among transformational leadership, teacher attitudes, and teacher self-efficacy. The robust correlation among these components indicates that educational institutions should consider these dynamics when developing programs for these interactions, establishing a self-reinforcing loop that promotes effective education for sustainable development. Furthermore, transformational leaders who foster positive teacher attitudes will likely enhance their professional development (Ibrahim et al., 2020), which will bolster teachers' self-efficacy, allowing them to implement sustainable practices more efficiently in their classrooms (Zhao & Zhang, 2024), ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

The result from the SEM in this research pursuit shows that school heads' TL significantly influences teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. Pronounced by four key components, including idealized influence, individualized considerations, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation, it is deduced that TL can foster a conducive environment conducive for teachers' career growth and development, leading to enhanced self-efficacy. In conjunction with this, attitudes directly influence a teacher's self-efficacy in ESD. With key components of implementation, limitations, and adequacy, positive attitudes towards ESD enhance educators' trust in ESD and promote innovative pedagogical approaches that engage students. Transformative leaders are instrumental in cultivating a supportive and innovative atmosphere fostering sustainable education. Through positive modeling, goal setting, and collaborative practices, school heads can significantly improve educators' attitudes towards ESD, enhancing their self-efficacy. Analogously, school heads' TL and teachers' attitudes toward ESD strongly influence the educators' self-efficacy in ESD. A nurturing and motivating leadership atmosphere and affirmative teacher dispositions bolster educators' confidence in integrating sustainability principles into their instruction (Yang, 2023; Önal, 2020). By emphasizing transformational leadership and cultivating positive attitudes towards ESD, educational institutions can profoundly influence teachers' self-efficacy, thereby advancing the overarching objective of SDG 4. This comprehensive approach improves the teaching profession and equips students to tackle critical sustainability challenges in their future pursuits.

4.0 Conclusion

The study's findings concluded that Model 3 is the best-fit model that elucidates the direct influence of transformational leadership of school heads and teachers' attitudes on teachers' self-efficacy in ESD and the interconnections between these variables. Such a model affirms the theory used, the Social Cognitive Theory, which states the dynamic interplay of environmental factors and behavior in shaping individual performance and

development. The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership of school heads, teachers' attitudes towards ESD, and teachers' participation in professional development significantly influence teachers' self-efficacy based on correlation and regression analyses. However, when subjected to structural equation modeling, the significance of teachers' participation in professional development diminishes after data stratification and consideration of theoretical relevance, indicating that although professional development may enhance teachers' self-efficacy in broader analyses, its direct influence may be diminished when contextual and theoretical factors are considered, underscoring the necessity for nuanced approaches to comprehending the determinants of teacher self-efficacy.

The optimal realization of the SDG 4 goals is deeply rooted in the teacher's self-efficacy. In the higher institutional realms, educational institutions are tasked with catalyzing opportunities that empower educators to become self-assured and capable of incorporating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their pedagogical approaches. This is an ongoing and indispensable reform in cultivating an academic atmosphere that robustly upholds inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education toward lifelong learning for learners. Thus, the empirical relevance of studies delving into teachers' self-efficacy in higher education is responsive to this global demand. The study's findings revealed the structural equation model 3 is fundamental for understanding the complex interrelationships among TL of school heads, teachers' attitude, and teachers' self-efficacy in ESD. This study intends to establish a foundational benchmark for future research and apply the best-fit model in different localities in a particular educational context. Further studies should be done to test the robustness of the theory used and strengthen the claims of this study's findings. Converging with this conclusion, the enhancement of teachers' self-efficacy may enable policymakers and educational leaders to expedite advancements toward SDG 4 and streamline how education can be leveraged for continuing sustainable development. Ingrained in these dynamics, education stakeholders can develop targeted strategies that may enhance the professional environment for teachers, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes. With high hopes, this empirical pursuit strives to serve as a baseline for future research in ESD.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

As the only author of this research, the researcher bears full responsibility for all facets of the study, encompassing conceptualization, data collecting, analysis, writing, editing, and manuscript finalization, which is a requisite for his doctoral degree.

6.0 Funding

This research received no specific funding from any agencies or institutions.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author asserts that there is no conflict of interest about the publication of this research.

8.0 Acknowledgment

I want to convey my profound appreciation to Lou Jane and our daughter Hayley Sofia, whose love and motivation sustain me, and for their steadfast support and encouragement. I thank my family and friends for their unwavering belief in me. I profoundly appreciate my research adviser's significant assistance and insight during this journey. I express my profound gratitude to Almighty God for His infinite blessings, power, and grace that have facilitated my achievement.

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Harnessing Community-Based Aquaculture for the Sustainable Development of Small Scale Fishery

Danielle D. Pamesa^{*1}, Ma. Cecilia M. Ferolin², Maria Pia M. Sison³, Peter D. Suson⁴, Marph Daryl C. Porras⁵

^{1,2,3,5} Sustainable Development Studies, School of Interdisciplinary Studies,

Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City, Philippines

⁴Center for Resiliency, Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: danielle.detera@g.msuiit.edu.ph

Date received: December 7, 2024

Date revised: February 19, 2025

Date accepted: March 8, 2025

Originality: 95%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 5%

Recommended citation:

Pamesa, D., Ferolin, M.C., Sison, M.P., Suson, P., Porras, M.D. (2025). Harnessing community-based aquaculture for the sustainable development of small scale fishery. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 75–88.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0663>

Abstract. This study examines how the principles of sustainable development can be realistically applied to community-based aquaculture in small-scale fisheries. Using the case of the Simbuco Aqua-Marine Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SAMMPC) in Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, this research explores the socio-economic and ecological dimensions of aquaculture activities and their broader implications for sustainability in small-scale fisheries. The study is framed within key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), highlighting how SAMMPC's initiatives align with global sustainability efforts. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD). Findings indicate that SAMMPC has significantly improved members' livelihoods through diversified income streams, enhanced credit access, and strengthened social cohesion. Notably, the cooperative fosters inclusivity by promoting women's participation in aquaculture, contributing to SDG 5 (Gender Equality). However, challenges such as environmental degradation, resource depletion, and market instability highlight the complexities of balancing economic growth with ecological sustainability. While SAMMPC serves as a model for cooperative-based aquaculture, the study underscores the broader need for sustainable practices across small-scale fisheries. The research advocates for biodiversity-friendly aquaculture methods, climate-adaptive strategies, and improved waste management systems to mitigate environmental risks. By integrating these approaches and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, community-based aquaculture can be a viable pathway for sustainable development, ensuring both economic viability and ecological resilience.

Keywords: Community-based aquaculture; Small-scale fisheries; Seaweed, Sustainable development; Well-being.

1.0 Introduction

Community-based aquaculture (CBA) is a participatory approach that involves the local community in the planning, implementation, and management of aquaculture (Atweberhan et al., 2018). It has been an integral part of the Philippines aquaculture sector since the 1970s (Agbayani, 2008). CBA has been seen as a viable or complementary means of generating income with the aim of establishing the wellbeing of impoverished small-scale fisheries (SSF) households (FAO, 2022).

SSF encompass a range of activities throughout the fisheries resource value chain which are undertaken typically by individuals and households with low levels of technology or capital investment and small fishing vessels (if any), making short fishing trips, close to shore, for local consumption (FAO, 2022). SSF provides around 40% of the world's fishery products hence they play a vital role in ensuring food security, nutrition, and livelihoods for millions of people worldwide. The Philippine Statistics Authority Fisheries Situation Report 2022 reveals that the total volume of SSF production amounted to 4,339.89 MT, with an uptick of 2.2% from the previous year. Aquaculture accounted for 54% of the total production, with seaweeds, milkfish, tilapia, and shrimps/prawns being the major cultured species. Furthermore, the marine municipal fisheries contributed 21.8% to the total fisheries production in the country. This highlights the significant role of small-scale fisheries in the country's seafood production.

SSF faces critical challenges from local threats and global pressures, including overexploitation, climate change, and inadequate governance. Community-based enterprises focusing on aquaculture cooperatives is advocated as a viable or complementary means for the sustainable development of SSF coastal communities (Fajardo, 2021). This phenomenon of adopting community-based and cooperative-led aquaculture as an enterprise to deal with the challenges brought on by small-scale fisheries can be observed in the Simbuco Aqua-Marine Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The Department of Agriculture (DA), through BFAR, launched the Special Area for Agricultural Development Program (SAAD) to support small-scale fishers (SSF) in impoverished coastal communities with high poverty rates, focusing on community-based enterprises to enhance resilience and sustainability. The Simbuco Aqua-Marine Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SAMMPC) in Lanao del Norte, established in 1993 by 20 fisherfolk as a seaweed farming group, grew to almost 200 members but faced significant setbacks due to environmental challenges, significantly decreasing seaweed production beginning 2018. As a SAAD beneficiary since 2019, SAMMPC shifted to milkfish production, achieving a gross income of Php10.3 million over three years with a 21% return on investment. This success underscores the potential of community-based aquaculture to strengthen SSF while raising the need to evaluate its broader ecological, social, and economic impacts.

As previously articulated, the CBA is an approach that empowers the small-scale fishery communities to ensure their sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing as enshrined in the Sustainable Development framework. This approach aligns with SDG 14's emphasis on conserving marine ecosystems while also supporting SDG 8's goals of inclusive economic growth and decent work (Fondo et al., 2024). By integrating material, relational, and subjective dimensions of wellbeing, CBA not only aims to improve household resources and social networks but also seeks to uplift perceptions of quality of life, ultimately contributing to the sustainability of SSF communities (Isaacs, 2019). This study examines whether the CBA approach of SAMMPC effectively addresses the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainable development for its small-scale fisherfolks.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research adopted a descriptive mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the case under study. This approach involved the simultaneous and equal collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative analysis was conducted using thematic analysis and document review, allowing for a deep exploration of stakeholders' perceptions and challenges. This method enabled the identification of recurring patterns and themes, offering a contextualized understanding of the key issues (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, which provided numerical insights and visual representations of variables such as local awareness, perceptions, participation, knowledge, and socio-economic conditions. These statistical analyses supported the qualitative findings by providing empirical data and quantifying the scope and significance of various phenomena (Field, 2017). Together, the qualitative and quantitative analyses offered a balanced and detailed portrayal of the research topic.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in Simbuco, Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, a barangay strategically located along the coastline of Panguil Bay, a major fishing ground for Kolambugan's fisherfolk. It is the largest fishing community in Kolambugan per capita, with 70% of its households (210 out of 305) engaged in fishing activities. Simbuco, Simbuco Aqua-Marine Multi-Purpose Cooperative, was chosen as the study site due to its significance as one of

Kolambugan's largest fishing communities, its recent involvement in the DA-SAAD Phase I program, and its longevity as a community-based aquaculture enterprise. It initially focused on seaweed production but now diversifying into milkfish farming and other income-generating activities. Over the decades, the membership of SAMMPC has steadily grown, with the cooperative now accepting members from other barangays.

2.3 Research Participants

In this research, the inclusion criteria for survey respondents were a) involvement in either artisanal/capture fisheries, seaweed farming, milkfish production, and c) membership in SAMMPC for at least five years. There are currently 189 members of SAMMPC in 119 households. The sample size was determined using established statistical principles. A margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95% were applied to ensure precision in the findings. While the ideal sample size of 119 at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error was 54, the study achieved 40 valid responses after data cleaning. This reduced sample size slightly increases the margin of error. However, the confidence level of 95% is retained, and the findings remain robust due to the representativeness of the sample and the use of a mixed-methods approach, which supplements quantitative results with qualitative insights for a comprehensive understanding. Five key-informant interviews (KII) targeted individuals with expertise, experience, or strategic positions related to the research subject. Key informants included SAMMPC leaders, BFAR representatives, local government officials. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were conducted to at least five members of SAMMPC who presented valuable information during the survey. Furthermore, a focus group discussion (FGD) was held with nine individuals who were selected based on their involvement in seaweed and milkfish production and their active participation in SAMMPC. The FGD facilitated dynamic interactions, allowing participants to discuss shared experiences, challenges, and adaptation strategies in aquaculture. Together, the KIIs, in-depth interviews, and FGDs provided a rich contextual understanding, complementing the quantitative findings and enhancing the overall depth and reliability of the research.

2.4 Research Instrument

This study utilized several instruments to gather relevant quantitative and qualitative data. To obtain quantitative data, a five-part survey questionnaire was partly adapted from the work of Mengo et al. (2023). It collected data on participants' profiles, fisheries experience, and seaweed culture patterns influenced by climate change, and adaptation practices. A five-point Likert scale was used to rate statements, providing comprehensive insights into farmers' perceptions of SAMMPC as the main avenue by which CBA is enacted. The validity of the survey instrument was assessed using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR), and its reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.9, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Likewise, the research tools also included guide questions for in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Questions were tailored based on the specific objectives of the study, focusing on participants' experiences, challenges, and strategies in seaweed and milkfish production, as well as their perceptions of SAMMPC's as a CBA.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure was conducted in a systematic manner. Initially, the questionnaires used in the study were validated and tested for reliability to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the collected data. Data collection took place between January and August 2024. Courtesy calls and letters were sent to the Mayor of Kolambugan, the Barangay Chair of Simbuco, Chair of SAMMPC, and other concerned offices to obtain approval and support for the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, where each individual was presented with an informed consent form, had the contents explained to them, and voluntarily agreed to participate. Participants were given the option to skip any questions they did not wish to answer. Throughout the process, confidentiality was strictly maintained to protect the privacy of the respondents. After the data was collected, it underwent a thorough cleaning and analysis process before being used to draw conclusions and write the final report.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and respecting cultural norms. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Ethical considerations extended to data dissemination, with findings presented responsibly and respectfully.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-demographic Profile and of SAMMPC members

As shown in Table 1, the socio-demographic profile of the participants reveals a predominantly middle-aged group, with 72.5% aged between 31-59 years, and a significant proportion being female (67.5%). Most participants are married (79%) and belong to small households, with 82.5% having 1-3 members. A majority (85%) have children involved in fisheries, reflecting the intergenerational nature of fishing livelihoods. Educational attainment is modest, with 55% completing high school and 27.5% having only elementary-level education, indicating limited access to advanced education. Membership in SAMMPC is driven mainly by economic opportunities, such as seaweed trading (40%) and access to credit (32.5%), with family and social influences accounting for 17.5%. Notably, 90% of participants are registered fisherfolk under the Municipal Fisherfolk Registration System, indicating active engagement in formalized fisheries activities. This shows the importance of inclusive programs targeting this demographic (Fajardo, 2021). Research on small-scale fisheries suggests that economic vulnerability and limited educational attainment are common barriers in coastal communities, impacting access to financial resources and decision-making autonomy (FAO, 2022). The predominance of women in the cooperative aligns with global trends in small-scale fisheries where women play a crucial role in processing and marketing but are often underrepresented in governance structures (Mengo et al., 2023). This shows the importance of inclusive programs targeting this demographic.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of the participants

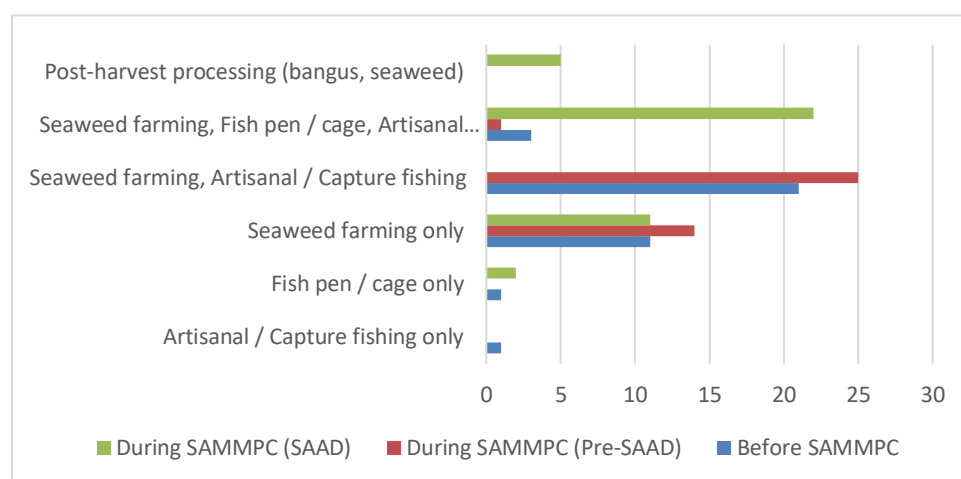
Variables	N	%
Age		
≥ 60	10	25.0
31-59	29	72.5
18-30	1	2.50
Sex		
Male	13	32.5
Female	27	67.5
Civil Status		
Single	2	17.2
Married	30	79.0
Widow	4	1.10
Cohabiting	6	2.30
Household size		
1-3 members	33	82.5
4 + members	7	17.5
Children involved in fisheries		
1-3	34	85.0
4-5	6	15.0
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level	11	27.5
High School level	22	55.0
Vocational	3	7.50
Higher Education	4	10.0
Reason for joining SAMMPC		
Seaweed trading	16	40.0
Source of credit	13	32.5
Influence of family/friends	7	17.5
Others	4	10.5
Registered fisherfolk*		
Yes	36	90.0
No	4	10.0

*Based on the Municipal Fisherfolk Registration System or FishR

Table 2 and Figure 1 indicates a significant shift in fisheries activities among SAMMPC members before and during their membership. Prior to joining SAMMPC, 92.5% of respondents were engaged in fisheries, with the majority (56.8%) participating in both seaweed farming and artisanal fishing. During SAMMPC membership, 100% of respondents reported involvement in fisheries, with a notable increase in diversified activities. Seaweed farming remained predominant, either as a sole activity (35%) or combined with artisanal fishing (60%). The SAAD project further enhanced this diversification, with 55% benefiting from both seaweed farming and fish pen activities, and 12.5% engaging in post-harvest processing.

Table 2. Fisheries activities before and during SAMMPC membership (Pre-SAAD and SAAD)

Variables	N	%
Involvement in Fisheries before SAMMPC membership		
None	3	7.50
Yes	37	92.5
Type of fisheries activity before SAMMPC membership		
Artisanal/ capture fishing only	1	2.70
Fish pen/cage only	1	2.70
Seaweed farming only	11	29.7
Seaweed farming, Artisanal/ capture fishing	21	56.8
Seaweed farming, Fish pen/cage, Artisanal/ capture fishing	3	8.10
Fisheries activity during SAMMPC membership (pre-SAAD)		
No	0	0
Yes	40	100
Type of fisheries during SAMMPC membership (pre-SAAD)		
Seaweed farming only	14	35.0
Seaweed farming, Artisanal/ capture fishing	25	60.0
Seaweed farming, Fish pen/cage, Artisanal/ capture fishing	1	5.00
SAAD Project directly benefited in		
Fish pen only	2	5.00
Seaweed farming only	11	27.5
Seaweed farming, Fish pen	22	55.0
Post-harvest processing (bangus, seaweed)	5	12.5

**Figure 1.** Fisheries activities before and during SAMMPC membership (Pre-SAAD and SAAD)

This diversification aligns with studies emphasizing the importance of alternative livelihoods in enhancing resilience among small-scale fishers. The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) highlight the need for livelihood diversification to mitigate risks associated with environmental variability and market fluctuations (FAO, 2023). SAMMPC's support for fish pen aquaculture and post-harvest processing reflects a broader strategy to stabilize incomes while addressing seasonal declines in seaweed production (Fajardo, 2021).

Table 3 reveals that 70% of SAMMPC seaweed farmers engage in alternative livelihoods alongside aquaculture, with skilled labor (25%) and agriculture (21.43%) being the most common options. Meanwhile, 30% of farmers do not pursue additional livelihoods, potentially increasing their vulnerability to economic shocks. Economic literature suggests that small-scale fishers often rely on diversified income streams to cope with climate variability and resource fluctuations (Weeratunge et al., 2013). The fact that a significant proportion of SAMMPC members engage in secondary livelihoods highlights their adaptability but also raises concerns about labor burden and sustainability.

Table 3. Alternative sources of livelihood

Variables	N	%
Other livelihood sources	12	30
No		
Yes	28	70
Government/Community Roles	5	17.8
Skilled Labor	7	25.0
Entrepreneurship	5	17.8
Agriculture (Copras)	6	21.4
Service Jobs	3	10.7
Other	2	7.14

As shown in Table 4, the improvements in housing, credit access, and healthcare coverage among SAMMPC members indicate tangible benefits of cooperative participation. Healthcare insurance coverage increased from 40% before membership to 100% during the SAAD period, reflecting the positive impact of financial security and institutional support. Similarly, ownership of essential household appliances, such as refrigerators and washing machines, improved significantly, demonstrating increased purchasing power and quality of life. These findings are consistent with research highlighting how cooperative membership can improve socio-economic conditions in rural communities. A study on calamansi farmers in the Philippines found that cooperative participation significantly increased household expenditures on education and health, suggesting improved economic stability (Jimenez & Digal, 2019).

Table 4. Changes in living conditions

Indicators	Before SAMMPC		SAMMPC Member (Pre-SAAD)		SAMMPC Member (SAAD)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Housing</i>						
Main housing material						
Combination of wood and nipa	32	80.0	10	25.0	12	30.0
Combination of semi-concrete, wood, galvanized iron	6	15.0	26	65.0	24	60.0
Combination of concrete, steel, galvanized iron	2	5.00	4	10.0	4	10.0
Housing Ownership Status						
Owner	29	72.5	33	82.5	35	87.5
Renter	4	10.0	4	10.0	2	5.00
Caretaker	7	17.5	3	7.50	3	7.50
<i>Water, Sanitation, Healthcare</i>						
Source of drinking water						
"Flowing"/ Natural Spring (Fetched)	39	97.5	38	95.0	32	80.0
Bottled Mineral Water	1	2.50	2	5.00	4	10.0
SAMMPC Pump*					4	10.0
Source for washing/cleaning:						
"Flowing"/ Natural Spring (Fetched)	40	100.0	40	100	36	90.0
SAMMPC Pump					4	10.0
Type of Toilet						
Water sealed	38	95.0	39	97.5	39	97.5
Antipolo system	2	5.00	1	2.50	1	2.50
Usage of toilets						
Family only	30	75.0	31	77.5	31	77.5
Common	10	25.0	9	22.5	9	22.5
Healthcare insurance						
Yes	16	40.0	35	87.5	40	100
No	24	60.0	5	12.5	0	0
<i>Home Appliances, Access, and Acquisition</i>						
Tangible assets - appliances at home**						
Refrigerator	9	23.0	30	75.0	28	70.0
TV	10	25.0	29	72.5	16	40.0
Washing Machine	3	8.00	16	40.0	20	50.0
Others	2	5.00	8	20.0	8	20.0
Acquisition of tangible assets - appliances at home						
Cash	12	30.0	18	45.0	14	35.0
Loan/Installment	13	32.5	17	42.5	23	57.5

Given	0	0.00	5	12.5	3	7.50
Access to Electricity						
Yes	36	90.0	40	100	40	100
No	4	10.0	0	0	0	0
Main source of credit						
SAMMPC Lending	17	42.5	28	70.0	35	87.5
Other lending companies	16	40.0	2	5.00	3	7.50
Family or friends	6	15.0	10	25.0	2	5.00
Food and Recreation						
How often do you eat/day:						
3+ / day	38	95.0	40	100	39	97.5
1-2x / day	2	5.00	0	0	1	2.50
Subsistence agriculture*						
Raise livestock like hogs, chicken, etc.	29	72.5	29	72.5	26	65.0
Plant vegetables	27	67.5	28	70.0	31	77.5
Budget for Recreation						
Yes	33	82.5	37	92.5	19	47.5
No	7	17.5	3	7.50	21	52.5

*Non-existent before SAAD

** Respondents marked all applicable (multiple responses)

3.2 SAMMPC Aquaculture Practices and Challenges

As shown in Table 5, the predominance of the Floating Longline method (97.5%) highlights the cooperative's reliance on efficient yet environmentally sensitive cultivation techniques.

Table 5. Seaweed aquaculture description

Variables	N	%	Mean	Median	SD
Method of seaweed culture					
Bottom Longline or Monoline method	1	2.50			
Floating Longline or Monoline method	39	97.5			
Farm Size					
Length (m)			95.6	100	37.0
Width (m)			21.5	17.5	15.9
No. of lines or rows of seaweed frames (<i>kutay</i>)			18.2	13.5	13.0
Distance per propagules tied (in inches)			4.73	5	1.62
Farming site depth (m)			4.16	4	2.22
Farm to coastline distance (m)			286	200	284
Total number of seaweed farmers needed (prep phase)*			3.82	4	1.82
Demographic breakdown (per farm)					
Adult females			1.94	2	.906
Adult males			1.83	2	.971
Children			1.78	2	.972
Family member involvement in seaweed culture					
Yes	34	85.0			
No	6	15.0			
Duration of main seaweed farming cycle during the high season (days)			42.9	45	6.15
Do you farm several different seaweed varieties?					
Yes	32	80.0			
No	8	20.0			
First preference - cultivated variety during the high season					
Cottonii	30	75.0			
Spinosum	2	5.00			
Vanguard	8	20.0			
Second preference - cultivated species variety the high season					
Vanguard	31	77.5			
Cottonii	8	20.0			
Spinosum	1	2.50			
Seaweed buyer					
SAMMPC	39	97.5			
Others	1	2.50			

* The total number of seaweed farmers is based on overall estimates for the preparation phase and does not represent the sum of demographic categories

However, concerns about environmental degradation and fluctuating seaweed yields remain pressing challenges. Previous studies in the Philippines have documented declining seaweed productivity due to temperature variations, pollution, and genetic diversity (Orbita, 2013). Financially, the high reliance on loans (45%) for initial investments suggests that many farmers face capital constraints, reinforcing the need for accessible and affordable credit mechanisms. Child labor, with an average wage of ₱75, highlights socio-economic vulnerabilities that necessitate stricter regulatory oversight and alternative educational support for young workers (FAO, 2023).

Table 6 shows that seaweed farmers predominantly rely on loans for initial investments, with 45% obtaining funding from banks or micro-lenders, and 42.5% using personal savings. The average loan amount is ₱9,033.23, while SAMMPC initial capital support averages ₱3,721.62. Key farm setup costs include nylon (₱1,871.37), polyethylene rope (₱2,856.76), seaweed propagules (₱7,018.42), and farming site leasing (₱19,812.50), which collectively underscore the financial burden of starting aquaculture. Operational expenses highlight maintenance (₱2,005.48) as a major cost, followed by labor (₱1,526.32), with daily wages averaging ₱398.68 for males and ₱338.89 for females, indicating a gender wage gap. Child labor, with an average wage of ₱75, reflects socio-economic vulnerabilities. These findings support need for financial support systems, equitable labor practices, and policy interventions to address high initial investments and operational challenges while promoting inclusive and sustainable aquaculture practices.

Table 6. Seaweed aquaculture costs – initial set up and operations

Variables	N	%	Mean	Median	SD
Source of initial investment					
Government assistance	2	5.00			
Own savings	17	42.5			
Loan (bank, micro-lending)	18	45.0			
Loan (middle man)	1	2.50			
Loan from extended family	2	5.00			
Total	40	100.0			
Start-up Investment					
Amount loaned			₱ 9,033.23	5000	9627.09
SAMMPC Initial capital			3,721.62	2000.	5175.27
Farm Structure					
Nylon used			1,871.37	350	7640.20
Polyethylene rope			2,856.76	1200	3841.97
Soft tie used			485.25	360	426.53
Bamboo poles			370.29	375	367.27
Floaters			759.95	500	756.81
Sinkers			637.50	650	419.08
Area (farming site)			19,812.50	15000	15250.00
Seaweed propagules			7,018.42	4000	6315.44
Boat ownership (non-motorized)			7,805.56	6000	4845.14
Miscellaneous cost			1,333.33	1000	577.35
Operational Costs (Growing and Harvesting phase)					
Cost of fuel			₱ 394.44	135	585.36
Cost of the boat if rented			372.22	300	289.52
Cost of farm's maintenance			2,005.48	1000	2946.44
Total Cost of Labor			1,526.32	2000	1181.62
Daily wage for hired adult males			398.68	400	218.02
Daily wage for hired adult males			338.89	337.50	167.43
Daily wage for hired children			75.00	75	28.68

As shown in Table 7, during the high season, farmers sell an average of 326.25 kg of dried seaweed at a mean price of ₱51.82 per kilogram, though prices vary widely (SD = ₱91.25). Wet seaweed is sold in larger quantities (868.92 kg on average) but at a lower price (₱16.47/kg). In contrast, the low season involves a longer cultivation period (12.26 additional days on average), with smaller harvests (244.88 kg of dried seaweed). However, dried seaweed prices increase to an average of ₱69.16/kg, while wet seaweed prices rise to ₱29.33/kg, albeit with considerable variability. Impact of seasonality on productivity and pricing, with higher market volatility during the low seasons

suggest the need for interventions to stabilize prices and optimize production cycles, ensuring economic resilience for farmers across seasons.

Table 7. *Seaweed yield and prices per season*

Variables	Mean	Median	SD
High season			
Quantity of dried seaweed sold (kg)	326.25	300.00	236.12
Selling/ market price of dried seaweed	₱ 51.82	37.00	91.25
Quantity of wet/fresh seaweed sold (kg)	868.92	500.00	1045.81
Selling/ market price of wet/fresh seaweed	₱16.47	10.00	12.38
Low Season			
No. of days seaweed culture is longer	12.26	15	7.31
Seaweed harvested during low season cycle (kg)	244.88	100	419.04
Selling/ market price of dried seaweed during a typical low season cycle	₱ 69.16	35.00	192.19
Selling/ market price of wet/ fresh seaweed during a typical low season cycle	₱ 29.33	10.00	77.51

The respondents' feedback highlights a mix of positive and neutral perceptions regarding SAMMPC's aquaculture operations (Table 8). Strong agreement is observed concerning the negative impact of the waning seaweed operations ($M = 4.63$) and the effectiveness of waste management in fish pen operations ($M = 4.20$) now that substantial increase of fish pens have emerged in adjacent barangays. However, perceptions about ecological benefits, such as increases in marine species or improved seawater quality, were rated neutral to negative ($M = 2.88, 2.73, 1.95$). Additionally, while there is agreement that SAMMPC receives support from government and agencies ($M = 4.35$), respondents are neutral about the sustainability and environmental impacts of the fish pen operation compared to the previous seaweed operations.

Table 8. *Summary of respondents' views on SAMMPC's aquaculture operations*

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
The waning of seaweed operation negatively affected SAMMPC.	4.63	Strongly Agree (SA)
SAMMPC is effectively managing the waste from the current fish pen operation.	4.20	Agree (A)
The fish pen operation has led to an increase in the population of local marine species.	2.88	Neutral (N)
The fish pen operation has led to the discovery or addition of new marine species in our coastal area.	2.73	Neutral (N)
SAMMPC has received ample support from the from local government unit and other agencies to effectively manage its aquaculture operation.	4.35	Agree (A)
The fish pen operation has not affected the quality of the seawater.	3.33	Neutral (N)
The presence of other private entities with fish pens has negatively impacted the nearby coastal environment.	3.15	Neutral (N)
The seawater quality is better now than it was during the seaweed operation	1.95	Disagree (D)

Legend: 4.50 - 5.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 3.50 - 4.49 Agree (A); 2.50 - 3.49 Neutral (N); 1.50 - 2.49 Disagree (D); 1.00 - 1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD)

To elaborate on the statement of members feeling the impact of waning seaweed aquaculture interviewees have mentioned several factors that relate the following studies: A 2018 study investigated lead levels in the waters of the Port of Mukas in Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte. The findings revealed an average lead concentration of 0.18 mg/L, surpassing the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) allowable limit of 0.05 mg/L for marine waters. The elevated lead levels were attributed to activities such as ship salvaging, which involve the use of paints and welding equipment, as well as discharges from nearby industries and residential areas. (Jimenez et al., 2018) Further, a 2024 review focused on environmental assessments in Panguil and Iligan Bays, highlighting concerns about pollution from rapid industrialization and urban expansion. The study identified contaminants like heavy metals and microplastics in sediments and marine biota. (Macalisang et al., 2024)

3.3 Economic Performance and Benefits of SAMMPC and its Members

Table 9 compares the mean, median, and standard deviation of incomes from fishing, seaweed farming, and alternative livelihood sources. Seaweed farming stands out with a significantly higher mean income of ₱26,918.93 per 45-day cycle, surpassing both fishing (₱6,351.35) and alternative sources (₱6,492.80). Truly, there is great economic potential of seaweed aquaculture in enhancing household incomes. The relatively higher standard

deviation for seaweed income (₱34,493.08) suggests greater variability, possibly due to factors like market price fluctuations and environmental conditions.

Table 9. Summary of income statistics across livelihood activities

Category	Mean	Median	SD
Fishing Income only	₱ 6,351.35	4,000.00	6,664.44
Seaweed Income (Net) *	₱ 26,918.93	11,801.54	34,493.08
Alternative sources **	₱ 6,492.80	5,000.00	6,262.18

* After initial set-up; 45-day period

** See Table 3

Nonetheless, the elevated median income indicates that, for most farmers, seaweed cultivation offers superior financial returns compared to traditional fishing and other livelihoods. These findings are consistent with studies that emphasize the role of seaweed farming in improving socio-economic conditions in coastal communities (Fabro, 2022). The Municipal Agriculture Officer (MAO) reinforced this observation, noting:

"Seaweed was a primary source of income during peak years (2012-2017), with monthly incomes reaching ₱24,000 in a 45-day cycle. However, current production is negligible, with some municipalities like Simbuco ceasing operations entirely."

The results are telling of the urgent need for interventions to revitalize this industry. Addressing environmental and market challenges, such as genetic diversity loss and price fluctuations, could unlock the full potential of seaweed farming to sustain and enhance household incomes. Likewise, these also underlines the importance of exploring alternative livelihoods to complement fishing and mitigate economic risks.

The only available consolidated financial statements of the cooperative were from 2019 to 2023 (see Table 10). During this period, SAMMPC exhibited financial stability and gradual growth despite fluctuations in certain metrics, bolstered by capacity development and external support. The net surplus increased from ₱387,086.00 in 2019 to ₱627,155.96 in 2023, reflecting enhanced profitability, although slight declines were observed in 2021 and 2022. Net sales showed variability, peaking at ₱8,075,426.92 in 2019 and dipping to ₱3,042,708.63 in 2021, with cost of sales following a similar trend. Notably, net sales consistently outpaced the cost of sales, ensuring positive gross margins and indicating effective cost management. SAMMPC's financial performance benefited significantly from capacity development initiatives, including training on financial management and bookkeeping provided by SAMMPC officials and organized by BFAR as part of the SAAD program. Additionally, inputs and investments from the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) and the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) program from 2020 to 2022 further supported the cooperative's operations, enhancing its financial and operational capacity. These interventions likely contributed to the cooperative's ability to sustain its profitability and maintain a strong financial position. SAMMPC's assets grew steadily until 2021, reaching a high of ₱12,059,492.04, before declining to ₱7,839,785.02 in 2023. Meanwhile, liabilities remained relatively stable, averaging ₱2.3 million annually, contributing to a strong asset-to-liability ratio throughout the period. This favorable financial position underscores SAMMPC's capacity to meet obligations while maintaining a sustainable foundation.

Table 10. Financial Performance Overview of SAMMPC (2019-2023): Net Surplus, Sales vs. Cost of Sales, and Assets vs. Liabilities

Particulars	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Net Surplus	₱ 387,086.00	508,353.00	450,288.00	393,843.20	627,155.96
Net Sales vs. Cost of Sales					
Net Sales	₱ 8,075,426.92	4,358,055.00	3,042,708.63	5,661,619.78	4,200,467.51
Cost of Sales	₱ 7,551,282.29	3,783,182.00	2,632,732.28	5,037,045.35	3,692,347.77
Assets vs. Liabilities					
Assets	₱ 7,824,906.32	11,252,923.91	12,059,492.04	11,922,104.17	7,839,785.02
Liabilities	₱ 1,874,988.51	2386052.07	2,354,097.69	2,135,159.08	2,374,170.93

Table 11 presents the financial contributions and derived benefits of SAMMPC members, highlighting the varying levels of share capital and corresponding financial returns. Based on the cooperative's December 2023 consolidated financial statement, presented during the April 2024 general assembly, 42.5% of members have invested between ₱500 and ₱5,000, while 25% have contributed ₱25,001 or more. The distribution of financial returns reveals a strong correlation between share capital and benefits, as 62.5% of those receiving the highest

interest and patronage refunds belong to the highest investment bracket. This trend underscores the advantage of greater capital participation in maximizing financial gains within the cooperative framework.

Table 11. *Share capital and derived benefits among SAMMPC members*

Variables	N	%
Current share capital at SAMMPC		
₱ 500 - 5,000	17	42.5
5,001 - 10,000	4	10.0
10,001 - 15,000	3	7.50
15,001 - 20,000	2	5.00
20,001 - 25,000	4	10.0
≥ 25,001	10	25.0
Estimated total interest earned from capital since membership		
₱ 500 - 5,000	5	12.5
5,001 - 10,000	1	2.50
10,001 - 15,000	2	5.00
15,001 - 20,000	2	5.00
20,001 - 25,000	5	12.5
≥ 25,001	25	62.5
Estimated total patronage refund earned since membership		
₱ 500 - 5,000	5	12.5
5,001 - 10,000	4	10.0
15,001 - 20,000	1	2.5
20,001 - 25,000	5	12.5
≥ 25,001	25	62.5

However, ensuring broader financial inclusivity remains crucial. To address this, SAMMPC could introduce flexible capital-building initiatives and financial literacy programs, helping members with smaller investments gradually increase their capital. Such strategies have been successfully implemented in Philippine cooperatives, where targeted reinvestment incentives and structured capital growth programs have improved member participation and equity in financial benefits (Briones et al., 2023).

The data in Table 12 reveals a strong agreement that SAMMPC significantly contributes to economic development and aquaculture productivity. Key strengths include accessible savings mechanisms ($M = 4.00$), credit availability ($M = 4.55$), and the high profitability of aquaculture activities ($M = 4.53$). Respondents also strongly agreed on effective market access ($M = 4.63$) and the role of DA-SAAD financial assistance in supporting SAMMPC's operations ($M = 4.73$). Infrastructure and community-based aquaculture activities are seen as enhancing productivity and economic prosperity among members, reflecting SAMMPC's critical role in the sector.

Table 12. *Member perception on the economic development and aquaculture activities*

Statements	Mean	Description
Members have easy access to savings mechanisms facilitated by SAMMPC.	4.00	Agree (A)
Credit/borrowing of money is accessible to members of SAMMPC."	4.55	Strongly Agree (SA)
The profitability of aquaculture activities outweighs the associated costs and investments.	4.53	Strongly Agree (SA)
Access to markets and value chains for aquaculture products is adequately facilitated.	4.63	Strongly Agree (SA)
Adequate infrastructure and farm implement in the cooperative such as fish pen, equipment and gears, and processing facilities enhance the productivity of aquaculture	4.48	Agree (A)
The Department of Agriculture – Special Area for Agricultural Development (DA-SAAD) financial assistance greatly helped SAMMPC.	4.73	Strongly Agree (SA)
The community-based aquaculture has contributed to the overall economic development and prosperity its members.	4.48	Agree (A)

Legend: 4.50 - 5.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 3.50 - 4.49 Agree (A); 2.50 - 3.49 Neutral (N); 1.50 - 2.49 Disagree (D); 1.00 - 1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD)

3.4 Community Perceptions on Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

As shown in Table 13, the respondents strongly agree that SAMMPC's community-based aquaculture fosters social cohesion ($M = 4.55$) and effectively resolves conflicts ($M = 4.35$). If conflicts do arise between concerning SAMMPC and its members or officials, disputes are first handled internally. Should the conflict escalate, appropriate and external channels are called for mediation and arbitration. Documented causes of conflict for this year alone involved member delinquency and shake-ups in the organizational structure. The Provincial

Cooperative Office (PCO) acts as an adviser and action counselor as well during these instances. Women are perceived as playing a pivotal role, both in aquaculture activities (M = 4.63) and decision-making processes (M = 4.58). On this note, the SAAD project director pointed out that “Women play an active role in seaweed farming, which has been seen as empowering. While the men are involved in the harvesting, the women take on other crucial roles like planting and maintaining the seaweed farms.” (Magamano A., 2019)

Table 13. Summary of respondent's views on SAMMPC's role in social inclusion

Statements	Mean	Description
The community-based aquaculture in SAMMPC has improved social cohesion (solidarity and cooperation) among members.	4.55	Strongly Agree (SA)
Conflict resolution mechanisms within SAMMPC are effective in addressing disputes and disagreements among members.	4.35	Agree (A)
Women are actively involved in aquaculture within SAMMPC.	4.63	Strongly Agree (SA)
Women are actively involved in the cooperative's decision- making.	4.58	Strongly Agree (SA)
The community-based aquaculture initiative has facilitated the sharing of knowledge and skills among community members.	4.28	Agree (A)
Government agencies play a pivotal role in facilitating the expansion and social integration of SAMMPC's community-based aquaculture initiatives.	4.78	Strongly Agree (SA)

Legend: 4.50 - 5.00 Strongly Agree (SA); 3.50 - 4.49 Agree (A); 2.50 - 3.49 Neutral (N); 1.50 - 2.49 Disagree (D); 1.00 - 1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD)

The initiatives also facilitate knowledge and skill-sharing among members (M = 4.28), with government agencies being acknowledged for their significant role in supporting SAMMPC's expansion and social integration (M = 4.78). A gender-focused study in Southeast Asia found that cooperatives with active female participation demonstrated higher financial performance and stronger community engagement (Mengo et al., 2023). This reinforces the need for continued gender-sensitive policies within SAMMPC. This underscores the cooperative's success in promoting inclusivity and community solidarity.

Table 14. Thematic analysis of FGD on SAMMPC seaweed farmer perspectives on wellbeing

Section	Theme	Response
Section 1: Exploring General Perspectives about Wellbeing	Well-being Indicators (Positive Attributes)	Hardworking, stable jobs, ability to provide for family, send children to school, social respect, and community involvement
	Well-being Indicators (Negative Attributes)	Laziness, addiction, poverty, and being unable to provide for one's family
	Needs for Well-being in the Coastal Community (Seaweed Farming Context)	Government support for capital or land for housing, and the revival of seaweed farming to improve livelihoods.
	Changes in Well-being Over the Last Decade	Declining well-being due to reduced income from seaweed farming, climate change, and debt accumulation.
Section 2: Assessment of Changes in Wellbeing	Perception of Life's Improvement or Decline	Life improves with good harvests (seaweed/fish) leading to higher income but worsens due to environmental damage and educational costs.
	Impact on Different Groups in the Community	The younger generation is most affected by environmental and livelihood changes. Wealth disparities have grown, with capitalists benefiting.
	Hope for the Future of Seaweed Farming and Coastal Resources	Hope for the revival of seaweed farming and marine resources, believing that sustainability and conservation efforts could restore abundance.
Section 3: The Linkage Between the Coast and Wellbeing	Actions to Improve Coastal Well-being	Cleaning up the sea, managing waste, and community discipline are key to improving coastal well-being and supporting marine resource recovery.
	The Role of Government and Regulations	Government policies and regulations focused on environmental protection are crucial to improving conditions for seaweed farming and fishing.

The thematic analysis (Table 14) of FGD responses highlights the nuanced perspectives of SAMMPC seaweed farmers regarding wellbeing. Farmers associate positive wellbeing with stable jobs, family support, education, and community involvement, while negative attributes include poverty, addiction, gambling, and the inability to provide for one's family. Over the past decade, wellbeing has declined due to reduced seaweed income, climate change, and growing debts. However, good harvests temporarily improve livelihoods, underscoring the critical role of environmental and economic stability. The younger generation is disproportionately affected by livelihood shifts and growing wealth disparities, as capitalists benefit more than local farmers. Farmers express hope for the

revival of seaweed farming through sustainable practices and conservation, linking coastal health directly to community wellbeing. They emphasize the importance of sea cleanup, waste management, and community discipline to restore marine abundance. Government intervention is deemed vital, particularly through supportive policies and environmental regulations that balance ecological protection with economic opportunities. The insights gathered from the FGD highlight the urgent need for policies that recognize the interconnectedness of livelihood improvement and coastal resource sustainability, advocating for a comprehensive framework that supports both economic and environmental objectives (Hill et al., 2011).

4.0 Conclusion

The study draws attention to the unique role of community-based aquaculture, as exemplified by the Simbuco Aqua-Marine Multi-Purpose Cooperative in fostering socio-economic resilience and inclusivity among small-scale fisheries in Lanao del Norte. SAMMPC has substantially improved its members' wellbeing through enhanced financial access, diversified income opportunities, better living conditions, and strengthened social cohesion. Additionally, the cooperative has provided a platform for gender inclusivity, with women actively participating in aquaculture operations and decision-making. Despite these achievements, challenges persist, such as environmental concerns linked to aquaculture practices, market volatility, and inequities in income distribution.

To address these challenges, SAMMPC can adopt biodiversity-friendly aquaculture methods like polyculture to minimize ecological risks and enhance waste management through recycling and proper disposal. Regular site monitoring in collaboration with environmental agencies is essential. Financial and operational support can be strengthened by expanding access to government grants and microfinance, reducing loan dependence. Training in cost-effective aquaculture, feed management, and equipment use, along with a risk management fund, will enhance resilience to natural disasters and market fluctuations. Social inclusion can be improved by offering skill programs for women and youth, standardizing wages to address gender disparities, and promoting safe, age-appropriate roles in aquaculture. Strengthening governance through collaboration with local authorities and enforcing transparency within SAMMPC is crucial. Diversifying income sources through eco-tourism, agro-processing, and market expansion—such as producing seaweed snacks or processed milkfish for export—can enhance profitability and stability. By implementing these strategies, SAMMPC can achieve sustainable aquaculture, balancing economic growth with environmental preservation while serving as a model for community-based fisheries.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

AA – encoding, editing, writing, data analysis

BA –supervising, writing, data analysis

CA – editing, data analysis

DA – editing, data analysis

EA- editing, data analysis

6.0 Funding

The study was conducted with no financial grants from any external organizations.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding this study.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express profound gratitude to those who contributed to the study's success, from its inception through data collection to the analysis and reporting of findings

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Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Justice and Culture: Their Influence on Organizational Commitment

Vanessa Mae Z. Caminos¹, Mark Raymond S. Tan^{*2}

¹Suntingon Elementary School, Division of Cagayan de Oro, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

²City College of Cagayan de Oro, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: tan.markraymond@g.cu.edu.ph

Date received: January 24, 2025

Date revised: February 20, 2025

Date accepted: March 9, 2025

Originality: 89%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 11%

Recommended citation:

Caminos, V.M., Tan, M.R. (2025). Teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and culture: Their influence on organizational commitment. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 89-103.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.039>

Abstract. This study examines how organizational justice and organizational culture influence the commitment of public school teachers in East District II, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. Understanding these factors is essential for improving teacher retention and job satisfaction. A descriptive correlational research design was used, with data collected from 282 randomly selected teachers through survey questionnaires. Results indicate that organizational justice and culture both significantly affect teachers' commitment. Specifically, interactional justice plays a key role in strengthening commitment, while distributive and procedural justice do not show a significant effect. Among the aspects of organizational culture, only adaptability demonstrates a meaningful impact on commitment. Overall, the model explains 12.5% of the variance in organizational commitment, confirming that fostering fairness and a supportive work environment can enhance teacher dedication. These findings highlight the importance of fair treatment and a strong organizational culture in creating a motivated and engaged teaching workforce.

Keywords: Organizational commitment; Organizational culture; Organizational justice; Regression analysis.

1.0 Introduction

Having efficient and effective systems in a workplace plays a significant role in every organization. Employing and retaining skilled workers is a function of human resources. An organization's policies must be put into practice since they act as a roadmap or strategic guide to accomplish the organization's objective. Consequently, in this context, it is important to comprehend the justice and culture in an organization as well as the commitment of the workers. However, the challenge of an employee making wise judgments is a fact that confronts a company as a place of employment (Pasion, 2023). For instance, considering the present scenario in the public elementary educational system, issues of Organizational Justice, Organizational Culture, and Organizational Commitment come into play.

Justice is a fundamental human need to maintain social unity. Positive impressions of justice in societal issues can promote happiness and patience, while negative experiences may result in societal instability and confusion. In this regard, social institutions, notably schools, are accountable for developing environments where individuals can live and engage constructively (Tahseen & Akhtar, 2015). When there is a lack of justice in the workplace, particularly when teachers compare their work with their coworkers who put in less time but earned greater rewards, their level of commitment will either decline or be reduced. As a result, they will act in a way that hinders their ability to accomplish their objectives as school teachers (Tahseen & Akhtar, 2015).

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There is no consensus on what factors enhance a worker's commitment to their organization. It is possible that an employee's level of commitment can be influenced positively or negatively by the organization's culture (Ramdhani et al., 2017). Despite extensive studies exploring the relationship between organizational culture and commitment, significant gaps still exist. Notably, many studies have concentrated on Western contexts, often overlooking the impact that cultural nuances in non-Western settings may have on this relationship. Addressing these gaps could lead to a more comprehensive and contextually relevant understanding of the intricate connection between organizational culture and employee commitment.

Organizational justice and organizational culture are not new concepts, but very few studies exist in both schools and education management. There is insufficient research in education, especially among teachers (Jameel et al., 2020). Also, the literature review on organizational justice, culture and commitment reveals that few studies frequently concentrate on educational contexts. The relationship between these concepts has not been well studied; hence, it is believed to be a crucial gap to enhance the teacher's efficiency and the sustainability of the concept for educational institutions to utilize to succeed.

Blau's (1964) Theory of Social Exchange and Denison's (2003) Theory of Organizational Culture provide a deeper understanding of the connection between justice, culture, and commitment. Social exchange research suggests that when employees perceive justice, they are more likely to develop an emotional connection with the organization to reciprocate fair management practices. Organizational justice is a motivator for teachers' commitment to achieving the organization's goals. It also plays a significant role in how committed teachers perceive the organization. Teachers who perceive justice tend to exhibit positive behaviors, while those who perceive injustice may show reduced effort and low levels of commitment. Additionally, Jufrizen et al. (2021) emphasized that maintaining an organizational culture grounded in established principles is essential for motivating teachers to commit firmly to their organization. A robust organizational culture fosters shared goals among teachers, ultimately benefiting staff performance (Shahzad et al., 2015).

The study comprehensively examines the intricate relationships and influences among organizational justice, culture, and commitment within the specific context of public elementary school teachers in Cagayan de Oro City. By exploring these dynamic interactions, the research seeks to enhance existing knowledge regarding how perceptions of fairness (organizational justice) impact the overarching culture within schools and how these factors, in turn, affect teachers' commitment to their roles and responsibilities.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed the descriptive-correlational research design with regression analysis. Descriptive-correlational design strongly emphasizes explaining the connections between and among variables. The method used was suitable because correlational research designs allow for examining relationships between variables without putting any of the variables under the researcher's direct control or manipulation. Additionally, regression analysis was used to assess the influence of culture and justice on commitment. Regression analysis was used to ascertain which components genuinely affect the outcome statistically.

2.2 Research Respondents

The study's respondents were the 282 teachers in East District II, Department of Education Division of Cagayan de Oro. The population frame comprised regular elementary school public teachers, totaling 330. The total population had the following breakdown: (a) school 1-59; (b) school 2-45; (c) school 3-57; (d) school 4-73; (e) school 5-21; (f) school 6-28; (g) school 7-5; (h) school 8-13 and (i) school 9-29. To identify schools, all schools were located in the researcher's assigned district, East District II under the Division of Cagayan de Oro. The study included public elementary school teachers who are currently teaching and are permanent teachers, in the Division of Cagayan de Oro, Department of Education (DepEd). In selecting teacher-respondents from the school, proportionate stratified random sampling was used in the study to ensure an equal distribution of respondents per school. In this sampling strategy, the researcher first defined the population, consisting of 330 public elementary school teachers from nine (9) public elementary schools in East District II under the Division of Cagayan de Oro for the school year 2023-2024. Using the Raosoft Calculator, the researcher determined the sample

size, which is 282, based on a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 5%. After the sample size was obtained, the population was divided into groups or strata. The stratification process was based on the nine (9) public elementary schools. This sampling strategy aimed to gather data from a representative sample of public elementary school teachers, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions and make inferences about the entire population of interest.

2.3 Research Instrument

The study used modified questionnaires to gather the data, following the scope of the study. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections: demographic data, Teachers' Organizational Justice, Teachers' Organizational Culture, and Teachers' Organizational Commitment. The first section of the instrument solicited the demographic data, such as age, gender, and length of service. The second section of the questionnaire was adapted from the organizational justice scale, developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) and was adapted by Novitasari et al., (2020). The instrument has been used in several studies to examine the level of the teachers' justice. It also consists of three subscales: Distributive, Procedural and Interactive Justice. This has been modified to reduce ambiguity, answer bias, or measurement error to increase the questionnaire's reliability and ensure that the items measure the intended components precisely and effectively.

The third section of the questionnaire was adapted from the organizational culture instrument, consisting of 20 questions based on Denison's organizational culture, and was adapted by Wahyuningsih, (2019). The instrument has three (4) dimensions, namely: (1) Involvement, (2) Consistency, (3) Adaptability, and (4) Mission. This questionnaire was designed to calculate the overall organizational culture level of the employees. This has been modified to consider cultural sensitivity and variances, particularly for research done in various educational environments. Adjustments were made to the questionnaire to account for differences among the surveyed teachers. Finally, the fourth part of the questionnaire used was the organizational commitment scale, adapted by Novitasari et al., (2020). There were three dimensions, namely: (1) Affective, (2) Normative, (3) Continuance. The questionnaire was modified to include elements of commitment that are particularly relevant to the teachers' culture, beliefs, and objectives and to ensure that it will always be accurate, relevant, and helpful in determining how committed teachers are to their organization. Overall, the researcher modified the three sets of questionnaires to suit the local context of the teacher respondents. These were the following factors taken into account when modifying questionnaires: first, whether the question or statement was unclear; second, whether particular questions, statements, or sections should be removed; and third, whether the question or statement has to be rephrased in order for the respondents to comprehend completely.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

In gathering the data for this study, the researcher implemented a series of systematic procedures to ensure a thorough and ethical approach. First, the researcher obtained a formal permit from the Superintendent of the Department of Education – Region X Schools Division. This step was crucial as it established the legitimacy of the research and ensured compliance with educational regulations. Upon receiving the necessary permissions, the researcher engaged directly with the school principals to facilitate the distribution of the questionnaires to the teachers. This involved scheduling meetings to explain the study's purpose, the importance of teachers' participation, and how the feedback would contribute to educational improvements. After three days designated for collection, the researcher retrieved the completed survey forms. To maintain confidentiality and ensure the integrity of the data, each form was handled with care and organized systematically. Subsequently, the researcher tabulated the responses meticulously, preparing the data for statistical analysis. This involved coding the data and using appropriate software tools to ensure accurate calculations. The results were then analyzed, interpreted, and compared against the study's hypotheses and previous research findings to draw meaningful conclusions. This comprehensive approach ensured the research was reliable and valid, yielding insights that could inform future educational practices. To suit the local context of the study, the instruments were subjected to content validation and face validation by the experts in the field. After the comments and suggestions of the experts, these were integrated to enhance the instruments. To test the reliability of the questionnaires, the researchers performed pilot testing on the teachers in the other district who were not the respondents of the actual study. Cronbach alpha values for organizational justice, organizational culture, and organizational commitment are 0.955, 0.942, and 0.895, respectively.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Carrying out research in the Department of Education required strict compliance with ethical standards to safeguard the well-being and respect of all respondents engaged. Essential principles involved acquiring informed consent, guaranteeing that participants were informed about the study's objective, methods, and possible risks before participating. Confidentiality and privacy were ensured to safeguard sensitive information, and the researcher guaranteed that data was utilized only for the study's designated purposes. It was crucial to evaluate the possible effects of the research on the respondents, steering clear of any methods that might have led to harm or unnecessary stress. Furthermore, the study had to be structured. It carried out equitably, honoring the rights and independence of every respondent while guaranteeing that the research outcomes were presented truthfully and impartially.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Relationship between Organizational Justice and Organizational Commitment

Table 1 presents the correlation analysis highlighting a connection between organizational justice and commitment.

Table 1. *Test of Relationship between Organizational Justice and Organizational Commitment*

	Org Commitment			Affective			Continuance			Normative		
	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Org Justice	.277** .000	Reject Ho	S	.291** .000	Reject Ho	S	.164** .006	Reject Ho	S	.187** .002	Reject Ho	S
Distributive	.215** .000	Reject Ho	S	.202** .001	Reject Ho	S	.162** .006	Reject Ho	S	.132* .026	Reject Ho	S
Procedural	.247** .000	Reject Ho	S	.297** .000	Reject Ho	S	.129* .030	Failed to Reject	S	.156** .009	Reject Ho	S
Interactional	.304** .000	Reject Ho	S	.309** .000	Reject Ho	S	.160** .007	Failed to Reject	S	.231** .000	Reject Ho	S

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Notably, organizational justice and the overall measure and its dimensions (distributive, procedural, and interactional) strongly correlate, emphasizing the significant relationship between the teachers' organizational commitment. These findings underscore the vital role of fairness and equity in fostering a positive and effective work environment for teachers. The significant correlation between teachers' commitment levels and their views of justice and fairness indicates a close relationship between these two variables. Teachers who believe their schools are just and fair will likely feel appreciated, respected, and supported by their colleagues. This in turn promotes a feeling of loyalty, commitment, and trust toward the organization (Haider & Khan, 2022). The results of this study highlight the significance of organizational justice as a critical component in determining the teachers' levels of commitment, including their moral obligation and continuity decisions as well as their emotional bond with their schools. These results provide insightful information about how organizational justice and commitment interact in the context of education.

Moreover, when teachers feel that their contributions are fairly acknowledged and rewarded, that decision-making procedures are open and inclusive, and that administrators and colleagues treat them with decency and respect, they are more likely to develop deep bonds with their schools. Teachers' commitment is improved by a favorable work environment, job satisfaction, and general well-being facilitated by fair treatment and organizational assistance (Iqbal, 2017). On the other hand, the correlation coefficients reveal notable associations. Affective Commitment shows a positive correlation of ($r=0.291$, $p=0.000$), suggesting that teachers become more

emotionally attached to and committed to the organization when they perceive organizational justice is present. It also indicates that teacher views of justice and justice inside the organization were connected on their emotional attachment to and commitment to their educational institution. Teachers are more likely to form a close emotional connection with the organization when they feel that resources and rewards are handled fairly, the decision-making processes are transparent, and they are treated with dignity and respect (Naghypour et al., 2015). Moreover, the significance of cultivating an organizational justice in educational institutions is highlighted by this relationship. The goal of leaders and administrators in schools is to develop procedures and systems that prioritize equality, openness, and diversity (Shamma & Shurman, 2018). This could entail putting in place precise and uniform policies, giving the teachers the chance to contribute and participate in decision-making, and ensuring they are treated fairly and have their contributions recognized (Lawal, 2022).

3.2 Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment

In the context of the study of the relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment, the findings presented in Table 2 suggest a significant association between the surveyed teachers. Specifically, when examining Organizational Commitment, the correlation coefficient of ($r=0.321$, $p=0.000$) supports rejecting the null hypothesis, indicating a statistically significant and significant association. This suggests that among the teachers taking part in the study, indicating a healthy organizational culture was associated with the overall commitment. The statistics were consistent with the notion that teachers who work in situations with positive organizational cultures were committed to their organizations (Soomro & Shah, 2019). Table 2 highlights positive correlations between organizational culture and commitment, covering involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. These results emphasize organizational culture's critical role in fostering a supportive work environment for teachers.

Table 2. Test of Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment

	Org Commitment			Affective			Continuance			Normative		
	r value/P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Org Culture	.321** .000	Reject Ho	S	.386** .000	Reject Ho	S	.152* .010	Reject Ho	S	.217** .000	Reject Ho	S
Involvement	.297** .000	Reject Ho	S	.372** .000	Reject Ho	S	.130* .029	Reject Ho	S	.199** .001	Reject Ho	S
Consistency	.286** .000	Reject Ho	S	.345** .000	Reject Ho	S	.131* .027	Reject Ho	S	.196** .001	Reject Ho	S
Adaptability	.317** .000	Reject Ho	S	.364** .000	Reject Ho	S	.165** .005	Reject Ho	S	.212** .000	Reject Ho	S
Mission	.273** .000	Reject Ho	S	.309** .000	Reject Ho	S	.142* .017	Reject Ho	S	.186** .002	Reject Ho	S

**₁. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*₁. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Moreover, an organization's values and ethical leadership are essential elements of a healthy school culture that encourages normative commitment. Teachers are more likely to have a sense of trust and loyalty towards the school when they believe their principals/leaders act honestly, transparently, and justly in their decision-making. Teachers also tend to identify more with the school's principles and feel obligated to uphold them when such values include respect, teamwork, and social responsibility (Azadi et al., 2013). These findings demonstrate a strong positive correlation between organizational culture and organizational commitment, highlighting the relationship of a healthy organizational culture to teachers' levels of commitment in the setting of education. The results show how crucial a positive organizational culture is to the teachers' commitment in their respective schools. Educational institutions can cultivate a committed and motivated teacher by recognizing and promoting a positive culture (Kaya & Secim, 2018). Moreover, principals help their teachers reach high standards and motivate them to be more successful by building strong school cultures. Thus, the commitment of teachers is strongly and directly tied to the principal's involvement in creating a strong school culture (Soomro & Shah, 2019).

3.3 Relationship between Organizational Justice and Organizational Culture

In Table 3, the correlation analysis shows that organizational justice correlates positively with organizational culture.

Table 3. *Test of Relationship between Organizational Justice and Organizational Culture*

	Org Justice			Distributive			Procedural			Interactional		
	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation	r value/ P value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Org Culture	.449** .000	Reject Ho	S	.334** .000	Reject Ho	S	.437** .000	Reject Ho	S	.476** .000	Reject Ho	S
Involvement	.415** .000	Reject Ho	S	.315** .000	Reject Ho	S	.396** .000	Reject Ho	S	.440** .000	Reject Ho	S
Consistency	.449** .000	Reject Ho	S	.328** .000	Reject Ho	S	.435** .000	Reject Ho	S	.484** .000	Reject Ho	S
Adaptability	.397** .000	Reject Ho	S	.294** .000	Reject Ho	S	.397** .000	Reject Ho	S	.412** 0.000	Reject Ho	S
Mission	.462** .000	Reject Ho	S	.360** .000	Reject Ho	S	.456** .000	Reject Ho	S	.468** .000	Reject Ho	S

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

In examining the relationship between organizational justice and organizational culture, the results presented in Table 3 indicate a significant association among the surveyed teachers. Specifically, the correlation coefficient for the connection between Organizational Justice and Organizational Culture is ($r=0.449$, $p=0.000$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The concepts of organizational justice and culture were connected and mutually significant where positive organizational cultures built on mutual respect, cooperation, and trust were fostered by just and equitable organizational structures that are defined by transparent decision-making procedures, equitable resource allocation, and respectful treatment of teachers (Britton, 2018).

Additionally, according to Arar and Saiti (2022), organizational justice is strongly associated with teachers' positive perceptions of organizational culture. Teachers gain from creating a fair and equitable classroom atmosphere in various ways that develop their commitment, overall experience, and well-being. Addressing issues of organizational justice truthfully is a practical move in creating a more encouraging and positive culture within the school (Day et al., 2020). Also, trust and respect are fostered within the school when teachers think that decisions are made relatively (procedural justice) and treated fairly (interactional justice). A supportive and encouraging organizational culture built on trust and respect makes teachers feel appreciated and supported (Pavlidou & Efstathiades, 2021).

Moreover, transparent rules and procedures are essential to an effective organization. Teachers are more likely to trust the leadership and feel involved in decision-making when they have access to information and can explain the reasons behind organizational decisions. By encouraging trust and lowering uncertainty among teachers, this transparency helps create a strong organizational culture (Sheeraz et al., 2020). Likewise, when an organization makes sure that all teachers receive equitable treatment and have equal access to opportunities for professional advancement, teachers are more likely to be motivated and committed to the organization's objectives when they believe that prospects for growth, resource allocation, and contribution recognition are equitable (Kusumaningrum et al., 2020). Teachers feel empowered to succeed in an encouraging and welcoming work environment.

3.4 Influence of Organizational Justice on Organizational Commitment

Table 4 reflects the significant influence of organizational justice on organizational commitment. The R-squared value in Table 4 is 0.077, indicating that the predictor variable, organizational justice, can explain approximately 7.7% of the variance in Organizational Commitment.

Table 4. *Regression Analysis using Organizational Justice as predictor of Organizational Commitment*

Model 1					
Predictor	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	Remarks
(Constant)	2.35	.112	21.0	.000	
ORG_JUSTICE	.159	.033	4.81	.000	Significant
Model 1: R-squared = 0.077, F =23.227, p-value =0.000					
Dependent Variable: ORG_ COMMITMENT					
Model 2					
Predictor					
(Constant)	2.34	.113	20.7	.000	
Distributive	.024	.048	.511	.610	Not Significant
Procedural	-.039	.075	-.518	.605	Not Significant
Interactional	.174	.056	3.11	.002	Significant
Model 2: Adjusted R-squared = 0.084, F =9.551, p-value =0.001					
Dependent Variable: ORG_ COMMITMENT					

While the R-squared value is relatively modest, the statistically significant F-value of 23.227 (p-value = 0.000) suggests that the overall model was significant. The significant F-value indicates that at least one predictor variable (in this case, organizational justice) was significantly related to the dependent variable (organizational commitment). Therefore, based on the analysis, the model 1 for regression is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.352 + 0.159 X_1$$

Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = Organizational Commitment

X_1 = Organizational Justice

The positive coefficient about organizational justice implies that there was a positive influence between teachers' perception of fairness and justice inside their respective schools and their level of commitment increases.

Organizational justice has been acknowledged as a driving force and factor affecting the teachers' commitment to the organization. Therefore, improving organizational justice can aid in keeping teachers' commitment and the facility's capabilities strong (Deressa et al., 2022). Additionally, organizational justice, which emphasizes the importance of fairness in organizations, has revealed that teachers' perceptions of organizational justice significantly impact their commitment to their schools (Demir, 2016). This means that there is likely a meaningful influence between perceptions of justice within an organization and the level of commitment teachers have towards their schools. This finding supports the idea that when teachers perceived higher fairness in how they are treated within their schools, they are more likely to be committed to it (Karem et al., 2019). Teachers may, therefore, have a higher level of organizational commitment by actively striving to maintain and enhance a just and fair work environment.

When justice is increased and viewed positively by teachers, they are more likely to stay rather than look for chances elsewhere when they feel appreciated and respected, strengthening their commitment to their school (Kedenburg, 2014). The study of Imamuglo et al., (2019) states that organizational justice influences organizational commitment and creates a cooperative and harmonious work atmosphere that helps organizations get the most out of their employees. These employees who are loyal and have a fair concept of justice are likelier to share information and experience. Additionally, there is a strong sense of obligation towards the work when there is a perceived organizational justice in the workplace. The fair methods, proper allocations and decision-making processes will lead to a strong commitment among the employees (Ajala, 2015). Moreover, Jufrizen et al., (2021), states that fair treatment and transparent procedures influence teachers' sense of engagement and commitment. When teachers feel they are adequately treated, they are more likely to have an emotional investment in their work and the objectives of their school, because committed teachers are eager to put in their best efforts to accomplish shared goals, this engagement improves the school as a whole.

On the other hand, moving to Model 2, which includes the sub-dimensions of organizational justice (Distributive, Procedural, and Interactional), the adjusted R-squared is 0.084, suggesting that the additional predictors contribute slightly to the model's explanatory power. The overall model is still statistically significant with an F-value of 9.551 (p-value = 0.001). Analyzing the sub-dimensions, only Interactional Justice has a significant impact ($B = 0.174$, $t = 3.113$, $p = 0.002$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for Interactional Justice. This signifies that Interactional Justice significantly influences Organizational Commitment, while Distributive and Procedural Justice fail to reach significance in this model. Organizational justice, particularly in its interactional dimension, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' organizational commitment, as evidenced by the results of the regression analysis. Therefore, based on the analysis, the model 2 for regression is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.341 + 0.174 X_1$$

Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = Organizational Commitment

X_1 = Interactional Justice

The regression coefficient for Interactional Justice in the multiple regression model is 0.174. This coefficient represents the estimated change in the dependent variable (Organizational Commitment) for a one-unit increase in the predictor variable (Interactional Justice), while holding the other predictor variables (Distributive and Procedural Justice) constant. In this context, a positive coefficient of 0.174 indicates that an increase in the score of Interactional Justice is associated with a corresponding increase in the predicted Organizational Commitment. Specifically, for each additional unit increase in Interactional Justice, the predicted Organizational Commitment is expected to increase by 0.174 units. Teachers' perceptions of justice in interpersonal interactions may carry greater significance and influence than their perceptions of procedural or distributive justice. They might be more concerned with their personal treatment than with the fairness of procedures or results (Qureshi et al., 2017).

The degree to which teachers believe they are being treated fairly by the company influences their views, which in turn influences their level of commitment (Imamoglu et al., 2019). Recognizing the influence of interactional justice on organizational commitment implies that schools should purposefully foster a work environment where teachers experienced fair and respectful treatment during interpersonal interactions. This improves teachers' wellbeing and schools' effectiveness. Additionally, schools can improve the possibility that teachers will stay with them by providing opportunities for professional development and supportive work environments. They can increase the appeal of staying at the school they choose and decrease the perceived costs of leaving by doing this (Gichira, 2016). In turn, this builds high mutual respect and trust when teachers feel that they are treated with dignity and respect by their school principal/head, and co-teachers, and the school at large. When teachers receive this kind of interpersonal approach, they feel valued and respected, which raises their commitment levels (Hakim, 2015).

Similary, teachers are more likely to feel higher commitment to their schools when they believe they are being treated properly in terms of their interactions with administrators and other teachers. This emphasizes how crucial it is to promote an environment of decency, equity, and respect in terms of interpersonal interactions in order to increase teachers' commitment to the school (Ajala, 2015). Khan et al, (2017) opined that not only does organizational justice have an influence on commitment, but it also plays a beneficial role in the interaction with its employees. Studies have shown that employees who believe that justice is one of the leadership practices exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment. Furthermore Gichira (2016), workers assess their employer-employee interactions from a just perspective and determine whether they were treated fairly or unjustly. This notion of fairness has an influence on their commitment towards their organization. The findings increase an understanding of the connection between employee commitment and views of justice in the workplace. Similar findings from Raja (2012) show that when leaders begin treating their employees fairly it influences and can boost employee commitment, which in turn improves the organization's performance as a whole and raises productivity levels.

3.5 Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Commitment

Table 5 shows the regression analysis for predicting organizational commitment using overall measure of organizational culture (model 1) and its sub-dimensions (model 2).

Table 5. *Regression Analysis using Organizational Culture as a predictor of Organizational Commitment*

Model 1					
Predictor	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	Remarks
(Constant)	2.13	.133	16.1	.000	
ORG_CULTURE	.214	.038	5.67	.000	Significant
Model 1: R-squared = 0.103, F =32.23, p-value =0.000					
Dependent Variable: ORG_ COMMITMENT					
Model 2					
Predictor					
(Constant)	2.13	.135	15.8	.000	
Involvement	.066	.071	.933	.352	Not Significant
Consistency	-.004	.083	-.046	.964	Not Significant
Adaptability	.122	.062	1.98	.049	Significant
Mission	.030	.061	.488	.626	Not Significant
Model 2: Adjusted R-squared = 0.095, F =8.337, p-value =0.004					
Dependent Variable: ORG_ COMMITMENT					

The R-squared value in Table 5 is 0.103, indicating that approximately 10.3% of the variance in Organizational Commitment can be explained by the predictor variable, Organizational Culture. The statistically significant F-value of 32.23 (p-value = 0.000) reinforces the overall significance of the model, suggesting that at least one predictor variable (in this case, Organizational Culture) is significantly related to the dependent variable (Organizational Commitment). Therefore, based on the analysis, the model 1 for regression is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.138 + 0.214 X_1$$

Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = Organizational Commitment

X_1 = Organizational Culture

This equation signifies that the predicted value of Organizational Commitment increases by 0.214 units for every one-unit increase in the score of Organizational Culture. The significant association suggests that there is a comparable rise in organizational commitment among the surveyed teachers when organizational culture scores rise. This implies that teachers' commitment is significantly influenced by organizational culture (Dunger, 2023). One of the main factors influencing teacher increased commitment to their school is a positive and encouraging culture in school. According to Jufrizen et al. (2021), organizational culture has a significant influence on organizational commitment. Thus, this indicates that a strong organizational culture that each employee adopts and upholds provide high commitment that will benefit the organizations personnel. The significance of organizational goals and objectives is strengthened by an effective culture. Teachers are more driven to strive toward reaching these objectives when they are aware of and supportive of them.

Teachers who work in supportive environments feel like they belong, are more likely to form a close bond with the school when they perceive themselves as part of the school and are treated with respect. Their commitment and desire to contribute to the success of the school will be increased with this sense of belonging (Muis et al., 2018). Additionally, Muis et al., (2018), states that teachers are more committed to their organization when the organizational culture is strong. Employees are more likely to feel a feeling of connection and belonging to the company when the organizational culture is in line with their values, beliefs, and work preferences. This alignment fosters more emotional connection to the school, and as a result, commitment is strengthened (Pham Thi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, results similar to those of Anitha (2016) show that organizational culture significantly impacts employee commitment. This suggests that the organization's employees see its organizational culture more favorably. This demonstrates that most employees remain with the company because of the benefits of their position (Continuance Commitment) and their ethical commitment to upholding its principles (Normative

Commitment). On the other hand, moving to Model 2, which includes the sub-dimensions of Organizational Culture (Involvement, Consistent, Adaptability, and Mission), the adjusted R-squared is 0.095, indicating a modest increase in the model's explanatory power due to the additional predictors. The overall model remains statistically significant with an F-value of 8.337 (p-value = 0.004).

Analyzing the sub-dimensions, only Adaptability has a significant impact ($B = 0.122$, $t = 1.981$, $p = 0.049$), leading to rejecting the null hypothesis for Adaptability. This signifies that Adaptability significantly influences Organizational Commitment, while Involvement, Consistency, and Mission fail to reach significance in this model. Organizational culture, particularly in its adaptability dimension, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' organizational commitment, as evidenced by the regression analysis results. Therefore, based on the analysis, the model 2 for regression is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.138 + 0.122 X_1$$

Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = Organizational Commitment

X_1 = Organizational Culture (Adaptability)

Although adaptability significantly impacts organizational commitment, an improved approach is required. Schools can establish a culture that connects with teachers and strengthens their commitment to the organization by focusing on efforts that improve flexibility, reevaluating methods connected to Involvement, Consistency, and Mission, and creating a positive change culture. By giving these efforts top priority, schools may foster a caring and supportive atmosphere that profoundly connects with teachers and increases their commitment to the organization's vision and goals (Hollingworth et al., 2018).

To effectively respond to changing conditions, such as curriculum adjustments, changes in teaching styles, or technological improvements, teachers must possess flexibility in the rapidly moving educational landscape. A culture that prioritizes flexibility enables teachers to welcome change constructively, building resilience and a spirit of creativity. Teachers who have support in adapting to change are more likely to stay committed to their schools. Additionally, the ability to adapt predicts employee commitment. Organizations that change with the times gain the loyalty of their employees. Employers should support employee innovation and collaboration. This will let workers adapt in a changing environment, enhancing their commitment level (Nongo & Ikyanyon, 2012).

Moreover, teachers who work in organizations with adaptable cultures are more resilient and flexible. In times of uncertainty or change, they are more likely to stick with their commitment when they feel empowered to embrace innovation and adjust to changing circumstances. According to Bizuneh (2016), adaptability is the most effective indicator of employee commitment among all organizational culture characteristics. Employees who work for organizations that adapt to change are more committed. Therefore, this will make employees' adaptability in a changing environment possible by increasing their commitment to a level. Additionally, the ability to adapt predicts employee commitment. Organizations that change with the times gain the loyalty of their employees. Employers should support employee innovation and collaboration. This will let workers adapt in a changing environment, enhancing their commitment level (Nongo & Ikyanyon, 2012). Furthermore, employees exhibit a high level of commitment to the organization when they feel that a culture of knowledge creation is present in their organization, characterized by a higher learning culture (adaptability traits) and the ability to quickly adapt to current developments and anticipate changes in the future (Suraje et al., 2023).

3.6 Influence of Organizational Justice and Organizational Culture on Organizational Commitment

Table 6 shows the regression analysis for predicting organizational commitment using overall measures of organizational justice and culture (model 1) and its sub-dimensions (model 2). Table 6 presents the R-squared value of 0.125, indicating that approximately 12.5% of the variance in Organizational Commitment can be explained by the predictor variables, Organizational Culture and Organizational Justice. The statistically significant F-value of 19.971 (p-value = 0.000) reinforces the overall significance of the model, suggesting that at least one predictor variable is significantly related to the dependent variable. Examining the predictor variables,

both Organizational Culture and Organizational Justice significantly positively influence Organizational Commitment (p-values = 0.009 and 0.000, respectively). Furthermore, the data indicates that a noteworthy portion (87.5%) of the variance in organizational commitment can be attributed to factors not included in the study.

Table 6. Regression Analysis using Organizational Culture and Organizational Justice as predictors of Organizational Commitment
Model 1

Predictors	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	Remarks
(Constant)	1.99	.142	13.9	.000	
ORG_CULTURE	.096	.036	2.64	.009	Significant
ORG_JUSTICE	.164	.042	3.93	.000	Significant
Model 1: R-squared = 0.125, F =19.971, p-value =0.000					
Dependent Variable: ORG_ COMMITMENT					
Model 2					
Predictors					
Organizational Justice					
(Constant)	2.01	.143	14.0	.000	
Distributive	.030	.047	.646	.519	Not Significant
Procedural	-.068	.075	-.909	.364	Not Significant
Interactional	.139	.057	2.44	.015	Significant
Predictor					
Organizational Culture					
Involvement	.056	.070	.796	.427	Not Significant
Consistent	-.039	.083	-.474	.636	Not Significant
Adaptability	.126	.061	2.06	.040	Significant
Mission	.007	.061	.119	.905	Not Significant
Model 2: Adjusted R-squared = 0.120, F =6.458, p-value =0.000					
Dependent Variable: ORG_ COMMITMENT					

Therefore, based on the analysis, the model 1 for regression is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 1.991 + 0.096X_1 + 0.164X_2$$

Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = Organizational Commitment

X_1 = Organizational Culture

X_2 = Organizational Justice

This equation signifies that the predicted value of Organizational Commitment increases by 0.096 units for every one-unit increase in the score of Organizational Culture, while holding the score of Organizational Justice constant. Similarly, the predicted value of Organizational Commitment increases by 0.164 units for every one-unit increase in the score of Organizational Justice, while holding the score of Organizational Culture constant. Furthermore, this suggests that organizational culture and justice positively contribute to the prediction of organizational commitment among the surveyed teachers. The importance of developing a healthy, encouraging culture and equitable organizational practices is highlighted by the implications of the positive influences of organizational justice and culture on organizational commitment. Thus, the schools' overall success, organizational adaptability, and increased teacher commitment are all impacted. This implies that although these variables are important, teachers' commitment is not solely determined by them. Teachers are individuals with diverse upbringings, dispositions, and goals. In addition to organizational justice and culture, 87.5% are other important elements that impact teachers' commitment to their schools, including salary, job happiness, attitudes, career objectives, etc.

According to Kustiawan et al (2022), teachers' commitment to their schools is significantly influenced by their level of happiness at work. When satisfied with their roles, teachers are more likely to be committed, driven, and engaged. Schools can increase employee happiness by creating a healthy work environment, encouraging work-life balance, giving autonomy and recognition, providing chances for professional growth, encouraging student success, and developing a positive school culture. Additionally, Tahir (2016) claims that a good salary also strengthens organizational commitment of teachers. Teachers who receive a good pay can live comfortably and

care for their fundamental necessities. Teachers are freed from the worry of unstable finances to concentrate on their professional duties.

Moreover, one concrete approach to appreciate and acknowledge teachers' diligence, commitment, and knowledge is offering them a competitive compensation. Teacher commitment to the organization rises when they perceive that their efforts are pretty compensated, boosting their sense of worth. In the context of DepEd, teachers' commitment is strengthened when they receive a good salary. Their financial needs are met, and it also improves morale, lowers turnover, and increases job satisfaction. By ensuring teachers receive fair compensation, DepEd can cultivate a more dedicated, driven, and stable workforce, which would ultimately improve the country's educational system (Belencion, 2020).

Conversely, the remaining 2.2% is the additional variance of organizational commitment explained by the combined interaction of organizational justice and organizational culture beyond what each variable explains individually. The 2.2% reflects the percentage of variance that can be attributable to the combined influence of organizational culture and organizational justice, as opposed to the separate contributions of each variable. It implies that there is something special about how these two variables work together to help explain the dependent variable, which is organizational commitment—something that's missed when taking them into account independently.

The result implies that when these two elements are combined, there is a unique contribution. Analyzing the interactions between organizational culture and justice adds more explanatory value than focusing on each component alone. Further, it can mean that some organizational culture elements could strengthen or lessen the effects of organizational justice, and vice versa. This result emphasizes how crucial it is to look at variables in combination to have a more complete picture of how they affect relevant outcomes in an organizational setting. The additional explained variance indicates that interactions between organizational culture and justice may have compensating or synergistic effects. Positive organizational cultures may strengthen the benefits of organizational justice, improving employee outcomes and organizational commitment. This suggests that a supportive culture alongside just and fair school practices leads to a higher level of commitment among the surveyed teachers.

Moving to Model 2, which includes the sub-dimensions of both Organizational Justice (Distributive, Procedural, and Interactional) and Organizational Culture (Involvement, Consistent, Adaptability, and Mission), the adjusted R-squared is 0.120, indicating a modest increase in the model's explanatory power due to the additional predictors. The overall model remains statistically significant with an F-value of 6.458 (p-value = 0.000). Therefore, based on the analysis, the model 2 for regression is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.017 + 0.139X_1 + 0.126X_2$$

Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = Organizational Commitment

X_1 = Interactional Justice

X_2 = Adaptability

Analyzing the sub-dimensions, only Interactional Justice and Adaptability within Organizational Justice and Organizational Culture, respectively, have significant impacts ($B = 0.139$, $t = 2.447$, $p = 0.015$; $B = 0.126$, $t = 2.063$, $p = 0.040$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for these specific dimensions. This signifies that Interactional Justice and Adaptability significantly influence Organizational Commitment, while other dimensions fail to reach significance in this model. The joint consideration of organizational culture and organizational justice, particularly in their interactional and adaptability dimensions, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' organizational commitment, as evidenced by the regression analysis results.

In organizational justice, only interactional justice is significantly influenced by organizational commitment among the surveyed teachers. This indicates that the degree of the teachers' commitment to their organization is greatly influenced by how they are treated on an interpersonal level (interactional justice). The level of respect,

courtesy, and thoroughness of explanations that teachers receive from their leaders during interactions is a key component of interactional justice. When teachers receive fair treatment in their daily encounters, they may feel more appreciated and valued, increasing their commitment level (Imamoglu et al., 2019).

However, distributive and procedural justice were not significant in influencing the commitment of teachers (p -value = 0.519, p -value = 0.364). In distributive justice, given that the p -value of 0.519 is far more significant than the typical significance level, it may be drawn that the statistical significance between distributive justice and organizational commitment was not statistically significant. The concept of distributive justice concerns the perceived fairness of the results obtained, including compensation, incentives, and accomplishments (Karem et al, 2019). In this case, teachers' commitment is not significantly impacted by how fair these outcomes are.

Regarding their commitment, it is probable that workers accept the results they get or that other elements outweigh the perception of distributive justice. Additionally, in procedural justice, a p -value of 0.364 suggests that it is not statistically significant between procedural justice and organizational commitment. Procedural justice is the perceived fairness of the methods of making decisions. In this instance, despite their importance, fair procedures do not appear to have a large direct impact on organizational commitment. Like distributive justice, procedural justice might not significantly impact commitment since teachers might value other parts of their work experience more than procedural justice. Alternatively, most teachers may view the current processes as generally fair, which would reduce the range of reactions to this type of justice.

The considerable influence of interactional justice highlighted the importance of respectful treatment and strong interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Iqbal, 2017). Conversely, the lack of statistical significance in the impact of distributive and procedural justice implies that although these are essential components of organizational justice, they do not propel organizational commitment to the same extent as interactional justice. In organizational culture, only adaptability influences the commitment of teachers. This implies that teachers' commitment to a school was greatly influenced by its capacity to innovate, adapt to changes, and react to the outside world. Teachers feel more engaged, safe, and valued in an adaptable organization. They might believe that an adaptable organization will be better able to endure and expand, providing them with security and chances for career and personal development. This feeling of stability and room for advancement will strengthen their commitment.

However, the subcomponents' involvement (p -value = 0.427), consistency (p -value = 0.636) and mission (p -value = 0.905) were not significant in influencing the commitment of teachers. Involvement was insignificant to organizational commitment, as evidenced by the p -value of 0.427, significantly higher than the usual significance level. Teachers' participation in decision-making processes and level of engagement are referred to as "involvement." This instance indicates that involvement did not significantly impact teachers' commitment. Involvement might not be as vital for long-term commitment, even when necessary for motivation and short-term job satisfaction. Teachers may value involvement but might not consider it a significant component of their overall sense of commitment to the school. Additionally, the p -value of 0.636 does not support the statistical significance of the influence between consistency and organizational commitment. Consistency is the degree of alignment and coherence between organizational practices, policies, and procedures. The result demonstrates that consistency has no impact on commitment. While consistency is beneficial in creating a stable and predictable work environment, it may not always be the primary driver of teachers' commitment. It is possible that teachers might not see consistency as a source of inspiration for their commitment.

Similarly, there was no statistically significant influence between mission and organizational commitment because the p -value of 0.905 was much more significant than the significance level. The mission aspect of organizational culture pertains to the significance and clarity of the organization's goals and development. In this case, a compelling goal does not affect teachers' commitment significantly. Teachers may not feel committed to the organization's goal even though they support it if other components of their profession, including job satisfaction or adaptability, are absent. Teachers may not be as committed to the goal if they emphasize their everyday experiences and opportunities for personal growth more than the organization's overarching goals. The considerable influence of adaptability shows the necessity of developing a culture that can adjust to changes and challenges (Inanlou & Ahn, 2017). The fact that involvement, consistency, and mission do not significantly affect

organizational commitment implies that, although these cultural elements are important, they do not drive organizational commitment as strongly as adaptability.

The significant influence shown between interactional justice and adaptability indicates that these variables are critical in determining teachers' commitment to their respective schools. Focusing on the adaptability dimension of organizational culture also indicates that the organization is competent and willing to adapt in response to changing circumstances (Taye et al., 2019). Two important factors heavily influence organizational commitment: interactional justice and adaptability. While adaptability encourages resilience, engagement, and a sense of ownership among the teachers, interactional justice builds trust, respect, and positive interpersonal interactions. Collectively, these factors foster an atmosphere in which teachers are more inclined to commit their skills and energies to their schools' success amidst challenges and change (Inanlou & Ahn, 2017).

Additionally, improving teachers' organizational commitment is significantly impacted by organizational culture and organizational justice, particularly in their interactional and adaptability aspects. By proactively addressing these aspects, an environment that is more encouraging and helpful may be developed, eventually benefiting teachers and the schools that employ them. Accordingly, Tahseen and Akhtar (2015) state that positive relationships and trust are fostered within the organization when teachers feel their leaders and colleagues treat them fairly and respectfully. Treating the teachers fairly and communicating openly during the decision-making process increases their sense of worth, dignity, and respect, which increases their commitment to the school (Kalay, 2016).

In the context of DepEd, interactional justice and adaptability are among the factors that significantly impact teachers' commitment within the framework of the Department of Education (DepEd). When teachers believe that their administrators and peers treat them with dignity and respect, they become more committed to the interactional justice model. The DepEd will communicate policies, updates, and expectations clearly and concisely. Concepts like interactional justice and adaptability included in organizational procedures within the Department of Education (DepEd) framework can significantly impact teachers' commitment to their schools. DepEd may better assist and empower teachers by integrating these concepts of interactional justice and adaptability into its policies and practices. This will, therefore, probably increase teachers' commitment to their schools, boost morale, increase work satisfaction, and eventually improve student learning outcomes (Guevarra, 2020).

4.0 Conclusion

Both organizational justice and organizational culture shape teachers' commitment to their schools. The theoretical framework of social exchange offers a fundamental approach to understand the influence between organizational justice and organizational commitment. According to this theory and as supported by the findings of this study, individuals engage in a give-and-take relationship where their commitment and loyalty to the organization are influenced by the support, resources, and recognition they receive. When teachers feel valued and supported by their institution, they are more likely to reciprocate with higher commitment and dedication. This mutual exchange creates a positive reinforcement cycle, enhancing individual and collective organizational commitment.

Schools may also encourage more outstanding commitments from their teachers and create a more positive and effective work environment by promoting justice and fairness. Although commitment is not a specific focus of the Denison Organizational Culture Model, its dimensions are strongly tied to the dimensions that affect teachers' commitment within an organization. Building a culture that values employee involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission are essential in developing a strong sense of commitment among the teachers.

Therefore, developing a school that prioritizes justice, fairness, and employee-centric values is necessary to help teachers feel deeply committed to their work. Schools can create a culture where teachers feel appreciated, respected, and aligned with the institution's objectives by highlighting involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. Lastly, fostering a sense of organizational justice and cultivating a supportive organizational culture are crucial for enhancing teachers' commitment to their institution. By ensuring fair treatment and recognizing teachers' contributions, educational organizations like the Department of Education can create an environment where teachers are motivated to remain dedicated and engaged, ultimately leading to a more cohesive and effective educational institution.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The duties related to editing, writing, supervision, data analysis, and encoding were shared among the authors, who jointly engaged in reviewing and endorsing the final manuscript version before submission. Both authors played a significant role in developing and designing the study, as they defined the key research questions and carefully devised the study protocol to steer their inquiry. Author 1 took the lead in gathering and encoding the data, ensuring all details were precisely documented. In the meantime, Author 2 was instrumental in analyzing and interpreting the data, using their expertise to extract significant insights from the results. The first version of the manuscript was written by Author 1, who detailed the main elements of the research. Author 2 then played a vital role in the following revisions, offering constructive critiques and improving the clarity and precision of the text. In the end, both authors scrutinized the final manuscript and gave their complete consent for publication, emphasizing their shared dedication to the integrity and quality of the research showcased.

6.0 Funding

This research was conducted independently and received no specific grant or funding from any agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgement

The researchers wish to express their profound and sincere appreciation to the Almighty Father for His unwavering guidance and generous blessings that have brightened their journey during this research project. His spiritual motivation has consistently strengthened them to persist and stay devoted to their objectives. Furthermore, the researchers would like to convey their deep gratitude to all the committed individuals who played a role in the development and completion of this study. Each person's participation has been essential, whether through intellectual support, helpful feedback, or logistical aid. The team is particularly grateful to mentors, peers, and friends who offered insights, motivation, and assistance throughout the process, helping this research achieve its maximum potential. The researchers are genuinely thankful for the significant enhancement of the study by their collective efforts.

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Technostress among Boomer Teachers in ICT Integration

Iris A. Lozada¹, Queenie Lyn G. Almerez², Amelie E. Trinidad^{*3}

¹Department of Education, Digos City, Philippines

^{2,3}Davao del Sur State College, Digos City, Davao del Sur, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: amelie.trinidad@dssc.edu.ph

Date received: February 2, 2025

Date revised: February 20, 2025

Date accepted: March 9, 2025

Originality: 91%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 9%

Recommended citation:

Lozada, I., Almerez, Q.L., Trinidad, A. (2025). Technostress among boomer teachers in ICT integration. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 104-113. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.053>

Abstract. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly transformed teaching and learning environments, often leading to technostress among educators. While existing studies explore ICT integration challenges, limited research focuses on boomer teachers' experiences in managing technostress. This study examines the experiences of boomer teachers in integrating ICT in the classroom, their coping mechanisms, and insights on mitigating technostress. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study involved eight boomer teachers from large public secondary schools in Davao del Sur. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria: (1) belonging to the boomer generation, (2) actively teaching in a public secondary school, (3) integrating ICT in classroom instruction, and (4) willingness to participate in semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that boomer teachers face challenges such as technological incompetency, adaptability issues, and unequal access to ICT resources, which hinder their effective use of technology in teaching. However, strategies including collaborative learning, ICT training, and resilience-building helped mitigate technostress. The study highlights the importance of continuous professional development, mentorship programs, and intergenerational collaboration to support boomer teachers in overcoming ICT-related challenges. Furthermore, promoting a culture of lifelong learning and providing institutional support can enhance ICT integration and overall teaching effectiveness. The study recommends further quantitative research and a broader participant base to validate and extend these findings. These insights contribute to developing targeted training programs and policies to reduce technostress and improve digital competence among older educators.

Keywords: Boomer teachers; ICT integration; Phenomenology; Qualitative; Technostress.

1.0 Introduction

Innovation has transformed the education landscape, reshaping how teachers facilitate learning through information and communication technology (ICT). The integration of ICT in the classroom has been widely recognized as an essential tool for enhancing instructional methods and improving student engagement. It has enabled more flexible, interactive, and accessible learning experiences, particularly in digital and distance education (Salazar-Concha et al., 2021). However, while technology offers numerous advantages, its integration into teaching practices has also introduced significant challenges, particularly for educators who may struggle with rapid technological advancements.

One critical challenge is technostress, a phenomenon arising from an individual's inability to cope with technological demands in the workplace. Technostress manifests in various ways, including feelings of anxiety, cognitive overload, and job-related strain due to the continuous need to adapt to new technologies (Coklar et al.,

2017; Tarafdar et al., 2019). Studies indicate that teachers experience increased work exhaustion due to the pressure of integrating modern technology into their instructional methods (Estrada-Munoz et al., 2020; Gemmano, 2023). Furthermore, technostress has been linked to lower job performance and reduced well-being among educators, affecting their ability to effectively deliver lessons (Cahapay & Bangoc II, 2021).

While research has extensively explored the general impact of technostress on educators, there remains a notable gap in understanding its specific effects on older teachers, particularly those belonging to the Baby Boomer generation. Boomer teachers, often characterized by their extensive teaching experience, may face unique challenges in adapting to ICT integration due to differences in digital literacy and comfort with technology compared to younger educators (Player et al., 2017). Studies in Europe and Asia suggest that while technostress can hinder productivity, certain aspects of technological adaptation may also contribute positively to professional growth (Srivastava et al., 2020). However, limited research has examined how boomer teachers in the Philippines navigate technostress, their coping mechanisms, and their perspectives on addressing these challenges.

Given the crucial role of seasoned educators in shaping students' learning experiences, understanding their struggles and strategies for overcoming technostress is essential for developing targeted interventions and support systems. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the experiences of boomer teachers in integrating ICT into their classrooms, identifying the coping mechanisms they employ to manage technostress, and gathering their insights on mitigating its effects. By shedding light on this issue, the research seeks to inform policies and practices that promote a more inclusive and supportive technological transition for educators of all generations.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used phenomenological methodology. Phenomenology is a specific technique in qualitative research that investigates a person's everyday experiences while suspending the researchers' preconceived assumptions about the phenomenon. The method's core purpose is to describe the specific phenomenon's nature (Creswell, 2013). This research method is suited for this study since the researcher sought to learn about the experiences of boomer teachers in terms of using technology in the context of integrating ICT in the classroom.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in various public secondary schools within the Department of Education Digos City Division in Digos City, Davao del Sur, Philippines. Digos City, the capital of Davao del Sur, is a component city in the Davao Region (Region XI). It is geographically positioned at 6°45'N latitude and 125°21'E longitude, covering an area of approximately 287.10 square kilometers. The city's topography is diverse, comprising coastal areas, flatlands, rolling hills, and mountainous terrain, which contribute to the varied accessibility and learning conditions of schools under the DepEd Digos City Division. The DepEd Digos City Division supervises the city's public elementary and secondary schools, ensuring quality and accessible basic education. Schools within the division vary in size and resources, with some located in urban barangays, benefiting from well-equipped facilities, while others are in rural and upland areas, where students face geographical and logistical challenges in accessing education. Despite these disparities, the division remains committed to enhancing educational opportunities for all learners.

2.3 Research Participants

In this study, eight boomer teachers from big public secondary schools in the Division of Davao del Sur underwent a semi-structured interview. According to Ellis (2016), a sample size between six (6) and twenty (20) for phenomenological research is sufficient. According to Marshall et al. (2013), outstanding qualitative work requires saturation, but there are no available rules or assessments of appropriateness for determining the sample size necessary to accomplish saturation. Therefore, a sample size of eight was enough to conduct this study. The following criteria were used in determining the teacher participants of the study: (1) a boomer teacher; (2) teaching in a big public secondary; (3) integrated information and communication technology in the classroom; and (4) willingness to participate in the interview. However, there was an exclusion for these criteria among the participants, who were boomer teachers who were 60 years old and on leave.

Purposive sampling was employed to choose the participants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which the sample is chosen based on demographic characteristics and the study's objectives. Purposive sampling is selective, critical, or subjective (Crossman, 2020). The participants in this study were those from the Boomer generation of teachers because they had a rich knowledge of shared experiences in instruction and learning developments. They were ready to tackle the challenges of experimenting with various instructional tools, including new technology.

2.4 Research Instrument

This study used a semi-structured interview guide questionnaire as the key source of information. Open-ended, flexible, semi-structured interviews were frequently used. Set questions were asked in a predetermined order, making comparisons between responders simple but potentially constrained (George, 2022). The semi-structured interview questions were employed to ascertain teachers' experiences with technostress, ways to deal with it, and insights to address it when information and communication technology integration was done in the classroom. Furthermore, three (3) professional experts on the ground validated the semi-structured interview guide questionnaire.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher went through the steps of acquiring data to provide a rich data supply. Recommendations from principals who served as boomer teacher participants in the study were sought. The principal gave the name of the available teacher for an interview schedule. After being fully informed, teachers who participated in the study gave their consent and approval. The researcher ensured that the participants fully grasped the goal and procedure of the research. After the participants' consent, eight individuals were interviewed by the researcher. Each participant was given a brief explanation of the purpose of the data collection. Pseudonyms were used to keep the true character of every participant. The researcher developed a strong relationship with the participants to inspire their confidence and trust. The participant was given a thorough explanation of the study's importance and purpose. Furthermore, the researcher utilized a smartphone to capture speech during data collection. This was done to ensure that every event throughout the data collection process was documented. After obtaining approval and cooperation from the participants, voice recordings of the interview were made. The researcher transcribed, then translated verbatim into English and evaluated the data following the interview. All voice recordings were kept confidential even up until the study was done.

The researcher used the Miles and Huberman framework for qualitative data analysis from the study's interviews. The framework had three major components: data reduction, data presentation, and proving and validating findings (Punch, 2005). The researcher uploaded all of the audio recordings to a computer before doing a qualitative data analysis and generated the transcripts. All interview transcripts were translated into English and stored in their original languages. All remarks and words were documented to guarantee that any data recorded for analysis remained original and legitimate. Then, data analysis followed. During the reduction stage, the researcher reduced and arranged the qualitative data received from the interview. Secondly, matrix presentations of the data were shown to conclude the data. Finally, in the conclusion-drawing and verification stage, the researcher analyzed the data to develop conclusions about the study. These preliminary conclusions were validated, and their veracity was assessed using existing transcripts and records.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research strictly adhered to ethical guidelines to ensure all participants' rights, safety, and well-being. The following ethical principles were observed:

Informed Consent – Written consent was secured from school administrators, teachers, and parents (for minor participants) prior to participation. Participants were fully informed about the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any stage.

Confidentiality and Anonymity – To protect participants' identities, pseudonyms or numerical identifiers were used. Any sensitive data was stored securely, with access limited to the researcher.

Voluntary Participation – Participants were not coerced or pressured into joining the study. They had the freedom to decline or withdraw without facing any repercussions.

Minimization of Risk – The study ensured that no participant experienced physical, psychological, or social harm. The interview questions were carefully designed to avoid discomfort and distress.

Approval from Authorities – The DepEd Digos City Division and relevant school heads provided necessary approvals, ensuring compliance with institutional research protocols.

Integrity and Accuracy – The researcher ensured that data were accurately recorded, analyzed, and reported to uphold academic integrity. No manipulation of results was performed, and findings were presented objectively.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Integrating information and communication technology (ICT) in education presents opportunities and challenges for boomer teachers, who often struggle with adapting to rapidly evolving digital tools. Their experiences are categorized into two significant aspects: Challenging Experiences and Positive Experiences. The difficulties include (1) technological incompetency, (2) adaptability issues, (3) inequality in access to ICT resources, and (4) challenges in performing educational tasks. These are juxtaposed with the benefits of ICT integration, which include (1) convenient and easy access to information and (2) improved engagement in classroom instruction. These findings align with the overarching theme of Navigating the Challenges and Benefits of Digital Inclusion for Boomer Teachers.

3.1 Challenging Experiences

This theme encapsulates boomer teachers' obstacles when integrating ICT into their teaching practices. Due to generational differences and limited exposure to digital tools, many boomer teachers experience difficulties that hinder the seamless use of technology in the classroom. The key subthemes under this category include technological incompetency, adaptability issues, inequality in access to ICT resources, and challenges in performing educational tasks.

Technological Incompetency

One of the most pressing challenges experienced by boomer teachers is their struggle with operating ICT tools due to limited exposure and insufficient training. A participant shared,

“During our time, we did not have this technology, so it is challenging for our age group” (VioletDahlia2p4L92-101).

This sentiment underscores the generational gap in digital literacy, where older educators face difficulty keeping pace with technological advancements. Dragano and Lunao (2020) confirmed that adopting new technologies can increase stress levels, particularly in education, where digital tools are now integral to instruction. The lack of structured training programs further compounds this issue, leaving many boomer teachers reliant on self-directed learning or informal peer support. Consequently, professional development programs tailored to the needs of older educators are essential to bridge this digital divide.

Adaptability Issues

Technological proficiency is a crucial factor in effective ICT integration. Many boomer teachers reported feelings of frustration and inadequacy when using digital tools. One participant noted:

“I try my best, but there is a gap in what I want to learn... it is very easy to forget” (DaisyBloom4p12L347-355)

This difficulty in retaining ICT knowledge highlights the cognitive load associated with acquiring new technological skills at a later stage in one's career. Joo et al. (2017) and Maier et al. (2015) support this finding, emphasizing that low technological confidence negatively affects the willingness of educators to integrate ICT in their teaching practices. The inability to troubleshoot technical issues independently further discourages using

digital tools. To address this, educational institutions should provide continuous training and technical support, ensuring that boomer teachers gain the confidence and competence required for seamless ICT integration.

Inequality in Access to ICT Resources

A significant barrier to ICT integration is the unequal distribution of digital resources. Some boomer teachers reported having limited access to gadgets such as laptops, projectors, and interactive whiteboards, making incorporating technology into their lessons challenging. One participant shared:

“It is stressful when the system fails to function, like a laptop, projector, or corrupted files” (IrisBlossom6p21L648)

Murithi and Yoo (2021) highlight that disparities in ICT resources hinder teachers' ability to implement new technology effectively. Schools with insufficient ICT infrastructure exacerbate this issue, making it challenging for boomer teachers to develop digital competencies. To mitigate this challenge, institutions must prioritize equitable access to ICT tools and ensure reliable internet connectivity, fostering an environment conducive to digital learning.

Challenges in Performing Educational Tasks

Boomer teachers frequently encounter obstacles in completing educational tasks due to limited ICT skills. One teacher expressed:

“I fought despite my age... I often fumbled, especially when holding the mouse” (VioletDahlia2p3L77-81).

Such struggles indicate that even essential digital functions can be challenging for teachers unfamiliar with modern technology. Gamboa (2022) similarly identified common ICT-related barriers, including unstable internet connections, power outages, and the complexity of digital platforms. These findings are consistent with the person-environment fit theory, which suggests that stress and resistance to change increase when individuals perceive a mismatch between their capabilities and environmental demands. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive training programs, user-friendly technology, and a supportive learning environment to enhance teachers' digital fluency.

3.2 Positive Experiences

Despite the challenges, many boomer teachers recognize the benefits of ICT in improving their teaching efficiency and student engagement. This theme highlights the advantages of convenient and easy access to information and improved engagement in classroom instruction.

Convenient and Easy Access to Information

ICT tools facilitate quick and easy access to educational resources, enabling teachers to enhance their instructional materials. One participant stated,

“Using technology made my teaching method more successful and enjoyable” (LiliyMagnolia7p24L749-751)

The ability to search for information, create multimedia presentations, and utilize online resources has significantly improved the efficiency of lesson planning.

Das (2019) confirmed that ICT fosters collaboration, creativity, and more profound learning experiences by providing educators with various digital tools. The availability of e-learning platforms and open educational resources further supports teachers in designing more interactive and engaging lessons. This access to technology empowers boomer teachers to develop innovative instructional strategies that cater to diverse learning needs.

Improved Engagement in Classroom Instruction

By leveraging technology, boomer teachers enhanced their teaching methods and made lessons more interactive and engaging. One way in which ICT improves classroom instruction is through improved organization and lesson sequencing. With the help of technology, boomer teachers structured their lessons and activities in a well-

organized manner, ensuring that all competencies were covered. This statement was confirmed by the participant stating:

"It helped to improve my teaching because the lesson is well-arranged when I use ICT, and I will not forget the other competencies that should be accomplished that day. It is already guided, sequenced, and presented, and all the activities are there." (JasmineLily3p7L196-203)

The results revealed that boomer teachers effectively improved teaching methods and increased the interactivity and engagement of the lessons by harnessing technology. Boomer teachers utilized technology to structure the lessons and activities meticulously, ensuring thorough coverage of competencies. This approach proved especially beneficial for students who faced challenges with traditional learning methods while also contributing to a seamless teaching and learning process for boomer teachers.

This finding aligns with the study of Wang et al. (2023), which highlighted that the use of classroom discussion, sharing, and video-making techniques improved student learning interactions. Subsequently, it was important for teachers to use effective classroom management techniques to ensure that the learning environment was conducive to student success, such as clear communication, setting expectations, and creating a positive classroom culture to ensure students were motivated and engaged.

3.3 Nurturing Collaborative Resilience in Empowering Educators for ICT-Enhanced Pedagogies

Through the increasing utilization of technology in the schoolroom, many boomer teachers experienced technostress—stress or anxiety related to using technology. However, these boomer teachers also developed coping mechanisms to deal with this phenomenon. According to Petrakova et al. (2021), the most common behavioral technique teachers used under pressure was to seek out social support. Some of the coping mechanisms adopted by boomer teachers to deal with technostress allowed them to use technology effectively and enhance the learning experience for their students despite the challenges. In this study, there are three coping mechanisms of boomer teachers for technostress: (1) conduct collaborative learning; (2) acquire ICT training; and (3) practice resiliency to adopt new pedagogies, which leads to come up with the general theme of Nurturing Collaborative Resilience in Empowering Educators for ICT-Enhanced Pedagogies.

The overarching theme of Nurturing Collaborative Resilience in Empowering Educators for ICT-Enhanced Pedagogies encompasses teachers' strategies to adapt to digital advancements, including collaborative learning, acquiring ICT training, and practicing resiliency to adopt new pedagogies.

Conduct Collaborative Learning

To effectively utilize ICTs in their teaching, boomer teachers sought help from colleagues, co-teachers, children, and family members who knew technology. Collaborating helped boomer teachers stay motivated and engaged in their teaching practice. These approaches were narrated with the lines of the participant stated, "In my case, I used to request or ask assistance from my young collaborator-teacher to share it with me through a flash drive, downloading it so that I could use it in my class." (RoseLily8p27L861-863)

The results showed how boomer teachers effectively utilized ICTs by seeking help from various sources. Seeking help from colleagues, co-teachers, children, and family members who know technology, boomer teachers received valuable insights, advice, and hands-on assistance, which helped incorporate technology into the lessons. Collaborating with others was crucial in keeping boomer teachers motivated and engaged in teaching practice. By working together and sharing knowledge, boomer teachers benefited from feedback and suggestions from peers, allowing individuals to learn and improve skills.

Moreover, collaborative teaching strategies, such as co-teaching and team teaching, proved effective methods for boomer teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge. These strategies fostered a supportive learning environment where teachers could collaborate to incorporate ICT into their teaching. According to Ansari and Khan (2020), using social networking sites for collective education impacts peer and teacher collaboration and online knowledge-sharing behavior. Therefore, collaborative learning was an important teaching strategy that benefited students and teachers. To effectively integrate ICTs into their teaching, teachers need to be willing to

seek help from others, value collaborative teaching strategies, and continuously improve their skills through training and education. By working together, teachers provide students with a quality education that prepares them for the digital age and most alleviates the stress of manipulating gadgets.

Thus, seeking help from others, embracing collaborative teaching strategies, and participating in ICT training programs played vital roles in empowering boomer teachers to utilize ICTs effectively in their teaching practice. These approaches fostered a supportive learning community and enabled boomer teachers to successfully enhance their skills and incorporate technology into the lessons.

Acquire ICT Training

Many boomer teachers were not adept at utilizing technology in the classrooms because of limited knowledge and were not born with it. Boomer teachers should have adequate training in technology-related topics, especially information technology, to reap the advantages of ICT integration in education. Recognizing the value of ICT integration in the classroom for student engagement and learning was very important. Technology has helped the learning instruction be more interactive, engaging, and practical, increasing student participation and retention. As revealed by one of the participants stating that:

"Teachers need to be trained and be able to use ICT integration in the classroom. If teachers can do so, it may potentially improve students' performance." (JasmineLily3p10L281-286 75)

Boomer teachers must provide comprehensive and ongoing training in technology-related topics to understand the value of ICT integration in the classroom. This training included technical skills and pedagogical strategies for integrating technology effectively into the program. Thus, providing teachers with adequate ICT training is essential for efficiently using technology in instructional settings. By recognizing the significance of ICT integration and providing teachers with the necessary training, the skills developed and the level of education also increased. This was also supported by Lee et al. (2014), who claimed that teachers' ICT abilities increased after obtaining in-service training. The results showed that boomer teachers advocated for comprehensive and ongoing training in technology-related topics to grasp the value of ICT integration. This includes technical skills and pedagogical strategies to effectively incorporate technology into the curriculum.

Therefore, providing boomer teachers with adequate ICT training was essential for effectively implementing technology in the instructional setting. It enhanced student engagement and learning while facilitating information management and accessibility. By recognizing the importance of ICT integration and offering necessary training, boomer teachers' skills were developed, improving education quality.

Practice Resiliency to Adopt New Pedagogies

In modern education, technology integration in the classroom has become increasingly significant. However, not all teachers, especially boomer teachers, were at ease with introducing new pedagogies and technologies into their work. It was critical for boomer teachers, who may have been less digitally aware, to appreciate the obstacles of using technology in class preparation while simultaneously acknowledging its viability. A participant in this study attested with her statement:

"I learned not to give up on myself. We should be adaptable and be able to adjust ourselves to new technology." (IrisBlossom6p22L687-691)

Boomer teachers had to cultivate resilience and accept new pedagogies that included technology in the classroom. Learning something new, seeking help from others, and realizing the limitations of integrating technology while recognizing its viability were all needed to utilize technology effectively in the instructional setting. By doing so, boomer teachers could have presented young ones with a dynamic and engaging learning environment that would have equipped them for success in the digital era.

Therefore, technology has transformed how people live and learn, and it has become an indispensable tool in education. ICT integration has created new chances for boomer instructors and students to work together and learn from one another, regardless of age. Personal perspective, social support, and mentorship connections have

all been demonstrated to have a significant role in helping people cope and adapt to the environment (Park et al., 2017; Pilvera & Trinidad, 2024). By nurturing collaborative resilience and empowering teachers in ICT-enhanced pedagogies, we can provide a more inclusive and dynamic teaching scheme that equips students for the challenges of the 21st century.

3.4 Importance of Lifelong Learning

Technostress was a phenomenon that affected individuals like boomer teachers who experienced stress or anxiety when using technology. In the context of integrating ICT in the classroom, particularly those from the baby boomer generation, technostress is experienced due to the increasing utilization of technology in the instructional setting. These teachers had limited involvement with technological advances and, as a result, felt overwhelmed or anxious when using new digital tools. This study explored some insights from boomer teachers about technostress and how they coped with this phenomenon. We revealed: (1) the importance of teacher training and upgrading skills in ICT integration; and (2) establishing efficient methods for integrating ICTs into classroom instruction. This leads to the general theme - Importance of Lifelong Learning. Lifelong learning is the continuous process of acquiring and applying knowledge and skills throughout an individual's career to remain relevant and practical. For boomer teachers, lifelong learning is essential in adapting to the evolving educational landscape, particularly in ICT integration. These teachers can overcome technostress and enhance their instructional strategies by embracing ongoing professional development and institutional support.

Teacher Training and Skill Upgrading Skills in ICT Integration

Boomer teachers often struggle with ICT integration due to limited exposure, highlighting the need for continuous professional development and institutional support. A participant emphasized:

"Continuous education on ICT utilization in educational development should be conducted in a school setting, fostering teachers' open-mindedness and willingness to train." (RoseIvy8p29L905-908)

Participants stressed that ICT training should encompass technical skills and pedagogical approaches to enhance instruction. By blending traditional teaching methods with modern technology, boomer teachers can create a more dynamic learning environment. Granados (2015) asserted that ICT adoption requires removing outdated tools like chalkboards and pens, demanding retraining to align with contemporary teaching needs.

Thus, training and upskilling in ICT are essential for boomer teachers to stay relevant. With the proper support, they can effectively integrate technology, improving student learning while preserving the value of traditional pedagogy.

Efficient ICT Integration in classroom instruction

Effective ICT integration requires collaboration between teachers and school administration, ensuring access to professional development and institutional support. A participant shared:

"The school should assist teachers struggling with ICT integration. Initially, they may feel exhausted, but they see the benefits once prepared, as ICT reduces workload and enhances teaching outcomes." (JasmineLily3p11L310-320)

Boomer teachers emphasized that ICT success depends on infrastructure availability and teachers' willingness to adapt. Structured training programs and adequate resources should be provided to facilitate this transition. According to Onyema (2020), teachers at all educational levels must continuously update their skills to integrate emerging technologies effectively. Despite challenges, ICT adoption brings benefits such as increased teaching efficiency, improved access to information, and enhanced student engagement. Schools must prioritize ICT integration and provide ongoing skill development, particularly for boomer teachers, to ensure high-quality education.

4.0 Conclusion

Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the classroom has presented challenges and opportunities for Boomer teachers. The study highlighted that while digital tools offer enhanced accessibility to information and improved classroom engagement, they also pose significant difficulties, such as technological

incompetency, adaptability issues, inequality in access to ICT resources, and challenges in performing educational tasks. These struggles often result in technostress, leading to anxiety, frustration, and resistance toward digital adaptation. Despite these challenges, boomer teachers demonstrated resilience and a willingness to adapt by employing various coping mechanisms, including collaborative learning, ICT training, and fostering resilience in adopting new pedagogies.

The findings emphasize the necessity for structured professional development programs tailored to the needs of older educators. Continuous ICT training, institutional support, and accessible digital resources are critical in empowering boomer teachers to integrate technology effectively. Furthermore, collaborative efforts among educators, administrators, and policymakers should focus on creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment that acknowledges generational differences in technological literacy.

Ultimately, the study affirms that while technostress remains a prevalent issue among boomer teachers, strategic interventions—such as mentorship programs, peer collaboration, and ongoing training—can mitigate these challenges. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and digital resilience, educational institutions can ensure that all educators, regardless of age, are equipped to navigate the evolving technological landscape in education. This study contributes to the broader discourse on digital inclusion in teaching, emphasizing the importance of adaptive strategies to bridge the digital divide and enhance the quality of education for teachers and students.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Irish A. Lozada - manuscript writing, data gathering, data analysis, encoding
Queenie Lyn G. Almeraz - advising, reviewing, editing
Amelie E. Trinidad - supervising, reviewing and revising manuscript

6.0 Funding

The authors declare that no funding was received for the conduct of this study.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of this research, especially those who provided valuable insights, assistance with data collection, and support throughout the research process. Lastly, the authors express their deep appreciation to their families and friends for their constant encouragement and unwavering support throughout the project.

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Technology Transfer Management Practices among Selected State Universities and Colleges in Davao Region, Philippines

Venson B. Sarita^{*1}, Shiella Mae B. Inutan²

¹Innovation Office, Davao Oriental State University, City of Mati, Philippines

¹Faculty of Computing, Engineering, and Technology, Davao Oriental State University, City of Mati, Philippines

²Faculty Agriculture and Life Sciences, Davao Oriental State University, City of Mati, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: venson.sarita@dorsu.edu.ph

Date received: February 7, 2025

Date revised: January 21, 2025

Date accepted: March 10, 2025

Originality: 97%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 3%

Recommended citation:

Sarita, V., Inutan, S.M. (2025). Technology transfer management practices among selected state universities and colleges in Davao Region, Philippines. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 114–130.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.070>

Abstract. This study examines the technology transfer management practices of selected State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Davao Region, focusing on intellectual property (IP) registration, commercialization, and barriers. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from Knowledge and Technology Transfer Division staff and IPTBM Office heads. Quantitative results revealed that SUC 1 recorded 15 patents, 34 copyrights, and 10 utility models, while SUC 2 registered 5 patents, 43 copyrights, and 12 utility models. Despite these achievements, commercialization remained minimal, with SUC 1 leading in patents and SUC 2 excelling in utility models and products. The analysis using the 7Ps framework showed strong performance in patents (mean = 4.88) and promotion (mean = 5.00), but policy gaps (mean = 2.75) hindered SUC 2. Identified barriers included misalignment between research and commercialization (mean = 4.5) and high project costs (mean = 4.0). These findings highlight the need for stronger university-industry linkages, enhanced IP awareness, and policy reforms to improve technology transfer outcomes. By addressing these challenges, this study provides actionable insights that can drive more effective technology transfer strategies, fostering innovation-driven economic growth in the region.

Keywords: Davao Region; Innovation; Intellectual Property; SUC; Technology transfer.

1.0 Introduction

The role of universities has evolved through successive academic revolutions encompassing teaching, research, and innovation. With the enactment of the Bayh-Dole Act in 1980, universities intensified their focus on technology transfer, facilitating the translation of research outputs into commercial applications (Munoz, 2023). Technology transfer refers to transferring knowledge, skills, or technologies from one organization to another, often involving intellectual property (IP) rights (Sundaram & Rajavenkatesan, 2020). Despite global advancements, universities and research organizations face barriers hindering efficient technology transfer, including limited industry collaboration, resource constraints, and regulatory challenges (Quiñones et al., 2019). These barriers have prompted initiatives to strengthen technology transfer offices (TTOs) and implement supportive policies. However, gaps persist, particularly in aligning academic research with industry needs and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles (Micozzi et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, enacting the Technology Transfer Act of 2009 signaled the government's commitment to facilitating technology transfer activities. However, challenges remain, including limited commercialization of university research and inadequate industry partnerships (Colcelli, 2019). While several initiatives have been launched to enhance IP registration and commercialization, the regional context—such as Davao—remains underexplored. Understanding the specific practices and barriers SUCs face in this region is crucial to designing effective interventions. This study addresses the gap by examining technology transfer management practices and barriers among selected SUCs in the Davao Region. By focusing on the 7Ps framework (Policy, Partnership, Patent, Product, People, Process, and Promotion), the study aims to provide a localized perspective on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities in managing technology transfer. The findings enhance the efficiency and impact of technology transfer initiatives, aligning with the broader goals of regional and national innovation systems.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research employed a multiple case study design, which involves the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative research within a single study. This approach encompasses the collection and analysis of data to explore and comprehend a research problem comprehensively.

2.2 Study Locale

The Davao Region, designated as Region XI, is in the southeastern portion of Mindanao. It consists of five provinces—Davao de Oro, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Davao del Sur, and Davao Occidental—and one highly urbanized city, Davao City. This study focuses on two State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) within this region: one located in Davao City and the other in Davao Oriental. SUCs in the Davao Region play a crucial role in higher education accessibility, regional development, and human capital formation. These institutions are crucial in facilitating technology transfer operations by providing a conducive environment for innovation and collaboration between academia and industry. Through their technology transfer offices and initiatives, SUCs bridge the gap between research and practical application, fostering the development and commercialization of intellectual property.

The selection of these two SUCs was based on the following criteria: a) Technology Transfer Engagement – SUCs that have established Intellectual Property (IP) and technology transfer initiatives, b) IP Portfolio – SUCs with active or recorded patents, utility models, copyrights, and commercialization efforts, c) Geographic Representation – Selection of one SUC from an urban area (Davao City) and another from a provincial area (Davao Oriental) to examine potential disparities in technology transfer practices, d) Institutional Capability – SUCs with functional Knowledge and Technology Transfer Offices (KITTOs) and participation in government-funded research programs.

SUCs in the Davao Region play a crucial role in higher education accessibility, regional development, and human capital formation. These institutions facilitate technology transfer operations by providing a conducive environment for innovation and collaboration between academia and industry. Through their technology transfer offices and initiatives, SUCs bridge the gap between research and practical application, fostering the development and commercialization of intellectual property.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The study employed a purposive sampling design, and the researchers intentionally selected participants with specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The study's respondents were the Knowledge and Technology Transfer Division (KTTD) staff and the Intellectual Property Technology Business Management Office (IPTBMO) Head of State Universities and Colleges in the Davao Region. The respondents in this study were referred to as SUC 1 and SUC 2. The researcher chose the respondents based on the following criteria: a) name of office designated, b) job designation, and c) no. of years in service. The above-mentioned criteria helped the researcher gain deep insight and achieve accurate information about this research's stated problem. The structured survey questionnaire and interview were used to determine the technology transfer management practices and barriers of selected SUCs in the Davao Region.

2.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was an adapted and modified questionnaire. Data were gathered through a survey and structured interviews. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first page presented the letter to the respondents, the purpose of the study, the confidentiality clause, and informed consent. In the first part of the survey, the questionnaire contained questions about the numbers of registered intellectual property, people and services, and commercialized intellectual property; the second part introduced the management practices of technology transfer of selected SUCs in the Davao Region. The third part of the questionnaire produces questions regarding the barriers to technology transfer. A structured interview utilized questions regarding the challenges of SUCs to implementing technology transfer. To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot test was conducted with a small sample of respondents before the main study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure internal consistency and determine whether the questionnaire items produced stable and consistent results. To ensure validity, content validity was established through expert evaluation. University technology transfer specialists and intellectual property experts reviewed the questionnaire to assess its relevance and clarity. Additionally, triangulation was used by comparing survey results with interview findings to validate consistency in responses.

2.5 Data Collection Procedure

During the quantitative strand of this study, a survey questionnaire was administered personally to the respondents in their respective locations in the Davao Region. Informed consent was sought before administering the survey questionnaire. If respondents raised questions or clarifications about this study, these were answered before the survey proper. The quantitative data were collected personally from the respondents. For the qualitative strand, structured interviews were conducted as the primary data collection method. The interviews were held at locations preferred by the participants to ensure their convenience and focus. Prior to the interviews, the study's purpose was clearly communicated. While a predefined interview guide was followed, the interviewer also allowed for open-ended questions and discussions. With participants' consent, interviews were recorded to ensure accurate documentation. Interview durations were kept within an hour or less based on the participants' comfort. Subsequently, qualitative data from the interviews was transcribed and interpreted. Both qualitative and quantitative data were then utilized to analyze results, draw conclusions, and make recommendations in the study.

2.6 Data Analysis

The quantitative data in this study was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including standard deviation and mean, as part of the descriptive design. After conducting interviews, the verbatim data was collected, validated, and used to extract phenomenal themes. Participant responses were transcribed and analyzed after all recorded discussions from the in-depth interviews were collected. Detailed descriptions were obtained from participants, and phenomenal reductions were maintained throughout the analysis with an articulated structure. Non-English interview data were translated into English. The following steps were taken for quantitative data analysis: listing relevant expressions, coding the data, conducting thematic analysis, building a sequence of events, searching for data to answer specific questions, and synthesizing the texture and structure into an expression.

2.7 Ethical Consideration

To maintain ethical standards, the research study was completely independent of any governmental, non-governmental, or private institutions. Invitations were sent to the participants for the survey and interview. The Innovation & Technology Support Office Manager, Technology Transfer Officer, and Intellectual Property Technology Business Management Office Heads of State Universities and Colleges were briefed on the study's procedures as research participants. All participants provided their consent and were not coerced in any way. Discrimination was strictly prohibited throughout the study. Participants were treated with respect as they were the sole source of pertinent data for the study. In addition, participants were asked for permission to video or audio record, and their identities were concealed to maintain confidentiality. Pseudonyms or other identifiers were used in place of their real names. If participants expressed discomfort with the lengthy interview process, their concerns were addressed based on their needs.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Registered Intellectual Property, People, Services, and Commercialized Intellectual Property *Granted Intellectual Property*

Figure 1 shows the number of Granted IP Rights between SUC 1 and SUC 2 from 2021 to 2023. There is a significant disparity in the number of registered patents, with SUC 1 having the highest count (15) and SUC 2 the lowest (5). Both SUCs registered a similar number of UMs. SUC 2 holds the highest count of registered copyrights (43), while SUC 1 holds the lowest (34). Both SUCs have an equal number of registered trademarks (2). Notably, no industrial designs were registered from 2021 to 2023.

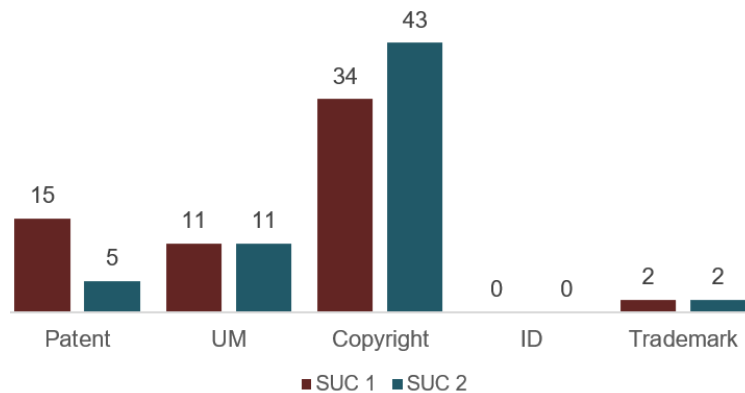


Figure 1. Number of Granted IPs from 2021 to 2023

The intellectual property (IP) analysis granted to SUC 1 and SUC 2 revealed interesting insights about their innovation and IP strategies. SUC 1 leads with the highest number of patents registered, demonstrating a proactive approach to patent awareness. In contrast, SUC 2 has the least patents registered, indicating potential areas for improvement in their innovation and IP strategies. Cheng (2019) suggests that preferential policies regarding university patent applications may contribute to the observed lower patent registration rates in SUCs. This indicates a need for SUC 2 to enhance its focus on patent development and protection. Jain et al. (2023) reports that institutional support, funding availability, and industry partnerships significantly influence patenting activities in academic institutions. Both SUCs obtained similar registered utility models, indicating comparable capabilities in developing and implementing utility models, potentially signaling similar levels of technological advancement and expertise.

SUC 2 obtained the highest number of registered copyrights, suggesting a strong emphasis on creativity and intellectual property protection, potentially indicating a culture of artistic expression within the institution. However, SUC 1's lowest count of registered copyrights suggests an opportunity for the institution to strengthen its focus on fostering creativity and protecting original works. The fact that both SUCs obtained similar registered trademarks indicates parity in their branding and intellectual property strategies.

The data suggests that State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) should focus on acknowledging their successes and identifying areas for growth. This commitment highlights the importance of SUCs obtaining legal protection for their Intellectual Properties, as demonstrated by the data provided. According to Ikomi (2022), adequate protection of intellectual property (IP) developed within universities is essential for turning ideas into valuable assets and preventing potential infringements. Through effective use of the IP system, technology universities can gain financial benefits from their research, creativity, and innovation. This, in turn, provides support for further innovation funding and serves as motivation for other researchers.

Figure 2 displays the overall percentage of intellectual property (IP) granted for SUC 1. Copyrights have the highest rate at 54.84%, suggesting that SUC 1 finds copyright protection more accessible and well-suited to their outputs than other forms of IP. This aligns with the observation by Rooksby (2019) that universities tend to favor

copyrights over patents, indicating a preference for the more straightforward and more suitable nature of copyright protection for their intellectual output. Copyrights are automatically granted upon creating original work, making the process more concise and accessible compared to the rigorous application and examination process for patents.

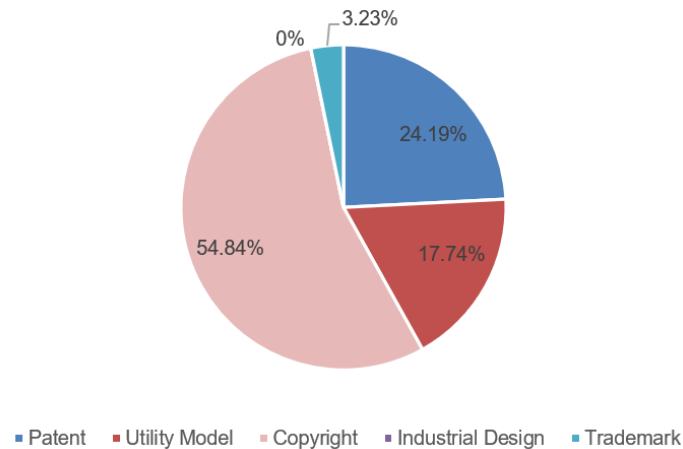


Figure 2. SUC 1 Total Percentage of Granted IPs

On the other hand, SUC 1 has a 0% registration for industrial design, suggesting a lack of emphasis on product design in their academic and research programs or the complexities and resource requirements associated with registering industrial designs. As stated by Novoa (2018), there is a need to modernize design education to meet current industry standards, indicating potential skill and knowledge gaps among designers. Applying invention standards in engineering design requires a high level of technical expertise, which may pose challenges for some university designers (Yan, 2022).

Figure 3 indicates that SUC 2 has a copyright registration rate of 70.49%, showing a strong emphasis on creating copyrightable materials such as research papers, educational content, and software. This aligns with the trend in universities favoring copyrights over patents due to their ease of access and suitability for their intellectual output. On the other hand, SUC 1 has a 0% rate of registered industrial designs, suggesting a lack of focus on product design in their academic and research programs. This could be attributed to resource demands and the complexity of registering industrial designs. Additionally, there may be a gap in design education and technical expertise required for invention standards in engineering design at SUC 1.

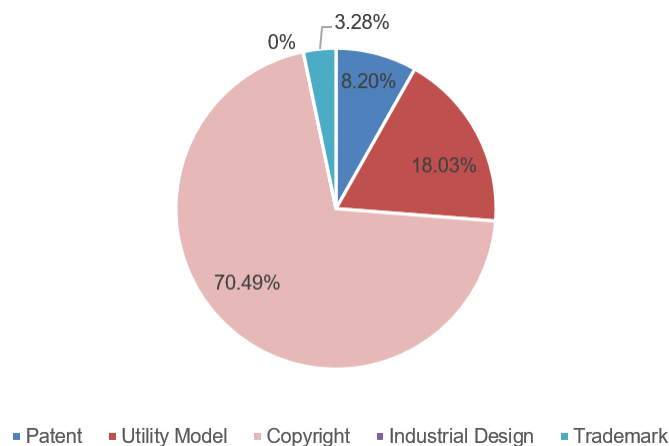


Figure 3. SUC 2 Total Percentage of Granted IPs

People and Services

Figure 4 details the analysis of people and services from 2021 to 2023 for SUC 1 and SUC 2. Notably, SUC 1 has more local industry partners (3) than SUC 2 (2). Regarding startups assisted, SUC 2 has supported two startups, while SUC 1 has not assisted any. Both SUCs have six personnel involved. Regarding innovation training sessions, SUC 2 conducted 15 sessions, while SUC 1 conducted 12 sessions.

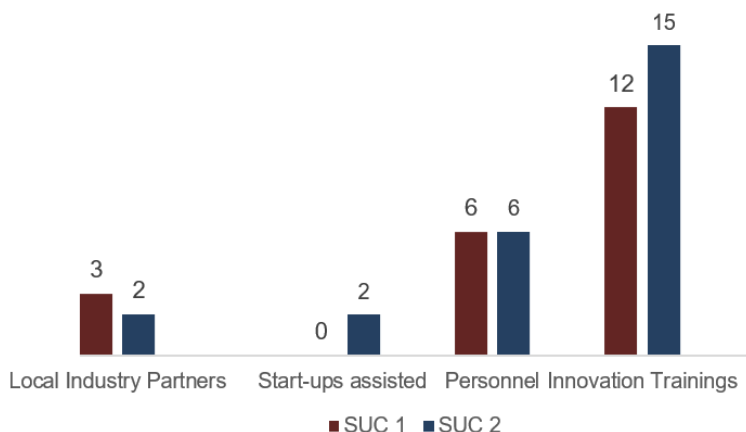


Figure 4. Number of People and Services

The data indicated that State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) are well-equipped to facilitate technology transfer operations. SUC 1 stands out with the most local industry partners, suggesting that it effectively leverages these relationships to enhance practical learning opportunities, research collaborations, and potential commercialization of innovations. As highlighted by Abbas (2019), cooperation between universities and industry supports the transfer of knowledge and technology through the sharing of intellectual property rights (IPRs), thereby driving innovation. On the other hand, SUC 2 has the lowest number of industry partners, indicating a potential area for growth and development in terms of industry collaboration and engagement. This observation suggests that SUC 2 may have untapped opportunities to establish partnerships with local businesses, potentially providing valuable resources, expertise, and opportunities for applied research and innovation.

Both SUCs have equal personnel involved in technology transfer, implying that both institutions prioritize allocating human resources to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology from academia to industry. Liu (2018) emphasizes the importance of considering employees' interests, regulatory frameworks, and prevailing mindsets to foster an effective technology transfer process. SUC 2's high number of conducted training programs suggests that it is actively educating its stakeholders about the importance of IP protection, technology transfer, and innovation management. By offering many training programs, SUC 2 demonstrates its commitment to empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of IP and innovation processes effectively.

Universities are crucial in technology transfer processes as they are key knowledge integrators (Shmeleva et al., 2021). SUC 1, with the fewest training programs, suggests that it focuses more on other forms of knowledge dissemination or has adopted a more specialized approach, offering fewer but more targeted training sessions. Considering the capacity of an SUC to allocate human resources and conduct training, it is noteworthy that SUC 2 has the highest number of start-ups assisted, demonstrating its capability to support startups effectively by leveraging their expertise and resources through training programs, according to Kim et al. (2020), startups are bridging the gap between universities and industries by improving collaboration. Moreover, SUCs can provide valuable guidance and mentorship to aspiring entrepreneurs, helping them navigate the complexities of starting a business. Finally, universities worldwide recognize the significance of providing entrepreneurship training to students, as mentioned by Shenkoya et al. (2023), to bolster their ability to create their startup ventures.

Universities play a vital role in actively facilitating technology transfer by allocating human resources to perform duties and responsibilities that enhance efforts to foster innovation. University-industry linkages have a positive impact on reaching the university's commercialization level. Technology transfer from universities to industries is a competitive strategy because academic research can aid business growth by providing new scientific discoveries and advanced technologies that accelerate innovation (Rosa et al., 2021).

Figure 5 presents the distribution of people and services focusing on innovation training. The figure indicates that innovation training has the highest percentage at 57.14%, reflecting a strong emphasis on enhancing innovative skills and knowledge. This suggests a concerted effort to promote creativity and provide participants with the necessary tools and methodologies to drive innovation. The capacity of universities to promote intellectual property (IP) awareness through training is evident in several studies. Trencheva (2017) emphasizes the role of universities in providing IP training, particularly within the library and information management sector. Ngwenya (2023) explores the dissemination of IP knowledge in universities, emphasizing policies, library web pages, workshops, presentations, and advisory services. Conversely, startup assistance received 0%, indicating potential gaps in entrepreneurial training, funding, mentorship, or essential infrastructure to support start-ups. Munari (2018) discusses the financial challenges faced by start-ups emerging from universities, while Závodská (2016) advocates for developing a comprehensive start-up education framework focusing on entrepreneurial competencies.

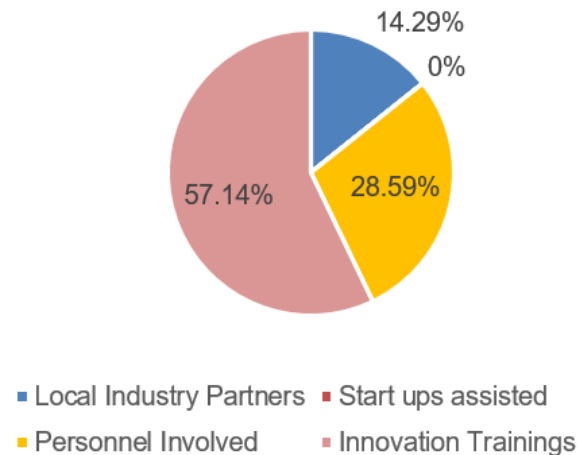


Figure 5. SUC 1 Total Percentage of People and Services

As shown in Figure 6, the innovation training program at SUC 2 has achieved a substantial 60% participation rate, highlighting a significant investment in promoting innovation within the institution. This proactive approach suggests a commitment to enhancing the innovative capabilities of both staff and students. According to Grigoreva (2020), such training is crucial in cultivating a culture of innovation among students and faculty, equipping them with the necessary skills and mindset to adapt to evolving challenges and contribute meaningfully to societal progress. Additionally, as Michaelis (2017) points out, innovation training has the potential to lead to more effective product offerings within the university. However, it's worth noting that local industry partners and personnel engaged in technology transfer only account for 8% each, the lowest percentages in the data. This suggests a potential gap or limited engagement between the institution and local industries regarding collaborative innovation and technology transfer activities.

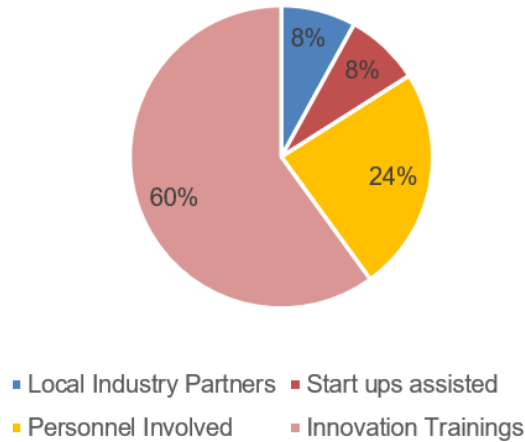


Figure 6. SUC 2 Total Percentage of Total People and Services

Shen (2016) underscores the challenges in connecting universities with industry, primarily due to industrial organizations' reluctance to collaborate with network participants. The equal percentages of 8% for local industry partners and personnel involved in technology transfer indicate a notable disconnect between the institution and regional industries, potentially impeding collaborative innovation and technology transfer efforts. These findings underscore the importance of fostering stronger partnerships between academia and industry to maximize the impact of university research and innovation. Addressing challenges such as industry reluctance and enhancing knowledge exchange for societal benefit can significantly contribute to overcoming these barriers.

Commercialize Intellectual Property

Figure 7 presented the commercialized IPs from 2021 to 2023 for SUC 1 and 2. There is a notable contrast in commercialized patents, with SUC 1 having three and SUC 2 having none. Regarding commercialized utility models (UMs), SUC 2 leads with 11, while SUC 1 has two. SUC 2 also leads in commercialized products with 11, in contrast to SUC 1. Regarding commercialized trademarks, SUC 2 has one, and SUC 1 has none. Both SUCs have not commercialized any copyrights or industrial designs. The data indicates a strong capacity for SUCs (State Universities and Colleges) to commercialize intellectual property, evidenced by the notable numbers. This aligns with the discussion by Breznitz and Feldman (2015) on the role of universities in fostering innovation and commercializing research outputs, particularly public universities.

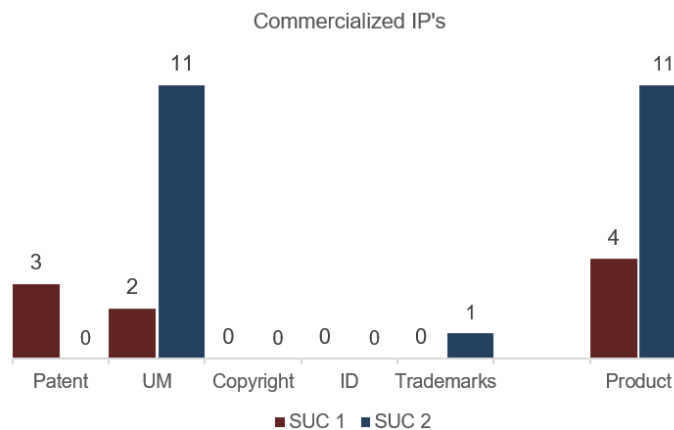


Figure 7. Number of Commercialized IPs

SUC 1's achievement in having the highest and only commercialized patents demonstrates success in translating intellectual property into tangible economic outcomes. This suggests effective navigation of technology commercialization through industry partnerships or licensing agreements. On the other hand, SUC 2's leadership

in commercialized utility models and products signifies significant success in leveraging intellectual property for commercial purposes. SUC 2's sole commercialization of trademarks also represents a unique accomplishment in establishing and monetizing its brand assets. Moreover, the highest number of commercialized products by SUC 2 highlights a strong capability to transform research outcomes into market-ready products. This underscores SUC 2's effective engagement with industry partners or entrepreneurial activities, resulting in successful product commercialization. Conversely, the lower number of commercialized products by SUC 1 suggests potential challenges or barriers in technology transfer and commercialization.

The commercialization of university inventions is a complex endeavor involving multiple stakeholders. Bansi (2016) emphasizes the importance of executive support, financial incentives, and streamlined decision-making within universities. Strong government backing, as Yang (2018) highlighted, is crucial for successfully commercializing science-driven innovations, particularly in the era of Industry 4.0, where innovation and interconnectedness are crucial (Chandra, 2019). These findings underscore the importance of fostering a supportive ecosystem for technology transfer and commercialization, enabling universities to maximize the impact of their research efforts and contribute significantly to economic development and industrial growth.

Figure 8 illustrates the percentage of commercialized intellectual properties (IPs). Commercialized products have the highest rate of 44.44%, indicating a substantial success in converting intellectual property into marketable products. This strongly connects the institution's research and development endeavors and commercialization strategies. Bansi (2016) emphasizes the significance of support from top executives, financial incentives, and efficient decision-making processes within universities for the success of the commercialization process. Conversely, the 0% commercialization for copyright, industrial design, and trademark indicates potential opportunities or challenges in translating these forms of IP into commercial products or services. Daniel (2020) highlights that inflexible university procedures and inadequate research, and development funding are significant obstacles in the commercialization process. Additionally, Ncube (2018) underscores the importance of addressing entrepreneurial challenges, such as concerns about copyright infringement and unfair contractual terms, to enable authors to derive economic benefits.

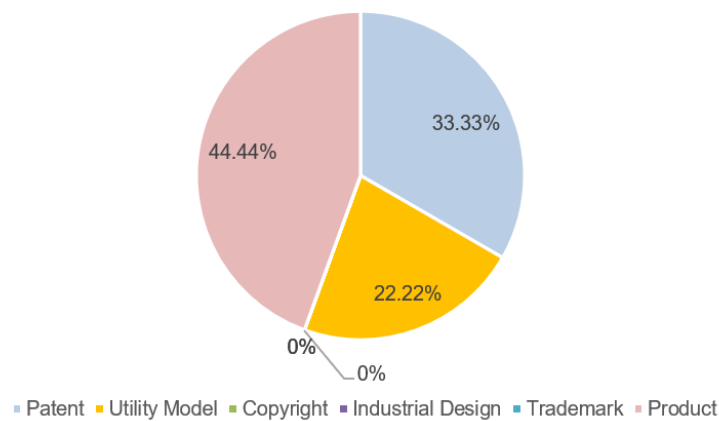


Figure 8. SUC 1 Total Percentage of Commercialized IPs

In the case of SUC 2 (Figure 9), the comparable percentages of 47.83% for both commercialized utility model and product indicate a balanced emphasis on both technological innovations and tangible product development. This balanced approach is in line with Loredó's (2019) findings, which underscore the importance of a balanced focus on technological innovations and tangible product development for utilities and manufacturing firms. Furthermore, non-formal search processes have been identified as central to product innovation in utilities, while sustainability orientation has been found to increase the likelihood of both product and process innovations.

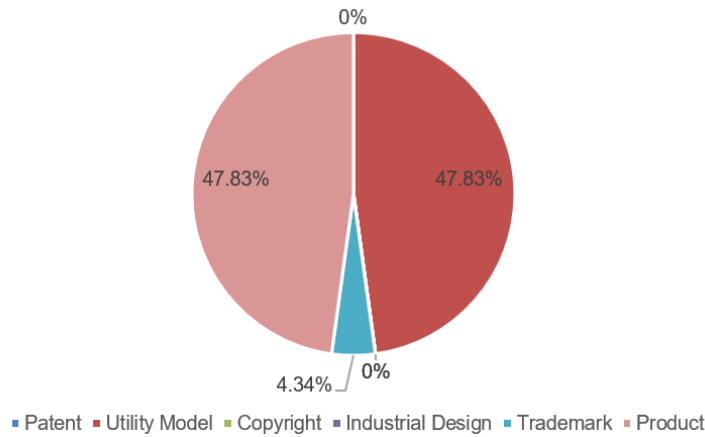


Figure 9. SUC 2 Total Percentage of Commercialized IPs

In contrast, commercialized copyright and industrial design scored 0%, reflecting a trend like that of SUC 1. This suggests potential challenges in converting these intellectual properties into marketable products or services. Daniel (2020) points out that rigid university procedures and inadequate funding for research and development are significant barriers to commercialization. Additionally, Ncube (2018) stresses the importance of addressing entrepreneurial obstacles, such as concerns about copyright violations and unfair contract terms, to enable creators to realize economic benefits.

3.2 Technology Transfer Management Practices

Table 1 details the technology transfer management practices of selected State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Davao Region, focusing on Policy, Partnership, Patent, Product, People, Process, and Promotion. It includes the overall mean, standard deviation, and descriptions used in the study. The 7P's framework was employed to assess various facets of technology transfer thoroughly. The study aims to pinpoint strengths and areas for development, thus ensuring a comprehensive approach to managing and improving technology transfer activities within these academic institutions.

Table 1. Technology Transfer Management Practices

Management Practices	SUC 1			SUC 2		
	Mean	Description	SD	Mean	Description	SD
Policy	4.38	Strongly Agree	1.92	2.75	Disagree	0.46
Partnership	4.13	Agree	0.83	4.13	Agree	0.64
Patent	4.88	Strongly Agree	0.74	4.38	Strongly Agree	0.35
Product	4.38	Strongly Agree	0.74	4.75	Strongly Agree	0.46
People	4.86	Strongly Agree	0.38	4.29	Strongly Agree	0.76
Process	4.75	Strongly Agree	0.46	4.63	Strongly Agree	0.52
Promotion	4.63	Strongly Agree	0	5	Strongly Agree	0.52

Policy

Upon reviewing the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that there are significant disparities in policy implementation between SUC 1 and SUC 2. SUC 1 attained a mean score of 4.38, signifying strong agreement among respondents regarding the consistent practice of the indicated policy within their institution. Conversely, SUC 2 received a considerably lower mean score of 2.75, indicating disagreement among respondents regarding this variable. The standard deviation for SUC 1 exceeds 1.0, suggesting high variability within the dataset, while SUC 2 exhibits a standard deviation below 1.0, implying greater consistency in respondent ratings.

These findings underscore differing perspectives on establishing and enforcing policy within the two surveyed State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). The comparatively high mean score for SUC 1 suggests strong agreement among respondents regarding the approved and well-practiced nature of the IP policy within the institution. Conversely, the low mean score for SUC 2 indicates that its IP policy may not yet be approved or is still in development. This aligns with Sattiraju's (2022) assertion that the lack of a supportive policy framework hinders

the potential of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to advance the national economy through innovative and commercially viable research and development efforts.

It is worth noting that research universities rely on their intellectual property (IP) policies to oversee IP disclosure and protection procedures and determine revenue distribution from commercialization (Bratton, 2015). Section 230 of Republic Act (RA) 10372, which amends RA 8293 (the Intellectual Property Code), mandates the establishment of IP policies. This provision requires schools and universities to implement IP policies to govern the utilization and creation of intellectual property and safeguard the intellectual creations of educational institutions and their personnel. Moreover, these policies should align with locally established industry standards for fair use. They may also be formulated in line with licensing agreements held by the educational institution with collective licensing organizations (IPOP HL, 2021).

Partnership

Similarly, Table 1 showed that the partnership indicator had a mean score of 4.13 for SUCs 1 and 2, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the active practice of this indicator and emphasizing the collaboration and cooperative efforts of SUCs within their respective industries. The low standard deviation for both SUCs suggested minimal variability in the data, reflecting consistent ratings from respondents. The findings indicated that both SUCs recognized and practiced this variable, aligning with Alexandre et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of university-industry connections in facilitating technology transfer. Effective university-industry linkages were crucial for knowledge and technology transfer, contributing to developing a Science and Technology Innovation System. These linkages aimed to drive collaborative research projects with the industry, leading to technology creation, adoption, and adaptation in local industries. Furthermore, university-industry collaborations fostered technological innovation by providing access to critical resources, expertise, and funding for research and technology development (Abebe Assefa, 2016).

Patent

Table 1 revealed notable differences regarding this indicator between SUC 1 and SUC 2. SUC 1 had a mean score of 4.88, signifying strong agreement among respondents regarding their active practice of this indicator. Conversely, SUC 2 had a mean score of 4.38, suggesting strong agreement that the patent indicator was actively practiced in their institution. These high mean scores indicated effective management and implementation of protection and patent-related processes in both SUCs. The standard deviation for this indicator was 0.74 for SUC 1 and 0.35 for SUC 2, both below 1.0, which signified low variability in the dataset and consistent ratings from respondents in both SUCs. This finding demonstrated the understanding of the importance of safeguarding intellectual property by both SUCs, not only for the inventors but also for those who utilize it. These results were consistent with Al Kassiri and Čorejová (2015) assertion, which suggested that patenting had broader benefits for individuals and the economy reliant on knowledge. Additionally, the results suggested that both institutions actively protected intellectual property, leading to a high number of patents granted and filed.

Product

Table 1 presents the product indicator for SUC 1 and SUC 2. SUC 1 had a mean score of 4.38, indicating that respondents strongly agreed that the product indicator was intensely practiced. In contrast, SUC 2 had a mean score of 4.75, suggesting that respondents also strongly agreed that product-related activities, such as product development, were intensely practiced in their SUC. The standard deviations were 0.74 for SUC 1 and 0.46 for SUC 2, below 1.0, indicating low variability and consistent respondent ratings. This finding demonstrated the understanding of the importance of safeguarding intellectual property by both SUCs, not only for the inventors but also for those who utilized it. These results were consistent with Al Kassiri and Čorejová (2015) assertion, which suggested that patenting had broader benefits for individuals and the economy reliant on knowledge. Additionally, the results suggested that both institutions actively protected intellectual property, leading to a high number of patents granted and filed.

People

The mean scores for the people indicator for SUC 1 and SUC 2 were presented in this section. SUC 1 had a mean score of 4.86, indicating substantial agreement among respondents that this indicator was actively practiced. On the other hand, SUC 2 had an overall mean of 4.29, suggesting strong agreement with this indicator. The standard

deviations were 0.38 for SUC 1 and 0.76 for SUC 2, reflecting low response variability, indicating consistently high ratings. These results confirmed that respondents recognized people's need, importance, and involvement in facilitating technology transfer very favorably within the SUCs. The findings affirmed that State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) intensely practiced the people indicator, as evidenced by the significant number of people involved in facilitating technology transfer and the presence of dedicated offices. The role of technology transfer professionals, including those working as TTOs in Research Support Offices, University-Business Engagement Offices, and Impact Offices (WIPO), was crucial in bringing knowledge and technologies to society. Their involvement significantly impacted the success of technology transfer. Furthermore, empirical evidence showed a strong relationship between the number of people employed in TTOs and technology transfer outcomes, such as new spin-off companies and licensed patents (Cartaxo & Godinho, 2017).

Process

The process indicators for SUC 1 and SUC 2 demonstrated strong agreement among respondents, with overall means of 4.75 and 4.63, indicating well-defined and communicated technology transfer management frameworks within SUCs. The low standard deviations of 0.46 and 0.52 suggested minimal variability within the dataset. This data indicated that SUCs fully embraced their responsibilities and were committed to operating technology transfer, fostering industry-university linkages, and developing technologies. As Maresova (2019) noted, successful patenting, licensing, and commercialization of academic inventions reflected the dedicated efforts of universities and their Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) to facilitate recognition and financial rewards for innovators.

Promotion

The promotion indicator for SUC 1 had a mean of 4.63, reflecting strong agreement from respondents that promotion activities were actively practiced. In comparison, SUC 2 achieved the highest category mean of 5 among the seven indicators, indicating that respondents strongly agreed on the effectiveness and importance of promotional efforts within the SUC. This demonstrated a strong consensus on the exceptional performance and value of promotional efforts in these academic settings. The standard deviation for SUC 1 and SUC 2 was below 1, indicating low response variability.

According to Bernal and Cárdenas (2014), there were many established examples of promoting innovation within education, with numerous subjects aimed at teaching students to enhance their creativity. Indeed, encouraging innovation spanned the entire educational system, including universities, institutes, and schools. Across all levels of the educational system, from universities to institutes and schools, there existed a myriad of established examples aimed at promoting innovation. Subjects such as design thinking, project-based learning, and entrepreneurship courses were increasingly integrated into educational programs to provide students with hands-on experiences and opportunities to explore their creativity. Moreover, initiatives like maker spaces, innovation labs, and research centers were hubs where students could collaborate, experiment, and prototype innovative solutions to real-world challenges.

3.3 Technology Transfer Management Barriers

Table 2 presents a comprehensive list of 24 barriers impeding effective university technology transfer. Technology transfer, the process of transferring scientific findings from one organization to another for further development and commercialization, is critical for fostering innovation and economic growth. However, universities face numerous challenges in this domain. Each barrier listed represents a specific challenge that universities must navigate, spanning administrative and organizational issues to cultural and financial constraints. The mean scores for notable barriers exceeded 3.5 points.

Among the 24 identified barriers in this study, it was confirmed that the "Misalignment between research and commercialization" barrier had the highest mean score of 4.5, indicating a consensus among respondents about its significance. This supports Quiñones et al.'s (2019) report, which identified the same barrier as the most influential based on its high in-degree measure. The misalignment can be attributed to industry partners' high expectations regarding the commercialization potential of university academics, leading to conflicting objectives.

Table 2. *Technology Transfer Management Barriers*

Barriers Description	Mean	Description
Misalignment between research and commercialization objectives	4.5	Strongly Agree
High costs of managing joint research projects in terms of time and money	4.0	Agree
Cultural differences between academia and enterprises	4.0	Agree
Lack of national benchmark to evaluate successful collaboration	4.0	Agree
Prototype technology is not compatible with the demands of mass production	4.0	Agree
Knowledge being too theoretical for practical purposes	3.5	Agree
Lack of venture capital	3.5	Agree
Lack of appropriate partners	3.0	Undecided
University proponents have unrealistic expectations regarding the value of their technologies	3.0	Undecided
Remote geographic distance	3.0	Undecided
Complex procurement process	3.0	Undecided
Lack of sales distribution centers within the university premise	3.0	Undecided
Process complexity	2.5	Disagree
Time constraints	2.0	Disagree
Lack of resources	2.0	Disagree
Risk of information leakage	2.0	Disagree
Insufficient rewards for university researchers	2.0	Disagree
Poor marketing/technical/negotiation skills of Technology Transfer Office (TTO)	2.0	Disagree
Lack of recognition for university-industry linkages	2.0	Disagree
Inconsistent rules and regulations	2.0	Disagree
Complex organizational structure	2.0	Disagree
Institutional bureaucracy	2.0	Disagree
Problems concerning intellectual property rights	2.0	Disagree
Lack of personal motivation	1.5	Strongly Disagree

The following barriers followed with a notable mean of 4. Barriers (High costs of managing joint research projects in terms of time and money) The high costs associated with managing joint research projects, both in terms of time and financial resources, often pose significant challenges for universities and enterprises. It can limit the scope and scale of potential collaborations, particularly in the early stages of partnership development (Fisher, 2019). (Cultural differences between academia and enterprises) Cultural differences between academic institutions and industrial enterprises frequently lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. These differences in organizational culture, communication styles, and objectives can hinder the establishment of effective collaborative relationships (Johnson, 2018).

The absence of a national benchmark for evaluating the success of university-industry collaborations creates uncertainty and inconsistency in assessing partnership outcomes. This lack of standardized metrics can impede the ability to measure progress and compare performance across different initiatives, and (Prototype technology is not compatible with the demands of mass production), as stated by Hayes (2021), one of the critical barriers to the commercialization of university-developed technologies is the frequent incompatibility of prototypes with the demands of mass production. This gap between innovation and scalability often prevents promising technologies from reaching the market.

Meanwhile, the barrier (Lack of personal motivation) has the lowest mean of 1.5. This indicates that this barrier is not experienced by State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), as the respondents strongly disagree with its presence. This suggests that SUCs have developed effective strategies to overcome this challenge or that it is not relevant in their specific contexts. This result was supported by Siegel's (2021) statement that state universities and colleges (SUCs) demonstrate a notably higher level of personal motivation among their staff involved in technology transfer activities. This intrinsic motivation, supported by strong institutional frameworks and effective incentive mechanisms, ensures that SUCs do not face the typical barriers associated with a lack of personal drive observed in other institutions.

3.4 Qualitative Findings

This section reveals the findings obtained from the structured interviews. It delves into emergent themes and conducts data analysis on the qualitative results obtained from this study.

Theme 1: Vehicles of Innovation

The first theme concerns the available office (authority) and facilities implementing innovation goals and their corresponding enabling mechanisms. Both SUCs have existing offices and their equivalent, such as the Intellectual Property Office, Technology Transfer Office, an accredited Innovation and Technology Support Office (ITSO), and innovation hubs for product development. This was necessitated due to existing policies that enable the operationalization and interaction of innovation actors, institutions, and activities. SUC 1 has an existing research and development (R&D) policy. Its R&D policy is further expanded to strategic innovation plan (framework), intellectual property policy, technology transfer policy, incentivization guidelines, and spin-off policy.

“Our tech trans office was primarily established due to the growing necessity of driving innovation in our institution. As the university realizes the need to operationalize innovation from research to commercialization, so has the establishment of the tech trans office.”

The presence of an authoritative agency and its mechanism highlights the institution's vigor in pursuing and involving itself in the dynamic innovation ecosystem.

On the other hand, SUC 2 shares similar groundwork with SUC 1 in establishing its policies. SUC 2's strategic innovation plan and incentivization guidelines are anchored in its R&D framework. This is quoted in the following:

“Since the establishment of the IPTBM Office, several IP inventories from different technology-based programs were conducted to determine the technologies generated with potential on IP protection. Those technologies' enhancement, promotion, and development were initiated to prepare for its pre-commercialization requirements.”

SUC 1's driver of innovation is firmly anchored and manifested in its office and policies. As this became apparent, SUC 1 became a mentor to budding institutions with a similar vision toward innovation. SUC 2 followed through and established its drivers of innovation. As state universities, both SUC 1 and 2 serve as key integrators of knowledge in technology transfer processes (Jafari-Sadeghi et al., 2021). Warwick (2021) further substantiates that university technology transfer agencies are instrumental in leveraging innovation and advancements. Through this qualitative exploration, it has become apparent that universities are catalysts for innovation and advancement. Similar themes emerged in both SUCs that house the vehicles of innovation.

Theme 2: Drivers of Innovation

Both SUCs have trained personnel in implementing varying innovation-related activities. SUC 1 and 2 exemplified dedication in training agents to ideate, strategize, and implement promising activities.

SUC 1's staff quoted his extraordinary experiences as:

“Participation in this ambitious position provided me with a multi-faceted opportunity for personal, emotional, social, and professional growth. I was able to become a trainer and a trainee as the manager of our office. I was also honed in how to lead and serve in the bureaucracy of our institution. Moreover, I learned how to manage and balance my personal and professional needs. Lastly, I met wonderful and brilliant people who have become leaders in their respective organizations presently.”

SUC 2 responded in a similar tone as well:

“Yes! Top management support, and the people who shared the same vision and passion for innovation.”

With the innovation agents on board, SUC 1 and 2 vary in their innovation-related activities. SUC 1 has been implementing technology pitching, technology exhibits, and training. These activities are further reinforced by establishing linkages to local industries and diverse research and innovation funding sources. Due to these engagements, SUC 1 was able to assist local start-up companies and later established its Technology Business Incubation Program (TBI). SUC 2 has conducted activities like those of SUC 1. However, SUC 2 is still working on

its TBI program to conduct activities promoting spin-off and start-up companies. Despite their proactive engagements, both SUCs have their strengths and weaknesses. As reported, SUC 1 has commercialized patents that can utilize impactful technologies. As for SUC 2, they commercialized utility models and trademarks. This entails that SUC 2 strategically utilized other forms of IPs.

The implementation of innovation-related activities is greatly influenced by the connections between academia and industries (Alexandre et al., 2022). The linkage is inspired to establish an industry-driven collaboration that will lead to local industries' creation, validation, and modification of technology (AbebeAssefa, 2016). The success of the aforesaid activities is determined by the involvement of the number of people employed in technology transfer offices, technology transfer outcomes, and the number of licensed patents (Cartaxo & Godinho, 2017). Despite the presence of trained personnel and implemented activities, challenges arise when industrial organizations are reluctant to collaborate with network actors (Shen, 2016). This reluctance is apparent to both SUCs, as evidenced by the absence of spin-off companies. Nevertheless, both SUC 1 and 2 have managed to continuously train agents and implement significant activities as drivers of innovation.

Theme 3: Uphill to Innovation

SUCs 1 and 2 have different insights when it comes to identifying challenges. SUC 1 has the more advanced technology transfer office and has stated multifaceted challenges. SUC 1's staff quoted the following:

"I also had a multitude of challenging experiences. Learning from mistakes is the foremost principle in overcoming those experiences. I learned how to choose the best people as teammates to ensure the project flows smoothly. Also, my family served as the best support system during those challenges."

Despite the indirect statement of learning from mistakes, it can be inferred that personnel are central to the operation's success. Given that as personnel assigned, individuals who have a share of personal, social, and professional challenges, he added that support systems are necessary to continue with the hurdles of innovation. From a different perspective, SUC 2's manager offered an objective statement about his experience managing innovation activities in their institution. He quoted:

"Dealing with people in the university who want to get involved in the innovation activities but to gain points for promotion and not for the passion of bringing impact to the university."

It can be inferred that bringing people into the innovation landscape is challenging when intention and motivation are absent. He added that motivation is inherently tied to promotion – personal aspirations – without the required concern to advancing intellectual property promotion. This becomes endemic among state universities as they share similar processes and instruments. Both SUCs projected dissimilar perspectives when it comes to barriers to innovation. This is evidenced by De Ocampo, Jr. et al.'s (2018) exploration of the challenges faced by Philippine state universities, including SUCs, in engaging in innovation activities. They discussed issues such as limited funding, lack of industry collaboration, and institutional constraints, which are different from what was exemplified by the two SUCs. Moreover, Melican et al. (2019) provided another insight that matches SUC 1 and 2's issues, such as limited extension services, inadequate support mechanisms, and difficulties scaling up innovation.

Despite this, both SUCs offered an optimistic view on improving the conduct of innovation activities. Continuous collaboration and collective engagements with the industry enable heightened collaboration, which equips both to better engage in future activities. Their optimism is quoted below:

"Interagency, collaboration, mentorships, and participation in training serve as our avenue in fostering collaboration. R&Ds also invites like-minded visionaries to meet on the same agenda and forges collective participation in innovation." SUC 1

"Building good relationships and involving the industry in creating solutions to their identified problem." SUC 2

Identifying the barriers and challenges to innovation can aid decision-makers in improving the ecosystem. Despite having the vehicle and drivers of innovation, innovation cannot be an innovation without succeeding in reaching the top of an uphill journey, as evidenced by acknowledgments for all the accomplishments of SUC 1 and 2. IPO

was awarded the most prestigious Platinum Award, recognizing their contribution to IP Applications, among other deliverables. Through a fruitful mentorship relationship, SUC 1 and 2 demonstrated exceptional dedication and innovation and effectively implemented intellectual property management and protection strategies. This collaborative effort made notable contributions to advancing and safeguarding intellectual property rights, garnering recognition from a prestigious authority such as IPOPHL. The platinum award serves as both validation and celebration of their collective efforts, underscoring the significance of mentorship in fostering excellence and innovation within educational and professional spheres.

4.0 Conclusion

The study highlights the critical role of structured management practices in improving technology transfer outcomes in the Davao Region. Findings show that SUC 1 excels in patent registrations and commercialization, while SUC 2 leads in copyrights and utility models. However, both institutions face challenges in commercialization, emphasizing the need for stronger institutional policies and industry partnerships. The 7Ps framework analysis revealed SUC 1's strength in patents and SUC 2's excellence in promotion practices, but policy gaps remain a concern. Barriers such as misalignment between research and commercialization goals and high project costs hinder effective technology transfer. Qualitative insights further emphasize the impact of organizational culture, resource allocation, and training on these outcomes.

To address these challenges, SUCs should enhance institutional policies, foster industry linkages, and provide targeted training to bridge the gap between research outputs and market demands. Strengthening innovation culture and aligning academic efforts with commercialization goals are essential steps forward. This study underscores integrating quantitative and qualitative insights to understand technology transfer dynamics better. Future research should explore more strategies to overcome commercialization barriers and expand innovation efforts, ensuring a more significant contribution to regional and economic growth.

To enhance technology transfer outcomes, SUCs should develop clear institutional policies, strengthen industry linkages, provide targeted training, implement commercialization support programs, and foster an innovation culture. Future research should explore comparative commercialization models across SUCs, assess industry engagement strategies, examine sustainable funding mechanisms, evaluate the long-term impact of IP commercialization, and investigate the role of digital platforms in technology transfer. These efforts will help bridge the gap between research and market demands, ensuring greater contributions to regional development and economic growth.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors contributed significantly to this study. Both authors led the conception and design of the study, as well as the analysis and interpretation of results. They played a key role in manuscript writing and revisions. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

6.0 Funding

This research was financially supported by the authors and assisted by the University for use of resources, in the development and conduct of the study.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in the conduct and publication of this study.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors generally wish to thank and acknowledge individuals (respondents and advisory panels) who significantly contributed to the development of the study, especially the support of the University and its top management.

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Participative Leadership Style of School Heads: Implications for an Effective Academic Mentorship Program

Raymond S. Villafane

Bulacan State University, Bulacan, Philippines

Author Email: raymond.villafane@bulsu.edu.ph

Date received: January 18, 2025

Date revised: February 21, 2025

Date accepted: March 10, 2025

Originality: 96%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 4%

Recommended citation:

Villafane, R. (2025). Participative leadership style of school heads: Implications for an effective academic mentorship program. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 131-146. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.033>

Abstract. This study explores how school heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan apply participative leadership in their daily work and how it influences decision-making and school improvement. While leadership is crucial to educational success, there is limited research on how participative leadership is practiced in this setting. There is also a lack of mentorship programs designed to support school heads in strengthening this leadership approach. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining the leadership practices of school heads and developing a mentorship program to enhance their effectiveness. A mixed-method, explanatory-sequential approach was used, combining surveys and interviews. The study included 81 secondary school heads for quantitative data and 15 informants for qualitative insights. Results showed that school heads consistently demonstrated participative leadership, with most practices rated to a "Very Great Extent." However, challenges such as resistance to change, lack of cooperation, and time constraints were identified. Other difficulties included personal issues, student disengagement, limited parental involvement, and weak community connections. Overcoming these obstacles requires strong community support, clear communication, and active stakeholder engagement. Best practices for participative leadership include involving stakeholders, being resilient, and maintaining effective communication. The study highlights improved collaboration, increased teacher engagement, and a better work environment. Key support strategies include teamwork, recognition, and training programs. Based on these findings, an academic mentorship program was designed to help school heads develop sustainable and effective leadership practices, ensuring long-term improvement in school leadership.

Keywords: Leadership; Participative leadership; School heads; Mentorship program; Academic.

1.0 Introduction

The success of any organization largely depends on its leaders' ability to guide members toward shared goals. Effective leadership ensures the proper management of resources, fosters a sense of direction, and maintains organizational stability. Without strong leadership, a group may weaken, become disorganized, and fail. This principle applies to schools, where leadership shapes educational outcomes. School heads employ various leadership styles, but participative leadership suits the educational environment. Jing et al. (2017) defined participative leadership as a democratic approach involving subordinates in decision-making, fostering a sense of ownership and aligning personal aspirations with institutional goals. Leaders practicing this style integrate participatory management into daily operations by emphasizing open communication, coordinated reporting, and flexible promotion methods.

Unlike other leadership styles, participative leadership is characterized by transparency and employee empowerment in corporate decision-making (Huang et al., 2021). It applies to organizations of different sizes and developmental stages, making it a widely adaptable model. The concept of shared governance is closely linked to participative leadership, which Abraham et al. (2017) describes as a transparent process where teachers, staff, administrators, alumni, and students collaborate in shaping policies and procedures. This approach fosters leadership development, teamwork, and innovation in school governance, ensuring a balanced framework of efficiency, equity, and fairness. Open communication is essential to the success of shared governance, yet school leaders often face challenges beyond their control. The effectiveness of leadership approaches varies, and schools inevitably encounter difficulties that require adaptive strategies.

The Schools Division of Bulacan presents a similar landscape to other Philippine school divisions, where some school leaders excel while others perform at an average level. The 2021 School-Based Management (SBM) Validation Report showed that only 37 out of 101 schools in the division advanced in SBM practice. Given that school heads oversee a wide range of responsibilities, including students, teachers, and non-teaching staff, it is difficult to determine which leadership styles are most effective. While participative leadership is widely acknowledged as beneficial, its practical implementation in the daily operations of school heads remains underexplored. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on tailored mentorship programs that support and enhance participative leadership practices. Addressing this research gap, the present study investigates how secondary school heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan demonstrate participative leadership in their duties and responsibilities. It also aims to explore how tailored mentorship programs can foster these practices.

By analyzing school heads' leadership styles, identifying challenges, and assessing their impact on school management, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of participative leadership in education. The findings will serve as the foundation for a proposed Participative Academic Mentorship Program to support school leaders in enhancing their leadership capabilities. This research will provide valuable insights for the Schools Division of Bulacan but may also inform leadership development initiatives in other educational divisions. Furthermore, its recommendations could serve as a basis for future studies and aid the Department of Education (DepEd) in evaluating school leadership, governance, and related concerns. By addressing these objectives, this study aims to provide a structured approach to improving participative leadership among school heads, ultimately fostering a more collaborative, transparent, and effective educational environment.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design using a mixed-method approach, specifically the explanatory-sequential design. The approach involved collecting quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively understand the participative leadership style of school heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan. The quantitative phase was conducted first to establish general trends, followed by the qualitative phase to explore and elaborate on the quantitative findings.

2.2 Research Participants

The study involved secondary school heads from the Schools Division of Bulacan. 81 school heads participated in the quantitative data collection, while 15 school heads were selected as informants for the qualitative phase based on their responses and leadership experiences. Purposive sampling ensured that qualitative participants represented diverse school contexts within the division.

2.3 Research Instruments

For quantitative data collection, the study utilized an adopted-modified questionnaire based on the dimensions of participative leadership outlined in the study by Wang (2022). Despite multiple attempts, the original author could not be reached. However, since the questionnaire was derived from an open-access work distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY), proper credit was given to the original authors, the copyright owner(s), and the source of the study's publication. The questionnaire measured various aspects of participative leadership, including Decision domain; Degree of participation; Participative structure; and Participative decision-making. To gather qualitative data, a semi-structured interview guide was developed. The guide was designed to explore school heads' perspectives on participative leadership, their challenges, and best practices in

implementing this leadership style. A pilot test was conducted with 10 secondary school heads in Bulacan to assess the reliability of the instruments. The results showed that all measurements had a reliability coefficient between 0.78 and 1.00, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70, confirming the reliability of the research instruments.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The study followed a systematic and structured process for data collection and analysis. Before gathering data, the researcher secured the necessary approvals, obtaining clearance from the Graduate School Office of Bulacan State University and official permission from the Office of the Superintendent of the Schools Division of Bulacan to conduct the study within the selected schools. Once approval was granted, quantitative data collection commenced. A structured questionnaire was administered in person to 81 secondary school heads across the Schools Division of Bulacan. Conducting the survey face-to-face ensured a high response rate and facilitated the immediate retrieval of responses. Participants were given clear instructions to maintain accuracy and consistency in their answers.

Following the quantitative phase, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with 15 purposively selected school heads. These participants were chosen based on their responses in the initial survey to gain deeper insights into their participative leadership experiences. A semi-structured interview guide was used to explore emerging themes from the quantitative findings, allowing for a more detailed examination of leadership challenges, best practices, and perceptions of participative leadership. The interviews were conducted in a confidential setting, recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative responses were processed, analyzed, and interpreted using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to determine leadership patterns and trends, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Meanwhile, the qualitative data underwent content analysis and thematic coding to identify key themes, challenges, and best practices related to participative leadership. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, ensuring that the results were well-rounded and supported by multiple sources of evidence.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure participants' rights, safety, and confidentiality. The university's ethics committee reviewed and approved the research protocol before data collection, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, assured of data confidentiality, and given the right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, and all collected data were securely stored to protect their identities.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 School Heads' Performance as Participative Leaders

Decision Domain

Tables 1 to 4 present the distribution of school heads' summary of performance as participative leaders based on different dimensions.

Table 1. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of decision domain*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Setting School Goals	4.95	0.37	Always
Hiring Teaching Staff	4.25	1.28	Always
Selecting Team Leaders	4.68	0.67	Always
Allocating Budget	4.79	0.61	Always
Instructional Policies	4.83	0.38	Always
Selecting Textbooks/Learning Materials	4.44	0.79	Always
Selecting Learning Objectives and Methods	4.59	0.67	Always
Grading Policies	4.86	0.41	Always
Student Discipline	4.58	0.61	Always
Overall Result	4.66	0.64	Always

As shown in Table 1, school heads are always participative in the dimension of the decision domain. Indicator number 1 in the decision domain, Setting School Goals yielded the highest computed mean of 4.95 and 0.37 standard deviation, interpreted as Always, while indicator number 2, Hiring Teaching Staff, obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.25 and standard deviation of 1.28, interpreted as Always. Hence, the overall mean yielded 4.66, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.64 suggests moderate variability in the responses across different decision domains in the school setting. It indicated that while there is a general trend or agreement in how these decisions are made (as reflected by the high means), there is still a range of differences in the responses. This could be due to diverse approaches, perspectives, or experiences among those involved in these decision-making processes. School administrators constantly make decisions. Even though everyone in a school occasionally makes decisions, administrators are paid to do so. Instead of carrying out mundane tasks, making decisions is their primary role. For instance, the superintendent's assessment of a principal's performance, or a principal's assessment of a department head's or team leader's performance, depends heavily on the quality of the judgments made. Additionally, decision-making impacts a school's or district's performance and the welfare of its constituents, including students, teachers, parents, and the community (Lunenburg, 2010).

Degree of Participation

As can be gleaned in Table 2, from the four indicators: indicator number 2, Information obtained the highest computed mean of 4.90 and standard deviation of 0.30, interpreted as Always. It is followed by indicator 1, Consultative Decision Making with a computed mean of 4.65 and standard deviation of 0.48, and indicator 3, Democratic Decision Making with a computed mean of 4.53 and standard deviation of 0.67, which were all interpreted as Always. The lowest computed mean was obtained by indicator number 4, Autocratic Decision Making, interpreted also as Always. Overall, the computed mean yielded 4.48, and a standard deviation of 0.45, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation across the indicators is 0.65, which suggests moderate variability in the responses. This indicates that while the overall tendency leans towards consistent application, there is some variation in how often the different decision-making approaches are utilized.

Table 2. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of degree of participation*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Consultative Decision Making	4.65	0.48	Always
Information	4.90	0.30	Always
Democratic Decision Making	4.53	0.67	Always
Autocratic Decision Making	3.85	0.95	Always
Overall Result	4.48	0.65	Always

In managing school financial resources, the law requires both transparency and accountability. Transparency as a prerequisite ensures that resources are used wisely and efficiently. Regardless of the levels of transparency and accountability observed, the fact remains that adherence to these principles creates a compelling reason to meticulously consider potential expenditures and disbursement of government resources in the Philippines' basic education, thereby preventing graft and corruption (Gaspar et al., 2022).

Structure

Indicative of Table 3 on the distribution of school heads' summary of performance as participative leaders in the dimension of structure, indicator number 1 on Explicit procedures concerning who participates obtained the highest computed mean of 4.58 and standard deviation of 0.54, interpreted as Always, followed by indicator number 2, Explicit procedures concerning what decisions are open to participation obtained the mean of 4.42 and standard deviation of 0.74 and also interpreted as Always. In indicator number 3, explicit procedures concerning participation, obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.82. Generally, the data as regards the distribution of school heads' summary of performance as participative leaders in the dimension of structure yielded an overall mean of 4.49, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.71 indicated a relatively high degree of variability in how frequently the explicit procedures are engaged across the different participation dimensions. This suggested that while there is a general trend toward consistent application, as reflected in the Always interpretation, the experiences of participation vary more than initially thought.

Table 3. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of structure*

Structure	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Explicit Procedures Concerning Who Participates	4.58	0.54	Always
Explicit Procedures Concerning What Decisions Are Open to Participation	4.42	0.74	Always
Explicit Procedures Concerning How Participation Occurs	4.48	0.82	Always
Overall Result	4.49	0.71	Always

Many organizations have recently been interested in the concept of authority delegation. The practice of delegation is taken seriously by both the public and private sectors worldwide. One crucial aspect of school administration is the assignment of responsibilities to subordinates. It aids the principal in adequately managing the institution, yet depending on how the process is carried out, it may harm the subordinates (Masaku et al., 2018).

Decision-making

As can be discerned in Table 4, from the three indicators: number 1, Decision Motive, obtained the highest computed mean of 4.87 and standard deviation of 0.06, interpreted as Always, followed by indicator 2, Teacher-Oriented Motive, obtained the mean of 4.84 and standard deviation of 0.09, also interpreted as Always. In indicator number 3, the Principal-Oriented Motive obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.77 and standard deviation of 0.14, which is interpreted as Always. Aseemingly, the overall mean was computed to 4.83, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.33 across the various categories implied that the responses were relatively consistent and clustered around the mean, indicating good agreement or consistency in the assessed measures.

Table 4. *School heads' performance as participative leaders in the dimension of participative decision-making*

Decision Making	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Decision-Oriented Motive	4.87	0.06	Always
Improve Decision Quality	4.83	0.47	Always
Encourage Teacher's Acceptance of the Decision	4.91	0.28	Always
Teacher-Oriented Motive	4.84	0.09	Always
Develop Teacher's Confidence	4.94	0.24	Always
Increase Teachers Motivation	4.85	0.36	Always
Increase Teacher's Commitment	4.85	0.36	Always
Improve Teacher's Skills	4.72	0.60	Always
Principal-Oriented Motive	4.77	0.14	Always
Share Responsibility	4.83	0.47	Always
Reduce Principal Work Load to Manage Time Better	4.62	0.56	Always
Improve Principal's Work Efficiency	4.88	0.33	Always
Overall Result	4.83	0.33	Always

People believe that leaders are created rather than born. However, it is widely recognized that to be a competent leader, one must have the experience, knowledge, dedication, patience, and, most importantly, the ability to negotiate and collaborate to achieve goals (Amanchukw et al., 2015).

Summary

As shown in Table 5, the school heads are always participative in the different dimensions of participative leadership: decision, degree of participation, structure, and participative decision-making. Specifically, Dimension 4 on participative decision-making obtained the highest computed mean of 4.83 and standard deviation of 0.05, interpreted as Always. In contrast, Dimension 2 on degree of participation obtained the lowest mean of 4.48 and standard deviation of 0.45, interpreted as Always. Lastly, the overall computed mean reached 4.62, and the standard deviation of 0.16, interpreted as Always. The standard deviation of 0.25 across the dimensions suggests a relatively low but notable spread of responses. This meant that while there is a general consistency in the application of participative processes, indicated by the Always interpretation, there are variations in the extent to which these processes are experienced or perceived among the respondents.

Table 5. *Summary of performance as participative leaders in different dimensions*

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Decision Domain	4.66	0.22	Always
2. Degree of Participation	4.48	0.45	Always
3. Structure	4.49	0.08	Always
4. Participative Decision Making	4.83	0.05	Always
Overall Result	4.62	0.25	Always

It is glaring that the school heads' performances showed very active participation in all dimensions of leadership, particularly in the decision domain, degree of participation, participative structure, and participative decision-making. Therefore, all the school heads know how to implement participative leadership in their schools to improve their operations and functions. The findings are ascribed to Wang's (2022) study on participative Leadership, which underlined that "encouraging employee involvement" is an important component of effective management. He also stated that employee participation - a critical feature of organizational decision-making - is a big factor for companies to respond to the changing business environment and improve the efficacy and integrity of leadership judgments. With this power, participative leaders may share decision-making and full employee consultation to handle workplace concerns cooperatively.

3.2 School Heads' Manifestation of Participative Leadership Styles

The extent to which school heads summarize the manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of areas like supervisory role, students' support, parental involvement, and community linkages.

Supervisory Role

Table 6 showcases the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of supervisory role. As shown in the table, indicator number 4 on the supervisory role, which stated, The school head regularly monitors that all teachers are physically present and in contact with the learners yielded the highest computed mean of 4.93 and 0.26 standard deviation, interpreted as Very Great Extent. In contrast, indicator number 1, which stated, The school head checks and verifies the teachers' physical and mental well-being before the classroom delivery obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.51 and standard deviation of 0.74 interpreted as Very Great Extent. Hence, the overall mean yielded 4.73, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of 0.52 across the given indicators reflected moderate variability in the responses. This indicated that while there was general agreement among the responses, there was also a noticeable range of different answers. The variation is not extremely wide, suggesting that most responses are relatively aligned, but not tightly clustered, indicating some differences in perceptions or experiences among the respondents regarding the school head's practices.

Table 6. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of the supervisory role*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head checks and verifies the teachers' physical and mental well-being before the classroom delivery.	4.51	0.74	Very Great Extent
2. The school head daily monitors and fulfills outlined instructional activities of the teacher in lesson plans/ instructional materials/classroom management, etc.	4.59	0.77	Very Great Extent
3. The school head ensures that all teachers receive supervisory feedback and /or advice.	4.79	0.47	Very Great Extent
4. The school head regularly monitors all teachers to ensure they are physically present and in contact with the learners.	4.93	0.26	Very Great Extent
5. The school head regularly maintains that teachers' problems are addressed.	4.83	0.38	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.73	0.52	Very Great Extent

The statistics demonstrated that the school heads' participation in participative leadership in supervisory roles demonstrated high involvement and manifestation. As a result, school administrators guarantee that instructors are well-supervised in delivering quality education to students through practical technical help and feedback mechanisms. Practically, the school heads are burdened with several tasks, and they must fulfill all of their commitments while also possessing the competencies to complete their responsibilities jointly. According to Garcia and Acosta (2017), several skills make one a great leader. These abilities enable managers and administrators to do their daily jobs efficiently, motivate employees, and cope with workplace challenges for the business to continue to develop and prosper. According to them, leadership skills can be classified as dominant or recessive based on how they exercise their unique leadership style, deal with cross-cultural differences, improve

the school's commerciality, and perform their corporate social responsibility. All of these areas are concealed inside the disclosed leadership abilities, which are bound to be attributory, participative, and contributing, and which can be proven to be dominant or recessive depending on the scenario.

Student Services

Table 7 illustrates the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of the manifestation of participative leadership styles in student services. As can be gleaned in the tabular presentation of data, from the five indicators: indicator number 1, The school head checks and monitors the conduciveness of the classroom and the learners' statuses and indicator number 5, The school head ensures the interventions provided to the non-performing students obtained the highest computed mean of 4.85 and standard deviation of 0.36, interpreted as Very Great Extent. It is followed by indicator number 2, The school head provides the school's basic services to the learners and indicator 4, The school head monitors the operation and implementation of the students' organization, which were all interpreted as Strongly Agree with a computed mean of 4.84 and standard deviation of 0.46. The lowest computed mean was obtained by indicator number 3. The school head knows the students' academic performances, with a computed mean of 4.72 and a 0.53 standard deviation, which is also interpreted as a very great extent. The computed mean yielded 4.82, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of 0.44 indicated a moderate variation in how the different aspects of the school head's involvement are perceived or experienced. While the overall trend showed significant involvement, as indicated by the high mean, the SD reflects some differences in individual responses or situations.

Table 7. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of student services*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head checks and monitors the conduciveness of the classroom and the learners' statuses.	4.85	0.36	Very Great Extent
2. The school head provides essential services to the learners.	4.84	0.46	Very Great Extent
3. The school head knows the academic performances of the students.	4.72	0.53	Very Great Extent
4. The school head monitors the student organization's operation and implementation.	4.84	0.46	Very Great Extent
5. The school head ensures the interventions provided to the non-performing students.	4.85	0.36	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.82	0.44	Very Great Extent

According to the findings, the school heads' involvement in participative leadership in student services was very high, particularly in monitoring students' progress, providing a good learning environment, essential services, and implementing intervention programs for low-performing students. Support for kids appears to be one of the most important duties that a school principal must do. In their study, Pastou et al. (2017) concluded that there was a rising demand for accessible and anonymous services to help students experiencing psychological and/or academic issues. Such issues can result in various adverse consequences, including poor academic performance, poor mental health, decreased study satisfaction, and study dropout. Universities in the United Kingdom currently lack financial resources, and the on-campus mental health services historically provided to students have become more fiscally unsustainable. Compounding the perceived shame of utilizing such services, mental health practitioners have been compelled to accommodate students' growing requirements through online services. Though the proposals were aimed at postsecondary students, they might equally be applied to primary school kids.

Parental Involvement Monitoring

Table 8 displays the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of the manifestation of participative leadership styles in parental involvement monitoring. Indicative of Table 8 on the distribution of areas of school heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of parental involvement monitoring, indicator number 5 on The school head invites and accommodates the parents when there are school activities obtained the highest computed mean of 4.85 and standard deviation of 0.45, interpreted as Very Great Extent. In contrast, indicator number 3, The school head has a unique support program for the parents during special occasions, obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.64 and standard deviation of 0.73. Generally, the data regarding manifestation of school heads' participative learning regarding parental involvement monitoring yielded an overall mean of 4.76, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of 0.58 pointed to a moderate range of responses, reflecting some diversity in the perceptions or experiences of the school head's effectiveness in maintaining communication and engaging parents. While the overall assessment is positive, the SD showed that there were varying degrees to which the respondents felt these initiatives.

Table 8. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of parental involvement monitoring*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head maintains communication linkage with the parents.	4.78	0.50	Very Great Extent
2. The school head has a parental involvement mentoring and recognition program.	4.75	0.51	Very Great Extent
3. The school head has a unique support program for the parents during special occasions.	4.64	0.73	Very Great Extent
4. The school head assists the parents.	4.75	0.64	Very Great Extent
5. The school head invites and accommodates the parents when there are school activities.	4.85	0.45	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.76	0.58	Very Great Extent

The data implied that the school heads' extent of participative leadership on parental involvement monitoring demonstrated high engagement and linkages in strengthening the parents' participation and recognition for school improvement and student academic progress. The data confirmed the school head's participative leadership style to the stakeholders, particularly the parents. According to Llego (2022), there are several reasons why parents should be active in their child's education. One explanation is that parental participation can lead to children performing better academically. Parents who are active in their kids' education can guarantee their child receives the best education possible. Another reason parents should be active in their child's education because it can strengthen the parent-child bond. When parents participate in their kid's education, they can assist in building trust and communication between parent and child. This can assist to strengthen and enhance the parent-child bond.

Community Linkages

Table 9 shows the distribution of areas of school heads' summary of manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of community linkages. As can be discerned in the tabular presentation of data, from the five indicators: number 1, The school head knows the members of the Sangguniang Barangay and other important stakeholders in the community, obtained the highest computed mean of 4.77 and the standard deviation of 0.48, interpreted as Very Great Extent while number 2, The school head has a program for parents' The school head attends and participates in the meetings that are regularly held in the barangay obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.40 and standard deviation of 0.74, interpreted as Very Great Extent. Aseemingly, the overall mean was computed to 4.62, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The standard deviation of 0.60 suggested a moderate dispersion in perceptions regarding the school head's community involvement. This indicates that while there was a general recognition of their very great extent of involvement, experiences vary among respondents. It was glaring that the school heads' extent in participative leadership on community linkages showed high connections, especially in tapping external stakeholders such as LGUs and Sangguniang Kabataan. In addition, the school heads actively involve the external stakeholders in conferences, celebrations, and outreach events. These were effective indicators of connectivity towards school improvement, which involved using facilities, infrastructure, and learning resources through collaborative efforts of LGUs, particularly the Local School Board.

Table 9. *School heads' manifestation of participative leadership styles in terms of community linkages*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. The school head knows the Sangguniang Barangay members and other important community stakeholders.	4.77	0.48	Very Great Extent
2. The school head has a program for parents. The head attends and participates in the meetings that are regularly held in the barangay.	4.40	0.74	Very Great Extent
3. The school head attends and participates in the meetings regularly held in the municipality.	4.73	0.52	Very Great Extent
4. When necessary, the school head participates in the barangay council meetings and attends outreach events.	4.58	0.65	Very Great Extent
5. The school head cooperates and joins all the municipal events and celebrations.	4.65	0.57	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.62	0.60	Very Great Extent

The findings are consistent with Qaralleh's (2021) findings on the importance of school leaders in establishing community collaboration. Even though the phrase "community involvement" was used in this study. Qaralleh's study demonstrated a significant propensity for the study samples to develop the performance of school administration regarding Community Partnership (CP), emphasizing the relevance of this collaboration for the school to achieve its goals. The school leaders also attempted to implement a variety of methods to develop CP to improve the educational environment, establish communication with various community institutions, and implement what the Saudi Vision 2030 calls for, which is to create a safe and positive school climate by providing

school facilities for the local community as well as accelerating school development through the external environment represented by the local community. This also means that the school administration has an unorthodox mindset of striving for knowledge growth and constructing an aware and educated generation whose responsibilities emerge in the local community.

Summary

Table 10 exhibits the extent of school heads' manifestation of participative leadership style based on different areas. Table 10 provides an overview of the extent of school heads' manifestation of participative leadership style based on different areas. From the table, data revealed that the school heads' manifestation of participative leadership style on student services revealed a Very Great Extent shown by the highest computed mean of 4.82 and standard deviation of 0.06. At the same time, community linkages obtained the lowest computed mean of 4.62 and standard deviation of 0.15, revealed a Very Great Extent. In sum, all the areas garnered an overall mean of 4.73, interpreted as a Very Great Extent. The standard deviation of approximately 0.12 for the listed areas suggested a low to moderate spread of responses around the mean. This indicated that the perceptions or experiences of the respondents were quite consistent with each other, with relatively small deviations from the average. The low average SD pointed to a strong consensus on the effectiveness of the school's supervisory role, student services, parental involvement monitoring, and community linkages, as evaluated by the respondents.

Table 10. School heads' summary of the manifestation of participative leadership style

Areas	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Supervisory Role	4.73	0.17	Very Great Extent
2. Student Services	4.82	0.06	Very Great Extent
3. Parental Involvement Monitoring	4.76	0.08	Very Great Extent
4. Community Linkages	4.62	0.15	Very Great Extent
Overall Result	4.73	0.12	Very Great Extent

The school heads' extent of participative leadership in all aspects of school administration meant strong performance in supervisory roles, student support, parental involvement, mentoring, and community linkages. According to Khassawne and Elrehail (2022), the participative leadership paradigm has received substantial empirical attention due to its generalizability and adaptability to varied organizational settings. The underlying notion of leadership being freely and authentically expressive of thinking processes to ensure the prioritized accomplishment of each subordinate underpins the concept of participative leadership. Such an approach yields ethical and beneficial job outcomes.

3.3 Problems Encountered in Participative Leadership Style

Supervisory Role

This study identified several recurring themes in school leaders' participative leadership practices. Notably, resistance to change, lack of cooperation among staff and stakeholders, and insufficient time to fulfill leadership responsibilities emerged as significant challenges (Table 11).

Table 11. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of the supervisory role

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Resistance to Change	Teachers hesitate to adopt new teaching methods and administrative changes.	"There are times that teachers find it difficult to embrace changes when directed to implement teaching techniques. It requires school heads, like me, to practice the virtue of patience to understand the situations of teachers better." – Mr. Grand
	Teachers avoid participation in new programs or initiatives.	"Some teachers hesitate to participate in the programs initiated by other teachers or the school head." – Mr. Ruling
Lack of Cooperation	Some teachers remain in their comfort zones and resist leadership involvement.	"Some teachers resist change. They are hesitant to share their opinions and talents because they do not want to be discovered." – Mr. Directing
	Teachers show reluctance in collaborative decision-making.	"Not all teachers are cooperative and participate in all decisions for the good of the community and learners." – Mr. Chief
	Resistance to supervision from delegated leaders (e.g., Head Teachers).	"They follow if I am around, but if the OIC is involved, they are not submitting to the supervision. Some are hardheaded, especially the older teachers." – Mr. Uppermost
	Some teachers do not recognize the authority of Head Teachers when the principal is absent.	"The teachers have different perceptions of supervision. If I am away, then the Head Teachers supervise, but they do not accept the HT as their superior." – Mr. Predominant
Insufficient Time	School heads struggle to balance multiple responsibilities.	"Inadequate time to provide instructional leadership and supervision is consistently an identified impediment by school administrators." – Mr. Dominant
	Urgent administrative tasks interfere with instructional supervision.	"Sometimes during monitoring and observation, I cannot finish due to urgent tasks to accomplish, but to ensure that the head teacher will do these things." – Mr. Managing

School heads implementing participative leadership face challenges, including resistance to change, lack of cooperation, and insufficient time. Teachers' reluctance to adopt new strategies hinders progress, requiring patience and targeted interventions (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Prieto, 2019). Lack of cooperation arises when teachers resist collaborative decision-making, emphasizing the need for leadership strategies that foster engagement (Meyer et al., 2023; Bevan & Flores, 2021). Additionally, time constraints due to administrative and instructional duties impact leadership effectiveness (De Jong et al., 2017; Wise, 2015). Addressing these challenges requires structured support systems, including leadership training and mentorship programs, strengthening participative leadership.

Student Services

The study revealed various challenges school heads encountered in student services while practicing participative leadership. These challenges were categorized into two major themes: students' personal problems and lack of interest in school programs, projects, and activities (PPAs). Table 12 presents these themes, the specific challenges identified, and selected responses from participants.

Table 12. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of student services

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Personal Problems of Students	Students face serious personal issues such as health concerns, early pregnancy, and involvement in conflicts.	"I am giving my full attention to students facing serious health conditions, personal problems like early pregnancy, and troubles like student fights. We conduct guidance and counseling to help them rebuild their reputation and complete their studies." – Mr. Directing
	Absenteeism and tardiness due to personal and external factors.	"External problems that involve non-academic issues of students, such as absenteeism and tardiness, are common challenges." – Mr. Predominant
Lack of Interest of Students in PPAs	Family problems and financial difficulties hinder students' education.	"Some of the problems I encountered are related to family issues, lack of parental involvement, and financial problems, which affect students' education." – Mr. Uppermost
	Students show unwillingness to participate in school programs, projects, and activities.	"Some students are not interested in our organization's goals and advocacy due to a lack of encouragement and motivation, maybe because of the two-year pandemic." – Ms. Sovereign
	Students feel discouraged and unmotivated.	"Learners are discouraged and not motivated." – Mr. Directing
	Students have difficulty focusing on academic and extracurricular activities.	"Lack of focus among learners is a persistent problem." – Mrs. Topmost

The study identified key challenges in student services under participative leadership, particularly personal problems and lack of interest in school activities. Students' issues, including health, absenteeism, early pregnancy, and financial struggles, affected academic performance. Julal (2012) emphasized that institutional support, such as counseling and financial aid, is crucial in addressing these concerns. Khan et al. (2019) noted that absenteeism remains a long-standing issue impacting achievement, while Daud et al. (2018) and Deng et al. (2022) highlighted financial struggles and parental involvement as critical factors in student success. Lack of interest in school programs was another concern, with many attributing it to the pandemic's impact. Al-Muslawi & Hamid (2020) identified external and internal distractions as significant barriers to learning. To address these challenges, schools must strengthen student support systems, enhance parental involvement, and implement strategies to boost motivation and participation.

Parental Involvement Monitoring

The study identified several challenges school leaders faced in monitoring parental involvement while practicing participative leadership. These challenges were categorized into two major themes: lack of cooperation and tendency to overpower. Table 13 presents these themes, the specific challenges identified, and selected responses from participants.

Table 13. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of parental involvement monitoring

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Lack of Cooperation	Some parents do not actively participate in school programs, meetings, and conferences.	"Some parents are not cooperative regarding their children's academic behavior. They are not responsive to letters for conferences. Only PTA officers are active, and only 75% of parents attend the Quarterly General Assembly." – Mr. Dominant
	Parents have negative perceptions of school involvement, making it challenging to engage them.	"Changing parents' perceptions about school participation is a challenging task. However, if they see your dedication and goals for their children's benefit, they will eventually become participative." – Mr. Ruling
Tendency to Overpower	Some parents are less interested in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) than the elementary level.	"Some parents do not attend meetings and conferences. They are not active in the PTA/Council unlike in the elementary department." – Mr. Predominant
	Some parents overstep their boundaries in decision-making and school policies.	"Some parents/guardians tend to overpower and exceed their boundaries." – Mr. Directing
	Some educated parents show less respect for teachers, particularly those whose children are in the star section.	"Some educated parents have less respect for teachers, especially those of students in the star section. They feel they are the authority, and the teachers are merely servants. Their experiences with other school heads could influence this." – Mr. Uppermost

The study identified key challenges in parental involvement under participative leadership, particularly lack of cooperation and a tendency to overpower school authority. Lack of cooperation was evident as some parents remained unresponsive to school initiatives, conferences, and meetings. Demirbulak, as cited by Gokalp et al. (2021), emphasized that parents play a crucial role in a child's cognitive and emotional development, making school-home collaboration essential for academic success. However, schools must actively engage parents rather than attribute low participation solely to them. Effective strategies include parent-teacher conferences, strengthened communication, and home visits to foster engagement. Some parents also tended to assert authority over school affairs, particularly those with strong educational backgrounds. Gunawan (2020) and Oundo (2014) highlighted how attitudes shape actions, with parental perspectives influencing their level of involvement. Samal (2012) noted that positive parental attitudes enhance student motivation and academic achievement, while negative perceptions hinder learning. Policymakers and school leaders must cultivate a school culture that encourages mutual respect, promotes parental awareness, and strengthens collaboration to optimize student success.

Community Linkages

The study identified key challenges school leaders faced in establishing effective community linkages while practicing participative leadership. These challenges were categorized into two major themes: lack of cooperation and information dissemination issues. Table 14 presents these themes, the specific challenges identified, and selected responses from participants.

Table 14. Problems encountered in the participative leadership style in terms of community linkages

Themes	Challenges Encountered	Sample Responses from School Heads
Lack of Cooperation	Limited community participation in school programs and activities.	"Some parents are not cooperative with the school." – Mr. Dominant
	Open communication exists, but community members are not actively engaged in school affairs.	"There is open communication, but the community is not that active in the school affairs." – Mr. Uppermost
Information Dissemination Issues	Limited collaboration between schools, parents, and the community affects educational goal achievement.	"Schools, teachers, parents, and the community should contribute more to cooperative activities beyond just words on paper. Partnerships must be developed through practice." – Mr. Directing
	Community members lack awareness of DepEd policies and school-related announcements. There is a need to explain DepEd issuances to the community before engaging them in school matters.	"Similar to parental involvement monitoring, many stakeholders lack information about the latest DepEd concerns, issuances, and policies." – Ms. Sovereign "To make community linkage more dynamic and participative, I explain DepEd issuances first, because most of the time, the community members lack awareness of the school situation." – Mr. Grand

The study identified challenges in community linkages under participative leadership, particularly lack of collaboration and ineffective information dissemination, which hinder school heads from engaging the community. Minimal parental and community involvement in school activities weakens educational outcomes, as cooperation between families, schools, and the community is essential (Fatimah et al., 2023). Another concern was the limited awareness of DepEd policies and school initiatives. DepEd Order No. 26, s. 2022, highlights the role of School Governance Councils (SGC) in promoting shared responsibility among stakeholders. Strengthening communication channels and fostering inclusive governance will enhance collaboration, ensuring effective education service delivery and student welfare.

3.4 Solutions to Challenges Experienced in Participative Leadership Style

The study identified key solutions that school leaders employed to address challenges encountered while practicing participative leadership. These solutions were categorized into three major themes: support from the school community, proper communication, and stakeholder engagement. Table 15 presents these themes, the specific solutions implemented, and selected responses from participants. The study highlighted school heads' solutions to challenges in participative leadership, emphasizing the importance of school community support, proper communication, and stakeholder engagement. Effective leadership relies on collaboration, transparency, and involvement from all sectors to ensure smooth school operations and improved educational outcomes. School heads recognized the value of support from the school community in addressing challenges. They emphasized open-mindedness, resource utilization, and shared decision-making as key strategies. Effective school-based management (SBM) fosters decentralization, empowering school leaders and stakeholders to take responsibility for educational progress. By promoting collaboration and accountability, SBM enhances teacher motivation, student performance, and overall school quality (Cornito, 2021; Mailool et al., 2020).

Table 15. Solutions implemented by school leaders in community linkages

Themes	Solutions Implemented	Sample Responses from School Heads
Support from the School Community	Encouraging a positive mindset and seeking support from colleagues.	"I always have a positive mindset and accept support if necessary. Conducting brainstorming of possible solutions and putting these solutions into practice is a great help." – Mr. Directing
	Utilizing available resources and assigning responsibilities to key personnel.	"Department heads monitor teachers' and students' performance daily. We have different group chats where we can immediately inform, analyze, and resolve issues with quick solutions." – Mr. Paramount
	Practicing transparency and collaborative decision-making.	"Through a thorough decision-making process with the concerned people, challenges can easily be resolved. Transparency is necessary for good governance." – Mr. Ascendant
Proper Communication	Involving staff, coordinators, and other personnel in problem-solving and decision-making.	"I involve my staff and school personnel in the solution. We document our meetings and discussions to ensure accountability and immediate response to issues." – Mr. Managing
	Implementing open-door policies to encourage dialogue with teachers and stakeholders.	"I practice open-door policies so that teachers know they can approach me anytime with their queries. Transparency and adherence to DepEd issuances guide me as a participative leader." – Mr. Grand
	Establishing clear communication channels and setting boundaries.	"Setting limitations, open communication, and vision sharing are vital to overcoming challenges in participative leadership." – Mr. Directing
Engaging the Stakeholders	Encouraging collaboration and active teacher involvement in decision-making.	"School administrators should actively seek input from team members to ensure that everyone's perspective is valued." – Mr. Directing
	Partnering with community members and local government units to support school initiatives.	"The school taps the capable members of the community for support, as well as the local government unit. The Parents-Teachers Association also helps through resolutions for students' health and well-being." – Mr. Dominant
	Strengthening communication with parents and stakeholders.	"Intensify communication with parents and stakeholders, and include internal and external education partners in planning and implementing the School Improvement Plan." – Mr. Dominant
	Encouraging stakeholder participation in school activities and decision-making.	"Engaging learners, teachers, parents, and the community effectively resolves issues and challenges. They realize the value of planning, implementation, and school accomplishments." – Mr. Ruling

Alongside community support, proper communication plays a crucial role in participative leadership. Open communication channels, ethical leadership, and adherence to DepEd guidelines create a transparent environment where issues are addressed efficiently. A principal's ability to foster a positive atmosphere encourages teamwork and ensures that decision-making aligns with student and teacher needs. Encouraging stakeholder input strengthens collaboration and enhances organizational efficiency (Mayo & Woolley, 2016). Furthermore, engaging stakeholders ensures sustained school improvement. Active participation of parents, local government units, and community members in planning and decision-making fosters shared responsibility and strengthens school-community ties. Parental involvement positively influences student motivation and academic performance, while strong partnerships between schools and communities create mutual benefits that enhance educational and social development (Hashmi & Akhter, 2013; Lewallen et al., 2015). School heads effectively address leadership challenges by integrating these strategies, ensuring a more inclusive, dynamic, and responsive educational environment.

3.5 School Heads' Good Practices in School Management and Administration

Table 16 presents the key themes identified in the qualitative findings, emphasizing the good practices implemented by school leaders to overcome challenges in school management and administration. These practices highlight the significance of participative leadership, stakeholder involvement, resilience, and effective communication. The study identified effective practices that school heads developed to overcome challenges in implementing participative leadership, highlighting the active participation of stakeholders, resiliency, and proper communication as key drivers of school growth. Active stakeholder participation fosters collaboration and shared decision-making, reinforcing the idea that school leadership is a collective effort. School heads recognize that involving teachers, parents, students, and the community strengthens relationships, transforms weaknesses into strengths, and enhances overall school management (Goods, 2014; Bangayan-Manera, 2020).

Resiliency among school heads emerges as a crucial trait developed through experience. Facing challenges strengthens leadership skills, increases awareness of limitations, and refines decision-making processes. Adversity fosters adaptability, optimism, and the ability to navigate uncertainties effectively (Taylor, 2013; Doney, 2013). By learning from past difficulties, school heads build a culture of perseverance that benefits both administrators and stakeholders in solving future issues collaboratively. Proper communication further strengthens participative leadership by promoting transparency, trust, and shared understanding between schools and stakeholders. Open dialogue ensures that decisions are well-informed and widely accepted, fostering a cooperative school environment (Locklear, 2019). Modern communication tools, such as social media and digital platforms, enhance engagement and responsiveness, aligning with evolving stakeholder expectations (King, 2015; Greene-Clemmons

& Flood, 2013). By integrating these practices—stakeholder participation, resiliency, and effective communication—school leaders create an inclusive, adaptive, and transparent leadership approach, driving continuous improvement and sustainable school development.

Table 16. School heads' good practices in school management and administration

Theme	Findings	Sample Responses from School Heads
Active Participation of Stakeholders	School leaders emphasized the importance of collaboration and stakeholder involvement in decision-making and school governance. Engaging parents, teachers, students, and the local community enhances school programs and activities.	<i>"The school head cannot do it alone. That is why support and collaboration of all concerned persons is of prime importance."</i> -Mr. Paramount <i>"I practice participative leadership through the involvement of all people in our school. Collaboration is important in decision-making to transform weaknesses into strengths."</i> -Mr. Managing <i>"Shared responsibility is exerted for any success of a team or organization."</i> -Mr. Directing
Resiliency	School heads demonstrated resilience by adapting to challenges, strengthening their leadership skills, and learning from difficult experiences. Overcoming obstacles made them more effective in decision-making and problem-solving.	<i>"By solving the problems that come, I become stronger as a principal and more prepared for the next problems."</i> -Mr. Chief <i>"Challenges make the school head tougher and encourage stakeholders to participate, especially when issues affect their children's learning."</i> -Mr. Ruling <i>"Having encountered many challenges, I am now more aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a leader and more careful in decision-making."</i> -Mr. Grand
Proper Communication	Effective communication strategies, such as open-door policies and collaborative discussions, were key in fostering positive relationships between the school and its stakeholders. Transparent communication ensured that all parties were well-informed and engaged in school activities.	<i>"Sitting and talking about problems, challenges, and possible solutions should be the final step to resolving issues."</i> -Mr. Manager <i>"By solving these challenges through communication, we get to discuss all decisions, and all parties adhere to what has been agreed upon."</i> -Mr. Directing

3.6 Benefits of Participative Leadership

The study demonstrated that implementing participative leadership yields several key benefits (see Table 17), including a more enhanced work environment, stronger collaboration, and increased teacher engagement. These advantages collectively contribute to improved organizational performance and a more dynamic, inclusive educational setting.

Table 17. Benefits of participative leadership

Theme	Benefits	Sample Responses from School Heads
Enhanced Work Environment	Participative leadership fosters a positive work environment by improving relationships among administrators, teachers, and staff. It enhances job satisfaction, trust, and collaboration.	<i>"There are several benefits in the organization and teachers of having participative leadership. This helps to fulfill an organization's goals and motivate the teachers to do well, produces more effective teachers, boosts one's morals, improves the workforce's productivity, improves a harmonious relationship, and promotes a positive outlook in life."</i> -Mr. Manager <i>"The teachers are not hesitant to express their insights and opinions for the students' development as well as to their fellow mentors to attain harmonious relationships and update themselves for professional growth."</i> -Mr. Superior <i>"It increases the teachers' satisfaction and develops trust in one another because they feel they are part of the decision-making."</i> -Ms. Sovereign
Collaboration	Encourages teamwork by involving teachers in decision-making, school programs, and initiatives. This process fosters shared responsibility and enhances organizational transparency.	<i>"When teachers are part of decision-making, they feel valued, and they become more proactive in contributing ideas that benefit the school."</i> -Mr. Strategic <i>"I have seen that collaboration among teachers strengthens teamwork, which helps implement school programs successfully."</i> -Ms. Visionary <i>"Through participative leadership, teachers feel that their voices matter, encouraging them to work together towards a shared goal."</i> -Mr. Guiding
Increased Teachers' Engagement	Teachers become more involved in decision-making, feel empowered, and develop a sense of ownership over school initiatives.	<i>"Everyone is encouraged to speak their mind and become receptive to situations and challenges."</i> -Mr. Chief <i>"Increased teachers' engagement, when each member can take part in high-level decision-making, they can feel empowered in their roles."</i> -Mr. Dominant <i>"It is beneficial that all have a voice in the organization. Moreover, I think the members would have a sense of ownership. For the teacher, their voice would also be heard. They will work hard for the good of the school and the community as well."</i> -Mr. Ascendant

The findings highlight that participative leadership has significant advantages for school environments, particularly in fostering an enhanced work environment, collaboration, and increased teacher engagement. Creating a positive atmosphere where teachers and administrators collaborate effectively leads to increased satisfaction and motivation. Jain and Kaur (2014) emphasize that a workplace that prioritizes employee well-being enhances productivity and fosters harmonious relationships. Saidi et al. (2019) further highlight that a positive work environment, where supervisors engage employees in decision-making, directly contributes to improved job performance. Decision-making processes that include teachers create a sense of collective responsibility, as emphasized by Puni et al. (2018). Employees who feel valued and respected are more likely to contribute

meaningfully to the organization (Jones, 2013). Quick and Nelson (2013) further assert that participative leadership increases workplace transparency, boosting morale and organizational success. A decentralized decision-making approach, such as School-Based Management (SBM), ensures that teachers actively shape policies and school governance (Brown, 2011). Morenike (2019) stresses that engaging teachers in key decisions leads to a sense of ownership, positively impacting school and community development. School heads can cultivate a supportive and productive educational environment by implementing participative leadership strategies, ultimately benefiting educators and students.

3.7 Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

This research study integrates qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively understand the support mechanisms that enable participative leadership among school heads. The qualitative findings capture the lived experiences of school leaders, highlighting the specific ways they foster collaboration, recognize teacher contributions, and facilitate professional development. The quantitative findings confirm that most school heads implement participative leadership, while the qualitative insights reveal how they navigate challenges. Furthermore, the study's practical implications are reinforced by the development of an academic mentorship program, which directly stems from the research findings. This program addresses real-world challenges and enhances leadership development among future educational leaders in the Schools Division of Bulacan. Ultimately, this research underscores the value of participative leadership in achieving educational goals and provides actionable recommendations for improving school leadership practices.

3.8 Proposed Participative Leadership Style Academic Mentorship Program

This section presents the study's findings on school heads' manifestation of participative leadership and its implementation across four key areas: teachers, students, parents, and the community. Results indicate a "Very Participative" outcome and a "Very Great Extent" of implementation. The qualitative data revealed various reflective themes, none considered negative responses. Instead, these insights informed the development of the training plan, which includes a structured mentorship program to strengthen participative leadership among school heads. In the Schools Division of Bulacan, school leaders employ different leadership styles, leading to varied reactions from subordinate teachers, ranging from acceptance to resistance. The administration's failure to consider essential factors can hinder organizational success. To address this, the mentorship program follows a structured flow: an initial orientation and goal-setting session, followed by discussions on leadership theories and their application. School heads will be paired with experienced mentors to guide them in collaborative planning, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, the program integrates classroom observations and feedback mechanisms, fostering a culture of instructional leadership. Through sessions on community involvement and stakeholder engagement, school heads will develop strategies to strengthen relationships with parents and the broader community. The program culminates with a reflection and sharing of best practices, allowing participants to assess their growth and refine their leadership approaches. Participative leadership, or democratic leadership, is integral to school leadership practices. While some may perceive it as a novel approach, many school heads already incorporate its principles. Effective participative leaders guide their teachers, encourage feedback, and promote shared decision-making, recognizing teachers' crucial role in school success. The mentorship program thus serves as a key initiative to further enhance these leadership competencies, ensuring a more collaborative and effective educational environment.

4.0 Conclusions

The statistical analysis showed that most Bulacan school heads employ the Participative Leadership Style. While all computed means indicated a consistent "Always" response, slight variations in the numerical sequence did not impact on the overall interpretation of results. School heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan (SDO Bulacan) exhibit participative leadership styles across various domains, including supervisory roles, student services, parental involvement monitoring, and community linkages. Their ability to effectively exercise their duties and obligations, despite the demands of their workload, underscores their commitment to serving the stakeholders of the education system. Despite the widespread implementation of participative leadership, secondary school heads face challenges in fulfilling their roles. However, they demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving skills, which allow them to navigate obstacles and maintain their commitment to their schools' success. Their

capacity to find innovative solutions highlights their dedication to continuous improvement and leadership excellence.

This study underscores the need for sustained support mechanisms and professional development initiatives for school heads. In response to this need, an Academic Mentorship Program has been established to assist aspiring educational leaders in SDO Bulacan. This program is designed to equip future school heads with the necessary leadership competencies, foster collaboration, and enhance their ability to implement participative leadership effectively. Future research may build on this study by exploring the long-term impact of participative leadership on school performance, teacher retention, and student outcomes. Additionally, further studies could investigate the effectiveness of mentorship programs in leadership development, particularly in addressing specific challenges school heads face. Expanding this research to include comparative analyses across different school divisions or educational contexts could provide a broader perspective on best practices in participative leadership. Strengthening these areas will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of educational leadership dynamics and inform policy-making for continuous leadership enhancement.

5.0 Contributions of Author

This research was presented at an international research conference, reviewed by research experts, and subsequently approved by the Research Committee of the Schools Division of Bulacan and the Ethics Review Committee of Bulacan State University, ensuring its credibility and adherence to ethical standards.

6.0 Funding

This research was conducted independently and did not receive financial support or funding from external grants, organizations, or institutions. The researcher provided all resources and materials used in the study, ensuring that the findings were based solely on their own efforts and without any external financial influence.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The researcher declares no conflict of interest related to this study. The research was conducted with complete impartiality, and no personal, financial, or professional interests influenced the design, execution, or outcomes of the study. All findings and interpretations are solely the result of the researcher's objective analysis, with no external factors impacting the research process.

8.0 Acknowledgement

The researcher sincerely thanks Dr. Rainelda M. Blanco, his adviser, for her invaluable guidance and support throughout this study. He also extends gratitude to the professors and committee members for their insights and contributions. Appreciation is given to the administrators and staff of the Schools Division of Bulacan for their assistance in data collection. Finally, the researcher acknowledges the unwavering support of his family, whose encouragement made this endeavor possible.

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First-Time Fathers' Experiences in Antenatal Care

Lady Marianne Reyes*, Jewelrie Mae V. Abainza, Shaina Claire A. Hernandez,
Anne Emmanuelle D. Urbano, Ian Justine B. Belista, Vivian P. Lajara, Marc Lester F. Quintana
Canossa College San Pablo City, Inc., San Pablo City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: c-21000051reyeslm@canossacollegespc.com.ph

Date received: November 30, 2024

Date revised: February 22, 2025

Date accepted: March 13, 2025

Originality: 97%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 3%

Recommended citation:

Reyes, L.M., Abainza, J.M., Hernandez, S.C., Urbano, A.E., Belista, I.J., Lajara, V., Quintana, M.L. (2025). First-time fathers' experiences in antenatal care. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 147-158.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0644>

Abstract. First-time fathers' involvement in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners is recognized as important for improving maternal and child health. However, engaging in this process can be challenging as they encounter different barriers. Their involvement in decision-making for seeking health care and obtaining health facilities can influence maternal outcomes, possibly affecting the maternal death rate. This study aims to provide information on what programs can be implemented to encourage more fathers to participate and support the antenatal care of their pregnant partners by exploring their lived experiences. This study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3 and 5, which focus on good health, well-being, and gender equality. The researchers employed a qualitative research design using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Data was gathered through self-made questionnaires from ten participants selected through snowball sampling, targeting first-time fathers aged 18 and above whose partner is currently pregnant and residing in the 3rd District of Laguna. The thematic and interpretative phenomenological analysis identified the major themes and sub-themes. The findings revealed four major themes: anticipating parenthood, embracing new roles, mutual support in pregnancy, and active engagement in prenatal care that exhibit the first-time fathers' state of preparedness and antenatal involvement during the pregnancy of their partners. Their willingness to be part of the antenatal care of their pregnant partners was seen. For them, antenatal care is a shared responsibility, not just for women. They demonstrated positive behavior toward antenatal care as they have a good perception of it. It is recommended to implement programs for first-time fathers that focus on pregnancy, helping reduce anxiety and enhance understanding of their responsibilities.

Keywords: Antenatal care; First-time father; Lived experience; Qualitative study.

1.0 Introduction

First-time fathers frequently mention that they appear purposeless, helpless, and worried because they do not know that being pregnant is hard. This study also agrees with Baldwin et al. (2018), who state that the most common problems a first-time father may have been anxiety and depression connected to mixed feelings as a result of their responsibilities. Global research recommends that involving first-time fathers in antenatal care, either through being part of antenatal care consultations with their partner who is pregnant or in antenatal education interventions, can be an efficient method for improving health during pregnancy (Sande, 2022). In 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized that male partners can play a part in a woman's favorable experience of being pregnant, giving birth, and the postnatal period. According to Gibore et al. (2019), the father's involvement can also have effects late in the decision-making process for seeking health care and obtaining health facilities, which are possible reasons for the increase in maternal death rate. The absence of paternal involvement

can be an issue and may lead to a mother's stress and emotional stability a few months after giving birth. This is due to a lack of education about the importance of paternal involvement during pregnancy (Hanapi, 2019).

Women feel empowered to surpass the challenges and trials during their pregnancy when their husbands support them. They bear the labor better and readily embrace having the baby after the delivery. Professionals believe that the involvement and effort of husbands in the antenatal care of their wives will increase their curiosity and help lessen pregnancy complications (Firouzan et al., 2018). The objective of this study was to know and explore the experiences of first-time fathers in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners. As a result of limited local studies regarding this topic in the Philippines, the researchers identified a knowledge gap. Recent quantitative studies urge future researchers to utilize a qualitative method to have an in-depth understanding of this topic, resulting in the identification of a methodological gap.

This study gives the healthcare system an advantage by providing them with knowledge and information on how to improve or what programs they can implement to encourage more fathers to participate and support the antenatal care of their pregnant partners. This study also aids first-time fathers in having an in-depth understanding of the importance of their participation in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners. Furthermore, this study provides knowledge and information to fathers about the laws and regulations enacted to aid them in supporting their partners' pregnancy. They will be enlightened that there are also laws and regulations for them and not only for women. The researchers also aspire that the result of this study will be helpful for first-time fathers, pregnant women, nurses or nurse-midwives, maternal and child nursing, birthing facilities, and as well as future researchers. This study aimed to explore the essence of the lived experiences of first-time fathers in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners in the 3rd District of Laguna.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used qualitative research design, which analyzes in-depth insight into reality and asks open-ended questions whose answers are difficult to put into numbers. This research took on hermeneutic phenomenological techniques to excavate into the primary encounters of novice fathers in supporting their pregnant partners during prenatal care. Hermeneutic phenomenology, a qualitative approach, lets the researchers scrutinize experiences, cultural influences, and routine behaviors. It enables researchers to describe how ordinary, everyday practices, childhood experiences, day-to-day challenges, and the resources that support them in raising their children. This method elicits stories from participants as a source of understanding.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was executed in Laguna's 3rd district and nearby municipalities such as San Pablo City and Calauan. The researchers enlisted participants residing in San Pablo City and Calauan in Laguna.

2.3 Research Participants

The researchers gathered 10 participants from the 3rd District of Laguna, particularly in San Pablo City and Calauan, Laguna. The participants were first-time fathers aged 18 years old and above, and their partners were currently pregnant. Snowball sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, was used to select participants. Participation attracts a group of people with similar experiences or situations. Upon screening, the researchers eliminated participants whose partners had already given birth during the interview process.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researchers utilized a self-made interview guide to dig into and build up a broad-gauged understanding of the experiences of first-time fathers participating in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners in San Pablo City. This tool empowers the researchers to condense on relevant exploration pivotal to the study. The researchers developed an interview guide containing thoroughly self-made questions, which three experts validated thereafter. The interview guide consists of three sections. The first part, the demographic profile, covered participant details such as age, marital status, occupation, and religion. Part two, labeled as Set A, includes eight questions addressing participant preparedness. Lastly, Part Three, or Set B, contained nine questions about participant antenatal involvement.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers obtained approval to operate their study away from the school grounds and sought out participants who met the specific criteria of being first-time fathers. Employing a snowball sampling method, they purposely picked individuals for the study, resulting in ten male first-time fathers residing in the 3rd District of Laguna, particularly in Calauan and San Pablo. Using a set of self-made questions as an interview guide, the researchers accentuate key inquiries pertinent to their study. Before wrapping up one-on-one interviews, the researchers carried out a consent form. They presented it to the participants, outlining its terms and conditions and informing them of the audio recording of the interview. This approach guarantees data collection sticks to ethical standards and protocols. Governing detailed semi-structured face-to-face interviews allowed the researchers to comprehensively understand and analyze the participants' firsthand experiences as first-time fathers.

Amidst data collection, the researchers stumbled upon difficulties in finding participants. They sought guidance from their thesis adviser to expand the research to a broader area. The decision was made to shift the research locale from San Pablo City to the 3rd District of Laguna. Eventually, the participants comprised eight individuals from San Pablo City and two from Calauan, Laguna. To make sure the analysis of the gathered data is comprehensible, the researchers sought guidance from an intercoder. This teamwork developed a thorough interpretation, enabling the identification of both significant and sub-themes within the study. Applying interpretative phenomenological analysis, the researchers adopted a two-cycle coding approach. Initially, they recoded participants' responses to each question into representative words or phrases during the first cycle. Subsequently, the researchers organized and categorized these codes in the second cycle, resulting in sub-themes. Through further congregating, the researchers identified overarching significant themes.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researchers garnered consent from the participants before proceeding and ensured they were not coerced into participation. Participants were assured confidentiality of all collected information, which would solely be utilized for academic purposes. They were told about the study's importance and the terms of participation, listed in a consent letter provided to them. This document detailed the participants' voluntary involvement and their right to refuse at any point.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Anticipating Parenthood

Psychological and Emotional Readiness

Table 1 presents the codes and annotated exemplars on first-time fathers' experiences in antenatal care of their pregnant partners. It focuses on their preparedness under the significant theme "Anticipating Parenthood" and the sub-theme "Psychological and Emotional Readiness." These experiences offer crucial insights. A total of 39 responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, occurring 11 times, is Psychological and Emotional Readiness, which generally encapsulates fathers' mental and emotional preparation for parenthood, highlighting the significance of being emotionally equipped to handle the challenges and responsibilities associated with impending fatherhood. On the other hand, the code Adjustment Phase was the least to appear, which appeared 3 times, reflecting fathers' experiences of adapting to their new roles and responsibilities during pregnancy.

Participant 6's response reflects the initial excitement and joy of impending fatherhood, capturing the anticipation felt by many expectant fathers. Participant 6 states,

"I am so happy as a first-time dad that... my wife is pregnant then... of course, everyone is happy because it is our first baby."

This response highlights the sheer happiness experienced by fathers upon learning about their partner's pregnancy, illustrating the emotional readiness and eagerness to embrace their new role.

Participant 9's reflection underscores the underlying apprehensions and uncertainties accompanying the transition to parenthood. Participant 9 expressed,

"So yes, I am happy, but there is still that thought in my mind that... as I am about to start a family... there are many changes within myself... there is a realization that I have limitations now... it is not like when I was single and could do whatever I wanted... now I am thinking about how I will survive this family life... so yeah..."

This response highlights the conflict experienced by fathers as they wanted to engage in prenatal care, but some factors prevented them from being part of it all the time.

Table 1. Codes and annotated exemplars on Psychological and Emotional Readiness

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Initial Joy and Excitement	9	"Of course at first I was happy... I was happy because you can feel what it's like to be a parent ahh... to have your own family in one house and of course they became my inspiration ahh... to work harder in life and to prepare for the future of the child"
Initial Fear and Pressure	6	"That fear... I thought about it by myself... I was afraid that I might not be able to provide for the needs of my future child that was my fear."
Mixed Emotions	3	"We really didn't expect it to happen but we did have plans I guess... maybe it was a surprise a shock then there was happiness and at the same time there was... excitement and fear it was like a mix of emotions"
Age as a factor	4	"Yes... actually we thought about it... I'm already 38 and we're at the right age... it's like we want to settle down... if we wait a few more years it will be harder for us"
Adjustment Phase	3	"Ah, that... there was a time when since it was still new it was my first time so I was adjusting... it was something I wasn't used to... before, I could do everything but now there are restrictions... there are things I can't do anymore"
Sudden realization of unpreparedness	3	"It's like... we wanted it but at the same time we weren't completely ready for it it's like we didn't have a totally solid plan for the pregnancy"
Psychological and Emotional Readiness in general	11	"Well it's like this... when you're in that situation your mind really has to be ready and it's up to you how you're going to handle it...ah... how you're going to manage your wife's pregnancy"

Participant 5's response underscores the importance of perseverance and support, emphasizing the emotional challenges associated with pregnancy and the crucial role of paternal involvement in providing support to their partners. Participant 5 emphasizes,

"Also, you have to be determined... you need to stay focused on your wife and child... of course, pregnancy is tough... I experienced it with her... it is not tough... but she needs your support... that is all."

This response emphasizes the need for fathers to remain dedicated and focused on supporting their partners through the challenges of pregnancy, highlighting the importance of emotional readiness and active involvement in the journey to parenthood.

Based on the participants' responses, it can be noted from the study by Onyeze-Joe and Godin (2020) that first-time fathers aspire to be supportive and involved parents, providing practical and emotional support to their partners. These codes that have appeared from the participants' responses are also supported by the study of Franzen et al. (2021). It was mentioned that it can affect their mental health, which leads to stress, anxiety, or depression. First-time fathers frequently mention that they appear purposeless, helpless, and worried because they do not know that being pregnant is hard.

Financial and Practical Foundations

Table 2 presents the codes and annotated exemplars on first-time fathers' experiences in antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards the state of readiness under the significant theme "Anticipating Parenthood" and the sub-theme "Financial and Practical Foundations," revealing crucial insights. Nineteen responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The prevailing code occurs 10 times and is Planned and Anticipated Pregnancy. It summarizes fathers' approach and preparedness to become parents, emphasizing the importance of being prepared to face their new responsibilities as fathers. On the other hand, Lack of Prior Childcare Experience, with two occurrences, demonstrates fathers' lack of knowledge and skill in child care.

Table 2. Codes and annotated exemplars on Financial and Practical Foundations

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Financial Readiness	7	"Prepared? well I was ready... I already got ready... of course when I found out she was pregnant... I knew right away that financial support would be needed... that was already clear... so I started saving of course we weren't married yet... I really started saving."
Lack of Prior Childcare Experience	2	"I don't have much experience in taking care of children because I'm a man I never took care of my siblings' kids or anything like that... I never really had that experience, so it's a bit..."
Planned and Anticipated Pregnancy	10	"Mm we're ready because we really prepared for everything... it's not like... she just got pregnant out of nowhere we prioritized getting married first out of respect for her for her parents... and of course... for God it's more important to be blessed first so we prayed that after the wedding, we would have a baby and our prayer was answered and we got blessed with a child."

Participant 6 emphasizes the importance of financial stability, recognizing it as a cornerstone for building a secure future for their family. Participant 6 states,

"Yes, that is very important because no matter what situation we are in in life, we still need to be financially stable... we always need to have a backup. Even if we say we have money, we must still be prepared."

This response emphasizes the significance of financial preparedness in ensuring the well-being and security of the family unit, emphasizing the practical considerations that accompany parenthood.

Participant 3's response underscores the value of thorough planning and preparation, including financial savings and birth plans, to ensure a smooth transition to parenthood. Participant 3 states,

"How did it help?... we have been talking about this for a long time... about what our plans would be when she gets pregnant... we planned for everything to be ready... we already have savings, and we also planned for her childbirth... with her."

Regarding the participants' responses, Noh's study (2021) states that first-time fathers were overwhelmed by a strong sense of duty and fresh financial pressure.

3.2 Embracing New Roles

Building Partnership and Responsibility

Table 3 depicts the codes and annotated exemplars on first-time fathers' experiences in antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards the state of preparedness under the significant theme "Embracing New Roles" and the sub-theme "Building Partnership and Responsibility," revealing crucial insights. A total of 7 responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, which occurs 4 times, is Imbibing Responsible Parenthood, which captures fathers' approach to facing their new responsibilities during parenthood. The last code to appear in Joint Responsibility emerged 3 times, which reflects the first-time fathers and their partner's collaboration to accomplish their responsibility as a parent.

Table 3. Codes and annotated exemplars on Building Partnership and Responsibility

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Joint Responsibility	3	"As her belly grows... I could see it and as it got bigger I could also see our future together at the same time we were saving."
Imbibing Responsible Parenthood	4	"Hmmm... right now... I'm just practicing things like... changing diapers stuff like that that's where I'm adjusting I don't have any experience with those kinds of things... tasks for the baby like cleaning and bathing I'm still practicing it but I don't really have a guide..."

Participant 5 emphasizes that they would not hesitate to make a collaborative decision for the safety of their baby. Participant 5 states,

"So what I mean is that we... what do you call that... will not hesitate to do what is right.... if we know what needs to be done... we will do it right away for her safety and the baby's safety."

This response indicates that collaborative decision-making is significant, especially for the baby's safety.

According to the study by Levy and Kotelchuck (2021), first-time fathers showed an engaged attitude toward learning about their role throughout infancy and their baby's needs and emotions.

Navigating Healthcare and Support Systems

Table 4 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on first-time fathers' experiences in antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards the state of preparedness under the significant theme "Embracing New Roles" and the sub-theme "Navigating Healthcare and Support Systems," revealing crucial insights. Nineteen responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, which occurs 10 times, is Medical Care Options, which encapsulates the fathers' decision about the medical assistance of their partners. Lack of exposure to childbirth education classes emerged 9 times, describing fathers' limited access to information, suggesting an action to address this concern.

Table 4. Codes and annotated exemplars on Navigating Healthcare and Support Systems

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Medical Care Options	10	<i>"It's all about where we can save money... because it's financial right... it's not just about the preparation for the phase of childbirth... once the baby is born it's not just about that single session of giving birth... it's continuous so we'll go with where we can save."</i>
Lack of exposure to childbirth education classes	9	<i>"It depends on the schedule of that day... because for now we only have Sunday as our day off from work since we work from Monday to Saturday... but if there is a chance or an opportunity we'll try."</i>

Participant 6 emphasizes the importance of seeking advice and feedback from their support system to know where to seek healthcare. Participant 6 states,

"I based it on... on our niece who gave positive feedback about the hospital, so we will just base it there because it seems good. Also, my wife was with our relative who gave birth there."

This response states that their support systems significantly affect the options for where to receive healthcare.

Participant 10 emphasizes that they lack knowledge and do not know if there are childbirth education programs. Participant 10 states,

"Nothing... I have not heard anything like that."

This response states that insufficient engagement in childbirth education classes is due to a lack of awareness that they exist.

According to Walsh et al. (2021), fathers emphasize several barriers to their access to antenatal care. They acknowledge that employment is one barrier to their participation in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners.

3.3 Mutual Support in Pregnancy

Understanding and Meeting Partner's Needs

Table 5 reveals the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of first-time fathers in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards the antenatal involvement under the significant theme "Mutual Support in Pregnancy" and the sub-theme "Understanding and Meeting Partner's Needs," revealing crucial insights. A total of 23 responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, which occurs 8 times, is Mood Swings during Pregnancy. This code encapsulates the fathers' experiences with the changes that their partners are experiencing. Intrinsic Fulfillment in Caregiving, which occurs four times, was the last to occur, underscoring the satisfaction that the fathers experience in taking care of their partner.

Participant 4's response reflects the care, concerns, and worries of impending fatherhood, capturing the anticipation felt by many expectant fathers. Participant 4 states,

"Hmm... when it comes to food, I do not know. She eats less when...when... now compared to before she got pregnant, so I worry about it... but I do not tell her because she might end up overeating... I do not mention it, but I worry... though her eating is still okay, just less than before."

This response highlights the worries and concerns fathers experience upon learning about their partner's pregnancy. It illustrates the importance of mutual support, understanding, and active involvement in ensuring the well-being of both partners.

Table 5. Codes and annotated exemplars on Understanding and Meeting Partner's Needs

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Mood Swings during Pregnancy	8	<i>"A lot ... there were a lot of surprising things... like my wife's mood swings were one of the things that surprised me... she became very emotional... so I adjusted by avoiding saying things that will trigger her to be emotional."</i>
Adhering to Partner's Needs	8	<i>"Pregnant women can easily get stressed, so as much as possible I keep my wife happy ... I gave her all the things that she wanted hahaha... because if there is something that they didn't like they will keep thinking about it that will lead them to being stressed sometimes they don't even say what's bothering them... they tend to hide it and keep it to themselves."</i>
Personal Monitoring of the partner's health status	3	<i>"We... we monitor the progression of her weight and the growth of her belly... as per the doctor's advice and also... what she eats... to see if it's unhealthy or not."</i>
Intrinsic Fulfillment in Caregiving	4	<i>"As a first-time mom, what she's dealing with isn't easy so I make sure... everyday that she knows how much I love her... ahh... being a father it's like every moment feels important and meaningful everyday I believed in my thoughts especially as the baby continued to grow... it's such a fulfilling and wonderful feeling."</i>

Participant 5 emphasized the physical needs of his partner. Participant 5 states,

"When we found out we went for a check-up right away after a week she was also the one who said that we needed to get checked then...if there is a need to take medication she is also the one who decided how much to take even though the doctor prescribed them but we are very cautious with medications...we do not take anything unless the doctor prescribes it."

This response focuses on the importance of meeting and fulfilling his partner's healthcare needs.

According to the study by Levy and Kotelchuck (2021), fathers were fascinated by how to keep up with their wives and partners prenatally. They were more interested in the stages of pregnancy. They rendered a captivated attitude of learning about their part in infancy and their baby's emotions and necessities. Fathers also wanted to discover more about what they must do for their partners to have a good pregnancy and childbirth. Fathers express clearly and inform that they long for further parenting skills and comprehension, proposing they wish to participate more actively and judiciously in the pregnancy.

Coordinated Decision-Making for Pregnancy Health and Wellness

Table 6 presents the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of first-time fathers in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards the antenatal involvement under the significant theme "Mutual Support in Pregnancy" and the sub-theme "Coordinated Decision-Making for Pregnancy Health and Wellness," revealing crucial insights. Thirty-two responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, which occurs 11 times, is Prioritizing the child and the partner, which encapsulates fathers fulfilling their responsibilities and giving importance to their pregnant partners and child. The least code to appear is Self-Funded Check-up and other Pregnancy Expenses, emerging 5 times. It underscores the fathers' initiative to provide financial needs regarding check-ups and other expenses for their partners' pregnancy.

Table 6. Codes and annotated exemplars on Coordinated Decision-Making for Pregnancy Health and Wellness

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Mutual Care in Pregnancy	8	<i>"I always prepare breakfast and dinner whenever she comes home because she always eats lunch her, hahaha so yeah... those are the things I do for her... and then I also take care of her before she goes to sleep like that."</i>
Communicating responsibilities	8	<i>"Of course there's a lot to it because... as partners we're both open about everything like what she wants what I want... and what needs to be fixed."</i>
Prioritizing the child and the partner	11	<i>"Well... actually ever since she got pregnant it's been almost... like I've been the one taking care of everything... I've been handling things and I don't go out much anymore so I can focus on helping."</i>
Self-Funded Check-up and other Pregnancy Expenses	5	<i>"Ahh nothing yet... like the expenses are all on us... the medicine... the milk."</i>

Participant 1's response underscores the importance of shared responsibility about the mutual care and prioritization of the child and the partner in pregnancy. Participant 1 accentuated,

"It should be 100% ... I am always with her for check-ups... like after the check-up, then if she feels anything, I immediately attend to it."

This response emphasizes the need for fathers to remain focused and goal-oriented regarding supporting their partners through their partner's needs during pregnancy.

In the study by Trinitade et al. (2019), the primary defense of the accusations regarding the need for help during pregnancy was the child's development occurring inside the woman's body, resulting in the realization that their partner was the one in need of support throughout pregnancy. According to the study by Warren et al. (2022), fathers require help or support from all facets of the ecosystem, including policymakers, spouses, families, coworkers, friends, and primary care physicians, above all else. To develop a partnership in parenting, the father and his partner should always cooperate on everything, especially in making decisions, no matter how big or small the decision is.

Guidance and Support Systems

Table 7 reveals the codes and annotated exemplars on first-time fathers' experiences in antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards antenatal involvement under the significant theme "Mutual Support in Pregnancy" and the sub-theme "Guidance and Support Systems," revealing crucial insights. A total of 44 responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, which occurs 17 times, is Importance of Pregnancy and Childcare Knowledge. This code encapsulates the significance of being educated in providing care for children. Guidance of Health Care Providers was the least code to appear, emerging 6 times, capturing the complex array of experiences of first-time fathers from the support of the health care providers.

Table 7. Codes and annotated exemplars on Guidance and Support Systems

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Guidance of Health Care Providers	6	<i>"Ahh so when she had her check-up...ahm... she explained of course it's our first baby we didn't know what to expect... but when she had the check-up the baby was okay and we were reassured."</i>
Advice from other people about pregnancy and parenthood	7	<i>"It's just that...like if there's something we don't know or something we should be doing we just ask what's the best thing to do because it's our first time... we're not sure if what we're doing is right so we just ask during the check-up."</i>
Involvement of Parents in both parties	2	<i>"Actually our first plan was to let her parents know right away before we told my family, and we were able to do that. We were able to inform them."</i>
Support from family and relatives	8	<i>"My parents as well as her parents support us in everything that we need... because our house is here my apartment is far and it is in Sta. Rosa so we just stay there whenever she has a check-up."</i>
Support given by the government and NGOs	4	<i>"Ahm yes... we have like for medicine... yes those are free."</i>
Importance of Pregnancy and Childcare Knowledge	17	<i>"I'm just learning online so I don't have actual hands-on experience yet that's what is pressuring me because once the baby is here I'm not sure if I can handle it... like bathing the baby I'm not sure if the things I've learned online will really help..."</i>

Participant 3 emphasizes the importance and relevance of support from family and relatives, recognizing it as a foundation for creating an assuring and inclusive future for their family. Participant 3 states,

"Support? Of course, there is support... like her grandparents are there... whenever we need help."

This response stressed the significance of family support in ensuring belongingness and providing assurance to help manage any worries or concerns during pregnancy.

Participant 10 underscored the significance of the support given by other government and non-government organizations. Participant 10 states,

"In our work, for example, when your wife is pregnant, the company provides some help... like they give assistance, but most of the time it's just food packages they give." Participant 10's response indicates the value of receiving support from different kinds of organizations, including food, financial, or other types of support.

These codes, which appeared in the participants' responses, are supported by the study of Hodgson et al. (2021), which reported that first-time fathers seek help and support from health professionals and are grateful for the care their pregnant partners receive.

3.4 Active Engagement in Prenatal Care

Proactive Involvement in Check-ups

Table 8 depicts the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of first-time fathers in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards antenatal involvement under the significant theme "Active Engagement in Prenatal Care" and the sub-theme "Proactive Involvement in Check-ups," revealing crucial insights. A total of 24 responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, which occurs 18 times, is Active Involvement in Check-up. This code encapsulates the father's engagement in check-ups, showing the importance of consulting a doctor about their partner's feelings. The code Regular Check-up was the least to appear, emerging 6 times, underscoring the importance of fathers having a routine medical appointment to assess their partners' pregnancies.

Table 8. Codes and annotated exemplars on Proactive Involvement in Check-ups

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Active Involvement in Check-ups	18	<i>"Mmm... what... what I thought was to always have regular check-ups for my wife and the baby's health as well as hers... I want us to always attend the check-ups and consult the doctor about any issues my wife is feeling... as much as possible we should tell the doctor everything she's experiencing if there are any."</i>
Regular Check-up	6	<i>"Ahh we had a check-up... uhm our first step was to have a check-up... with her doctor which is her OB then uhm... after that... we were scheduled for monthly check-ups."</i>

Participant 4 states,

"Ahh.. as the baby's father, maybe 100% I should be involved."

These responses highlight the dedication of fathers to active participation.

Participant 5's reflection underscores the underlying barriers that hinder them from always attending to their partners' needs. Participant 5 expresses,

"Well, I cannot say that I am hands-on... all day because I also have work... but as long as I am here, I am with her... I am always... doing household chores, I do not rely on her... we are not allowed to stop working at the same time... so there is... her sister is there... we discussed who will be with her... I cannot promise that I will always be the one to accompany her."

This response highlights the limitations fathers experienced. Due to some constraints, they could not attend check-ups regularly with their partners.

Numerous fathers reported involvement in antenatal care as a deliberate affirmation to themselves and their pregnant partners that they are willing and will be a part of the pregnancy (Walsh et al., 2021).

Managing Emotional Well-being Amidst Work and Prenatal Responsibilities

Table 9 presents the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of first-time fathers in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards antenatal involvement under the significant theme "Active Engagement in Prenatal Care" and the sub-theme "Managing Emotional Well-being Amidst Work and Prenatal Responsibilities," revealing crucial insights. A total of 29 responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. The most prevalent code, which occurs 8 times, is Challenges in the Early Stages, which reflects the father's problems in the early stages of their partners' pregnancy. Less involvement due to work schedule emerged the least, occurring 6 times, stating that fathers' engagement is being lessened due to their work schedule.

Table 9. Codes and annotated exemplars on Managing Emotional Well-being Amidst Work and Prenatal Responsibilities

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Challenges in the Early Stages	8	<i>"During the first trimester it was hard for her because she felt dizzy every afternoon I would come home from work and the household chores were still up to me because she felt dizzy... We just faced the situation as it came and dealt with it."</i>
Handling the partner's pregnancy symptoms	7	<i>"She always has... I noticed that she kept asking me to buy what she wanted... she would feel dizzy and nauseous... something like that."</i>
Less involvement due to work schedule	6	<i>"Well, I can't really say that I'm hands-on the whole day because I also have work..."</i>
Sacrifices to Prioritize the partner's needs	8	<i>"I really had to take a leave... it's just that work had to be sacrificed to improve things if I stayed around more... especially during childbirth."</i>

Participant 2 emphasizes the struggles of how they handle their pregnant partners at the beginning of their pregnancy. Participant 2 states,

"Maybe it is just the cravings... her pregnancy... I do not think I was prepared for that... the first trimester was difficult because she felt dizzy every afternoon, and I would come home from work, so I had to take care of the household chores since she was feeling dizzy... I just faced it head-on... whatever the situation was... I just dealt with it."

This response highlights the significance of handling the challenges well to meet their partner's needs.

Participant 4's response underscores the value of being aware of the fathers regarding the changes in emotions at the beginning of the pregnancy. Participant 4 states,

"There were many surprising things... like my wife's mood swings. One of the things that surprised me was how emotional she became..."

This response highlights the father's response after they witnessed the changes during this period.

These responses agree with the study by Gibore et al. (2019), wherein they stated that employed fathers have a lower level of involvement in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners due to the time they spend waiting for their partners. Franzen et al. (2021) explain that pregnancy and childbirth are major family adjustments, with both parents facing significant changes. First-time fathers often experience emotional challenges such as adapting to their partner's physical symptoms (e.g., dizziness) and heightened emotions, including mood swings. These transitions require patience, understanding, and active involvement to navigate effectively.

Commitment to Medical Advice and Care

Table 10 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of first-time fathers in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners towards antenatal involvement under the significant theme "Active Engagement in Prenatal Care" and the sub-theme "Commitment to Medical Advice and Care," revealing crucial insights. A total of 11 responses were coded, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the sub-theme. Adherence to Doctor's Advice and Prescriptions is the most common code, occurring six times. This code states the importance of obeying the doctor's input and prescriptions. The code Advice from non-health professionals but experienced adults appeared the least, which emerged 5 times. This code indicates the significance of listening to advice concerning pregnancy. Advice from the elderly helped them to know more about the pregnancy, which guided them in having a safe pregnancy.

Table 10. Codes and annotated exemplars on Commitment to Medical Advice and Care

Sub-themes	Frequency	Exemplar from the Interview
Adherence to Doctor's Advice and Prescriptions	6	<i>"If she had to take medicine she would decide how much to take even if the doctor prescribed it but we were very cautious with medicines... if it wasn't prescribed by the doctor we really didn't let her take it."</i>
Advice from non-health professionals but experienced adults	5	<i>"What the elders say we were able to apply as well... in that way we learned more about handling the situation and ensuring the safety of pregnancy and childbirth."</i>

Participant 5's response expresses that they seek consultations and consider advice from their doctors regarding medical prescriptions. Participant 5 states,

"The doctor reminded her about... what needed to be done and prescribed vitamins for her."

This response interprets that they trust their doctors when managing the mother and child's health.

In the study by Chawla (2023), the fathers actively participated in their pregnant partners' prenatal visits and took extra care of them regarding nutritional needs and physical support. The study highlights the role of antenatal care in supporting maternal and fetal health, emphasizing the importance of regular check-ups, guidance from healthcare providers, and prescribed supplements to ensure well-being (Ali et al., 2018).

The virtual representation of themes in Figure 1 coherently depicts the interrelationship between the major themes and their corresponding sub-themes, offering a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in the transition to parenthood. Illustrated by a first-time father with his wife at the center, the depiction signifies the pivotal moment of entering parenthood. Surrounding them are circles representing the sub-themes, each connected to its respective central theme, facilitating a visual understanding of the thematic structure.

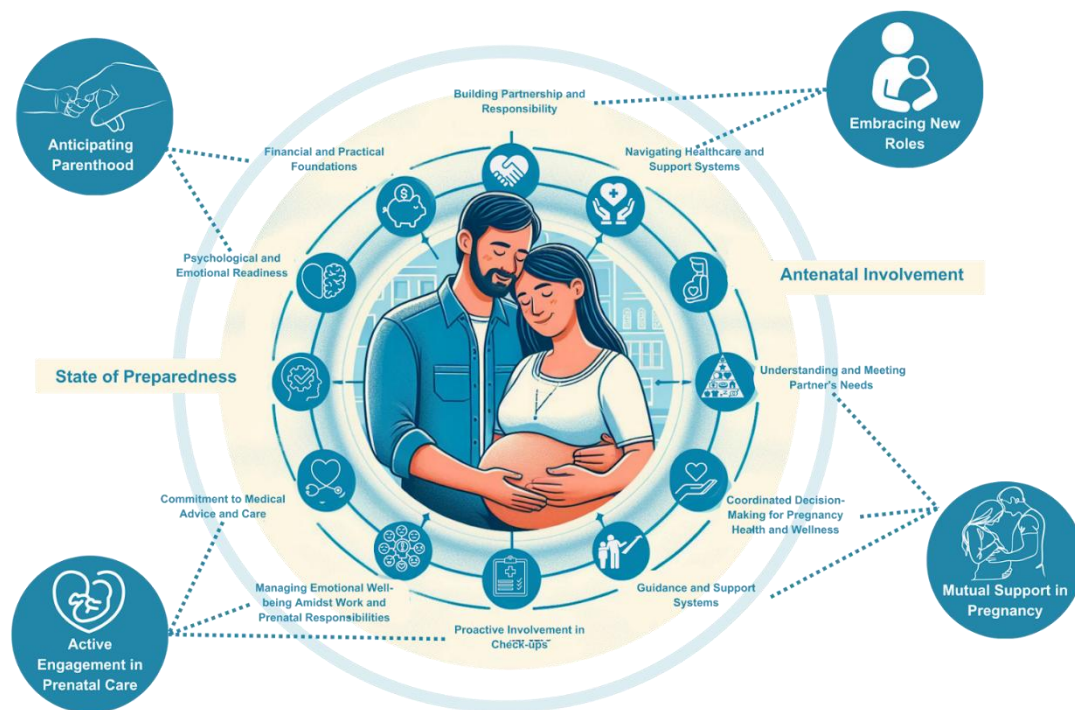


Figure 1. First-Time Fathers' Experiences in Antenatal Care

4.0 Conclusion

According to the study's findings, the researchers concluded that first-time fathers are willing to participate in the antenatal care of their pregnant partners because fatherhood gives them satisfaction and fulfillment. Even though some of the participants' experiences of pregnancy were unplanned, they still enjoyed and were excited about it. This led to another conclusion that fatherhood is a significant part of life for men, and even with anxiety and worry, they are still willing to face it. On the other hand, the researchers also concluded that first-time fathers do not think that antenatal care is predominantly for women because both of them are involved in this process. First-time fathers are also aware of the pressure that their partners experience in bearing a child, which leads them to understand that it is not easy and that they need to give their support and care for a successful pregnancy.

Based on the research findings, the researchers encourage the nurses and nurse-midwives to fulfill their role as educators during this period, not only for pregnant women but also first-time fathers. The researchers encourage them to implement programs for first-time fathers focusing on the process of pregnancy. Monitoring and having a list of first-time fathers could help them know who needs guidance about entering fatherhood. Future researchers should explore the experiences during antenatal, intranasal, and postnatal care. This will help uncover the genuine needs of first-time fathers and determine suitable strategies for meeting those needs effectively.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

This research paper results from a collaborative effort, with LR leading the team and contributing significantly to the Statement of the Problem, Assumptions, Theoretical Perspective, and Data Analysis. JA authored the Introduction and Research Design and contributed to Data Collection. IB focused on the significance of the study and the development of research instruments. SH designed the Theoretical Framework and ensured ethical standards. AU outlined the Scope and Limitations, contributed to the research context, and drafted the conclusion. All team members played an active role in data gathering. The success of this paper was also guided by the expertise of MQ, the Thesis Professor, who provided overall academic direction, and VL, the Thesis Adviser, who offered continuous mentorship and feedback throughout the process.

6.0 Funding

The authors acknowledge that no external or internal funding was utilized to conduct this research. All aspects of the study, including design, data collection, and analysis, were carried out without financial support from any organization, grant, or institution.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The study authors affirm that there were no conflicts of interest. Throughout the research process, no financial, personal, or professional affiliations influenced the study findings' design, implementation, or reporting.

8.0 Acknowledgment

This undergraduate thesis was made possible through the invaluable contributions of many individuals. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Sr. Rita Nedtran, FdCC, Dean of the College of Nursing, for her inspiring leadership; Dr. Marc Lester F. Quintana, RN, for his exceptional mentorship; and Mrs. Vivian P. Lajara, RN, MAN, for her unwavering guidance and support as our Research Adviser. We also thank Mrs. Kathleen B. Corcolon, RN, MAN, Ms. Girlie Mannphy A. Lacambra, RN, RM, MAN, our content validators, intercoder, and participants for their cooperation and dedication. Our appreciation goes to Laguna Provincial Hospital – San Pablo City District Hospital for their assistance and our Batch 2025 classmates, friends, and families for their steadfast encouragement. Above all, we thank Almighty God for His guidance and blessings throughout this journey.

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College Students' Remote Learning Experiences in Functional English

Princess De C. Puntual^{*1}, Carly Mae J. Suico², Renato P. Yu, Jr.³

¹English and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department, Al Rawabi Private School, Jebelat Hebshi, Bahrain

²General Education Department, University of Cebu – METC, Cebu City, Philippines

³Ministry of Education, Murcia, Spain

*Corresponding Author Email: puntualprincessde007@gmail.com

Date received: January 8, 2025

Date revised: February 22, 2025

Date accepted: March 13, 2025

Originality: 90%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 10%

Recommended citation:

Puntual, P.D., Suico, C.M., Yu, R. (2025). College students' remote learning experiences in Functional English. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 159-171. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.009>

Abstract. This study probed into the lived experiences of purposely selected college students who learned Functional English remotely during the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021, at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This phenomenological study employed semi-structured focus group discussions (FGD) with thirty-one (31) students from a state university in the Cebu province. Data was evaluated using Colaizzi's method, leading to the development of five emerging themes: The Road Less Traveled: Shifting to the New Educational Setup; Deep and Lost in the Woods: Impediments in Teaching-Learning Functional English Remotely; Finding a Way or Making It: Perseverance Despite the Challenges in Learning Functional English; The Thrill of the Chase: Real Takeaways From Learning Functional English Remotely; and Charting the Less-Traveled Path: Suggestions for the Refinement of Functional English in the New Setup. The findings indicate that students faced opportunities and challenges while learning Functional English remotely. It suggests that colleges should hold webinars or training for instructors to make the subject more engaging for students, particularly in the new educational context. Teachers are advised to prioritize quality over quantity when assigning activities, enabling students to utilize English in relevant contexts. Additionally, teachers should consider favorable input before assigning tasks to students. Comprehensible input should be applied when designing activities and assignments, ensuring students can effectively engage with the material.

Keywords: Colaizzi's method; Educational setup; Functional English; Phenomenology; Remote learning.

1.0 Introduction

Teachers are essential in adapting to the changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, particularly in the education sector. With traditional face-to-face classes halted, institutions have shifted to remote learning methods, including online, modular, and blended formats. This transition is crucial for maintaining educational continuity while ensuring the safety of both students and teachers. Technology has become a vital bridge, allowing virtual education to flourish amid the challenges of the pandemic. The demand for online learning has surged, making it popular and necessary for students to continue their education during school closures.

On the other hand, the rapid implementation of e-learning tools has presented significant challenges. Schools and universities in the Philippines had to quickly adapt their curricula, ensuring that learning competencies were still met despite the abrupt switch. While e-learning tools have played a critical role in facilitating the teaching-learning process, their disconnection from real-world interactions has raised concerns about their effectiveness. Specifically, in the context of Functional English instruction, which integrates essential language skills, the lack of

face-to-face engagement hampers students' confidence and ability to present effectively. This shift can lead to issues with students' identities and personalities, as they miss out on the interpersonal dynamics that traditional classrooms provide.

Furthermore, the learning process is influenced by various factors, including access to technology and the learners' overall well-being. The new educational setup relies heavily on information and communications technology (ICT), which can create disparities for students lacking adequate resources. Emotional and social factors also play a significant role, as many students face psychological challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Teachers, too, were unprepared for this sudden shift. With these challenges, it is crucial to understand and explore how these college students navigate remote learning, especially in Functional English, which demands active engagement. This phenomenological study aims to investigate the lived experiences of students learning Functional English remotely, shedding light on their complexities and offering insights into how the new educational setup can be improved for better learning outcomes.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized qualitative research methods, specifically the descriptive phenomenological design, as it is considered the most appropriate for illuminating profound issues and providing insights that stimulate action. As a distinct research paradigm, qualitative methods offer multiple frameworks for exploring phenomena experienced by individuals. Jackson et al. (2007) described exploring and understanding social phenomena as a significant aspect of qualitative research. This study aimed to apprehend the lived experiences, stories, and narratives of selected college students who have experienced learning Functional English in an online format. Husserl's descriptive phenomenology was employed, allowing the researchers to describe the phenomenon and 'bracket' their biases. Bracketing involves setting aside personal experiences to view the phenomenon under investigation in a new light. This is a critical assumption of Husserl's approach, ensuring that the researchers do not impose their assumptions on the data collection or structure. The goal is to separate prior knowledge of the phenomenon from the informants' descriptions. Therefore, 'bracketing' or 'epoche' is essential for maintaining the validity of data collection and analysis while preserving the phenomenon's objectivity. Husserl believed that researchers' bracketing aids in gaining insight into the standard features of lived experiences (Reiners, 2012). The phenomenon of interest is learning Functional English as an elective course during the new normal, as experienced by selected college students. The study's philosophical assumption is ontological, espousing the idea of multiple realities as perceived by the informants. It also adopts a constructivist perspective, suggesting that a single event can be characterized by "multiple realities or interpretations" rather than a singular, observable reality.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at a state university in Cebu province, established in 1944, offering education and technology courses from first to fourth-year tertiary levels. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021 marked the university's transition to an online, flexible learning environment. Before this shift, the university provided various orientations for instructors and students. The learning management system (LMS) called Odilo was utilized during the first semester to upload and organize learning materials, facilitate the monitoring of online classes, and track student progress. In subsequent semesters, teachers could use any accessible online platform, such as Facebook Messenger, Google Classroom, and YouTube.

2.3 Research Participants

The study's population consisted of selected education students in their third year of college. These informants took the Functional English class in the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021, facilitated by a professor who had served at the university for over five years. The Functional English subject was conducted three hours per week over eighteen weeks to fulfill the semester's fifty-four-hour requirement. The professor used the unified syllabus and course pack provided for all university campuses, supplemented by their teaching techniques and approaches in the new educational setup. Since qualitative research does not typically predefine sample sizes, participants were selected until data saturation was reached, meaning no new information emerged (Sargeant, 2012). A sufficient number of informants is necessary to address the research question (Merriam, 2009). In this study, data saturation was achieved with 31 student-informants. Purposeful sampling involved selecting individuals with knowledge or experience in remote Functional English learning (Creswell, 2014). Selection

criteria included: a) taking Functional English as an elective course in the first semester of A.Y. 2020-2021, and b) completing the semester's requirements. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step method, which was aligned with Husserl's descriptive phenomenological design.

2.4 Research Instruments

This study employed an in-depth qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of informants learning Functional English remotely, emphasizing the researchers as the primary instruments in the process. As highlighted by Stewart (2010), the credibility of qualitative research significantly relies on the researchers' skills, particularly in phenomenological studies where in-depth interviews are crucial for eliciting detailed narratives. The researchers aimed to conduct interviews in a natural, conversational manner, fostering a safe environment that encourages informants to provide rich responses. This involved active listening, maintaining a clear line of questioning, and using body language to establish rapport. A researcher-made interview guide featuring open-ended questions was utilized during focus group discussions conducted via Zoom. The guide was validated by a panel comprising a data analyst with a Doctor of Philosophy degree, an internal member with a Doctor in Education from Cebu Normal University, and an external member holding a Doctor of Arts in Literature and Communication. Before the interviews, the study's rationale was explained to the informants, who provided informed consent. Semi-structured interviews, lasting 45 minutes to an hour, were audio-video recorded with the informants' permission and subsequently transcribed. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and informants completed a written form regarding their demographic data, stored separately from the interview transcripts to maintain privacy.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study followed a series of specific steps to obtain its results. A request letter was sent to the campus director, the head of instruction, and the chairman of the college of education to seek approval to conduct data collection for the research. Since the leading researcher is a part-time instructor at the university, she has already established rapport with the faculty and staff. After receiving the necessary permissions, data collection commenced after the first semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. At that point, Functional English had been integrated into the new normal and students had learned it remotely.

Pre-gathering Phase

Before the actual focus group discussion was done, the researchers made sure to acquire the ethics clearance for the study first. This phenomenological study is exempted from ethics review and was granted ethics clearance on February 22, 2021 by the Cebu Normal University Ethics Review Committee (CNU-ERC). Once the ethics clearance was granted, the informants were given a word document with three parts, 'PART I: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form', 'PART II: Demographic Profile for Research Informants', and 'PART III: Interview Guide'. This form was given to the prospective informants and a pre-recorded video explaining the study through the class group chat. The informants were then asked, but not obliged to watch the video and download the informed consent form. The prospective informants were free to refuse to participate in the study if they wished and did not have to give the researchers any reason why they did not want to participate. After watching the pre-recorded video and the students agreeing to participate, the prospective informants filled out the demographic profile in the second part of the informed consent form. The prospective informants were assured that no information from them would be disclosed outside of the research team. The earlier information would be locked in a zipped folder with a password. It was ensured that the students were allowed to ask further questions after completing the forms, signifying that they were interested in participating in the study. When the final informants were identified based on the selection criteria, the research informants then affixed their signatures to the consent form to formalize their participation in the study. The semi-structured interview questions for the focus group discussions were given to the selected informants beforehand to allow them to formulate initial answers before the interview. Before the interview, the students were assured of the confidentiality of the personal data and the interview results. The informants were also assured that the results would not affect their grades in the course subject they were with the primary researcher. The informants were also informed ahead of the schedule of the data gathering and were allowed to ask questions regarding the matter as the informants of the study.

During

The semi-structured, focus group interview (FGD) through Zoom was conducted using the semi-structured interview guide questions validated by the panel. In the actual FGD, the initial questions that were answered by the informants along with the informed consent form and demographic data were then asked again to gather more in-depth information. This study employed focus group discussion to collect data as it works best for topics that individuals could talk about in their everyday lives—but do not (Macnaghten & Myers, 2004). Because the informants are all enrolled in the same research environment, they are not strangers to one another. They may have discussed the phenomenon at some point, but not in-depth. A focus group is undoubtedly a poor choice for sensitive, intensely personal, and culturally inappropriate things to discuss in the presence of strangers. However, the current study delves into a non-sensitive topic in the company of familiar people. Therefore, holding the FGD would not be detrimental to what the study is trying to find out (Merriam, 2009). Each session of the FGD included at least three (3) students who share similar characteristics. The interview was conducted for 45 minutes to an hour by the principal researcher. To establish rapport, the interview flow started with the demographic questions, including the informants' background regarding their personal data and educational attainment. After the demographic questions and the informed consent reiterated, the researcher began with the actual interview questions when the rapport was established. Informants were encouraged to talk freely and tell stories using their own words. The interview process was made to sound as natural as possible to draw out more realistic experiences from the informants. They were allowed to answer the interview questions in English, Filipino, or Cebuano-Bisaya or a mix of the three to express themselves fully. A constructivist viewpoint underpins this data gathering process since the data obtained from a focus group is socially created within the group's interaction (Merriam, 2009). The goal is to collect high-quality data in a social setting where informants can analyze their perspectives in light of that of others without having to agree or reach any form of consensus (Patton, 2002). Informants are also not required to disagree with each other as the whole process is dependent on the group's dynamics.

Post-gathering Phase

The audio-video recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the information given by the college students was decoded based on the interview. Coding categories were defined by specific thoughts, phrases or patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016). This allowed the descriptive data to be organized in a user-friendly format for further study and evaluation. At the end of each interview, the researcher reminded the informants about her need for a second contact to discuss the study findings and to make sure that the study findings reflect their own experiences. Data saturation was reached with thirty-one (31) college education students. An expert researcher with qualitative research experience also double-checked the transcripts.

2.6 Data Analysis

Colaizzi's seven step process of meticulous analysis provides an extensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. This method depends upon deep first-person accounts of experience verified by the informants who lived it. The following steps represent Colaizzi's process for phenomenological data analysis as used in the study.

Making Sense or Acquiring Feeling for the Protocols

Each transcript was read several times to understand the fullness of the experience as described by each participant. Since the researcher allowed the informants to answer the interview questions in English, Filipino, or Cebuano-Bisaya to express themselves fully, the transcripts were translated by the researcher in a data-driven way. A multilingual (English, Filipino, and Cebuano-Bisaya languages) professional translator and editor validated the translations (Abalos et al., 2016).

Extracting Significant Statements

The researcher reviewed each transcript to “extract from them, phrases or sentences that directly pertain to the investigated phenomenon” (Creswell, 2014). The original transcription, which is a mix of English, Filipino, or Cebuano-Bisaya and their corresponding English translations, was arranged side by side in columns to verify the meaning of the data. Each transcription was analyzed after each interview, and English translations were coded or numbered consecutively. These statements were also recorded on a separate sheet noting their transcript, page, and line numbers.

Formulating Meanings

The third step is formulating the meanings or spelling out the meaning of each significant statement. In this step, the researcher leaps from what the informants say to find what they mean, thus making a “precarious leap”. Colaizzi further explained that in finding these formulated meanings, the researcher must discover and illuminate the hidden meanings considering the various contexts and horizons of the phenomenon described in the original transcript. Furthermore, the researcher “must not formulate meanings that have no connection with the data.” To remain faithful to this description, validation was sought from an expert researcher for the formulated meanings, themes, and the theme clusters that were described in the phenomenon being studied.

Organizing the Clusters of Themes

In this step, formulated meanings were organized into clusters of themes. The process of grouping all formulated meanings into categories that reflect a unique structure of clusters of themes was initiated. Each cluster of themes was coded to include all formulated meanings related to that group of meanings. After carefully reading and reviewing the meaning of the experiences of the study's informants, significant themes were regarded as the central themes of the study. To check the accuracy of the overall thematic map, validation was sought from an expert researcher in qualitative research.

Integration of Results into an Exhaustive Description

All emergent themes were defined and included in an exhaustive description at this analysis stage. After merging all study themes, a whole structure of the phenomenon was extracted. Thereafter, an expert researcher was sought to review the findings in terms of richness and completeness to provide sufficient description and to confirm that the exhaustive description reflects the experiences of the selected college students regarding their learning of Functional English remotely. Finally, a validation to this exhaustive description will be confirmed by the research supervisors or the panel (Shosha, 2012).

Formulation of Results into an Exhaustive Description

In this step, a reduction of findings was made, and redundant, misused, or overestimated descriptions were eradicated from the overall structure to identify the fundamental structure. This description was written as unequivocally as possible. To do this, the theme clusters and emergent themes were integrated to form the description.

Validation

The final step in Colaizzi’s method of data analysis is the validation of the findings using the “member checking” technique. This was done by returning the research findings to the informants and discussing the results. A second contact was made with the informants to ensure they were satisfied with the study findings because they reflected their experiences. A 1-hour Google Meet session was conducted by the study's principal researcher with the study informants to discuss the results with them. Out of 31 informants, only 20 could attend the validation due to conflict of schedules. However, since the session was recorded, those who could not attend were still allowed to view it and see the validation that transpired. If they have any clarification regarding the result, these informants were allowed to ask questions by sending the researchers a personal message. In validating the study results, all informants confirmed that their experiences were described accurately and in detail. They declared that no further changes or additions were needed in the study results.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Conflict of Interest

The informants in this study are the researcher's students in two Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) subjects, ED 319, ‘The Teacher and the School Curriculum,’ and ED 3110, ‘Building and Enhancing New Literacies Across the Curriculum.’ However, the researcher does not teach Functional English. There is no conflict of interest, as their participation in the study did not impact their final grades in ED 319 and ED 3110.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The informants were assured that no information about them would be shared with anyone outside of the research team and the information collected from this research project would be kept private. The informants were informed that any data and details about them would have a number and initial instead of their name. Only the

researchers would know their certain number and lock that information in a zipped folder with a password. These files would not be shared with or given to anyone except the research evaluators or panel. The knowledge the researchers would collect from this research would be shared with the informants before making it widely available to the public. The informants were informed that the study results would be published so that other interested people may learn from the research. Each informant would receive a summary of the results after the study is executed.

Informed Consent Process

The prospective informants were given a word document with three parts, 'PART I: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form', 'PART II: Demographic Profile for Research Informants', and 'PART III: Interview Guide'. This form was sent through the class group chat of the prospective informants along with a pre-recorded video explaining the study in a language the informants understand. The informants were then asked, but not obliged to watch the video and download the informed consent form. The prospective informants were free to refuse to participate in the study if they wished and did not have to give the researchers a reason why they did not want to participate. A period of 24 hours was given for the prospective informants to think over the presented information. The Information Sheet used the non-technical and straightforward words that include an introduction paragraph containing the name of the principal investigator, name of the organization, purpose and conduct of the study, risk and inconveniences, possible benefits for the informants, compensation, voluntariness of participation, confidentiality, and the contact person in case of queries. The informed consent form would only be signed by the informant along with the demographic profile after ensuring that the informant was already prepared for informed decision making. The informants affixed their signature at the bottom of the consent form confirming that they had read and understood the information sheet for the study and had the opportunity to ask questions. The research informants received a copy of the participant information sheet and the informed consent form.

Vulnerability

The prospective informants are 20-51 years old and are therefore entitled to decide whether to participate in the study. After having been fully informed of what would be asked of them, how the data would be used, and what benefits, compensation, or consequences there could be; the informants provided explicit, active, signed consent to taking part in the research, including understanding their rights to access to their information and the right to withdraw at any point.

Recruitment

The groups that were studied are similar in age and teaching styles used under the study. Prospective informants for this study were readily available since the prospective informants were the primary researcher's students for the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021, specifically in ED 319 and ED 3110 but not in Functional English.

Risks

There were no potential risks to the informants in participating in the research, other than the possible information the participant may deem personal. If the participant felt uncomfortable, they did not have to answer questions or participate in the interview. The informant did not have to give the researchers any reason for not responding to the interview or refusing to participate. The informant could also withdraw their provided data if they changed their mind. It also did not affect the informants' final grades for the current semester in ED 319 and ED 3110.

Benefits

There were no direct benefit to the research informants. However, their participation should help college instructors see things in the students' perspective with regards to learning Functional English in the new educational setup. As a result, college instructors as curriculum implementers will be driven to take initiative or act regarding the students' opportunities or struggles in learning Functional English in the new normal towards curriculum improvement.

Compensation

The informants were not provided any incentive to take part in the research. However, the researchers gave the informants simple tokens for the time and internet expenses they had to participate in the study. The researchers

value the informants' time, so when the prospective informant accepted to participate in the research, the informants were given tokens to express the researchers' gratitude for their participation.

2.7 Rigor of the Study

Research studies must be rigorously conducted to influence a field's practice or theory. These studies must present insights and conclusions accurately for readers, practitioners, and other researchers (Merriam, 2009). Several strategies were employed to ensure the study's validity and reliability, which depicted the situation in sufficient detail. This is for the readers to realize that the substance of this phenomenological investigation makes logical sense. This study conducted member checking, used rich, thick description to convey findings, clarified researchers' bias through reflexivity journal, and a prolonged time in the field of the phenomenon by the principal researcher. The transcripts were also checked for apparent errors, and made sure there were no ambiguities in the definition of codes (Creswell, 2014).

Member Checking

This was accomplished by returning the research findings to the informants and discussing them with them. A second contact was made to ensure that the informants were satisfied with the study findings as they mirrored their own experiences. All of the informants confirmed that their experiences were accurately and thoroughly described, and they declared that no further changes or additions were required in the study's results.

Rich, Thick Description to Convey Findings

Each emerging theme in the study was thoroughly characterized using significant literature and vignettes and then rationalized using relevant literature and studies.

Researcher's Position or Reflexivity

As explained earlier, bracketing eradicates any bias inherent in researcher beliefs and attitudes (Creswell, 2014). This means the researcher must avoid and separate any imposing of their own assumptions on the data collection process or the structure of the data in order to arrive at the pure essences or meanings of the experience. To avoid this occurrence, the main researcher wrote a reflexivity journal, which is a critical reflection that acknowledges her role in the research before interpreting the data.

Prolonged Time in the Field of the Phenomenon

The leading researcher also experienced the phenomenon as she is a teacher of Functional English in the same research environment. Therefore, the leading researcher has some understanding of the phenomenon. However, since reflexivity is used, the informants' experiences in the phenomenon under investigation are reported independently of the principal researcher's assumptions.

Transcripts Checked for Obvious Errors

The researchers manually transcribed the audio-video recordings taken on the day of the focus group interviews and read them several times to ensure that any evident flaws were corrected.

Transparency in the Definition of Codes

This was accomplished by constantly comparing data with the codes and by writing memos about the codes and their definitions repetitively until definite and relevant codes were constructed. A broad inquiry into informants' experiences in learning Functional English despite the new educational setup in the Philippines aided in identifying the transferability of the phenomenon. Specific characteristics of the shared lived experiences of these selected college students in learning Functional English in the new normal can also be generalized to learning any other subjects in the new normal. Some declarations about the professor's facilitation tactics and procedures that may have influenced the experiences of these informants may not apply to the experiences of those students who have a different professor, where the course is facilitated differently. However, specific assertions are more general, reflecting informants' perspectives that may be more transferable to college students who have also experienced the new educational arrangement, which is profoundly new in the Philippine educational system.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Five emergent themes originated from the twenty cluster themes to form the core of the study's findings, which faithfully represent the lived experience of the informants of this study. The following were the emergent themes, which were tagged with metaphorical terms to describe the informants' experiences as a whole: *The Road Less Traveled: Shifting to the New Educational Setup*, *Deep and Lost in the Woods: Impediments in Teaching-Learning Functional English Remotely*, *Finding a Way or Making It: Perseverance Despite the Challenges in Learning Functional English*, *The Thrill of the Chase: Real Takeaways From Learning Functional English Remotely*, *Charting the Less-Traveled Path: Suggestions for the Refinement of Functional English in the New Setup*. The informants' narratives thoroughly explained their lived experiences by extracting significant statements, constructing formulated meanings, and developing cluster and emerging themes. The following section describes the emergent themes based on informant narratives from the interview data.

The Road Less Traveled: Shifting to the New Educational Setup.

Informants reflected on their experiences learning Functional English in the new normal, often comparing it to their previous educational setup. Initially, they felt like adventurers at a crossroads: one path represented familiar in-person learning, while the other led to the uncharted territory of online education. During the COVID-19 crisis, informants recognized the necessity of navigating this new route, sharing diverse perspectives on their experiences. Many found online learning more convenient, citing access to unlimited resources that boosted their confidence in participating in English classes. However, they ultimately agreed that in-person education remains irreplaceable. As informants became accustomed to the online setup, they often reiterated its convenience. They felt empowered by its flexibility, allowing them to manage their time better while supporting their families during difficult times (Shurville et al., 2008). This perspective aligns with findings from Altuwairesh (2021) and Cole et al. (2014), who noted the convenience of online learning as a key benefit.

Conversely, some informants found traditional classrooms distracting due to noise and peers, while others struggled to create conducive learning environments at home (Altuwairesh, 2021; Rotas & Cahapay, 2020). The online setup also enabled them to conduct research efficiently, fostering reading, vocabulary, and grammar skills, which they felt made them more productive. McKeachie and Gibbs (1999) emphasized that effective online teaching requires access to technology, which supports this observation. The online environment also instilled greater confidence in shy students, facilitating participation without the pressure of in-person scrutiny (Altuwairesh, 2021; Sun & Chen, 2016).

However, some informants expressed concerns about the lack of face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers, asserting that in-person education is still vital for effective learning. They noted that specific lessons are better understood through a teacher's gestures and direct communication, as Kohnke and Jarvis (2020) highlighted the challenges of teaching skills without personal connection. Moreover, the absence of real-time interactions in group activities was a drawback of online learning. Informants reported difficulty focusing during online classes due to household distractions, echoing the findings from Rotas and Cahapay (2020) regarding balancing schoolwork and home responsibilities. These insights suggest that the transition from traditional to online learning cannot be seamless, as mastery of competencies may be compromised (Ogena et al., 2020). Despite the potential for e-learning to grow in importance, studies indicate it is unlikely to fully replace traditional classroom settings (Kulal & Nayak, 2020).

Deep and Lost in the Woods: Impediments in Teaching-Learning Functional English Remotely.

Informants shared various challenges while learning Functional English in the new educational setup. A lack of teacher guidance led to tasks being completed merely for compliance. They recognized personal learning difficulties, signal issues, and environmental distractions as key factors that diminished their enthusiasm for the subject. The teacher's absence was particularly detrimental; initial online meetings dwindled, leaving students to navigate tasks independently. As noted by Khan (2017), Rotas and Cahapay (2020), and Thumvichit (2020), reliance on text-based instructions can create confusion, especially for those with reading comprehension challenges.

The role of the instructor is critical in online education, as students expect guidance and facilitation (Ragan, 2015). Many informants indicated that communication was ineffective, often reduced to minimal interactions like

"waving" digitally. This lack of meaningful engagement resulted in a sense of detachment. The informants also struggled to seek help, frequently receiving no responses to their inquiries. This aligns with findings from Coman et al. (2020) and Rotas and Cahapay (2020), which noted that some professors provide inadequate learning support in online contexts. Delays in response can hinder student progress and contribute to dissatisfaction (Ragan, 2015).

Additionally, anxiety regarding their online schedules and tasks was another challenge, as informants often felt uncertain about expectations. They noted that links provided for resources were frequently broken or inaccessible, further complicating their learning experience. Such findings support Baticulon et al. (2020) and Ragan (2015), emphasizing the importance of clear communication of expectations. The absence of social interaction in class activities was also a concern, with tasks completed individually, limiting collaboration. Thumvichit (2020) highlighted the challenges of promoting communicative interactions in the current setup, while Kohnke and Jarvis (2020) noted that lack of two-way communication hampers effective teaching. Informants also faced personal learning challenges, such as speech difficulties and physical strain from prolonged screen time, which negatively impacted their performance. Bailey and Lee (2020) suggested that conversation classes may struggle under asynchronous learning conditions. Rotas and Cahapay (2020) noted that remote learning could jeopardize students' physical health, leading to eye strain and headaches.

In summary, the challenges identified by informants in their online classes contributed to negative perceptions of their learning experiences. Many reported completing tasks solely for compliance, feeling demotivated and pressured by the demands of online education, a sentiment echoed in studies by Coman et al. (2020), Kunarsi (2021), and Rotas and Cahapay (2020). The lack of balance between assigned tasks and available time and technological challenges has further complicated their learning journeys.

Finding a Way or Making It: Perseverance Despite the Challenges in Learning Functional English.

Despite facing challenges on their unfamiliar journey, informants persisted in learning Functional English. They attributed their resilience to their initiative and the camaraderie with classmates, fostering a determination to meet the demands of their online English class. Many expressed a newfound appreciation for English, mainly through engaging with level tasks they found compelling for their learning. Informants recognized that the rewards of this endeavor are accessible, but require courage and self-initiative. Some mentioned performing the viral TikTok flight attendant challenge as part of their assignments, which they found particularly difficult due to time constraints. They emphasized the importance of perseverance and maintaining a positive outlook when faced with challenges, echoing findings by Mallillin et al. (2021) that a strong desire to learn can help students overcome transitional difficulties.

These informants shared techniques for coping with remote learning, noting that taking initiative and collaborating with peers significantly impacted their success. They believed that many issues, particularly the lack of support from their Functional English teacher, could be addressed through self-discipline and initiative. Informants highlighted the necessity of self-directed learning, especially when their teacher was unavailable. They took responsibility for interpreting instructions and sought additional resources, such as educational videos, to overcome personal learning challenges. This aligns with the perspective of Pokhrel and Chhetri (2021), which indicates that students with a growth mindset can adapt more readily to new educational scenarios.

Despite the challenges posed by unclear instructions and limited teacher engagement, informants found ways to work independently and develop their skills. They emphasized that collaboration among classmates was crucial for understanding and completing tasks, reinforcing the importance of building a supportive online learning community (Sun & Chen, 2016). Informants acknowledged that their teacher's engagement heavily influenced the quality of their learning experience. They expressed that more explicit instructions and guidance would have enhanced their understanding and application of the course content, aligning with findings from Coman et al. (2020) regarding the need for effective teaching strategies in online environments.

Many informants reported that independent learning activities often involved applying higher-order thinking skills, helped them improve their vocabulary and writing abilities. They recognized that these activities prepared them for future challenges in a globalized world, supporting the notion that Functional English is essential for developing contemporary skills (Khan, 2017). Some informants noted a gradual improvement in their English

skills due to the emphasis on autonomous learning. They found a growing interest in tasks like creating conversation scripts, which encouraged them to read more and step outside their comfort zones. This aligns with Thumvichit (2020), emphasizing the need for students to enhance their communication skills actively. Overall, these informants transformed challenges into opportunities for growth, demonstrating their ability to adapt and thrive in a new learning environment.

The Thrill of the Chase: Real Takeaways From Learning Functional English Remotely.

Having navigated the unfamiliar path of learning Functional English, informants reflected on the significant influence of their experiences. They recognized that, regardless of whether they return to this path, they have gained valuable insights that will benefit their future teaching careers. They believe this journey has provided guidelines for future educators to establish effective communication with students while remaining technologically competent. Informants emphasized the importance of communication skills in becoming productive teachers, noting that they should model effective communication for their future students. They acknowledged that effective communication is crucial in teaching-learning, confirming Ragan's (2015) assertion about the importance of understanding discourse rules for effective online communication.

Moreover, the informants highlighted the necessity of learning higher-level English, as it aids their studies and future careers (Mahmood & Lohar, 2020). They viewed their learning experiences as essential preparation for providing a better teaching-learning process in the future. Most informants stated that their Functional English learning experience helped them clarify the type of teacher they aspire to be. They compared different teaching strategies encountered online to determine which would best serve their future students. This adaptability will give them an advantage in managing students in an increasingly digital educational landscape.

Many informants also recognized the importance of being digitally savvy, having learned to utilize various online tools and technologies. They believe this firsthand experience will enhance their teaching effectiveness and adaptability in the evolving educational field (Thumvichit, 2020). As they envision the future of education, informants consider the potential of digitally driven classrooms, where students may learn from home rather than traditional classrooms. They feel prepared for the challenges of future teaching roles, echoing Simon's (2012) view that teachers can transform their professional identities by embracing digital competencies. These insights align with Bada et al. (2016), who argue that universities must fully embrace technology in pedagogy to enhance the teaching-learning process. Overall, informants believe their experiences taught them that life is 10% what happens and 90% how they react, reinforcing the importance of adaptability and a positive mindset.

In facing the challenges of remote learning, informants learned the necessity of self-study when teachers are unavailable and emphasized the importance of maintaining enthusiasm for learning. They recognized that patience, responsibility, and good time management are key to overcoming obstacles in the new educational setup. These findings are consistent with research by Coman et al. (2020), Kunarsi (2021), and Rotas and Cahapay (2020), which highlighted students' difficulties in adjusting to new instructional schedules. Informants concluded that thriving in this environment requires responsible learning and proactive engagement, rather than complaints about assigned tasks.

Charting the Less-Traveled Path: Suggestions for the Refinement of Functional English in the New Setup.

Informants who have navigated the unfamiliar path of learning Functional English expressed a desire to prevent future students from feeling as lost as they once did. They offered suggestions for professors to enhance the online teaching of Functional English, effectively charting a map for future learners. These informants emphasized that professors teaching skill-based subjects like English should be more engaged, available, and considerate of their students. They believe increased teacher involvement is crucial for a successful teaching-learning process in the new educational setup. Ragan (2015) supports this by highlighting that proactive course management strategies can significantly improve the student learning experience.

One informant noted the importance of live discussions, stating that the absence of real-time interactions made it challenging to grasp the material. This finding aligns with Coman et al. (2020), who argue that videoconferencing can enhance understanding and information processing. Furthermore, fostering dialogue during live discussions

is essential for effective learning, as stated by another informant, echoing the need for teachers to humanize their teaching tactics (Pacansky Brock et al., 2020).

Informants also suggested that teachers clarify tasks and engage in meaningful conversations to build personal relationships. Thumvichit (2020) notes that professors often struggle to develop deeper relationships with students in asynchronous settings. Encouragement from teachers during challenging times, particularly regarding financial and personal issues, was also highlighted as vital for student morale (Kunarsi, 2021). To enhance the teaching-learning process, informants recommended that teachers explore alternative methods of lesson delivery, such as pre-recorded lecture videos. They found these resources more straightforward to learn from than live discussions, supporting the findings of Chung et al. (2020) that students prefer pre-recorded content over live sessions.

Recognizing teachers' various obligations, informants suggested that clear communication about scheduling conflicts is essential if live discussions are not possible. They stressed the importance of immediate feedback on assignments to identify areas for improvement. Doucet et al. (2020) emphasize that timely feedback is crucial for effective learning. Additionally, informants pointed out that strong guidance in Functional English is vital for their future careers. Mahmood and Lohar (2020) affirm that learning higher-level English significantly benefits students' academic and professional endeavors. These informants called for greater empathy and understanding between teachers and students, noting submission deadlines and internet access challenges. They suggested that teachers listen to students' concerns and offer flexibility.

Furthermore, informants advised teachers to establish a good mix of online discussions and assignments to ensure a balanced workload. They echoed the notion that students' basic needs, including reliable internet access, must be prioritized for effective online learning (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). The informants also recommended that teachers use clear, student-friendly language when giving instructions, as misunderstandings can lead to frustration (Khan, 2017). They emphasized collaboration and communication between professors and students, essential for fostering a sense of belonging online (Coman et al., 2020).

In conclusion, most informants suggested that teachers should create tasks that promote student collaboration to enhance speaking skills and make assignments more manageable. Thumvichit (2020) supports this by indicating that collaborative online learning can foster student connections, making learning more engaging and effective.

Implication

Presenting phenomenological data is an ethical endeavor to reflect informants' experiences accurately. Descriptive phenomenology focuses on describing rather than explaining, with bracketing used to maintain fidelity to the informants' perspectives. The informants, all students from the same state university in Cebu Province but from diverse degree programs and English language backgrounds, shared everyday experiences that revealed essential themes. The study's findings emphasize the need for improved teaching strategies and course delivery in Functional English. It highlights the importance of instructor involvement, availability, and compassion, especially in unfamiliar educational settings. In conclusion, the lived experiences of these college students in remote Functional English learning provide valuable insights. The emergent themes suggest that instructors, universities, and curriculum developers should evaluate and refine the online Functional English instruction course syllabus.

4.0 Conclusion

This phenomenological research highlights college students' lived experiences learning Functional English online, emphasizing several significant contributions. First, the study provides deep insights into the challenges and successes students encountered, revealing their perceptions of online learning and the critical role of instructors. The findings underscore the importance of instructor engagement, availability, and empathy; students noted that a supportive teacher significantly enhances their learning experience. Furthermore, the research advocates for improved teaching strategies, including clear communication of expectations, timely feedback, and diverse instructional tools, such as pre-recorded lectures and visual aids, to cater to different learning styles. It suggests prioritizing meaningful assignments that promote real-life applications of English rather than an excess of tasks that can lead to student frustration. Additionally, the research encourages educators to reflect on their practices

and adapt to the evolving educational landscape, recognizing the value of student feedback in shaping effective teaching strategies.

Based on these insights, institutions should prioritize teacher training to enhance online delivery methods and foster a supportive online learning environment. Educators are encouraged to implement diverse teaching strategies and focus on the quality of assignments to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. Future research should explore areas such as optimizing comprehensible input in online Functional English instruction, conducting a SWOT analysis of the challenges and opportunities in teaching this subject, and analyzing the role of Functional English skills in various professional contexts. By examining college students' written outputs through a functional approach, educators can better understand the application of English skills. These recommendations aim to inform curriculum development and teaching practices, ultimately enriching the educational experience in Functional English courses.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Each author's contributions significantly enhanced the research's quality and depth. Puntual, as the principal researcher, conducted the interviews, ensuring that the informants' voices were accurately captured. She also transcribed and translated the manuscripts from Cebuano-Bisaya to English, facilitating a clear understanding of the data for a broader audience. Additionally, Puntual conducted member checking interviews, allowing informants to validate the findings and ensuring authenticity in the representation of their experiences. Suico played a crucial role in extracting significant statements from the data, carefully editing and finalizing the formulated meanings to ensure clarity and coherence. This meticulous attention to detail helped refine the interpretations of the informants' experiences. Finally, Yu organized the clusters of themes emerging from the data, integrating these results into a comprehensive description that encapsulated the essence of the findings. This systematic approach provided a structured framework for understanding the complexities of the informants' lived experiences in learning Functional English. Together, these contributions created a well-rounded and insightful exploration of the phenomenon.

6.0 Acknowledgment

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported me throughout my research journey.

To my mentors, thank you, Dr. Monique E. Cordova, my adviser, for your patience, guidance, and motivation. Your belief in my abilities inspired me to persevere. I am also grateful to Dr. Remedios C. Bacus, my panel chair, for your critical feedback and encouragement during the revision process. Thanks to Dr. Amelia M. Bonotan, my data analyst and mentor, for your expertise in methodology, which made the research more manageable. Dr. Rivika C. Alda, I appreciate your insights on improving my paper and your recognition of my efforts. I thank Dr. Roselyn T. Bustos for your compassion and positivity, which fostered my growth as an individual and a teacher.

To my family – my mother Erlinda, father Diosdado, sister Doline, and brother Dodge – thank you for your unwavering support and understanding during my hectic schedule. I promise to make up for the time we missed.

To my friends, especially Jeshanyan, thank you for listening to my frustrations and encouraging me to take breaks; your support means the world to me.

Lastly, I extend my deepest gratitude to my God, whom I am indebted to for guiding me through this journey.

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Utilization of School MOOE and Its Effect on Teachers' Welfare and Development

Kem Berly C. Abio^{*1}, Mercy Sol S. Alberto², Flordeliza A. Abecia³,
Marie Gold C. Alonsabe⁴, Olga C. Alonsabe⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Department of Education, Capitol University, Cagayan De Oro City, Philippines

³Valencia City Colleges, Inc., Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: kemberlyabio@gmail.com

Date received: December 19, 2024

Date revised: February 23, 2025

Date accepted: March 14, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Abio, K.B., Alberto, M.S., Abecia, F., Alonsabe, M.G., Alonsabe, O. (2025). Utilization of school MOOE and its effect on teachers' welfare and development. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 172-180.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0689>

Abstract. This study evaluated the perceptions of 200 public school teachers in the Talakag district of Bukidnon regarding the utilization of school Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) and their welfare and development. A descriptive-correlational design was employed to analyze the relationship between the perceived levels of MOOE utilization in areas including the School Improvement Plan, instructional materials, utilities, and school-based training, as well as how instructors view their own professional growth. Results indicated a significant positive correlation between MOOE utilization and teachers' welfare ($Rho = 0.658$, $p = 0.022$). High mean scores in school-based training and instructional supplies reflected that effective MOOE allocation enhanced teachers' professional growth and satisfaction. The findings emphasized the importance of strategic resource allocation in promoting educational outcomes and supported the need for ongoing evaluations to optimize MOOE usage. This research contributed valuable insights into the critical link between financial resource management and the overall effectiveness of teaching in the educational landscape.

Keywords: Financial management; MOOE utilization; Teachers' welfare and development.

1.0 Introduction

Teachers are at the forefront of the educational system, playing a critical role in shaping student outcomes and overall school effectiveness. However, the efficiency of public educational institutions, particularly in terms of the appropriate allocation and utilization of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), presents a significant challenge. MOOE funding is intended to support various operational needs within schools, but its effectiveness remains under scrutiny, particularly regarding its impact on teaching quality and student development. In the Philippine educational system, teachers are pivotal in shaping student outcomes and enhancing overall academic effectiveness. A critical element influencing their ability to fulfil this role is allocating and utilizing the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) designated for public schools. While MOOE is intended to support various operational needs—including instructional materials, utilities, and professional development—the challenges surrounding its effective allocation and use remain significant. Discrepancies between the allocated funds and their implementation raise concerns about the impact on teachers' welfare and professional growth.

Recent literature underscores the essential nature of MOOE in fostering an effective learning environment. Studies by Balagosa and Arnejo (2023) and Magno (2019) illustrate how prudent MOOE management improves teaching quality and learning outcomes. Similarly, a study by Tagoranao (2024) highlights the impact of MOOE allocation on teacher satisfaction and student engagement. However, these studies also reveal significant gaps in understanding how teachers perceive and utilize these funds. Despite research by Arevalo et al. (2020) documenting the correlation between educational resource allocation and teacher welfare, there remains a paucity of exploration regarding how MOOE utilization affects educators' professional development.

Furthermore, although recent increases in government funding for education have been notable, the effectiveness of the MOOE in promoting sustainable teacher welfare and growth necessitates further examination. A study by Cruz et. al (2023) assessed MOOE utilization concerning instructional practices but did not delve deeply into its implications for teachers' perceptions and development. In this context, the need to assess how teachers perceive MOOE utilization in critical areas—such as school-based training, instructional supplies, utilities, and the alignment with the School Improvement Plan (SIP)—is paramount.

This study addresses these gaps by assessing the effectiveness of MOOE in resource management for public education, focusing on how these funds are utilized in school-based training, instructional supplies, utilities, and comprehensive development plans. Our research aims to illuminate the relationship between MOOE allocation and teacher welfare and student outcomes. By investigating the correlation between the perceived levels of MOOE utilization and teachers' perceptions regarding their welfare and development, we hope to provide valuable insights that can inform policy decisions to improve educational practices.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. This design is beneficial in educational research as it enables the systematic data collection to assess relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014). According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2019), descriptive-correlational studies are adept at exploring the population's characteristics and the existence and strength of relationships among variables within that population. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of public-school teachers' perceptions regarding utilizing Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) and its impact on their welfare and development. This approach was deemed appropriate as it facilitated the systematic collection of data regarding the perceived level of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) utilization among public school teachers. It allowed for exploring relationships between MOOE utilization and teachers' welfare and development.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was carried out in the Talakag Districts of Bukidnon, Philippines. This locale comprises various public schools operating under the jurisdiction of the Division of Bukidnon, providing a diverse context for examining MOOE utilization amid the distinct challenges educators and administrators face in resource allocation.

2.3 Research Participants

The total population of elementary teaching personnel in the Talakag Districts was 200 public school teachers. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different grade levels and subject areas, thereby mitigating biases and allowing for a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions of MOOE utilization.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study utilized a modified questionnaire based on the framework established by Balagosa and Arnejo (2023) to gather quantitative data on perceived levels of MOOE utilization and its impact on teachers' performance. To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, the following steps were taken:

Pilot Testing: A pilot test was conducted with a sample of teachers outside the main sample group. This initial testing provided critical insights into whether the questions effectively captured the intended constructs (Given, 2008).

Reliability Assessment: The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, a widely accepted measure that assesses the internal consistency of survey instruments (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is acceptable for research purposes. This statistical analysis allowed the researchers to determine if the questionnaire items consistently measured the same underlying concept.

Validity Assessment: Content validity was established through expert review, involving educators and researchers who provided feedback on the relevance and clarity of the questionnaire items. Furthermore, construct validity was ensured by aligning the items with the theoretical framework used in the study, as supported by the literature on MOOE and its impact on teacher welfare (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Employing these methodologies, the study aimed to ensure that the instrument accurately measures teachers' perceptions of MOOE utilization and its effects on their welfare and development.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study utilized specific steps to ensure the effective collection of data. Following the development of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with a subset of teachers outside the primary sample to ensure reliability and validity. Feedback from the pilot test informed necessary revisions to the instrument. Data collection occurred through the structured questionnaire, which included closed-ended questions employing a Likert scale to quantify responses regarding MOOE utilization and teachers' welfare.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any point without facing any repercussions. The study also adhered to all necessary ethical standards and approval processes established by the relevant Institutional Ethics Committee.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Utilization of School MOOE

Table 1 summarizes the perceptions of teachers regarding the utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) for school-based training, using specific indicators rated on a Likert scale. The highest-rated indicator was “Annual school-based trainings conducted using MOOE funds for meals and materials,” which received a mean score of 3.72 (SD = 0.57), indicating that teachers consistently perceive these trainings as well-managed and adequately funded. Close behind, the indicator concerning “Teachers being allotted reimbursement travel claims for trainings” achieved a mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.60), reflecting positive perceptions of financial support for travel to training sessions, highlighting the importance of such funding in promoting teacher professional development.

Table 1. *Utilization of School MOOE in terms of School-Based Training*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Notices of trainings and capacity buildings were promptly relayed.	3.36	0.82	Always	Highly Utilized
2. Teachers were allotted reimbursement travel claim for trainings.	3.58	0.60	Always	Highly Utilized
3. MOOE included co-curricular activities, such as Boy Scouts of the Philippines and Girl Scouts of the Philippines school and district activities.	3.25	0.88	Often	Moderately Utilized
4. Annual school-based trainings were conducted using MOOE funds for meals and materials.	3.72	0.57	Always	Highly Utilized
5. Professional development for teachers like DepEd-sponsored short courses was included in MOOE.	3.46	0.73	Always	Highly Utilized
Overall Mean	3.47	0.72	Always	Highly Utilized

The results indicate a substantial utilization of MOOE for school-based training, with an overall mean of 3.47. This finding is significant as it aligns with recent studies emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development for teachers (Garcia et al., 2023; Pineda et.al., 2022). The high score (3.72) for well-managed annual training sessions indicates that adequate financial support contributes positively to professional development activities. Hence, strategic allocation and effective communication about training opportunities can enhance teacher satisfaction and effectiveness (Ferrer et. al, 2023).

Table 2 highlights the utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) for instructional supplies in the Talakag districts of Bukidnon. The highest-rated indicator was the allocation of instructional materials requested by teachers, which received a mean score of 3.39 (SD = 0.73), categorized as "Highly Utilized." This underscores the essential role of access to instructional materials in enhancing teaching effectiveness, aligning with existing research that emphasizes resource availability's importance in improving educational outcomes (Magno, 2019). Additionally, two other indicators, focused on allocations for graduation rites and small capital expenditures for instructional supplies, scored 3.38, demonstrating a commitment to supporting school events and fostering a positive school culture, which is crucial for student motivation and community engagement.

Table 2. *Utilization of School MOOE in terms of Instructional Materials*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. The teacher readily prepared visual aids because of the available school supplies.	3.14	0.96	Often	Moderately Utilized
2. Requests for instructional materials from teachers were allocated to the MOOE.	3.39	0.73	Always	Highly Utilized
3. Expenses about graduation rites, moving up, or closing ceremonies, and recognition activities were allocated.	3.38	0.74	Always	Highly Utilized
4. Reproduction of teacher-made activity sheets or exercises were included in the MOOE.	3.3	1.00	Always	Highly Utilized
5. Small capital expenditure items worth PhP15,000 and below for instructional supplies were procured.	3.38	0.84	Always	Highly Utilized
Overall Mean	3.32	0.85	Always	Highly Utilized

The results show a mean score of 3.32, suggesting that MOOE for instructional materials is highly utilized. The positive implications of resource availability for teaching efficacy are supported by recent findings highlighting the connection between adequate resources and improved student learning outcomes (Cruz et. al, 2023). However, the lower score for visual aids (3.14) indicates a need for enhancing access to these instructional materials, which is essential for fostering student engagement and understanding (Ronquillo et.al, 2020). Effective utilization of visual aids is critical for enhancing student comprehension (Shabiralyani, 2015). While the overall positive scores indicate effective resource management, enhancing the preparation and accessibility of visual aids can strengthen instructional effectiveness and align with DepEd's goals for educational reform aimed at creating a more effective and equitable system.

Table 3 assesses Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) utilization regarding utilities in Philippine schools, highlighting several key indicators related to infrastructure and operational effectiveness. The highest-rated indicator was the replacement and repair of broken bulbs and electrical issues, with a mean score of 3.55 (SD = 0.74), emphasizing the importance of maintaining functional learning environments for student engagement. Access to potable water scored 3.52 (SD = 0.76), and the availability of water for handwashing received 3.54 (SD = 0.63), both categorized as "Highly Utilized," underscoring the focus on health and hygiene in schools. Additionally, regular safety inspections achieved a mean of 3.48 (SD = 0.83), demonstrating proactive risk management. However, Wi-Fi connectivity scored lower at 3.16 (SD = 0.84), indicating moderate utilization and revealing a crucial area for improvement, especially given the growing reliance on technology for education. Overall, with a mean score of 3.45 (SD = 0.76), the findings suggest effective utility management in schools, but addressing connectivity issues is vital for enhancing educational delivery and equity in learning opportunities.

Table 3. *Utilization of School MOOE in terms of Utilities*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Broken bulbs and electrical problems in the classrooms were replaced and repaired.	3.55	0.74	Always	Highly Utilized
2. Potable water is continuously supplied for everybody.	3.52	0.76	Always	Highly Utilized
3. Water for handwashing (WINS) and other uses is continuously supplied in the school.	3.54	0.63	Always	Highly Utilized
4. Wi-Fi connectivity in the school for faster and smooth transactions, and for online classes and virtual meetings was observed.	3.16	0.84	Often	Moderately Utilized
5. Conduct an inspection from the Bureau of Fire and Protection or an electrical engineer or a lineman was regular and adhered to.	3.48	0.83	Always	Highly Utilized
Overall Mean	3.45	0.76	Always	Highly Utilized

The data reveals an overall mean of 3.45 for utilities, indicating effective essential infrastructure management. Access to reliable utilities is crucial, linked to overall learning environments. Although the scores for essential services like water and electricity were high, the lower score for Wi-Fi connectivity (3.16) points to a significant area requiring improvement, particularly as digital resources become increasingly essential in education (Grupo, 2024).

The analysis of Table 4 reveals positive trends in utilizing Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) concerning the School Improvement Plan (SIP) among 200 teachers in the Talakag District of Bukidnon, indicating effective resource management practices. The highest-rated indicator was the involvement of stakeholders such as parents, local government representatives, student leaders, NGOs, and instructors in crafting the SIP, scoring 3.93 (SD = 0.26). This high level of collaboration reflects the importance of community engagement in educational governance, as Guzman (2022) emphasized. Furthermore, the rigorous adherence to specified expenses and alignment of financial management with the SIP were also evident, with mean scores of 3.74 (SD = 0.44) and 3.68 (SD = 0.47), respectively, highlighting transparency and accountability in resource allocation (Gaspar et.al., 2022).

Table 4. Utilization of School MOOE in terms of SIP- Programs, Projects and Activities (PPAs)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Only expenses specified in the SIP were paid from the MOOE.	3.74	0.44	Always	Highly Utilized
2. The amount of a particular expense to be disbursed from the MOOE is by the SIP.	3.68	0.47	Always	Highly Utilized
3. Programs and activities aligned to the students and teachers' needs and development.	3.58	0.65	Always	Highly Utilized
4. The SIP prioritized needs and procurement.	3.3	0.46	Always	Highly Utilized
5. Stakeholders, including parents, representatives of local government units, student leaders, representatives of nongovernment organizations, and teachers, were present during the crafting of the School Improvement Plan.	3.93	0.26	Always	Highly Utilized
Overall Mean	3.65	0.46	Always	Highly Utilized

The results showcase an overall mean of 3.65 for using MOOE in SIP, reinforcing the essential role of community and stakeholder engagement in school governance (Gaspar et.al., 2022). The high rating for collaboration in crafting the SIP (3.93) corroborates recent literature emphasizing shared responsibility as critical to effective educational improvement (Gulac, 2023). However, a slight dip in the score for prioritization (3.30) suggests a need for better alignment of resources with specific educational goals, which could enhance the efficacy of improvement initiatives. The emphasis on collaboration among various stakeholders not only enhances shared ownership of educational strategies but also ensures that the insights of community members are incorporated into school improvement efforts. However, a slightly lower mean score of 3.30 (SD = 0.46) for prioritization and procurement indicates potential areas for enhancement, as effective integration of these processes could further streamline resource allocation and optimize program effectiveness. Therefore, maintaining strong alignment between planning and operational practices is essential for achieving educational goals and fostering sustainable growth in the Philippine educational system.

Table 5 presented the overall utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) by schools in the Talakag district, Bukidnon, highlighting the prioritization of activities in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as the most utilized resource, with a mean score of 3.65 (SD = 0.46), reflecting a strong commitment to systematic school improvement practices among educators, as supported by Ondong (2024). School-based training followed closely with a mean score of 3.53 (SD = 0.72), indicating consistent professional development to enhance teaching effectiveness and student outcomes (Pineda et.al., 2022). The effective management of utilities scored 3.45 (SD = 0.76), while instructional materials received a mean score of 3.32 (SD = 0.85), collectively resulting in an overall mean of 3.49 (SD = 0.70), categorizing MOOE utilization as "Highly Utilized."

Table 5. Overall Utilizations of School MOOE

Variables	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. School-Based Trainings	3.53	0.72	Always	Highly Utilized
2. Instructional Materials	3.32	0.85	Always	Highly Utilized
3. Utilities	3.45	0.76	Always	Highly Utilized
4. School Improvement Plan- PPAs	3.65	0.46	Always	Highly Utilized
Overall Mean	3.49	0.70	Always	Highly Utilized

These results underscore the strategic prioritization of activities within the SIP, aligning resources with educational goals, and indicating that Talakag teachers effectively implement practices to enhance school performance. The connection between school-based training and instructional materials suggests a beneficial cycle of professional growth leading to improved teaching resources and methods. At the same time, well-managed utilities are committed to maintaining a conducive learning environment (Ondong, 2024). However, the slightly lower mean score for instructional materials indicates an opportunity for improvement, suggesting a need for more accessible and diverse resources to cater to various learning styles (Pineda et al., 2022). Engaging continually with stakeholders such as parents and local government can further enrich the educational environment, and the teachers' commitment in Talakag lays a solid foundation for ongoing improvement toward achieving educational goals in the region.

3.2 Teachers' Perceived Level of Welfare and Development

Table 6 presented data from 200 teacher-respondents in the Talakag district of Bukidnon regarding their perceptions of utilizing Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) for their welfare and professional development. The most substantial perceived support came from funding for travel expenses, meals, accommodation, and incidental allowances for teachers participating in DepEd-initiated activities, with a mean score of 4.78 (SD = 0.42), categorized as "Strongly Agree" or "Very High Extent," indicating that teachers feel well-supported in logistical aspects of professional development initiatives. Following closely was the allocation of MOOE for ICT resources and educational equipment, which achieved a mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.70) and was similarly rated "Strongly Agree." Training activities for pedagogical retooling scored highly with a mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.74), emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional training. Conversely, lower-scoring indicators—still rated "Agree" or "High Extent"—related to immediate support for teacher welfare, such as funding for reproducing teacher-made test papers (3.97, SD = 0.95) and training for sports officiating (3.77, SD = 0.67). A moderate score of 3.80 (SD = 0.85) for research and technology training signifies recognition of its importance, albeit with less enthusiasm. Overall, the favorable mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.71) reflects teachers' positive perceptions of MOOE funding initiatives to enhance their welfare and professional growth.

Table 6. Teachers' Perceived Level in terms of Welfare and Development

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. MOOE is utilized to finance teachers' training activities for pedagogical retooling and professional development.	4.26	0.74	Strongly Agree	Very High Extent
2. MOOE is utilized to finance expenses for seminars and workshops.	4.25	0.61	Strongly Agree	Very High Extent
3. MOOE is utilized to finance instructional materials like CGs, TGs, and other supplemental materials needed.	4.00	0.81	Agree	High Extent
4. MOOE is utilized to finance the purchase of ICT resources and educational equipment.	4.28	0.7	Strongly Agree	Very High Extent
5. MOOE is utilized to finance the reproduction of teacher-made test papers during school-based testing programs.	3.97	0.95	Agree	High Extent
6. MOOE is utilized to finance trainings of coaches and officiating officials for athletic meets and sports events.	3.77	0.67	Agree	High Extent
7. MOOE is utilized to finance training of teachers in research undertakings and technological advancements.	3.8	0.85	Agree	High Extent
8. MOOE is utilized to finance training of teachers on essential life support and first aid for DRRM purposes.	4.14	0.75	Agree	High Extent
9. MOOE is utilized to finance teacher training on guidance and counseling as well as child protection policies.	4.13	0.62	Agree	High Extent
10. MOOE is utilized to finance travelling expenses, meals, accommodation, and incidental allowances for teachers conducting DepEd-initiated activities.	4.78	0.42	Strongly Agree	Very High Extent
Overall Mean	4.14	0.71	Agree	High Extent

This awareness underscores the value teachers in Talakag place on MOOE's impact, particularly in travel and ICT support which aligns with existing literature emphasizing resource allocation's role in enhancing educators' competencies (Cruz et. al, 2023). Building on these strengths—especially in training areas like guidance, research, and instructional materials—could lead to better alignment between professional development initiatives and teachers' needs, fostering a more robust educational framework. Furthermore, maintaining high levels of support while addressing contextual needs is essential for advancing educators' welfare and professional growth, particularly in light of challenges unique to Filipino teachers (Acosta, 2018).

3.3 Comparative Analysis on the Utilization of MOOE as Perceived by Teachers and Teachers' Welfare and Development

Table 7 presented a comparative analysis of the use of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) related to teachers' welfare and development among 200 respondents in the Talakag district, Bukidnon, revealing several significant issues. The highest mean score of 3.53 (t-value = 4.62835, $p = 0.023$) was observed for school-based training, indicating a strong sentiment among teachers that such training, likely funded by MOOE, was crucial for enhancing their professional capabilities and overall well-being. Closely following was the prioritization of activities within the School Improvement Plan, which garnered a mean of 3.65 (t-value = 3.28594, $p = 0.030$), suggesting that teachers believed this systematic approach could positively impact their development. Additionally, a significant connection was noted between the perceived utilization of MOOE for instructional materials (mean = 3.32, t-value = 6.02886, $p = 0.021$) and overall teacher welfare, underscoring the importance of adequate resources for effective teaching practices. The role of reliable utilities was also emphasized, achieving a mean of 3.45 (t-value = 4.87026, $p = 0.015$), as teachers recognized their necessity for daily operations.

Table 7. *Comparative Analysis on the Utilization of MOOE as Perceived by Teachers and Teachers' Welfare and Development*

Variables	Mean	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
School-Based Trainings	3.53	4.62	0.023	Significant
Instructional Materials	3.32	6.02	0.021	Significant
Utilities	3.45	4.87	0.015	Significant
School Improvement Plan- prioritization of activities	3.65	3.28	0.030	Significant

This consistent significance across various dimensions illustrated that the allocation of MOOE profoundly influenced teachers' perceptions of their well-being and development, providing a strategic framework for educational authorities to enhance support initiatives. The findings highlight that MOOE utilization carries substantial implications for teaching efficacy and professional growth, aligning with Chen et.al (2021)'s assertion that investing in systematic training and resources is vital for nurturing a productive learning environment. The significant relationships between MOOE allocations and teachers' perceptions emphasize the need for targeted funding, which could empower teachers and improve their overall satisfaction and output. Thus, educational policymakers should consider these insights when planning resource allocation, focusing on areas like school-based training, instructional materials, and utility enhancements to foster teacher morale and effectiveness, as noted by Bantugan, et. al (2023) Prioritizing MOOE utilization in these domains not only addresses immediate needs but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of educational quality in the Philippines.

Table 8's study highlights the connection between 200 teacher respondents' perceptions of their own welfare and professional growth and their utilization of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) in the Talakag district of Bukidnon, revealing a correlation coefficient (Rho) of 0.658, indicating a strong positive relationship between effective MOOE utilization and teachers' welfare and development. With a level of significance at 0.05 and a p-value of 0.022, the results were statistically significant, suggesting that improved MOOE utilization positively enhances teachers' perceptions of their welfare and development, thus highlighting the need for effective allocation of MOOE to foster a supportive environment that promotes professional growth and satisfaction.

Table 8. *Relationship between the Utilization of MOOE and the Teachers' Welfare and Development*

Correlates	Rho	p-value	Interpretation
Utilization of MOOE	0.658	0.022	Significant
Teachers' Welfare and Development			

This correlation underscored the importance of adequate funding in fulfilling teachers' needs and enhancing the overall educational environment, as teachers benefitted from well-utilized MOOE through improved training opportunities, necessary instructional materials, and enhanced working conditions essential for their development. According to Reyes (1997), supporting literature underscores how financial resources significantly impact teacher efficacy and ultimately influence educational outcomes. The findings suggest that strategic investment in MOOE could considerably enhance educators' perceptions of their welfare and development, urging educational authorities to prioritize effective resource allocation aligned with teachers' development objectives. Training programs, for instance, could significantly improve teaching capabilities, as emphasized by Mur Ray (2010), who stressed the importance of proper funding for professional development initiatives.

Additionally, the correlation invites exploration into specific areas of MOOE utilization that yield the most substantial positive outcomes, providing insights for targeted funding and initiatives. Continuous assessment of resource allocation, as noted by Ondong (2024), could lead to more tailored support for teachers, ensuring that their needs are met and reinforcing the necessity of effectively using financial resources to prioritize teachers' welfare, thereby nurturing an environment conducive to both teacher and student growth.

4.0 Conclusion

The findings of this study emphasize that improving teachers' welfare and professional growth relies on the efficient use of Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) in the Talakag district of Bukidnon. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between various dimensions of MOOE utilization – such as school-based training, instructional supplies, utilities, and the School Improvement Plan – and teachers' perceptions of their welfare and development. Teachers reported favorable opinions regarding the allocation of MOOE for training and instructional materials, highlighting that perceived effective financial resource management significantly enhances their professional growth, morale, and overall job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study identified impactful areas of MOOE utilization, underscoring the necessity for ongoing assessment and strategic resource allocation to optimize educational outcomes. Future research could explore the long-term effects of MOOE on teaching practices and student achievement and examine best resource allocation practices that could be employed in similar educational contexts. Ultimately, ensuring the effective use of MOOE is essential for creating a supportive environment that fosters both teacher and student development, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of the educational system in the division.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors indicate equal contribution to each section. The authors reviewed and approved the final work.

Kem Berly C. Abio: Contributed to the conception and design of the study, conducted the literature review, developed the research instrument, and wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. She is responsible for coordinating data collection and facilitating communication among team members.

Mercy Sol S. Alberto: Participated in the conception and design of the study. Assisted in data analysis and interpretation, providing insights into the findings. Mercy also contributed to the writing of specific sections of the manuscript and was involved in the revision process to enhance the clarity and coherence of the final document.

Flordeliza A. Abecia: Engaged in the conception and design of the research project, as well as the development of the research instrument. Flordeliza played a key role in analyzing the data and contributed to writing the results and discussion sections. She also participated in the manuscript revision process to ensure accuracy and adherence to publication standards.

Marie Gold C. Alonsabe: Contributed to the research design and methodology, providing expertise in the formation of the questionnaire and data gathering procedures. Marie Gold was involved in the statistical analysis of the data and played a vital role in drafting the discussion and conclusion sections of the manuscript, as well as revising the manuscript for clarity and organization.

Dr. Olga C. Alonsabe: Oversaw the overall project development and provided guidance in the research design and methodology. Dr. Olga contributed significant expertise in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Additionally, she assisted in the revision of the manuscript, offering critical feedback and ensuring the adherence to academic standards throughout the writing process.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declares that they have no conflicts of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to thank the Almighty Father, the source of everything and who made this study possible. The researchers would like to express her sincere gratitude to their adviser, Dr. Olga C. Alonsabe for sharing her expertise, guidance, and valuable suggestions throughout all stages of the work which have contributed greatly to the improvement of their study. They are also grateful to all of those with whom that has the pleasure to work during throughout this journey, and other related projects. They are thankful to their families whose love and guidance are with them in whatever they endeavoured.

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Examining the Impact of Administrators' Support Systems on Teachers' Instructional Competence in the New Normal Era

Jomary P. Nagdaparan*, Mariel E. Nagdaparan

Kulaman Elementary School, Department of Education, Arakan, North District, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: foesgrina@cfcst.edu.ph

Date received: February 3, 2025

Date revised: February 24, 2025

Date accepted: March 14, 2025

Originality: 95%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 5%

Recommended citation:

Nagdaparan, J., Nagdaparan, M. (2025). Examining the impact of administrators' support systems on teachers' instructional competence in the new normal era. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 181-192.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.057>

Abstract. A coordinated administrative approach in managing human resources, ensuring that teaching staff is well-supported and adequately trained, is paramount. This study investigates the relationship between administrators' support systems and the instructional competence of teachers in the context of the new normal education. Specifically, it explores: (1) the level of administrative support provided by school leaders, (2) the instructional competence of teachers, and (3) the influence of administrative support on teachers' performance. A quantitative, descriptive-correlational approach was employed, involving 10 school heads and 50 teachers from public elementary schools in the Arakan North District, utilizing complete enumeration sampling, weighted mean, Pearson's r , and multiple regression analysis. Findings indicate that school administrators demonstrate high competency in managing staffing needs, particularly socio-emotional and teaching skills. Furthermore, staffing plans and identifying staffing needs significantly influence teachers' instructional competence, particularly in teaching approaches. Teachers were found to exhibit competent teaching skills, with teaching approaches and cognitive skills being strongly influenced by administrators' efforts in staffing. School heads' proactive involvement in personnel planning and resource allocation is crucial for continuously improving instructional practices. It suggests that administrators focus on identifying staffing needs, aligning personnel planning with organizational goals, and utilizing available resources to enhance the professional development of teachers. These insights can guide school administrators in strategically improving instructional quality.

Keywords: Administrators' support system; Instructional competence; New normal education; Teachers' performance; Staffing plan.

1.0 Introduction

Educational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping effective policies and ensuring the overall success of schools. School principals and administrators are central in establishing learning environments that foster student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Walker & Qian, 2015). Across various educational systems, school leadership has been increasingly recognized as a key determinant of school performance, with administrators bearing the responsibility of implementing policies, overseeing teaching strategies, and ensuring the availability of resources. Strong leadership within schools contributes to higher levels of student engagement, teacher motivation, and academic achievement (Hallinger, 2013). As educational institutions strive for continuous

improvement, the role of school administrators in shaping instructional quality has garnered widespread attention.

Effective school leadership is often linked to national and international efforts to enhance education systems. Governments worldwide have implemented various educational reform policies, emphasizing the role of administrators in driving student success. One notable example is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 in the United States, which sought to improve school performance through increased accountability and leadership-driven interventions (Gentilucci, 2007). Similarly, in developing nations, administrators play a pivotal role in ensuring that schools operate efficiently, especially in the face of economic and logistical challenges. Research highlights that leadership influences student learning outcomes second only to direct classroom instruction, underscoring the profound impact of effective school management (Leithwood, 2005). These findings reinforce the need to explore how administrators' decisions and support mechanisms contribute to instructional competence.

While education leadership has been extensively studied, the role of school administrators in directly supporting teachers remains an area that requires further exploration. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted traditional educational models, forcing schools to adapt to new learning modalities, such as modular, blended, and online instruction (Zhao, 2020). Teachers face unprecedented challenges in this rapidly changing educational landscape, including adapting to technology-driven teaching, addressing students' socio-emotional needs, and managing instructional gaps. These challenges highlight the growing importance of administrative support in equipping teachers with the necessary skills, resources, and professional development opportunities to navigate the evolving education system effectively. However, existing research has yet to thoroughly examine how school administrators' interventions directly impact teachers' instructional competence in this "new normal" education.

School administrators, particularly school heads, play a critical role in shaping the environment and functioning of educational institutions by managing resources, setting a vision, and ensuring the execution of academic competencies. Their leadership is especially crucial during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced a global reassessment of educational practices and required the rapid adoption of remote or hybrid learning models (Zhao, 2020). This disruption highlighted the importance of long-term planning and the reevaluation of leadership strategies, as administrators were required to guide schools through challenges while managing staffing needs. Effective school leadership goes beyond daily operations; it involves proactive development of comprehensive staffing strategies that include both permanent and temporary staffing options to meet the evolving needs of students and staff. Such staffing strategies must align with the school's strategic goals and the community's broader needs, particularly during uncertain times like the pandemic (Picincu, 2019; Brandenburg, 2017).

In addition to managing staffing plans, school administrators must strengthen personnel support systems to ensure educators have the necessary resources to succeed. This includes providing professional development programs to help teachers adapt to new teaching formats, manage online or hybrid instruction effectively, and offer support to students with unique needs, such as those with disabilities or those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2012). The pandemic exposed the deep inequalities in education access and highlighted the fragility of for-profit educational models, further underscoring the need for strong leadership in balancing academic priorities with community needs (Ravitch, 2020; Van Barneveld, 2020). Effective leadership in times of crisis requires vision, adaptability, and resilience, as administrators must respond flexibly to changing circumstances and integrate new technologies while maintaining strong pedagogical standards (Leithwood et al., 2020; Harris, 2020). This moment presents an opportunity for administrators to transform leadership practices, creating more flexible, inclusive, and resilient educational systems adaptable to current and future challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education globally, highlighting the need for advanced research methodologies to capture the evolving nature of this transformation (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2020). Effective teaching is critical for ensuring academic success, particularly in core subjects like reading and math (Heck, 2008). Instructional competence goes beyond content delivery; it fosters critical thinking, engagement, and student participation, contributing to better academic outcomes. Effective teaching strategies must be dynamic, adapting to diverse learning styles and needs (Darling-Hammond, 2009). Classroom management, which is essential for

fostering a positive learning environment, requires teachers to address classroom challenges, promote student self-motivation, and maintain effective communication (Kellough, 2003; Muijs, 2011). Teachers must also recognize and address their students' unique characteristics and developmental needs (ADPRIMA, 2010). Furthermore, cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, are essential for effective teaching, enabling teachers to communicate complex information meaningfully (Harwell, 2003).

In addition to cognitive skills, social-emotional competence is crucial for creating a positive learning environment. Teachers' emotional connection with students enhances classroom dynamics and student engagement, directly influencing academic achievement (Randel, 2016; Skupa, 2016). Teachers must be equipped to support students' emotional development, promoting resilience and reducing emotional distress. The pandemic has underscored the need for trauma-informed teaching practices, as many students have experienced varying degrees of trauma (Griffiths et al., 2020). In response to the crisis, educators have had to leverage technology to sustain learning, but the role of the teacher remains central to fostering a supportive learning environment (Harris & Jones, 2012; Hargreaves, 2020). The challenge for educators moving forward is to balance instructional pedagogy with the integration of technology, ensuring both contribute to transformative educational experiences.

The lack of systematic studies on this issue presents a critical gap in the literature. While some research acknowledges the importance of administrative leadership in general, there remains limited empirical evidence on how administrators' support systems—such as staffing plans, personnel allocation, and professional development programs—contribute to teachers' instructional effectiveness. This gap is particularly pronounced in rural and resource-limited areas, where administrative interventions may be crucial in ensuring the success of educational delivery. Given that teachers are the primary facilitators of learning, understanding how administrative decisions influence their competencies is essential for improving both instructional quality and student learning outcomes. By examining the relationship between administrators' support systems and teachers' instructional competence, this study aims to provide insights into best practices for leadership-driven educational improvement.

To address this gap, this study explores the relationship between administrators' support systems and the instructional competence of teachers in the context of new normal education. Specifically, it aims to determine the level of administrative support provided regarding staffing plans, staffing needs, and personnel support. Additionally, it examines the instructional competence of teachers across various dimensions, including teaching-learning strategies, teaching approaches, cognitive skills, and socio-emotional skills. The study investigates whether a significant relationship exists between administrators' support systems and teachers' instructional competence and whether administrative interventions have a measurable influence on teachers' effectiveness. By identifying key areas of administrative impact, this research seeks to inform policies and strategies that enhance school leadership, ultimately fostering a more resilient and adaptive education system in the post-pandemic era.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational methodology to explore the relationship between administrators' support systems and teachers' instructional competence (Figure 1). The independent variables consist of the administrators' support system, which includes staffing plans, staffing needs, and personnel support. In contrast, the dependent variables focus on instructional competence, including teaching-learning strategies, teaching approaches, cognitive skills, and social-emotional development (Kothari, 2004). The analysis revealed a strong correlation between input, process, and output, contributing significantly to student academic success. Effective school heads who strategically plan for the future needs of their institutions enhance the teaching-learning process, ultimately improving student performance. Conversely, a lack of clear institutional vision or a shared understanding of goals can render instructional processes ineffective, undermining the overall educational system's effectiveness (Day & Sammons, 2014; Ndyali, 2013; Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010).

2.2 Research Locale

The researchers conducted this study among the public elementary schools under the Arakan North District. This northernmost municipality of Cotabato Province is a 69,322-hectare, first-class municipality with primarily mountainous terrain. Of its 28 barangays, ten (10) are under the Department of Education Arakan North District:

Anapolon, Binoongan, Datu Mantangkil, Katipunan, Napalico, Datu Ladayon, Gambodes, Kabalantian, Kulaman Valley, and Sumalili (Department of Interior and Local Government, 2013). To obtain the total number of respondents in the study, the researchers used complete enumeration (Efron, 1982) of the 10 school heads and 50 teachers from different DepEd Arakan North District schools.

2.3 Research Instrument

The authors used a researcher-made questionnaire subjected to the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test. This checklist was evaluated and yielded a score of 0.92 ("Good Coefficient"). Part I comprised the level of administrators' support system regarding staffing plan, staffing needs, and personnel support. Part II assessed teachers' instructional competence, such as teaching-learning skills, teaching approaches, cognitive skills, and social-emotional skills.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers wrote a letter expressing their desire and requesting permission to conduct the study. This letter was sent to the Arakan North District Schools District Supervisor for approval. After receiving approval from the district school supervisor, they forwarded a copy to the elementary school heads. They then handed out the survey questionnaires to the target respondents. Finally, they collected the questionnaires and thanked the respondents for their time.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

This study used descriptive statistics to analyze and interpret the data acquired (Kaur et al., 2018). The study used weighted mean to determine the administrators' support system and instructional competence of teachers. Pearson Product Moment Correlation/Pearson r (Pearson, 1908) was the instrument used to assess the degree of association of the relationship between the administrators' support system, and the instructional competence of teachers. To assess the influence of the indicators stated in the independent and dependent variables, multiple linear regression (Pearson, 1908) was utilized.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

In this study, the researchers followed ethical procedures (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012) by processing the gathered data in strict privacy (Strydom, 2011) to protect the respondents' personal information and identifiable qualities. Also, they made sure that the data were not altered, which could affect the results. The teacher-respondents were knowledgeable about the study and partook freely rather than being pressed or compelled. The researchers also followed the five essential principles of ethical research—beneficence or no harm to participants (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000); confidentiality of data shared; anonymity of research respondents; and reciprocity (Halai, 2006) – the teachers were free to partake (or not) or pull out from the study (at any time) without consequence for whatsoever reason, including uneasiness, embarrassment, etc. The researchers also established trust with the respondents and clarified that the answers would not be shared with anyone else (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Additionally, before starting this research, the researchers followed the stipulated criteria and avoided plagiarism. If the data were erroneous, it was the responsibility of the researchers to fix it. Additionally, as researchers, they correctly referenced the authors who provided quotes for this study. After the survey was finished, they gave some souvenirs to the respondents to show their sincere appreciation for their support in the survey.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Administrators' Support System

Staffing Plan

School administrators in the Arakan North District have demonstrated strong support in developing and implementing staffing plans (Table 1) that align with the Department of Education's budget and strategic goals, especially in the context of the new normal in education. They proactively predict staffing needs and ensure staffing decisions align with available resources and educational priorities. Administrators also carefully map out the required number of positions and skills for each role, ensuring that schools are staffed with the right personnel to meet the demands of students and the local community. This comprehensive approach underscores the importance of strategic staffing decisions, as a dedicated workforce is crucial to a school's success. Administrators recognize that a school cannot achieve its goals without effective staffing. The challenges posed by the COVID-19

pandemic have made staffing planning more complex, highlighting the difficulty of making long-term predictions in an environment marked by uncertainty and constant change (Azorin, 2020). Nevertheless, administrators are committed to forecasting staffing needs, accounting for short- and long-term requirements, and adapting to evolving circumstances (Picincu, 2019; Brandenburg, 2017). By aligning staffing decisions with the institution's goals and the broader community's needs, administrators contribute to a thriving educational environment despite the ongoing disruptions.

Table 1. *Administrators' support system in the new normal education in terms of staffing plan*

The school heads/administrators ...	Mean	Description
1. ...develop a concrete staffing plan	4.56	Highly Supportive
2. ...map out the exact number of positions needed by the organization and the skills and qualifications required for each person.	4.42	Supportive
3. ...hire staff by budget and goals.	4.54	Highly Supportive
4. ...coordinate personnel planning with HR department	4.44	Supportive
5. ...predict staffing needs for the upcoming year.	4.58	Highly Supportive
Weighted Mean	4.62	Highly committed

Staffing Needs

School administrators in the Arakan North District strongly support staffing needs (Table 2), with a high commitment to ensuring schools are adequately staffed despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Administrators focus on aligning staffing decisions with the school development plan, actively supporting the planning and staffing processes to ensure that teaching and non-teaching staff are hired as needed. They recognize the importance of expanding the workforce as the student population grows, particularly in the mountainous region where schools face unique challenges. Administrators work closely with the DepEd Cotabato Division Office to request additional staff, ensuring that educational services adapt to the community's evolving needs. Effective human resource management is critical during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. School heads must quickly identify and address staffing needs to prevent delays in fulfilling essential functions such as providing instructional support and meeting project goals (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012). The role of designated leaders in managing human resources during emergencies is vital to ensure staffing requirements are met efficiently and effectively (CARE International, 2010). Administrators' proactive approach in managing staffing ensures that schools can deliver quality education and support the community's needs.

Table 2. *Administrators' support system in new normal education in terms of staffing needs*

The school heads/administrators ...	Mean	Description
1. ...ensure that there is sufficient human resource to support the instructional program.	4.78	Highly Supportive
2. ...support planning for staffing needs to implement project proposals.	4.40	Supportive
3. ...include predicted staffing based on planned organizational development.	4.66	Highly Supportive
4. ...conduct meeting to determine staffing needs of all offices needing personnel.	4.38	Supportive
5. ...finalize hiring based on staffing needs as planned.	4.60	Highly Supportive
Weighted Mean	4.56	Highly Supportive

Personnel Support

The data (Table 3) show that administrators in the Arakan North District strongly support personnel, with an overall mean of 4.46, categorized as "Supportive." Administrators excel in using various instructional methods and assisting staff in extra-curricular activities.

Table 3. *Administrators' support system in new normal education in terms of personnel support*

The school heads/administrators ...	Mean	Description
1. ...use a wide variety of instructional methods, and educational services.	4.66	Highly Supportive
2. ...use school resources to help accelerate learning progress.	4.44	Supportive
3. ...conduct training workshop and seminars to enhance standards in instruction.	4.28	Supportive
4. ...assist staff to gain focus in extra-curricular activities.	4.56	Highly Supportive
5. ...acquire school facilities in support to school activities.	4.36	Supportive
Weighted Mean	4.46	Supportive

They also support utilizing school resources to enhance learning progress, conduct training workshops, and acquire facilities for school activities. This comprehensive support demonstrates the administrators' understanding of the need to equip teachers with resources and professional development to boost their confidence and effectiveness in the new normal. The findings align with research by Kensington-Miller (2011) and

Hattie (2009), which indicate that such support improves teacher performance and student outcomes. However, there is potential for further enhancement, particularly in areas such as training and resource optimization. These efforts are essential for ensuring that educators can continue to deliver high-quality education amidst ongoing challenges.

3.2 Instructional Competence of Teachers

Teaching Skills

The instructional competence of teachers in the Arakan North District (Table 5) is high, with an overall mean of 4.44, classified as "Competent." Teachers excel in providing effective teaching methodologies and using evidence-based competencies. They are proficient in assigning teacher loads according to expertise, utilizing learning activities to enhance their knowledge and skills, and encouraging effective student learning. These results reflect the rigorous selection and ongoing training teachers undergo, ensuring their competence in content and pedagogy. This suggests that regardless of their deployment area—urban, suburban, rural, or hinterland—teachers are competent in their profession. The findings align with research on the impact of the pandemic on education. Studies, such as those by Fetters and Molina-Azorin (2020), emphasize the importance of adapting teaching practices to current challenges. Ongoing professional development is critical in ensuring that teachers remain competent and ready to face the evolving demands of education.

Table 5. *Instructional competence of teachers in new normal education in terms of teaching skills*

The teachers...	Mean	Description
1. ...use evidence-based competencies.	4.46	Competent
2. ...assign teacher's load according to expertise.	4.36	Competent
3. ...utilize learning activities to strengthen their knowledge and skills.	4.46	Competent
4. ...encourage learners to learn effectively.	4.40	Competent
5. ...provide effective teaching methodologies or approaches.	4.50	Highly Competent
Weighted Mean	4.44	Competent

Teaching Approaches

Teachers in the Arakan North District demonstrate high competence in their teaching approaches (Table 6), with an overall mean of 4.54, classified as "Highly Competent." Teachers excel in motivating students to think critically and in using meaningful questions to achieve teaching objectives, both scoring 4.68. They are equally proficient in employing various techniques to make questions more understandable and in relating lessons to real-life situations. Additionally, teachers motivate students to analyze and identify tasks within a question. These results indicate that teachers are well-equipped with diverse pedagogical strategies that engage students and make learning relevant to their everyday experiences. The findings reflect teachers' commitment to continuously improving their teaching practices through ongoing professional development. This enhances their teaching styles, which positively impacts student learning outcomes. As ADPRIMA (2010) emphasizes, effective teaching requires not only technical skills but also qualities such as common sense, fairness, and an understanding of students' psychological and developmental needs. These qualities are essential for fostering critical thinking and analytical skills in students, contributing to a productive learning environment.

Table 6. *Instructional competence of teachers in new normal education in terms of teaching approaches*

The teachers...	Mean	Description
1. ...motivate the learners by answering the question effectively to develop critical thinking.	4.68	Highly Competent
2. ...motivate the learners to analyze and identify specific learning tasks in the given question.	4.30	Competent
3. ...use interesting and meaningful question effectively in achieving teaching objectives.	4.68	Highly Competent
4. ...relate lessons to the existing conditions and real-life situation to answer to probable question.	4.38	Competent
5. ...use different techniques, approaches and strategies to make the question more understandable.	4.68	Highly Competent
Weighted Mean	4.54	Highly Competent

Cognitive Skills

Teachers in the Arakan North District exhibit strong cognitive skills (Table 7), with an overall mean of 4.49, classified as "Competent." Teachers are highly competent in delivering content and understanding the need to adjust instructional contexts, demonstrating their ability to adapt to the changing educational landscape. They also possess solid knowledge and skills in their subject areas, create conducive learning environments, and assess student performance effectively. These competencies are crucial for fostering an effective classroom dynamic where students can thrive and teachers can monitor their progress. The results suggest that teachers have a solid

foundation of content knowledge, which is essential for effective teaching at the basic education level. However, the data also underscores the importance of continuous improvement in teachers' content knowledge. As O'Connell (2009) notes, traditional professional development programs may not be sufficient, and exploring new methods to further develop teachers' expertise is key to enhancing instructional effectiveness.

Table 7. *Instructional competence of teachers in new normal education in terms of cognitive skills*

The teachers...	Mean	Description
1. ... increased understanding on the need to change instructional contexts.	4.66	Highly Competent
2. ... increased and deeper knowledge and skills on content.	4.32	Competent
3. ... increased knowledge on how to provide learning environment conducive for classroom interaction.	4.36	Competent
4. ... increased effectiveness on delivery of content.	4.70	Highly Competent
5. ... increased knowledge and effectiveness in assessment of students' performance.	4.42	Competent
Weighted Mean	4.49	Competent

Socio-Emotional Skills

Teachers in the Arakan North District exhibit high socio-emotional skills (Table 8), with an overall mean of 4.58, classified as "Highly Competent." They excel in maintaining a positive attitude toward students, communicating effectively with them, and fostering interpersonal relationships with peers. These competencies highlight the emotional intelligence (EQ) required to create a supportive and productive classroom environment. Teachers also demonstrate strong efficacy, and are skilled at enhancing students' class interaction, showing their ability to manage emotions and promote collaboration among students. In the new normal education environment, these socio-emotional skills are essential for supporting students' learning and well-being. The high socio-emotional competence displayed by teachers suggests that they can manage diverse student behaviors with patience, emotional control, and focus, even under pressure. These abilities contribute to a positive learning atmosphere where students can excel academically and socially. This aligns with Skupa's (2016) research, which emphasizes the importance of social-emotional learning (SEL) in enhancing academic performance and interpersonal skills. Promoting SEL in schools helps improve emotional well-being, reduces distress, and supports students in coping with adversity, leading to better educational outcomes.

Table 8. *Instructional competence of teachers in new normal education in terms of socio-emotional skills*

The teachers...	Mean	Description
1. ... increased sense of efficacy.	4.58	Highly Competent
2. ... enhanced positive attitude towards students.	4.74	Highly Competent
3. ... enhanced attitude towards the improvement of students' class interaction.	4.42	Competent
4. ... enhanced manner of communication with students.	4.56	Highly Competent
5. ... improved interpersonal relationship with peers in the classroom.	4.62	Highly Competent
Weighted Mean	4.58	Highly Competent

3.3 Relationship between the Administrators' Support System and the Instructional Competence of Teachers Staffing Plan and Instructional Competence of Teachers

The results (Table 9) indicate that there is no significant relationship between administrators' support in staffing needs and teachers' instructional competence in areas such as teaching abilities ($pr = 0.1419ns$, probability = 0.1589), teaching approaches ($pr = 0.0973ns$, 0.3356), cognitive skills ($pr = 0.1533ns$, probability = 0.1279), and socio-emotional skills ($pr = 0.0279ns$). This suggests that the level of support from administrators does not impact teachers' competence in these areas. The hypothesis of the study is accepted, confirming that administrative support and instructional competence are independent variables. This finding implies that teachers are able to perform their tasks effectively regardless of the level of support or supervision they receive from school heads. It reflects the intrinsic dedication of teachers, who continue to work hard for the benefit of students, even without constant administrative oversight. Additionally, Picincu (2019) highlights that while constructing a staffing plan is essential to addressing staffing needs, it does not directly affect the teaching skills of teachers once they are hired and in place.

Table 9. Correlation matrix showing the relationship between the administrators' support system and the instructional competence of teachers

Administrators' Support System		Teaching Skills	Teaching Approaches	Cognitive Skills	Socio-Emotional Skills
Staffing Plan	Pearson r	0.1419 ^{ns}	0.0973 ^{ns}	0.1533 ^{ns}	0.0279 ^{ns}
	Probability	0.1589	0.3356	0.1279	0.7832
	N	100	100	100	100
Support on Staffing Needs	Pearson r	-0.0566 ^{ns}	-0.0285 ^{ns}	0.0747 ^{ns}	-0.0464 ^{ns}
	Probability	0.5761	0.7782	0.4599	0.6466
	N	100	100	100	100
Personnel Support	Pearson r	0.0212 ^{ns}	0.0676 ^{ns}	0.1315 ^{ns}	0.0274 ^{ns}
	Probability	0.8343	0.5040	0.1922	0.7865
	N	100	100	100	100

ns = not significant

Support on Staffing Needs and Teaching Competence of Teachers

The results (Table 9) show that administrators' support for staffing needs has no significant relationship with teachers' instructional competence in areas such as teaching abilities ($pr = -0.0566^{ns}$, probability = 0.5761), teaching approaches ($pr = -0.0285^{ns}$), cognitive skills ($pr = 0.0747^{ns}$), and socio-emotional skills ($pr = -0.0464^{ns}$). This suggests that the support administrators provide does not directly improve teachers' competencies in these areas. Since the probability values are above the 5% significance level, the hypothesis is accepted, confirming that staffing support does not significantly influence instructional competence. These findings imply that teachers' performance is more influenced by their selection and training prior to joining the school system rather than by ongoing administrative support. However, administrators still play a crucial role in ensuring sufficient staffing to support instructional programs. Proper anticipation and planning for staffing needs are essential to avoid delays in meeting staffing requirements. It is recommended that a Human Resource Officer manage staffing needs to ensure schools have the necessary personnel to meet their goals (CARE International, 2010).

Personnel Support and Instructional Competence of Teachers

The results in Table 9 show that administrators' personnel support has no significant relationship with teachers' instructional competence in areas such as teaching abilities ($pr = 0.0212^{ns}$, probability = 0.8343), teaching approaches ($pr = 0.0676^{ns}$, probability = 0.5040), cognitive skills ($pr = 0.1315^{ns}$, probability = 0.1922), and socio-emotional skills ($pr = 0.0274^{ns}$, probability = 0.7865). With probability values above the 5% significance level, the hypothesis is accepted, indicating that personnel support does not correlate with teaching competence. These findings suggest that while administrators may offer strong support, this does not directly improve teachers' competence. Teaching skills are largely established during the hiring process through screening and testing by the Department of Education. The level of support from school heads after employment does not significantly affect teachers' instructional performance. However, effective school leadership, as emphasized by Leithwood et al. (2020), remains essential in fostering a positive and productive school environment, even if it does not directly impact instructional competence, which is primarily influenced by initial training and selection.

3.4 Influence of the Administrators' Support System on Instructional Competence of Teachers

Administrators' Support System on Teaching Skills

The results (Table 10) show that administrators' overall support system significantly influences teachers' instructional competence in teaching skills, with an f -value of 2.996 and a probability value less than 0.05, meaning administrators' support accounts for 8.60% of the variation in teaching skills. However, 91.40% of the variance is attributed to other factors not included in the study. Among the components of support, staffing plans and support for staffing needs were identified as key predictors of teaching skills, indicating that effective planning and staffing are crucial for ensuring schools have the right human resources. However, a negative significant influence was found between administrators' support on staffing needs and teaching skills, suggesting that while administrators support staffing needs, it does not improve teachers' teaching skills. This contrasts with previous studies by Mulford (2003) and Francis and Oluwatoyin (2019), which suggested a positive relationship between administrative support and teaching efficacy. The negative impact may be due to the limitations within the DepEd structure, where school heads have limited control over hiring, identifying, or training teachers, as these responsibilities lie with the Schools Division Office (DepEd Orders 7, 2015; 3, 2016). While administrative support

is important, improving teaching skills and educational outcomes ultimately depends on having well-trained teachers, as emphasized by Darling-Hammond (2009).

Table 10. Influence of the administrators' support system on teaching skills

Administrators' Support System	Coef. B	Std. Error	t - value	Probability
(Constant)	4.14	0.55	7.45	0.0000
Staffing Plan	0.47	0.18	2.56	0.0120*
Support on Staffing Needs	-0.53	0.23	-2.25	0.0264*
Personnel Support	0.14	0.23	0.59	0.5515 ^{ns}

R² = 0.086, Probability = 0.035, F - Value = 2.996, * = significant, ns = not significant

Administrators' Support System on Teaching Approaches

Table 11 shows that administrators' support, particularly regarding staffing needs, significantly influences teaching approaches. With a t-value of -2.0802 and a probability value of 0.0402, this support accounts for 5.2% of the variation in teaching approaches, while the remaining 94.8% is influenced by other factors. This suggests that while administrative support in staffing has some impact, its effect is minimal. Ensuring adequate staffing is essential for enhancing teaching effectiveness, and though teaching approaches are shaped primarily by training from the Department of Education, administrative support boosts teachers' confidence, encouraging them to adopt new pedagogical strategies. However, a negative significant influence was found between administrators' support on staffing needs and teaching approaches, indicating that despite efforts to support staffing, it does not directly improve teaching methods. This is explained by the fact that school heads lack direct control over teacher selection, hiring, and training, as these responsibilities lie with the Division or Regional Offices (DepEd Orders 7, 2015; 3, 2017). The results also highlight the need for a dedicated Human Resources team to address staffing challenges, particularly during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (CARE International, 2010). As Darling-Hammond (2009) emphasizes, effective teaching requires adopting specific strategies that help students achieve satisfactory outcomes, especially in challenging times, ultimately improving student performance.

Table 11. Influence of the administrators' support system on teaching approaches

Administrators' Support System	Coef. B	Std. Error	t - value	Probability
(Constant)	4.27	0.54	7.84	0.0000
Staffing Plan	0.23	0.17	1.31	0.1916 ^{ns}
Support on Staffing Needs	-0.48	0.23	-2.08	0.0402*
Personnel Support	0.31	0.23	1.37	0.1716 ^{ns}

R² = 0.052, Probability = 0.159, F - Value = 1.765, * = significant, ns = not significant

Administrators' Support System on Cognitive Skills of Teachers

The administrators' support system (Table 12) has no significant impact on the cognitive skills of teachers. The support system accounts for only 3.6% of the variation in cognitive skills, meaning that 96.4% of the variation is influenced by other factors not included in the study. This suggests that administrative support, whether through staffing plans, staffing needs, or personnel support, does not significantly affect teachers' cognitive abilities. Teachers are hired based on academic qualifications such as PRC Board passing, satisfactory college grades, and a rigorous selection process, ensuring they possess the necessary cognitive abilities to effectively teach, regardless of administrative support. As O'Connell (2009) points out, traditional professional development programs may not significantly enhance teacher efficacy. His study found no difference in student development between teachers who participated in professional development and those who did not. This suggests that teachers' cognitive skills are primarily shaped by their qualifications and personal dedication, rather than by administrative support.

Table 12. Influence of the administrators support system on cognitive skills

Administrators' Support System	Coef. β	Std. Error	t - value	Probability
(Constant)	3.79	0.53	7.07	0.0000
Staffing Plan	0.19	0.17	1.11	0.2658 ^{ns}
Support on Staffing Needs	-0.25	0.23	-1.09	0.2769 ^{ns}
Personnel Support	0.21	0.22	0.93	0.3534 ^{ns}

R² = 0.036, Probability = 0.315, F - Value = 1.198, ns = not significant

Administrators' Support System on Socio-Emotional Skills of Teachers

The results in Table 13 show that administrators' support system has no significant impact on teachers' socio-emotional skills. Only 2.4% of the variation in socio-emotional skills is attributed to administrative support, while

the remaining 97.6% is influenced by other factors. This suggests that administrators' support has little to no effect on teachers' socio-emotional capabilities. Teachers' socio-emotional skills, such as managing diverse student personalities and maintaining a positive attitude, are largely intrinsic and expected when entering the teaching profession, particularly in public schools. As noted by Fullan (2007), social-emotional effectiveness, along with professional growth and assessments, are key factors in improving teacher performance. Teachers' individual efficacy—confidence in their ability to manage and teach students—is linked to better teaching practices. Furthermore, collective efficacy, or shared belief in the school's success, contributes to improved performance. These findings imply that teachers' socio-emotional skills are primarily shaped by personal experience and inherent abilities, rather than administrative support.

Table 13. Influence of the administrators support system on socio-emotional skills

Administrators' Support System	Coef. β	Std. Error	t - value	Probability
(Constant)	4.58	0.53	8.53	0.0000
Staffing Plan	0.10	0.17	0.56	0.5727 ^{ns}
Support on Staffing Needs	-0.34	0.23	-1.50	0.1359 ^{ns}
Personnel Support	0.25	0.22	1.11	0.2691 ^{ns}

$R^2 = 0.024$, Probability = 0.506, F - Value = 0.783, ns = not significant

Figure 1 presents the modified framework of the study, showing that administrators' support system and teachers' instructional competence exist independently, meaning teachers perform effectively regardless of administrative support. This highlights the intrinsic dedication of teachers, who strive to benefit students even without constant oversight from school heads. Although administrators play a role in staff selection, the actual hiring and staffing of teaching personnel fall under the jurisdiction of the Division Office. Teachers' performance is primarily influenced by their selection and screening before entering the public school system. Administrators' focus is on ensuring sufficient staffing and anticipating future staffing needs based on the institution's development plans.

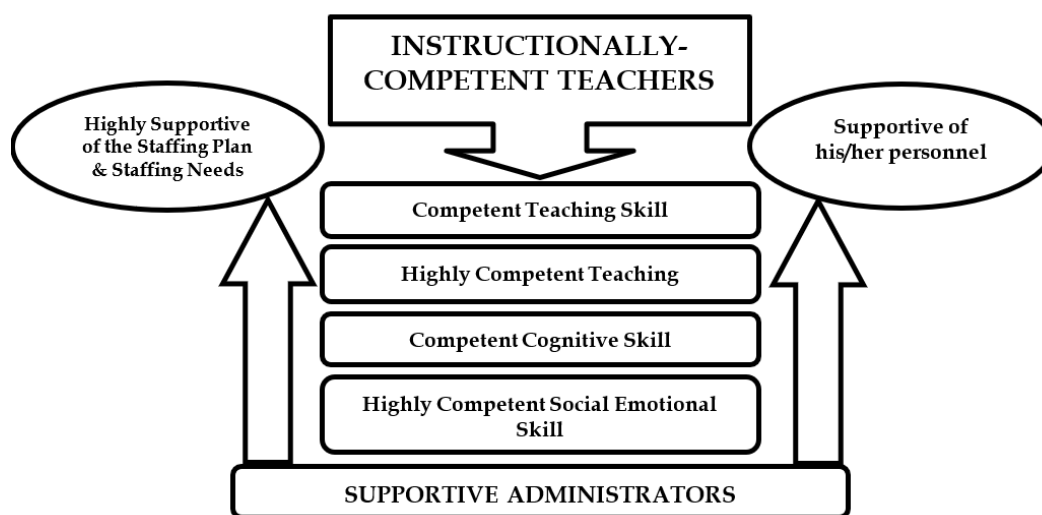


Figure 1. Modified framework of the present study

The study also shows that staffing plans and support for staffing needs are significant predictors of teaching abilities. By ensuring adequate staffing and resources, administrators can help sustain or improve the use of evidence-based teaching strategies. However, teaching approaches, while influenced by administrative support, are primarily shaped through training and seminars provided by the Department of Education. To improve instructional competence, the study recommends several interventions for school heads: mapping out staffing requirements and qualifications, engaging with the school community to assess staffing needs, requesting necessary facilities, and assigning tasks according to teachers' skills and expertise. These measures are essential for further enhancing the instructional competence of public elementary school teachers.

4.0 Conclusions

Based on the findings and the analysis of the data in the study, it can be concluded that administrators' support systems, while crucial, do not have a significant direct relationship with the instructional competence of teachers in the context of new normal education. The study revealed that while school heads and administrators are highly supportive in areas such as staffing plans and addressing staffing needs, their support does not directly impact teachers' teaching skills, cognitive skills, or socio-emotional competencies. Teachers in the Arakan North District are competent in these areas largely due to their professional qualifications, rigorous selection processes, and ongoing professional development. The study suggests that the role of administrators should primarily focus on ensuring sufficient staffing and resources to support instructional programs. However, it is clear that administrators' support in terms of personnel management alone does not necessarily enhance teachers' instructional competence. Instead, teachers' professional growth and effectiveness are largely shaped by their initial training, teaching experiences, and personal commitment to continuous development. Therefore, school leaders should prioritize strategic planning in staffing, resource allocation, and aligning educational goals with the broader development needs of the school community. In the face of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings emphasize the need for administrators to remain proactive in managing staffing needs and ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to face the evolving demands of education. By providing continued support through training and resources, administrators can help maintain a positive and productive educational environment, but this should be accompanied by a recognition of the inherent competencies of the teachers themselves.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors confirm the equal contribution in each part of this work. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of this work.

6.0 Funding

The authors did not receive any funding for the conduct of this work – neither from public nor private institutions.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study and in the possible publication of this article.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors express their thanks and appreciation to the learners and teachers of DepEd Arakan North District, Municipality of Arakan, Province of Cotabato. Their active participation made this research possible.

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Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction Among Coffee Shops in Dumaguete City, Philippines

Arnie B. Villanueva*, Ryan O. Tayco, Cesar P. Estrope
Negros Oriental State University, Dumaguete City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: ryantayco@norsu.edu.ph

Date received: February 5, 2025

Date revised: February 24, 2025

Date accepted: March 15, 2025

Originality: 85%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 15%

Recommended citation:

Villanueva, A., Tayco, R., Estrope, C. (2025). Service quality and customer satisfaction among coffee shops in Dumaguete City, Philippines. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 193-200.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.064>

Abstract. In the competitive coffee industry, coffee shops serve as social hubs and places for relaxation and productivity. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of service quality and customer satisfaction is crucial for operators who want to succeed in this bustling market. This research used descriptive-correlational design to elicit information from the customers visiting the selected coffee shops in Dumaguete City. A total of 120 respondents were customers, which comprised the sample size of this research. The findings reveal that customers perceive the service quality of coffee shops in Dumaguete City positively across various dimensions, including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions contribute significantly to customer satisfaction and loyalty. The analysis of p-values shows a significant relationship between customer perceptions and service quality, highlighting the importance of mutual understanding and communication. The overall positive perception underscores the need for coffee shop owners and managers to understand customer needs and preferences and implement strategies to enhance service quality and loyalty. The research indicates that continuous assessment and improvement of service quality are crucial for sustaining customer satisfaction and fostering long-term loyalty in the competitive coffee shop industry.

Keywords: Coffee industry; Service quality; Customer satisfaction; Dumaguete City.

1.0 Introduction

The coffee shop sector has seen substantial expansion. Globally, it is becoming an integral part of daily life for many individuals. As competition within this sector intensifies, the emphasis on service quality and customer satisfaction becomes most important for coffee shop owners and managers. Understanding the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage and ensuring long-term success in this dynamic market.

In evaluating service quality within the coffee shop sector, the SERVQUAL model's five dimensions – tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy – play a vital role in comprehending and improving customer satisfaction. Delivering high-quality services is essential for enhancing customer experiences in the coffee shop industry, highlighting the significance of service quality as a key factor in customer satisfaction (Dhisasmith & Kumar, 2020). Perceived service quality, perceived value, and service performance in chain coffee shops emphasize the need to understand the relationship between these variables to enhance service quality and behavioural intentions (Ge et al., 2021). Additionally, research has shown that marketing communication mix

elements, such as advertising spending, attitude toward advertisements, and promotional strategies, influence brand identification and service quality in coffee shop evaluations (Kim & Lee, 2020).

Coffee shops are widely popular worldwide because they serve various purposes, such as socializing, conducting meetings, dining, and offering a pleasant environment for studying (Hattox, 2014). In the Philippines, several distinctive elements influence customer satisfaction in coffee shops. The standard of service significantly influences customer satisfaction, making it an essential factor for reaching high satisfaction levels (Kaura et al., 2015). There are growing concerns among customers and business owners regarding the service quality and customer satisfaction in Dumaguete City's coffee shops. Despite the rapid growth of the coffee shop industry, several critical issues must be addressed to ensure a reliable and satisfying customer experience. Even with the thriving coffee shop market in Dumaguete City, there are marked challenges related to the service quality these establishments offer. Patrons frequently encounter long wait times, inconsistent product quality, untrained or unprofessional staff, and inadequate facilities. These challenges lead to customer dissatisfaction, negatively impacting coffee shops' reputation and profitability.

It is crucial to address service quality issues to enhance customer satisfaction, retain clients, and maintain the competitive advantage of coffee shops in the City. Therefore, this research evaluates the service quality and customer satisfaction levels of coffee houses in Dumaguete City. The standard of service significantly influences customer satisfaction, making it an essential factor for reaching high satisfaction levels (Kaura et al., 2015). There are growing concerns among customers and business owners regarding the service quality and customer satisfaction in Dumaguete City's coffee shops. Despite the rapid growth of the coffee shop industry, several critical issues must be addressed to ensure a reliable and satisfying customer experience. Even with the thriving coffee shop market in Dumaguete City, there are marked challenges related to the service quality these establishments offer. Patrons frequently encounter long wait times, inconsistent product quality, untrained or unprofessional staff, and inadequate facilities. These challenges lead to customer dissatisfaction, negatively impacting coffee shops' reputation and profitability. It is crucial to address service quality issues to enhance customer satisfaction, retain clients, and maintain the competitive advantage of coffee shops in the City. Therefore, this research evaluates the service quality and customer satisfaction levels of coffee houses in Dumaguete City.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research used a descriptive-correlational design to elicit information from customers visiting the selected coffee shops in Dumaguete City. The design was used to identify and analyze the relationships between service quality and customer satisfaction in coffee shops without manipulating any variables.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was conducted in Dumaguete City, a 2nd class component city and the capital of the province of Negros Oriental, Philippines. It is the most populous city, and the smallest city by land area, in Negros Oriental. The study was carried out in the different coffee shops in Dumaguete City.

2.3 Research Participants

The researchers used convenient sampling to identify the customers who acted as the study's respondents. There are 20 respondents from each selected coffee shop. A total of 120 respondents were customers, which comprised the sample size of this research. The selection of the coffee shop is based on the following criteria: 1) they started operating in 2020; 2) coffee shops with dining areas; 3) coffee shops operating from Mondays to Sundays; and 4) coffee shops that gave their full consent to serve as the locale of the study.

2.4 Research Instrument

The questionnaire was developed based on the established SERVQUAL model. The survey was pre-tested with a small sample to ensure clarity, comprehensibility, and reliability before finalization. It incorporates questions that assess customer perceptions across the five key service quality dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Minor adjustments were made to represent the specific circumstances of the research accurately. The questionnaire also includes questions about overall satisfaction and frequency of visits. The questionnaire was composed of three parts. Part I concerns the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Part

II concerns service quality regarding tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Part III concerns customer satisfaction.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

A self-administered questionnaire served as the main instrument for collecting data. Data was collected through purposive sampling at coffee shops within the specified geographical area. The researchers approached potential participants to explain the study's objective, confidentiality protocols, and their option to decline participation. Informed consent was secured before participants began the survey. Completed surveys were collected anonymously to protect participant privacy. The information was obtained through the questionnaire, counted, and organized to aid in its presentation, analysis, and interpretation. The subsequent statistical methods were utilized.

Frequency is a calculation that establishes the number of individuals that belong to a particular group or the frequency of occurrence of a specific trait. A Percentage Distribution is a data graph that displays the proportion of the observations for each data point or group of data points. It is also a frequency distribution in which the individual class frequencies are expressed as a percentage of the total frequency equated to 100—also known as a relative frequency distribution or a relative frequency table. Weighted Mean by multiplying each data point in a collection by a value determined by a characteristic of whatever contributed to the data point. A weighted average considers some data values more critical than others, so we want them to contribute more to the final average. Moreover, to analyze the significant relationship, the Spearman rho correlation coefficient analysis and the Chi-square test were utilized to demonstrate the association between two variables, dependent and independent. The Spearman rho correlation is a nonparametric method that assesses the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables measured on either an ordinal or continuous scale. Meanwhile, the Chi-square test is a statistical method employed to compare actual results against expected outcomes. The questionnaires from the relevant respondents were collected, and the findings were organized using the appropriate statistical methods. Subsequently, the data was represented through tables and graphs.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

In carrying out this research, the investigators adhered to ethical standards, as required by the Data Privacy Act of 2012, to protect the participants and maintain the confidentiality of their data.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondents Personal Profile

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic and institutional profile of the respondents in the Coffee Shops in Dumaguete City. Regarding age, most coffee goers are in the 18-25 age bracket—72.8%. Most people between 18 and 25 are college students and young professionals who want leisure at the coffee shop. They may go to coffee shops frequently to study, socialize, and increase their energy. Coffee shops provide a comfortable setting for conversations, project collaboration, or simply enjoying each other's company.

Table 1 also shows more female customers (60%) than male (40%). This shows that women visit coffee shops more often than men. Compared to men, women visited coffee shops more often because this can be linked to several social, cultural, and psychological variables. Women frequently see coffee shops as friendly, comfortable spaces ideal for relaxing, networking, and socializing. These days, women have their own quality time and self-care. The study of Andriani (2021) supports these findings. She explains that young female adults go to coffee shops because they like to go to the coffee shops where they meet their friends.

For educational attainment, most respondents are within college level or 51.7%. Coffee shops offer a quiet atmosphere conducive to studying, often with reliable Wi-Fi. This makes them ideal for individual study sessions or group projects compared to potentially noisy dorm rooms or crowded apartments. This is supported by the study of Assaf (2023), which states that visiting coffee shops offers a degree of emancipation from the family and opens up a space of relative autonomy for the youth. Simultaneously, the consumerist space of the coffee shop fosters the emergence of new sets of norms and practices specific to this generation.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents (n=120)

Particulars	f	%
Age		
36-45	3	3.30 %
26-35	22	23.9 %
18-25	67	72.8 %
Sex		
Male	48	40.0 %
Female	72	60.0 %
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	12	10.0 %
High School Diploma or Equivalent	43	35.8 %
Master's Degree	3	2.50 %
Some College or Associate Degree	62	51.7 %
Occupation		
Student	100	83.3 %
Entrepreneur	3	2.50 %
Service Industry	3	2.50 %
Online Job	1	0.80 %
Professional	5	4.20 %
Office Worker	4	3.30 %
Government Worker	1	0.80 %
Educator	3	2.50 %
Nationality		
Canadian	1	0.80 %
Filipino	119	99.2 %
Estimated Amount Spent Per Visit		
2,000 -2,999 pesos	3	2.50 %
1000-1999 pesos	11	9.20 %
101-999 pesos	87	72.5 %
100-below pesos	19	15.8 %
Frequency of Visit		
3x a week	1	0.8 %
daily	25	20.8 %
monthly	18	15.0 %
very seldom	1	0.80 %
weekly	75	62.5 %

As to the occupation of the respondents, many of the coffee-goers are students. As revealed in the age range, they are mostly 18-25 years old, and most of the respondents are within college level, which could better explain that they are students. Coffee shops offer a quiet atmosphere conducive to studying, often with reliable Wi-Fi. As a result, most students now go to coffee shops to connect to the Internet. As a result, the sight of a large group of students, each with their electronic device (for example, a laptop or a smartphone), has become increasingly common in the city's coffee shops (Zainuddin & Shujahat, 2022). They bring their laptops and other electronic devices and work countless hours, days, and even nights in coffee shops.

With regards to Nationality, it shows that the majority of the respondents were Filipinos. This means that most of the respondents are locals because of the coffee shops' proximity to Dumaguete City. Thus, convenience plays a vital role when visiting coffee shops. As gleaned from their occupations, most of the occupations are students; most of the students are Filipinos, and Dumaguete is a university town. Concerning the estimated amount spent per coffee shop visit. The table shows that most respondents spent ₱ 101-999 per coffee shop visit. This amount is worth the money the students pay in the coffee shop to be comfortable and secure, have free Wi-Fi, and enjoy the coffee shop's ambiance. Regarding the frequency of respondents' visits, It shows that most coffee goers visit the coffee shops regularly, 62.5%, followed by daily, 20.8%. Since most of the respondents it is expected to visit coffee shops during weekends only. This is a quick getaway for students from their busy schedules during school days. The data shows that the coffee shop business in Dumaguete City is sustaining.

3.2 Extent of the Service Quality Perceived by the Customers

Table 2 shows the extent of the service quality provided by coffee shops in Dumaguete City as perceived by the customers in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Table 2. *Extent of the Service Quality Perceived by the Customers*

Service Quality Dimensions	Mean	Description
Tangibility	4.75	Very Satisfied
The coffee shop has up-to-date equipment	4.68	Very Satisfied
The physical facilities are visually appealing	4.77	Very Satisfied
The crew are well dressed and appear neat	4.77	Very Satisfied
The appearance of the physical facilities is in keeping with the type of service provided	4.76	Very Satisfied
Reliability	4.74	Very Satisfied
Timeliness of the service	4.75	Very Satisfied
Willing to address customer complaints	4.79	Very Satisfied
The crew is dependable	4.68	Very Satisfied
The crew keeps their records accurately	4.73	Very Satisfied
Responsiveness	4.60	Very Satisfied
The crew is expected to tell customers exactly when services will be performed	4.65	Very Satisfied
It is realistic for the customers to expect prompt service from the crew	4.56	Very Satisfied
The crew are always expected to help the customers	4.68	Very Satisfied
The crew can handle pressure and multi-task	4.51	Very Satisfied
Assurance	4.74	Very Satisfied
The customers can trust the crew	4.77	Very Satisfied
The customers can feel safe in their transactions with the crew	4.83	Very Satisfied
The crew are polite	4.89	Very Satisfied
The crew should get adequate support from the service coffee shop management to do their job well	4.75	Very Satisfied
The crew is expected to give customers individual attention	4.48	Very Satisfied
Empathy	4.54	Very Satisfied
The crew gives customers personal attention	4.38	Very Satisfied
It is expected that the crew know what the needs of their customers are	4.55	Very Satisfied
It is expected that the crew have their customers' best interests at heart	4.68	Very Satisfied
Overall Mean	4.67	Very Satisfied

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very Satisfied (VS), 3.41 – 4.20 Satisfied (S), 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral, 1.81 – 2.60 Less Satisfied (LS), 1.00 – 1.80 Not Satisfied (NS)

Regarding tangibility, the findings show that the customer is delighted (4.75) with the overall service performance towards tangibility. The coffee shop has physical facilities that are visually appealing, and the crew are well dressed and appear neat. This would translate into the fact that if coffee shops invest in their physical facilities and human resources, customers would be delighted with their stay. In addition, it would be very appealing if the resort had visually appealing facilities and used modern technological means to serve the customers. These tangible elements impact customer perceptions and encourage repeat visits, thus becoming a key aspect of the service quality evaluation (Akpan & Etuk, 2019).

Regarding reliability, it shows that the customer is delighted (4.74) on the overall customer satisfaction towards the reliability dimension. The coffee shop keeps the promise of its willingness to address customer complaints and do things on time, receiving the highest scores of 4.79 and 4.75 respectively. This is because the coffee shop staff provides the service accurately and keeps their promises to customers. In addition, the customers feel satisfied with the reliability of the service of the coffee shop crew. This finding aligns with the research of Poku, Zakari, and Soali (2013), who investigated service quality in hotels and resorts in the Middle East and identified reliability as the key factor in ensuring customer satisfaction.

As to responsiveness, the table shows that the customer is delighted (4.60) with the overall customer satisfaction towards the responsiveness dimension. The coffee shop employees are always willing to help customers and to tell customers exactly when services will be performed. This means that the crew is always willing to help with their needs and are happy to serve. A study by Dhisasmitho & Kumar (2020), explains that service quality is a crucial driver of service performance in the coffee shop industry, underscoring the importance of delivering high-quality services to improve customer experiences.

Regarding assurance, it shows that the customer is delighted (4.74) on the overall customer satisfaction towards the assurance dimension. Most customers experienced that the coffee shop crew is polite and makes them feel safe when staying there. In addition, the coffee shop crew is credible and responsible when handling the customer's needs. The coffee shop crew must have broad and deep knowledge, be highly efficient in performing their duties, and be expected to give customers individual attention. Genove and Tayco (2024) found that assurance was the most critical factor in customer satisfaction, as evidenced by respondent feedback. Thus, the ability of the baristas and other staff to exhibit assurance through their interactions is a determinant of positive service quality.

Lastly, for empathy, the customer is delighted (4.54) in terms of overall customer satisfaction with the empathy dimension. The coffee shop crew has their customers' best interests at heart and was considered the most important 4.68, followed by the crew knowing what the needs of their customers are (4.55) and the crew giving their customers' attention (4.38). This importance is further emphasized in a study by Kim et al. (2021), confirming the importance of atmosphere, novelty, and consumer return on investment as factors influencing satisfaction and behavior intention.

3.3 Relationship between Profile of the Respondents and Service Quality

Table 3 delineates the correlational analysis results between the customer respondents' profile and service performance. For a significant relationship to exist, the p-value must be equal to or lesser than the alpha/margin of error, which in this study is set at 0.05. The following are predictors or influences on the customer respondents' perception towards the coffee shops' services in Dumaguete City.

Table 3. *Correlation between Profile of the Respondents and Service Quality*

Respondents Profile	Tangible	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Age					
(26-35) -(36-45)	0.043*	0.591	0.687	0.439	0.953
(18-25) -(36-45)	0.036*	0.313	0.975	0.517	0.936
Sex					
Female-Male	0.004*	0.015*	0.265	0.139	0.302
Educational Attainment					
High School or Equivalent	0.13	0.122	0.133	0.1082	0.194
Master's Degree	0.257	0.24	0.262	0.2139	0.384
Some College or Associate	0.125	0.117	0.128	0.1045	0.187
Occupation					
Entrepreneur - Student	0.897	0.135	0.042*	0.038*	0.094
Service Industry-Student	0.147	0.278	0.642	0.801	0.763
Online Job-Student	0.94	0.526	0.404	0.463	0.877
Professional-Student	0.238	0.551	0.725	0.847	0.76
Office Worker-Student	0.117	0.054	0.178	0.563	0.368
Government Worker-Student	0.218	0.99	0.404	0.463	0.525
Educator-Student	0.429	0.728	0.882	0.557	0.797
Citizenship					
Filipino-Canadian	0.251	0.5	0.014*	0.867	0.197
Frequency of visit					
Daily-3x a week	0.629	0.198	0.073	0.524	0.786
Monthly-3x a week	0.184	0.69	0.002*	0.922	0.083
Very Seldom-3x a week	0.192	1	0.008*	0.67	0.099
Weekly-3x a week	0.159	0.563	0.004*	0.93	0.062
Estimated Amount Spent					
(100 pesos below) -(1000-999 pesos)	0.053	0.044*	0.002*	0.161	0.008*
(101-999 pesos) -(1000-999 pesos)	<.001*	0.002*	<.001*	0.021*	<.001*
(2000-2999) -(1000-999 pesos)	0.025*	0.084	0.002*	0.212	<.001*

Note that a p-value lower than 0.05 indicates a significant effect.*

The age of the respondents is a predictor of their perception of tangible services, specifically the age range 18-25, 26-35, and 36-45 years old. Hence, it can be construed that the age range 18-25 and 26-35 and the level of satisfaction in tangibility are significantly related. This explains that customers' level of satisfaction in terms of age range is related to the tangibility dimension. The study by Grazhdani & Merollari (2015) found strong evidence of the effect of age on service quality perceptions. The practical access dimension of service quality was significantly higher for mature individuals than their younger counterparts. Their findings suggest that service quality should be more closely tailored to age and not to other demographic characteristics.

In terms of sex, the sex of the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of tangible and reliable services. This means the sex of the respondents affects the tangible and reliable services of the coffee shop. The study by Teeroovengadum (2022) focused on exploring gender's moderating effect on the relationships between the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. The study suggests that the satisfaction of male customers depends, to a more significant extent, on environmental quality, and there is a need to explore the specific expectations of male customers further. The results further suggest that interaction quality is a major contributor to satisfaction levels for both male and female customers. The company is thus encouraged to focus

on this aspect of its services and invest the required resources to improve on those in general. More specifically, the study suggests that the interaction quality attributes requiring the most urgent attention for female customers relate to employees' appearance, attitude, and competence. The interaction quality attribute requiring the most urgent attention for male customers is related to the employees' ability to respond to queries. Therefore, regular training opportunities in customer care are a must to improve the quality of interaction in customer services.

For occupation, the occupation of the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of responsiveness and assurance services. Especially those seen by entrepreneurs. The relationship between occupation and responsiveness and assurance services is statistically significant. The results show that the respondents' occupation affects the coffee shop's responsiveness and assurance services. The results are opposite to the study of Mirzagoli and Memarian (2015), which found that wage conditions of employment and occupation had no impact on customers' satisfaction based on their perceived service quality. Their study concluded that there is no relationship between job status and satisfaction and that the results do not match their study. If you change the employment status of workers to unemployed, the probability of satisfaction likely increases.

Regarding nationality, the respondents' citizenship is a predictor or influences their perception of responsiveness of services. Especially perceived by Filipinos. Since most of the respondents are Filipinos, only one Canadian respondent exists. Coffee owners have to design their facilities to cater to different nationalities. The study by Pantouvakis and Renzi (2016) explains that ethnicity moderates the overall quality of service. This implies that service companies should follow strategies that best fit the demands of each ethnic group. For instance, to increase the overall service quality, different marketing strategies are required, and they need to appreciate the customers and understand their needs.

In addition, the frequency of visits by the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of responsiveness services. Especially perceived by those who visited the coffee shops monthly, very seldom, and weekly. The results show that the frequency of visits of the respondents, especially those who visited the coffee shops monthly, very seldom, and weekly, have observed differences in the responsiveness and assurance services of coffee shops. Customers who visit coffee shops daily may become accustomed to the service quality regarding responsiveness and assurance. The lack of attention to service quality in responsiveness and assurance among daily coffee shop visitors can be attributed to habituation, expectation management, selective attention, normalization, the transactional nature of their interactions, etc. The study by Allen (2017) addressed how improved service quality can lead to customer loyalty and added to the body of knowledge in service quality. The construct of loyalty, as Allen (2017) has used, is expressed by repeat visits and willingness to recommend. Research results indicated a significant, moderate, positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty.

Lastly, the amount spent by the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of tangible services (especially those who spent 100 up to 2999), reliability services (especially those who spent 999 pesos and below), responsiveness, assurance (especially by those who spent 100 to 1000 pesos, and empathy in service to customers. The amount respondents spend can influence their perception of various aspects of service quality, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The amount spent by respondents can serve as a proxy for their expectations, preferences, and perceived value derived from the service. Different spending ranges may lead to varying perceptions of service quality across dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. According to the study by Yaqub, Halim, & Shehzad (2019), perceived price fairness is an important factor because they feel that the value of the service provided should be met with a fair price to satisfy and delight their customers. Thus, managers could divert more time and pay attention to improving price strategy and marketing promotion tools to promote customer revisit intention.

4.0 Conclusion

In analyzing the findings regarding the extent of service quality provided by coffee shops in Dumaguete City, it becomes evident that customers perceive the services positively across various dimensions. Customers rated tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy highly, indicating an intense satisfaction with the physical facilities, reliability in service delivery, responsiveness of staff, assurance of safety and politeness, and empathy towards customers' needs. Customers' findings underscore the importance of these dimensions in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty within the coffee shop industry. The analysis of p-values reveals a significant

relationship between customer perceptions and service quality. Customers' interest on service quality underscores the importance of mutual understanding and communication in enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction within the coffee shop industry.

To conclude, the findings highlight customers' opinions of coffee shops' service quality across various dimensions in Dumaguete City. These findings emphasize the need for coffee shop managers to understand their customers' needs and implement strategies that address these diverse factors to enhance service quality and customer loyalty. The research highlights the importance of maintaining high service quality to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty within the coffee shop industry. Future research may examine supplementary aspects affecting customer satisfaction and analyze ongoing enhancement strategies in service quality.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Arnie B. Villanueva: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing. Ryan O. Tayco: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing. Cesar P. Estrope: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

6.0 Funding

This research received no funding.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors acknowledge the assistance of the coffee shop owners, managers, and customers in finishing this study.

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Green Practices and Challenges in Accommodation Facilities

Shella May Laspiñas*, Ryan O. Tayco
Negros Oriental State University, Dumaguete City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: ryantayco@norsu.edu.ph

Date received: February 7, 2025

Date revised: February 24, 2025

Date accepted: March 15, 2025

Originality: 92%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 8%

Recommended citation:

Laspiñas, S.M., Tayco, R. (2025). Green practices and challenges in accommodation facilities. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 201-213. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.068>

Abstract. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global agenda for addressing key environmental, social, and economic challenges to achieve a more sustainable future. This research aimed to identify the sustainable practices and challenges encountered by the lodging industry in Dumaguete City regarding implementing green practices. This study employed a descriptive correlational research design to evaluate the existing condition and status of accommodation establishments' sustainable practices. Fifty-nine respondents are key personnel (owners/managers/supervisors) of the registered accommodation facilities in Dumaguete City. Key findings demonstrate a strong commitment to energy conservation and waste management in the lodging industry in Dumaguete City. Practices such as turning off equipment when not in use, cleaning air conditioner filters, minimizing illumination during daylight, waste segregation, and bulk purchasing are widely adopted. Despite these efforts, challenges in compliance with environmental regulations, cost management, resource constraints, and stakeholder awareness persist. The study reveals that younger employees and married individuals are more engaged in sustainability efforts, while gender, occupation, and length of employment do not significantly affect green behaviours. Organizational variables, industry trends, and external influences are identified as the primary challenges to green practices. The research underscores the need for comprehensive strategies incorporating organizational culture, leadership support, and external influences to advance environmental responsibility.

Keywords: Accommodation facilities; Green practices; Sustainable practices.

1.0 Introduction

Decades have passed since the hospitality industry adopted green practices to lessen its environmental impact by basing its operations on environmental-related service facets (Han et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2018). Green tourism is experiencing a notable surge in popularity within developing countries due to its emphasis on advancing conservation efforts and sustainable development through green practices. This burgeoning phenomenon recognizes the possible benefits of environmentally sustainable practices, such as increased supplier and consumer consciousness regarding ecological accountability (Aftabuddin & Jain, 2017). Thus, the tourism industry's predicament, namely the generation of a substantial quantity of refuse and additional pollutants, has consistently tarnished its otherwise favourable influence on local economies. An increasing number of individuals are visiting well-known tourist destinations, which has led to a notable apprehension regarding the refuse produced by their activities, including food packaging and plastic bottles. Consequently, this research aimed to identify the green practices and challenges encountered by the lodging industry in Dumaguete City regarding implementing green practices.

The primary aims of this research were to ascertain the demographic characteristics of the participating employees, encompassing information such as department, job position, employment status, educational achievement, years of service, training and seminar participation, and civil status. Following this, a profile of the accommodation options in Dumaguete City will be compiled, including details such as tenure, staffing levels, bed occupancy, and DOT accreditation. The extent to which green practices have been implemented in lodging facilities in Dumaguete City was then evaluated, emphasizing water conservation, energy management, refuse management, and air quality management. The challenges key personnel perceive regarding implementing green practices in lodging facilities will then be identified. These challenges will include those associated with policies and regulations, management, resources, cost, and awareness. The study will then investigate the significance of the respondents' profiles regarding the degree of implementation of green practices in lodging establishments in Dumaguete City and the difficulties that lodging establishments in Dumaguete City encounter when attempting to implement green practices. Finally, it is imperative to provide recommendations that benefit the management and the various constituents involved in the accommodation industry.

Dumaguete City, known as "University Town" and the "City of Gentle People," is a popular tourist spot in Central Visayas. International travellers are attracted to its vibrant ambience and attractions, which cater to business and leisure visitors. The city's accommodations support various budgets and tastes, ranging from backpacker-friendly bed and breakfasts to luxurious hotels. Hotels are crucial in advancing sustainability and environmental accountability in the tourism industry. Despite implementing eco-conscious measures in hotels, such as water conservation and energy-efficient illumination, there are still obstacles to balancing environmental impacts with quality standards. By implementing sustainable strategies, lodging establishments can differentiate themselves from rivals. Those who prioritize ecotourism and strive to reduce environmental impact are more likely to attract environmentally conscious travellers. As a result, managers are required to provide outstanding service and implement environmentally sustainable practices to satisfy the demands of these patrons while simultaneously demonstrating concern for the environment (Chan & Wong, 2006). Adopting green initiatives is paramount for hotels in Dumaguete City as it allows them to establish a unique identity and appeal to environmentally aware guests, thus ensuring their competitiveness within the tourism sector.

This research aimed to understand disparities regarding hotels' implementation of green practices in Dumaguete and the obstacles they encounter. The study aimed to encourage more hotels to adopt environmentally friendly practices, thereby contributing to developing a more sustainable local tourism sector. The research employs survey questionnaires to key hotel personnel in Dumaguete City to ascertain the sustainable practices and challenges these lodging establishments encounter.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to evaluate the existing condition and status of accommodation establishments considered part of the green programs and its challenges.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was conducted in Dumaguete City. Dumaguete City offers a dynamic research environment where scholars can delve into the multifaceted dimensions of sustainable green practices within accommodation facilities. By studying this vibrant city, researchers can contribute valuable insights to promote environmental sustainability, enhance tourist experiences, and foster the long-term viability of the hospitality industry.

2.3 Research Participants

The study involved key personnel/employees of various accommodation facilities in Dumaguete City. Purposive sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling is a sampling approach in which the researchers choose members of the population to participate in the study based on the researchers' judgment or criteria. Purposive sampling was used in the study to select who among the individuals of the population fit all the criteria and could participate in the study to reach the number of respondents needed to participate. The owner, manager, supervisor, and/or officer who has served for over a year in accommodation facilities registered under Dumaguete City, with function rooms and restaurants operating from Monday to Sunday.

2.4 Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire on green practices is adapted from the ASEAN Green Hotel Standard (www.asean.org). Challenges in implementing green practices are adapted from the study of Tanveer, Yuzliza, and Fawehinmi (2023). The questionnaire is composed of four parts. Part I is about the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Part II is about the profile of the establishment. Part III is the extent of implementation of green practices of the accommodation in terms of energy management, waste management, water conservation, air quality management, and environmental conservation where respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement by choosing from a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Great Extent - GE (4), Moderate Extent - ME (3), Limited Extent - LE (2), and No Extent - NE (1) in categorizing the responses of the research respondents on green practices. In contrast, Part IV is the challenges in implementing green practices, and the respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement by choosing from a 4-point Likert scale. The scales of the responses are: 4 - Strongly Agree (SA), 3 - Agree (A), 2 - Disagree (D), and 1 - Strongly Disagree (SD).

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

A survey questionnaire was sent to accommodation facilities to obtain responses from key personnel. Respondents were asked for permission to gather the necessary information for this study. Data were collected using printed questionnaires given to different accommodation facilities in Dumaguete City. The questionnaires were personally retrieved. Data were encoded and transposed to an Excel spreadsheet for tabulation. Finally, the gathered research data was treated with utmost confidentiality throughout the study. The researchers treated the data using the following statistical tools: Frequency is used in the study to determine the distribution of each respondent's profile included in the question. The percentage is used to get the part of the respondents' distribution of each profile from its total population. The weighted mean is used to calculate the respondent's level of agreement, and the standard deviation is used to measure how dispersed the data is about the mean. The weighted mean was used to calculate the respondents' level of agreement on the variables that asked about the extent of implementation of green practices and the challenges faced by accommodation facilities in Dumaguete City. Multiple regression is a statistical technique to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables. The objective of multiple regression analysis is to use the independent variables whose values are known to predict the value of the single dependent variable. Each predictor value is weighed, the weights denoting their relative contribution to the overall prediction.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the morals that motivate people to do the right thing. This paper applied ethics to gathering and retrieving data, strictly observing Republic Act 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012. This law seeks to protect all forms of information, private, personal, or sensitive. It is meant to cover both natural and legal persons processing personal information. The research participants knew the study's purpose and voluntarily answered the questionnaire. They were well informed that the undertaking was handled with strict confidentiality, for it was enclosed in the questionnaire and was legally binding. After the data, the researchers kept all questionnaires for burning and/or shredding after 5 years. This complies with the data privacy law.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondents Personal Profile

Table 1 provides insights into the age profile of the respondents, indicating that a significant portion falls within the age brackets 18-27 and 28-37, comprising 32.20 per cent and 33.90 per cent, respectively. While 25.42 per cent of the respondents are between the ages of 38 and 47, and 5 per cent are between the ages of 48 and 57. This demographic distribution suggests a relatively younger workforce within the accommodation facilities surveyed. The frequency of younger employees in the sample may indicate a workforce more receptive to innovation and change, including adopting environmentally friendly practices. Research by Azoulay et al. (2020) supports this notion, highlighting that the workforce in their late 30s and early 40s, often associated with innovation and entrepreneurship, are more likely to succeed. In the context of green practices in accommodation facilities, a younger workforce may exhibit greater adaptability and openness to environmentally friendly initiatives, contributing positively to the implementation and sustainability of such practices.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents (n=59)		
Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18 – 27	19	32.2
28 – 37	20	33.9
38 – 47	15	25.4
48 – 57	5	8.48
Sex		
Male	40	67.8
Female	19	32.2
Civil Status		
Single	46	77.9
Married	13	22.0
Job Position		
Owner	5	8.48
Manager	15	25.4
Supervisor	36	61.0
Others	3	5.08
Years of Service		
<1	4	6.78
1 – 3	20	33.9
4 – 7	12	20.3
8 – 10	13	22.0
≥11	10	16.9

Regarding sex, the majority of the respondents, comprising 67.80 per cent, are female, while only 32.20 per cent are male. This gender distribution prompts an exploration of how these demographics may influence perceptions and behaviors regarding the adoption of green practices and participation in sustainable initiatives within the hospitality sector. This could also be anchored to the study of Darroca et al. (2024), which discusses gender disparities in the Filipino Hospitality sector; this can be anchored to the slightly higher female representation among resort guests. The article's insights into gender-based preferences and behaviors can help explain why certain services and activities are more popular among women.

As to civil status, 46 or 77.97 percent of the 59 respondents are single, while 22.03 percent are married. This demographic distribution explores how civil status may influence perceptions and behaviors regarding the adoption of green practices and participation in sustainable initiatives within accommodation facilities. Research suggests that single individuals often exhibit higher levels of environmental concern and engagement in pro-environmental behaviors than their married colleagues.

Regarding job positions, most respondents, comprising 36 or 61.02 per cent, are supervisors of the accommodation facility. Followed by 25.42% who are managers, 8.48 % owners, and the least at 5.08% holding positions other than the said titles, which may represent officers or heads of certain departments. This distribution reflects the hierarchical structure within accommodation facilities and highlights the varying levels of influence and responsibility associated with each job position. As decision-makers and stakeholders, owners are responsible for determining the organization's strategic direction and resource allocation. Their support and commitment to sustainability initiatives are essential for driving change and embedding green practices into the organizational culture (Kim & Kim, 2021). However, this study's relatively tiny proportion of owner respondents suggests their involvement in sustainability efforts may vary, potentially impacting the organization's overall sustainability performance. Supervisors and managers are pivotal in translating sustainability goals into actionable plans and overseeing their implementation across different departments and functions.

As to years of service, Table 1 shows that 20 or 33.90 per cent of the respondents have been in the industry for 1 to 3 years, followed by 22.03 per cent who have served between 8 to 10 years. According to research, longer-tenured employee members may have important institutional knowledge and experience, which can help implement sustainable practices (Martinez et al., 2021). However, because of ingrained habits and customs, they could also show reluctance to change. On the other hand, younger workers might have more innovative ideas and be open

to implementing eco-friendly practices. However, they might not have the same in-depth knowledge of the dynamics and workings of the sector.

3.2 Accommodation Facility Profile

The institutional profile of the accommodation facilities in Dumaguete City aids the research in determining the business establishment and providing an overview of its operations. This will allow for better knowledge, clearer judgments, and the identification of relevant opportunities. Table 2 shows that hotels and resorts represent the largest proportion of accommodation establishments, comprising 49.15 percent of the surveyed facilities. These establishments are known for offering a wide range of services and amenities, catering to diverse traveler demographics.

Table 2. Profile of the Accommodation Facility (n=59)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Type of Establishment		
Hotel/Resort	29	49.15
Bed&Breakfast/Guesthouse	5	8.47
Inn/Boutique Hotel	15	25.43
Hostel/Dormitel	9	15.25
No Response	1	1.69
Bed Capacity		
10-25	3	5.08
26-50	5	8.47
51-75	8	13.56
75-100	13	22.03
≥101	27	45.76
No response	3	5.08
Years in Operation		
0 – 5 years	17	28.82
6 – 10 years	10	16.95
11 – 15 years	9	15.25
16 – 20 years	9	15.25
≥ 21 years	14	23.73
Number of Employees		
1 – 10	15	25.42
11 – 20	20	33.90
≥ 21	11	18.65
No Response	13	22.03
DOT Accreditation		
Yes	53	89.83
No	6	10.17

Regarding the bed capacity, most of the respondents' accommodation facilities in Dumaguete City have more than 101-bed capacity at 45.76 per cent. It is followed by accommodation facilities with a 75 to 100-bed capacity at 22.03 per cent and a 51 to 75-bed capacity at 13.56 per cent. 5.08 percent of the respondents' accommodation facilities have only 10 to 25 bed capacity and 3 out of 59 respondents did not provide information. For the years of operation, the majority of respondents, 28.82 per cent, have been in operation for up to 5 years, indicating the presence of relatively new operators in the industry. It is then followed by 23.73 per cent of the respondents' accommodation facilities that have been in operation for more than 21 years. This highlights the presence of longstanding or operating accommodation facilities that have withstood the test and challenge of time. These veteran players in the industry may possess deep-rooted expertise, strong brand recognition, and established networks within the local community, contributing to their continued success and sustainability.

Regarding several employees, a substantial proportion of accommodation facilities have a modest workforce size, with 20 out of 59 respondents, or 33.90 per cent, having 11-20 regular employees and 25. Forty-two per cent, or 15 out of 59 respondents, employ between 1 to 10 individuals. The presence of accommodation facilities with over 21 regular employees highlights larger-scale operations that may have more excellent resources and capabilities for implementing comprehensive sustainability practices. The importance of workforce capacity and organizational structure in facilitating green practices within the hospitality industry is highlighted in research by authors such as Kim et al. (2020). They emphasize the need for clear leadership, organizational commitment, and employee engagement to drive sustainable practices effectively.

Lastly, regarding their DOT Accreditation, Table 2 unveils that out of the 59 respondents, 53, or 89.83 per cent, are accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT), while only 6, or 10.17 per cent, are not. This demonstrates the prevailing trend of DOT accreditation within the accommodation sector, underlining the industry's commitment to meeting established quality standards and regulatory requirements. Research has underscored the importance of accreditation in enhancing customer confidence, improving market competitiveness, and driving sustainable tourism development (Han, Lee & Hyun, 2020). Understanding the prevalence of DOT accreditation among accommodation facilities provides valuable insights into industry standards, regulatory compliance, and the overall quality of tourism offerings.

3.3 Green Practices of Accommodation Facilities

Table 3 shows the extent to which accommodation facilities use green practices regarding energy management, waste management, water management, air quality management, and environmental conservation. Table 3 reveals the extent of the accommodation facilities' green practices in Dumaguete City as perceived by key personnel in energy management. As reflected, it obtained a composite mean of 3.46, interpreted as "Great Extent," or the green practices mainly were enforced. These findings indicate that the accommodation facilities participated in the energy management efforts as perceived by the key personnel.

The most widely implemented green practice is switching off equipment when not in use, which obtained a weighted mean of 3.88. This was followed by changing and cleaning the air conditioner filters regularly and reducing general lighting during the daytime, with a weighted mean of 3.81, and switching off lights when a guest leaves with a weighted mean of 3.73, all interpreted as "Great Extent". This indicates high adherence to energy-saving measures among the accommodation facilities surveyed. Research by Abdou et al. (2020) supports the significance of this practice; they explain that hotel operators should properly incorporate green hotel practices into their operational plans to achieve environment-related sustainable goals. By shutting down equipment during idle periods, accommodation establishments can significantly lower their energy usage and operational costs while minimizing environmental impact since the energy requirements of the guest room area vary depending on several aspects, like the room's layout, which may have large windows.

Regarding waste management, key personnel of accommodation facilities have always employed activities towards waste management, as evidenced by the composite mean of 3.56 with a verbal equivalent of "Great Extent", or the green practices observed and practiced all the time. The table revealed indicators such as always segregating waste material and observing the "first-in, first-out" disposal demonstrate high adherence to waste management protocols, exhibiting a weighted mean of 3.81 and 3.75, respectively. Woon et al. (2021) discuss that proper segregation prevents contamination, enabling food waste valorization despite challenges. By segregating waste materials at the source, accommodation facilities can streamline recycling processes and minimize contamination, enhancing overall waste management efficiency.

Regarding water management, as reflected, it obtained a composite mean of 3.10, interpreted as "Moderate Extent", or the green practices were observed and practiced most of the time or are partially implemented. Notably, the accommodation facilities mostly do their share in the water management programs by checking leaks, turning off unnecessary flows, and adjusting water flow according to the type of cleaning. Research by Chen et al. (2020) highlights the importance of leak detection and repair programs in the hospitality industry, emphasizing their role in reducing water waste and conserving resources. By promptly identifying and addressing leaks, accommodation facilities can minimize water losses and contribute to sustainability goals.

With a composite mean of 3.37, interpreted as "Great Extent," the accommodation facilities consistently observe and practice air quality management. These findings underscore the facilities' commitment to effective air quality management. Designation of smoking and non-smoking areas is a common practice in the hospitality industry, supported by research by Chen et al. (2020). By implementing designated areas, accommodation facilities can lessen the impact of secondhand smoke on indoor air quality and promote a healthier environment for guests and staff.

Table 3. *Extent of the Green Practices of Accommodation Facilities*

Green Practices	WM	VD
Energy Management	3.46	GE
Defrost freezers and clean the door seals regularly.	3.71	GE
Switch off equipment when not in use.	3.88	GE
Monitor energy consumption by checking the electricity meters at least once a month.	3.63	GE
Change and clean the air conditioner filters regularly.	3.81	GE
Reduce general lighting during the daytime.	3.81	GE
Made sure that the lights were switched off when guests left.	3.73	GE
Use of smart key cards in the rooms.	2.93	ME
Utilized energy-saving appliances, LED lighting, and intelligent energy management systems to minimize energy consumption.	3.53	GE
Provided occupant-controlled lighting.	3.15	ME
Used automatic shutdown sockets and fluorescent light with high energy efficiency	3.03	ME
Installed lighting controlled by sensors	2.76	ME
Displayed signage in guest/staff areas encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour.	3.56	GE
Waste Management	3.56	GE
Observe the "first-in, first-out" Disposal	3.75	GE
Segregate waste materials	3.81	GE
Prioritizes waste reduction through recycling and composting programs.	3.54	GE
Reused items that have a useful life	3.64	GE
Installed collection box for used batteries and recycled lightbulbs	3.24	ME
Provided alternatives to plastic bags	3.27	GE
Uses washable cloth products and dishware instead of disposable ones.	3.64	GE
Water Management	3.10	ME
Check leaks and turn off unnecessary flows.	3.81	GE
Install automatic water volume controls	3.17	ME
Read the water meter regularly to identify leaks.	3.53	GE
Adjust water flow according to the type of cleaning to be done.	3.63	GE
Do not let water flow while cleaning or rinsing.	3.44	GE
Wash only full loads in the dishwasher.	2.85	ME
Reuse the rinse water as flush water in garbage disposal units	2.75	ME
Install self-closing faucets.	2.55	ME
Install flow regulators on the showerheads/ faucet heads.	3.11	ME
Install low-flush toilets.	2.93	ME
Installed facilities utilizing rainwater and installed a drain to collect rainwater	2.29	ME
Air Quality Management	3.37	ME
Designation of smoking and non-smoking areas.	3.88	GE
Actively uses special equipment (e.g., dust collectors) to remove fine dust and particulates and to eliminate volatile organic compounds.	3.15	ME
Installed indoor air purifiers to purify the air and remove various foul odours.	3.27	GE
Active use of special equipment (e.g. air environment plants) to remove odours and harmful gases.	3.29	GE
Regular monitoring and maintenance of equipment and hotel facilities are needed to ensure air quality, i.e., air conditioning.	3.75	GE
Retrofitting of existing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and refrigeration units to avoid leakage and loss of existing ozone-depleting substances (ODSs).	3.20	ME
Use non-toxic products like lemon oil instead of products with toxic ingredients to clean and polish furniture when possible.	3.19	ME
Purchased cleaners with low toxic air pollutant and volatile organic compound (VOC) content.	3.37	GE
Chooses pump-style sprays emit fewer toxic air pollutants and volatile organic compounds (VOC).	3.32	GE
Used water-based, or other less toxic, paints and coatings.	3.32	GE
Regularly inspect floors to determine where the most wear occurs. Refinish only those portions.	3.56	GE
(If available) Used indoor furniture made of wood instead of pressed wood products, which can emit toxic air pollutants.	3.08	ME
Environmental Conservation	3.49	GE
Choose and buy seasonal fruits and vegetables.	3.38	GE
Use fresh products with little or no preservatives and food colouring.	3.59	GE
Buy products with as little packaging as possible.	3.40	GE
Buy in bulk rather than individually packaged items.	3.66	GE
Choose concentrated, environment and health-friendly cleaning agents.	3.62	GE
Avoid using plastic cups or disposable tableware.	3.43	GE
Provided interior space with access to daylight.	3.66	GE
Provided natural ventilation and interior space with access to outside views.	3.60	GE
Provided a green outdoor environment and landscaping	3.21	ME
Used renewable, reusable, or recyclable fixtures and furnishings.	3.40	GE
Used eco-friendly cleaning products and controlled noise during cleaning routines	3.46	GE

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Great Extent (GE), 2.50 – 3.24 Moderate Extent (ME), 1.75 – 2.49 Limited Extent (LE), 1.00 – 1.74 No Extent (NE)

Lastly, for environmental conservation, the composite means of 3.49, interpreted as "Great Extent", indicates a high level of engagement in these practices, reflecting the facilities' commitment to environmental sustainability. Conversely, there were these practices that the accommodation facility observed and practised all the time, such as buying in bulk rather than individually packed items, providing interior space with access to daylight, choosing concentrated, environment and health-friendly cleaning agents, and providing natural ventilation and interior space with access to outside views. Environmental conservation is the practice that minimizes humanity's impact on its surroundings. The main objective is to create and maintain conditions in which society and nature coexist. Likewise, environmentally preferable purchasing involves choosing products and services that will not hurt the human body, society, and the environment when competing with products and services that serve the same purpose, adding to the traditional parameters of price, quality, and functionality (Van Der Merwe, 2022). He further asserted that purchasing decisions, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries, can substantially affect the environment and society. They import many commodities, including food, from far-off nations to satisfy customer needs since they are constantly pressured to impress and meet guest expectations. The benefits of adopting an environmentally preferable purchasing approach are numerous. The environment, the customer, and the supplier are all potential beneficiaries.

3.4 Challenges of Accommodation Facilities in Implementing Green Practices

Table 4 shows the extent to which accommodation facilities use green practices regarding energy management, waste management, water management, air quality management, and environmental conservation.

Table 4. *Challenges of Accommodation Facilities in Implementing Green Practices*

Green Practices	WM	VD
Policies and Regulations	4.35	SA
Compliance with environmental regulations is a significant challenge for the accommodation facility.	4.58	SA
Accommodation facility operations are affected by frequent changes in environmental policies.	4.44	SA
Challenges in striking a balance between environmental performance and service quality.	4.31	SA
Accommodation facilities are faced with penalties for non-compliance with environmental regulations.	4.08	A
Management	4.41	SA
Accommodation facilities often face challenges in managing peak season demand.	4.10	A
Maintaining a high level of guest satisfaction is a crucial management aspect.	4.49	SA
Managing cost and profitability can be a significant challenge for accommodation facilities.	4.69	SA
The accommodation facility's challenge is adapting to changing consumer preferences and green, sustainable technology trends.	4.34	SA
Resources	4.22	SA
Accommodation facilities often struggle to allocate sufficient financial resources for eco-friendly initiatives.	4.10	A
Limited availability of sustainable materials and technologies	4.05	A
The lack of skilled personnel and expertise can hinder the implementation of eco-friendly practices.	4.34	SA
Ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and environmental standards is a substantial challenge	4.39	SA
Cost	4.12	A
Promoting eco-friendly initiatives and obtaining green certifications can require additional expenses.	4.29	SA
Employee training and environmental education programs can be costly.	4.03	A
The cost of adhering to green regulations is a significant barrier to the accommodation facilities' sustainability efforts.	4.02	A
Accommodation facilities find it challenging to balance environmental sustainability with the cost of implementing green practices.	4.17	A
Sourcing eco-friendly products and materials can be more expensive and complex than conventional alternatives.	4.08	A
Awareness	4.19	A
Actively promoting environmentally friendly practices to guests is a challenge to accommodation facilities.	4.41	SA
Guests may not fully grasp the importance of green initiatives.	4.17	A
Accommodation facilities struggle to effectively communicate green practices to guests	4.03	A
Encouraging eco-friendly behaviour faces challenges due to guest habits.	4.22	SA
Guest of the accommodation facility may not be informed about green practices, impacting their participation.	4.12	A

Legend: 4.20 – 5.00 Strongly Agree (SA), 3.40 – 4.19 Agree (A), 2.60 – 3.39 Neutral (N), 1.80 – 2.59 Disagree (D), 1.00 – 1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Regarding the challenges, the accommodation facilities face in implementing green practices as perceived by key personnel in terms of policies and regulations. The composite mean of 4.26 rated as "Strongly Agree". This indicates that with the efforts of accommodation facilities in implementing green practices, several factors affect their smooth application. It concurs that accommodation facilities may struggle to meet the stringent requirements set by environmental authorities, potentially leading to negative consequences such as penalties or reputational damage. These coercive mechanisms are government laws, policies, and regulations concerning environmental matters that exert pressure on organizations involved in green practices. Environmental policies and regulations are critical drivers in shaping organizations' sustainability strategies and practices. Tong et al. (2022) explain that

significant efforts have been made to promote green efficiency progress from financial health, resource consumption, and environmental quality perspectives. Accommodation facilities must navigate a complex web of environmental laws and regulations imposed by local, national, and international authorities, which can be challenging to interpret and adhere to consistently.

In terms of key personnel respondents experienced towards the accommodation facilities management. The composite mean of 4.41, reflecting a "Strongly Agree" rating, implies that significant obstacles or difficulties must be addressed and overcome to manage the activities concerning green practices effectively. As in the table, the highest challenges in terms of management are managing cost and profitability, maintaining a high level of guest satisfaction, and adapting to changing consumer preferences and green, sustainable technology trends. A growing body of literature underscores the doubt and uncertainty surrounding the effectiveness of green practices, particularly from the perspective of owners, managers, and supervisors in the hospitality industry. For instance, recent research by Hossain et al. (2024) highlights the intricate relationship between financial digitization and green innovation, aiming to shed light on their dynamic interplay within a global context.

Regarding resources, the composite mean of 4.22, classified as "Strongly Agree," indicates a significant agreement among respondents regarding the formidable challenges posed by resource-related issues. One of the most pressing challenges identified is ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and environmental standards, indicating a "Strongly Agree" rating. This emphasizes the complexities associated with navigating regulatory frameworks and meeting environmental compliance. Government policies and regulations are regarded as external elements that can influence how receptive businesses are to implementing green practices, according to Subagja (2023).

Regarding cost, the composite mean of 4.12, categorized as "Agree," indicates a notable agreement among key personnel regarding the significant financial obstacles encountered. The most challenging of which, in terms of cost as perceived by key personnel with a weighted mean of 4.29, is promoting eco-friendly initiatives, and obtaining green certifications can require additional expenses. This is followed by the challenge the accommodation facilities face to balance environmental sustainability with the cost of implementing green practices and the additional cost needed to train and educate employees regarding environmental programs. The above challenges underscore the financial complexities of implementing green practices within accommodation facilities. Overcoming these challenges requires strategic financial planning, innovative cost-saving measures, and supportive policy environments to foster sustainable business practices. Research by Deraman et al. (2017) explains that a significant sum of money is also needed for environmental auditing and certification costs, in addition to the cost of environmental goods and equipment.

Lastly, the challenges the accommodation facilities face in implementing green practices as perceived by key personnel in terms of awareness, with the composite mean of 4.19 rated as "Agree". This highlights the significant obstacles key personnel face in raising awareness about environmental issues and fostering commitment to sustainable practices among stakeholders. As seen in the table, actively promoting environmentally friendly practices to guests is a challenge to accommodation facilities; guest habits make it challenging to encourage eco-friendly behaviour, and as per accommodation facilities' key personnel in Dumaguete City, guests may not fully grasp the importance of green initiatives. The findings suggest that businesses may struggle to adopt green practices if suppliers, employees, and guests are unaware of environmental advocacies. As Wan et al. (2017) attested, even though guests are concerned about the environment, some might not be willing to pay extra for a green hotel. The study underscores the importance of effectively communicating the value proposition of green practices to guests to overcome resistance and encourage participation in sustainability initiatives.

3.5 Relationship Between Respondent's Profile and Green Practices

The significant effect between the profile and the implemented green practices of accommodation facilities' data is significant in understanding how the respondents' profiles correspond to their perceptions of the implementation of green practices of accommodation facilities. Table 5 presents the data to identify the effect of the profile variables on the extent of green practices in the accommodation facilities. Using Multiple Regression Analysis, the data reveal that the overall F-test is significant ($p < .001$). This means that some of the explanatory or independent variables are significant predictors of the extent of the practices of the accommodation practices.

Analyzing the regression output shows that the age ($p = 0.046$) and civil status ($p < .001$) of the respondents are the only predictors of the extent of green practices of the employees.

Table 5. Effect of the Profile Variables on the Extent of Implementation of the Green Practices on the Accommodation Facilities (n=59)

Variables	Coefficients	SE	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	3.33	0.40	8.30	0.00
Age	-0.16	0.07	-2.07	0.04
Sex (male=0,female=1)	0.16	0.12	1.40	0.16
Civil Status (single=0,married=1)	0.58	0.14	4.03	0.00
Job Position (owner/ manage=0,supervisor=1)	0.10	0.10	1.08	0.28
Years of Service	-0.06	0.06	-0.96	0.34
R = 0.7319				
R ² = 0.5356				
adjusted R ² = 0.4693				
F-ratio = 8.074				
p-value = <.001 (significant)				

Considering the age of the employees, the coefficient (-0.163) has a negative sign. This finding would mean that younger employees tend to have more green practices than older ones. A younger workforce may exhibit greater adaptability and openness to environmentally friendly initiatives, contributing positively to the implementation and sustainability of such practices. Research by Azoulay et al. (2020) supports this notion, highlighting that entrepreneur in their late 30s and early 40s, often associated with innovation and entrepreneurship, are more likely to succeed.

Regarding the civil status of the employees, the coefficient (0.580) is positive. Considering the coding of the variable (single=0, married=1), this finding connotes that married employees tend to display a better extent of green practices than single employees. The observed disparity in green practices between single and married employees may stem from variations in lifestyle and responsibilities. Single individuals typically have fewer family obligations and financial commitments and may prioritize convenience, affordability, or social activities, influencing their engagement with green practices in hospitality settings. Furthermore, the dynamics within marital relationships, such as shared decision-making and differing attitudes toward environmental conservation, may also influence an individual's propensity for green behaviours. Fisher et al. (2012) study indicates that married people are more likely to participate in green activities. Meanwhile, the other variables are not classified as significant determinants of the employees' extent of green practices. This signifies that the respondents' sex, job position, and years of service cannot account for the extent of their green practices. This suggests that factors beyond demographic characteristics, such as organizational culture, leadership support, and individual values, may be more prominent in shaping employees' attitudes and behaviours toward sustainability initiatives within accommodation facilities.

3.6 Relationship Between the Profile and Challenges faced by the Accommodation Facilities

Table 6 shows that the overall F-test is insignificant ($p = 0.500 > \alpha = 0.05$). This signifies that the profile variables of the key personnel cannot significantly predict the extent of challenges the accommodation facility faces. In other words, their age, sex, civil status, job position, and years of service cannot account for the challenges the accommodation facilities face. The non-significant results suggest that factors beyond individual demographics play a more substantial role in influencing the difficulties encountered in implementing green practices.

Table 6. Effect of the Profile Variables on the Extent of Challenges Faced by the Accommodation Facilities (n=59)

Variables	Coefficients	SE	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	3.81	0.49	7.79	0.00
Age	0.03	0.09	0.33	0.74
Sex (male=0,female=1)	0.20	0.14	1.36	0.18
Civil Status (single=0,married=1)	0.10	0.17	0.59	0.55
Job Position (owner/ manager=0,supervisor=1)	0.01	0.12	0.15	0.88
Years of Service	0.02	0.08	0.29	0.76
R = 0.3340				
R ² = 0.1116				
adjusted R ² = 0.0153				
F-ratio = 0.8791				
p-value = 0.505 (not significant)				

This implies that challenges related to green practices may stem from broader organizational factors, industry dynamics, or external influences rather than the individual characteristics of the respondents. Several potential explanations can be explored to understand why demographic variables did not emerge as significant predictors of challenges faced by accommodation facilities. The study of Čater and Serafimova (2019) indicates that analyzing individual and joint influences on environmental variables can aid in profiling green consumers, suggesting that socio-demographic variables are helpful for segmentation in a market with limited marketing research development. Therefore, while individual demographics may offer insights into respondents' behaviours and preferences, they may not be decisive factors in determining the challenges faced in implementing green practices within the accommodation facilities.

3.7 Relationship Between the Extent of Challenges Faced by the Accommodation Facilities and Green Practices

In Table 7, Spearman's rho correlation analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between green practices and the challenges encountered by the accommodation facilities. This correlation holds statistical significance at the 0.05 level, indicating a meaningful association between the two variables. Therefore, rejecting the null hypothesis suggests that green practices influence the challenges confronted by accommodation facilities. The findings imply that accommodation facilities implementing green practices are prone to encountering fewer challenges than those that do not prioritize sustainability initiatives. This positive correlation underscores the potential benefits of integrating environmentally friendly practices within accommodation operations. By embracing green strategies, such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and water management, facilities may effectively mitigate various challenges associated with resource scarcity, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency.

Table 7. Bivariate Analysis on the Relationship between the Extent of Challenges Faced by the Accommodation and Green Practices

Variables	Policies & Regulations	Management	Resources	Cost	Awareness	Overall Challenges
Energy Management	$\rho = 0.201$ p = 0.044 (significant)	$\rho = 0.158$ p = 0.116 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.306$ p = 0.002 (significant)	$\rho = 0.126$ p = 0.202 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.301$ p = 0.003 (significant)	$\rho = 0.266$ p = 0.005 (significant)
Waste Management	$\rho = 0.182$ p = 0.073 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.133$ p = 0.194 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.255$ p = 0.012 (significant)	$\rho = 0.138$ p = 0.188 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.177$ p = 0.079 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.188$ p = 0.050 (significant)
Water Management	$\rho = 0.114$ p = 0.247 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.090$ p = 0.366 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.339$ p < .001 (significant)	$\rho = 0.208$ p = 0.032 (significant)	$\rho = 0.172$ p = 0.078 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.203$ p = 0.029 (significant)
Air Quality Management	$\rho = 0.219$ p = 0.026 (significant)	$\rho = 0.258$ p = 0.009 (significant)	$\rho = 0.269$ p = 0.006 (significant)	$\rho = 0.052$ p = 0.590 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.046$ p = 0.639 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.088$ p = 0.340 (not significant)
Environmental Conservation	$\rho = 0.258$ p = 0.010 (significant)	$\rho = 0.176$ p = 0.080 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.266$ p = 0.007 (significant)	$\rho = 0.105$ p = 0.285 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.117$ p = 0.236 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.209$ p = 0.027 (significant)
Overall Practices	$\rho = 0.176$ p = 0.067 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.153$ p = 0.116 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.379$ p < .001 (significant)	$\rho = 0.119$ p = 0.210 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.159$ p = 0.096 (not significant)	$\rho = 0.207$ p = 0.023 (significant)

Spearman's Rank Order Correlation (ρ) at 0.05 level of significance

These results align with the growing recognition within the hospitality industry that sustainable practices contribute to environmental preservation and yield tangible operational advantages. Accommodation providers adopting green initiatives enhance their ecological footprint and position themselves to address challenges more effectively, fostering resilience and competitiveness in an increasingly sustainability-conscious market. The results show that energy management has a significant relationship with accommodation facilities' challenges regarding policies and regulations, resources, and awareness. Energy management plays a pivotal role in accommodation facilities' sustainability efforts. Facilities striving for energy efficiency often encounter challenges related to policies and regulations, resource availability, and awareness levels. For instance, a study by Jones, Hillier, and Comfort (2016) found that compliance with energy regulations can be challenging for accommodation providers, especially smaller establishments with limited resources.

Waste management has a significant relationship with resources. Effective waste management minimizes environmental impact and operational costs in accommodation facilities. According to Smith and Jones (2021), implementing robust waste management strategies reduces environmental impact and improves operational

efficiency and customer satisfaction in accommodation facilities. While water management has a significant relationship with resources and cost, water conservation is a key aspect of sustainable operations in accommodation facilities, particularly in regions facing water scarcity or high water costs. Research by Pérez et al. (2020) explains that tourist activities increase water demand and wastewater production, necessitating desalination to meet resident and tourist needs. This results in higher water management costs and issues exacerbated by water losses and seasonal tourism.

Air quality is significantly related to policies, regulations, management, and resources. Maintaining good indoor air quality is essential for guest comfort and health in accommodation facilities. Policies and regulations are crucial in ensuring compliance with air quality standards. Research by Liu et al. (2020) discusses the impact of indoor air quality regulations on facility management practices and investments in ventilation systems. Additionally, studies by Zhang et al. (2018) emphasize resource allocation and effective management strategies in mitigating indoor air pollution sources within accommodation facilities. Lastly, environmental conservation has a significant relationship with policies and resources. Environmental conservation efforts encompass various initiatives to minimize environmental damage and promote sustainable practices. Policies and regulations provide a framework for guiding conservation efforts within accommodation facilities. Research by Becken et al. (2019) discusses the role of government policies and incentives in driving environmental conservation practices in the hospitality industry.

4.0 Conclusion

This study examines the adoption of environmentally friendly practices in Dumaguete City's hotel industry and the related challenges. The study identifies key demographic characteristics that influence the level of green practices adopted in lodging establishments by analyzing respondents' reanalyzing. The research highlights important areas for promoting sustainability, including energy management, waste management, water management, air quality management, and environmental conservation. Key findings reveal a strong commitment to energy conservation, such as powering down equipment when not in use, regularly cleaning air conditioner filters, and minimizing illumination during nighttime. Waste management practices, such as waste segregation and purchasing bulk items, are widely adhered to, along with measures to enhance air quality. These efforts underscore the dedication of staff members to sustainable practices and contribute to overall environmental sustainability in the sector.

Despite these positive steps, accommodation facilities face significant challenges in their sustainability initiatives. These challenges include compliance with environmental regulations, managing costs and profitability, resource constraints, and lack of awareness among stakeholders. The study establishes age and civil status as important indicators of green practice adoption, with younger employees and married individuals showing greater engagement in sustainability efforts. However, gender, occupation, and length of employment do not significantly impact green behaviours, highlighting the complex interplay between human and organizational factors in organizational stability efforts.

The research indicates that the challenges associated with environmentally friendly practices are more likely to stem from organizational variables and organizational or external influences rather than individual characteristics. The study emphasizes that limited awareness, resource constraints, and insufficient communication hinder substantive elements in green practices. The results highlight the need for comprehensive strategies incorporating organizational culture and reorganizational and external influences to promote environmental responsibility and overcome challenges in implementing green practices in accommodation establishments.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Shella May Laspiñas: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing. Ryan O. Tayco: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

6.0 Funding

This research received no funding.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors acknowledge the assistance of the Accommodation Facilities owners, managers, and supervisors in finishing this study.

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Local Production Techniques and Sensory Evaluation of Cassava Wine

Jeyrald Jefferson G. Cay, Gerald E. Baniaga, Client William M. Malinao*
Ifugao State University - Potia Campus, Alfonso Lista, Ifugao, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: clientwilliammalinao@gmail.com

Date received: February 14, 2025

Date revised: February 24, 2025

Date accepted: March 16, 2025

Originality: 93%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 7%

Recommended citation:

Cay, J.J., Baniaga, G., Malinao, C.W. (2025). Local production techniques and sensory evaluation of Cassava Wine. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 214-220. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.090>

Abstract. This study aimed to develop a local production technique for cassava wine and evaluate its sensory acceptability across three treatments with varying cassava-to-yeast ratios: Treatment 1 (1 kg cassava, 50 g yeast), Treatment 2 (2 kg cassava, 50 g yeast), and Treatment 3 (3 kg cassava, 50 g yeast). Specifically, it assessed aroma, appearance, taste, texture, and respondents' likelihood of consuming cassava wine compared to other options. A quantitative approach integrating descriptive and experimental methods was employed. Sensory evaluations, conducted using a hedonic scale, revealed distinct acceptability levels among the treatments. Treatment 1 received moderate ratings for appearance (40%) and high ratings for aroma (30%), with most respondents describing its taste as sweet with a mild alcoholic note. Treatment 2 garnered mixed feedback, with 50% moderately liking the appearance and 40% slightly liking the flavor. Treatment 3 achieved the highest overall acceptability, with 50% highly rating its appearance and 40% moderately appreciating its taste. Regarding consumption preference, 40% of respondents indicated a willingness to consume Treatment 3 regularly, a preference comparable to rice wine. The study highlights the potential of cassava wine, particularly the variant produced with 3 kg of cassava, as a viable alternative in local markets. Enhancing fermentation techniques, increasing consumer awareness, and promoting cassava wine could improve its acceptance and commercial viability.

Keywords: Product development; Cassava wine; Local production technique.

1.0 Introduction

The global wine industry has played a significant role in social, cultural, and economic development, contributing to various sectors, including tourism, agriculture, and international trade (Brito et al., 2024). As part of the broader agenda set by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, the need for sustainable and innovative practices in food and beverage production has become increasingly imperative (Martínez-Falcó et al., 2023). With its long history from 6000 BCE in regions like Georgia, Iran, and Armenia, wine has evolved through technological advancements and diversification, reflecting changing consumer preferences and sustainability concerns (Lekicks, 2021; Wagner et al., 2023).

Traditional wine production, involving fermentation processes such as alcoholic and malolactic fermentation, has continually adapted to meet consumer demands for quality, flavor, and variety—fermentation conditions, including sugar content and temperature, influence sweetness, acidity, and aroma. However, the lengthy and resource-intensive nature of conventional winemaking poses challenges in terms of sustainability and efficiency (Shahrajabian, 2023). In alignment with SDG 2: Zero Hunger and SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, exploring alternative ingredients for wine production is essential to support agricultural innovation, promote food

security, and enhance rural development. Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), a drought-resistant staple crop rich in carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals (Mahapatra, 2020), presents a promising alternative. Its utilization in wine production offers a new avenue for product diversification. It supports cassava-producing rural communities, particularly in regions like North Maluku, Philippines, where cassava is a primary source of livelihood.

Cassava, especially the Lakan 1 variety known for its high starch content and moderate glycemic index, offers the potential for creating a unique wine product (Coelho et al., 2020; Andrés-Meza et al., 2024). This study aims to leverage cassava's agricultural abundance and nutritional value to produce a sustainable and innovative wine alternative, addressing consumer preferences and global sustainability goals. The motivation to conduct this research stems from introducing new, eco-friendly products in the wine industry, reducing dependency on traditional grape-based wines, and supporting rural economies through value-added agricultural products. This study explores the feasibility of producing cassava-based wine, focusing on its fermentation process, sensory attributes, and market potential. By utilizing Lakan 1 cassava, the research aims to contribute to developing sustainable agricultural practices, promoting food diversity, and enhancing economic opportunities for cassava farmers. The ultimate goal is to align with SDG targets by fostering innovation, supporting rural livelihoods, and promoting responsible production within the beverage industry.

2.0 Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study applied Quantitative research, a method of inquiry used in various academic disciplines and industries to collect and analyze numerical data to answer research questions. The methods included in the quantitative research were descriptive and experimental. Descriptive analysis focuses on summarizing and describing the characteristics of a dataset. Experimental design is a method used to investigate causal relationships between variables by manipulating one or more variables and observing the effect on another variable. These methods determined the Cassava wine's acceptability and palatability level.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted at Alfonso Lista and focused on the cultural significance of cassava wine within the Ifugao community. Cassava wine is essential as a traditional beverage deeply embedded in local customs and celebrations. Researching its production not only preserves and promotes this cultural heritage but also explores innovative opportunities for entrepreneurship.

2.3 Research Participants

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select respondents with specialized expertise in food science, fermentation processes, and beverage production. The study included five local experts in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao, and five food specialists from Ifugao State University – Potia Campus, all with significant wine fermentation experience. Respondents were chosen based on their food science, fermentation expertise, and professional experience. Their knowledge provided valuable insights into cassava wine production, particularly fermentation kinetics, quality control, and sensory evaluation.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher utilized five attributes for the research questionnaire to determine the level of acceptability of cassava wine. The questionnaire contained a letter to the respondents. The first part included the profile, which gathered demographic information. The second part focused on evaluating different cassava wine sample products, labeled Sample 1 to Sample 4, using a 9-point hedonic scale patterned from the study of Hou et al. (2020). Lastly, part three contains the likelihood of drinking Cassava Wine.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

The questionnaire for sensory evaluation and likelihood to consume was personally administered to the respondents and retrieved upon completion. Following data collection, responses were coded for analysis. Taste tests were conducted before the completion of the questionnaire to ensure accurate sensory evaluation. Respondents were personally approached for participation in the study. Those who expressed interest were asked to sign an informed consent form granting permission to participate. Four distinct products with varying treatments were presented to the respondents. A randomized sample of one product was provided for tasting in

the initial stage. Participants were given a cup of water to cleanse their palate before proceeding to the following sample. This process was repeated until all four products had been tasted and evaluated. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to analyze data.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Local Production Techniques

Fresh cassava tubers and fertilizer agents are the primary ingredients in producing cassava wine. The primary ferment (yeast strain) used in this work was the commercial lager brewing strain (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae* brand Instant Yeast Nevada) collected from a supermarket. To produce local Cassava Wine. Thoroughly wash the cassava tubers under running water to remove all dirt, soil, and impurities. Carefully peel the cassava to remove the outer skin, ensuring that no remnants of the peel remain, as it contains cyanogenic compounds that can affect the fermentation process. Slice the cassava into medium-sized pieces that fit comfortably into the cooking pot for even boiling. Place the cassava pieces in a pot of boiling water and cook until they are soft and fully cooked (approximately 30–45 minutes, depending on the size of the pieces). The cassava should be tender and easy to mash. Remove the cassava from the pot and allow it to cool to room temperature. Ensure the cassava is completely cooled before proceeding to prevent yeast degradation from heat exposure. Chop the cooled cassava into small, uniform pieces to ensure even fermentation and better interaction with the yeast. Spread the chopped cassava evenly onto a large, clean platter or tray to allow any remaining moisture to evaporate slightly and to prepare for mixing. Mix the chopped cassava with the measured yeast (Treatment 1 - 1 kg cassava, 50 g yeast, Treatment 2 - 2 kg cassava, 50 g yeast, and Treatment 3 - 3 kg cassava, 50 g yeast). Ensure the yeast is distributed uniformly for consistent fermentation across the batch. Transfer the yeast-cassava mixture into a clean, sterilized fermentation container. Cover the mixture with clean banana leaves, which act as a natural cover and can enhance the flavor profile during fermentation. Seal the container tightly to prevent leaks or contamination. Place the sealed container in a calm, dark environment with a stable temperature (preferably 20–25°C) to allow fermentation to occur over the desired period (typically 7–14 days, depending on the desired alcohol content and flavor development).

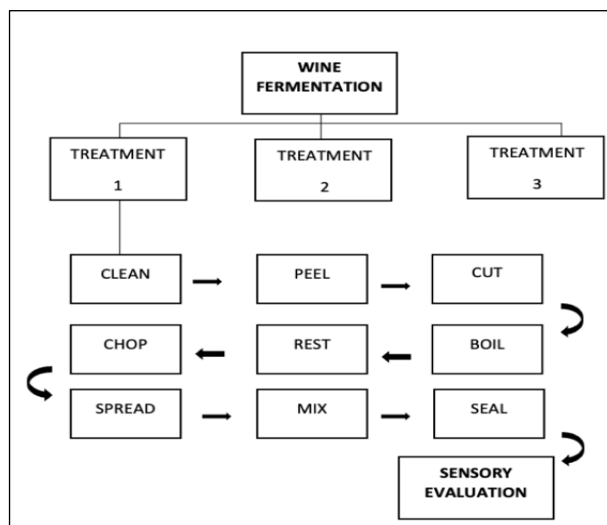


Figure 1. Local Production Technique for Cassava Wine

Other studies have studied the fermentation techniques for cassava wine, which encompasses a variety of traditional and modern techniques, each contributing to the unique characteristics of the final product. Traditional methods, such as those used for beverages like chicha and cauim, rely on spontaneous fermentation, which enhances flavor, aroma, and nutritional value while degrading harmful cyanogenic compounds present in cassava (Chacon-Mayorga et al., 2021). In contrast, modern approaches utilize controlled environments, such as the Temperature And Fermentation Controlled Chamber (TFCC), which allows for precise monitoring of pH, temperature, and alcohol levels, optimizing the fermentation process (Rofi'i et al., 2022). Additionally, innovative techniques like simultaneous saccharification and fermentation (SSF) and vacuum fractionation have been explored to improve ethanol yield and purity from cassava roots and peels, achieving concentrations of 8-12 wt%

and up to 86 wt% respectively (Phakping et al., 2014). These diverse methods highlight the adaptability of cassava fermentation, catering to both traditional practices and contemporary industrial applications (Aguilar et al., 2020).

3.2 Sensory Evaluation for Cassava Wine

Table 1 presents the level of acceptability of cassava wine (Treatment 1) based on appearance, taste, aroma, texture, and overall acceptability. Notably, 40% of the respondents moderately and slightly liked the appearance of cassava wine, describing its color as light yellow-brown, which may have influenced their perceptions of its visual appeal. Regarding taste, the responses were evenly distributed, with 20% of the respondents each indicating that they liked the taste immensely, very much, moderately, and slightly. The cassava wine was characterized by respondents as sweet with a somewhat alcoholic flavor, suggesting that while the sweetness was appealing, the alcoholic undertone may have contributed to the mixed responses. The aroma of the cassava wine received a favorable response, with 30% of respondents immensely liking its smell, which was described as a combination of sweet cassava and beer. This pleasant aroma may have positively influenced the overall sensory experience.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Level of Acceptability of Cassava Wine (Treatment 1)

Indicators	9	8	7	6	5	4
Appearance	10%	10%	40%	40%	-	-
Taste/Flavor	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	-
Smell/Odor	30%	10%	10%	20%	20%	10%
Texture	10%	40%	40%	10%	-	-
Overall Acceptability	10%	40%	30%	20%	-	-

Legend: Like extremely = 9, Like very much = 8, Like moderately = 7, Like slightly = 6, Neither like nor dislike = 5, Dislike slightly = 4, Dislike moderately = 3, Dislike very much = 2, Dislike extremely = 1.

Regarding texture, 40% of respondents either liked or moderately liked the texture, noting that the cassava wine provided a smooth sensation when swallowed, which is a desirable quality in fermented beverages. The overall acceptability of the cassava wine was generally positive, with 10% of respondents indicating they liked it, 40% very much liked it, and 30% moderately liked it. Although 20% of the respondents slightly liked the wine, no negative responses were recorded, indicating that cassava wine holds promise as an acceptable beverage option.

The predominantly positive reception suggests cassava wine has strong market potential as an alternative fermented beverage. Its unique combination of sweetness and mild alcoholic flavor could appeal to consumers looking for innovative local wine options. While the taste received mixed ratings, the positive feedback on texture and aroma highlights areas of strength. Enhancing the balance between sweetness and alcohol content could improve overall acceptability, making it more appealing to a broader audience. The light yellow-brown appearance and smooth texture were well-received, indicating that maintaining these sensory qualities during production is essential. Further refining the visual presentation, such as through improved packaging, could enhance its attractiveness in the market.

Studies indicate that the sensory profiles of cassava products, such as fufu and spirits, exhibit distinct characteristics that affect consumer acceptance. Fufu from environmentally friendly processes received higher acceptance scores than traditional methods, highlighting the importance of production techniques on sensory attributes like texture and flavor (Tomlins et al., 2007). Additionally, cassava wine produced through controlled fermentation and distillation demonstrated desirable sensory traits, appealing to experienced tasters (Coelho et al., 2020). Furthermore, improved fermentation methods enhanced sensory acceptability, suggesting that advancements in processing can positively impact consumer preferences (Marcon et al., 2007). Overall, sensory attributes such as appearance, texture, and flavor play critical roles in determining the acceptability of cassava-based alcoholic beverages (Sobowale et al., 2022).

Table 2 presents the level of acceptability of cassava wine (Treatment 2) based on appearance, taste, aroma, texture, and overall acceptability. Notably, 50% of the respondents moderately liked the appearance of cassava wine, describing its light yellow-brown color as visually acceptable, though not highly appealing to all participants. Regarding taste, 40% of the respondents slightly liked cassava wine, noting its sourness and mild alcoholic flavor. While the balance of sourness and alcohol was somewhat appreciated, it did not receive strong favorable responses, indicating that the flavor profile may need refinement. The aroma of the cassava wine was moderately

liked by 30% of the respondents, who described it as having a strong alcoholic smell. Although the aroma was not overwhelmingly disliked, its strength may have influenced the mixed responses.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Level of Acceptability of Cassava Wine (Treatment 2)

Indicators	9	8	7	6	5	4
Appearance	-	20%	50%	30%	-	-
Taste/Flavor	-	20%	10%	40%	20%	10%
Smell/Odor	20%	10%	30%	10%	20%	10%
Texture	20%	10%	20%	30%	20%	-
Overall Acceptability	10%	10%	20%	40%	10%	10%

Legend: Like extremely = 9, Like very much = 8, Like moderately = 7, Like slightly = 6, Neither like nor dislike = 5, Dislike slightly = 4, Dislike moderately = 3, Dislike very much = 2, Dislike extremely = 1.

Regarding texture, 30% of the respondents slightly liked it, describing it as rough on the throat. This suggests that the mouthfeel of the cassava wine may require improvement to enhance its overall acceptability. The overall acceptability of the cassava wine was mixed, with 10% of respondents indicating they immensely liked it, 10% very much liked it, and 20% moderately liked it. However, 40% of respondents slightly liked it, 10% neither liked nor disliked it, and 10% slightly disliked it. Although most responses fell within the positive range, the varied opinions highlight areas for potential product enhancement.

The mixed acceptability ratings indicate product refinement needs, particularly in taste and texture. Adjusting the fermentation process to balance the sourness and reduce the rough texture could significantly enhance the overall sensory experience and consumer preference. Improving the aroma by controlling the fermentation duration or incorporating aroma-enhancing techniques could make cassava wine more appealing. Additionally, refining the filtration process could result in a smoother texture, addressing the rough mouthfeel reported by respondents. The production of high-quality wine relies heavily on the complex interactions between microorganisms and fermentation conditions. Yeast strains play a crucial role in developing wine aroma and flavor by producing volatile metabolites (Lambrechts & Pretorius, 2019). The microbial ecosystem, including non-Saccharomyces yeasts and lactic acid bacteria, contributes significantly to wine aroma and consumer preferences (Belda et al., 2017).

Table 3 presents the sensory evaluation of cassava wine in terms of appearance, taste, aroma, texture, and overall acceptability. A significant proportion of respondents (50%) expressed high satisfaction with the wine's appearance, describing its light yellow-brown hue as visually appealing, consistent with the expected color profile of fermented cassava-based beverages. Regarding taste, 40% of the respondents indicated moderate to high acceptability, noting its slightly sweet flavor with subtle alcoholic undertones. This suggests that the fermentation process effectively balanced the residual sugars and ethanol content, though slight adjustments could further enhance its palatability and complexity. The aroma received moderate to high ratings from 30% of the respondents, who likened the scent to sugarcane wine. This comparison indicates that the cassava wine's volatile compounds, likely derived from the fermentation of cassava starches, contributed to a familiar and pleasant olfactory experience. However, optimization of fermentation conditions may be necessary to achieve a more pronounced and appealing aroma.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Level of Acceptability of Cassava Wine (Treatment 3)

Indicators	9	8	7	6	5	4
Appearance	-	50%	30%	20%	-	-
Taste/Flavor	-	40%	40%	20%	-	-
Smell/Odor	30%	30%	10%	10%	20%	30%
Texture	20%	20%	50%	10%	-	20%
Overall Acceptability	10%	40%	30%	20%	-	10%

Legend: Like extremely = 9, Like very much = 8, Like moderately = 7, Like slightly = 6, Neither like nor dislike = 5, Dislike slightly = 4, Dislike moderately = 3, Dislike very much = 2, Dislike extremely = 1.

The texture was moderately liked by 30% of the respondents, who appreciated its smooth mouthfeel. This smoothness indicates a well-executed fermentation process with minimal residual particulates, though further refinement in filtration and aging could enhance the tactile experience. Overall acceptability results showed that while preferences varied, all responses fell within the positive spectrum. Specifically, 10% of respondents rated the wine as highly acceptable, 40% very much liked it, 30% moderately enjoyed it, and 20% slightly liked it. These

findings highlight the potential of cassava wine as a viable alternative in the local wine market while also underscoring the need for continuous product development to enhance sensory attributes and broaden consumer appeal.

The moderate to high acceptability of cassava wine in terms of appearance, taste, aroma, and texture indicates that the product has a strong potential—the flavor complexity and refining the aroma. Adjusting fermentation parameters, such as yeast selection, fermentation duration, and temperature control, may optimize the sensory attributes of cassava wine. The study underscores the importance of continued research into fermentation kinetics and quality control measures. Innovations such as specialized yeast strains, optimized fermentation substrates, and advanced aging techniques could improve cassava wine's overall quality and consistency, making it more competitive in the broader wine market.

Key sensory attributes include color, smell, and taste (Rebič & Horska, 2018). While physical and chemical indicators are important, aromatic substances are crucial in wine quality, emphasizing that wine evaluation cannot rely solely on these indicators (Hou et al., 2020).

3.3 Likelihood of Consumption

Table 4 presents the respondents' willingness to use cassava wine under various treatments: consuming at every opportunity, consuming frequently, occasionally, and consuming only when available without actively seeking it. Notably, 40% of respondents indicated they would consume cassava wine produced with 3 kilograms of cassava and 50 grams of yeast at every opportunity. Additionally, 20% of respondents said they would frequently consume cassava wine made from 1 kilogram, 2 kilograms, and 3 kilograms of cassava with 50 grams of yeast each. Another 10% noted that they would occasionally consume cassava wine made from 1 kilogram of cassava with 50 grams of yeast. Furthermore, 20% of respondents indicated they would consume cassava wine made from 1 kilogram of cassava with 50 grams of yeast, if available, without actively seeking it. Conversely, 40% of respondents reported consuming cassava wine made from 2 kilograms of cassava with 50 grams of yeast only during special occasions, highlighting a preference for wine consumption primarily in celebratory or social settings. These findings underscore the potential market acceptance of cassava wine, particularly the variant produced with 3 kilograms of cassava, while also revealing that consumption patterns are influenced by availability and context.

Table 4. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution on Likelihood of Consumption of Cassava Wine*

Indicators	Cassava Wine Treatment 1	Cassava Wine Treatment 2	Cassava Wine Treatment 3
I would drink it every opportunity that I have.	20%	-	40%
I would drink this now and then	20%	20%	20%
I like this and would drink it now and then	10%	-	-
I would drink this if available, but not go out of my way.	20%	-	10%
I do not like this but would drink it on occasion.	10%	40%	-
I would hardly ever drink this.	20%	20%	30%
I would drink this only if forced to.	-	20%	-

Consumer preferences for wine attributes vary, with traditional and sustainable features like geographical indications, variety, and sustainable certification ranking highly (Stanco et al., 2020). However, consumer preferences can differ across markets. In other countries, extrinsic factors like price and country of origin often outweigh sensory attributes in influencing preferences, though some consumers prioritize sensory characteristics (Williamson et al., 2018).

4.0 Conclusion

Using different fermentation treatments, this study investigated cassava wine's local production techniques, sensory attributes, and consumer acceptability. The findings revealed that the traditional fermentation method utilizing *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* as the primary yeast strain successfully produced cassava wine with distinct sensory characteristics. The production process, which involved careful cassava preparation, fermentation, and aging, proved effective in developing a locally made alcoholic beverage. The sensory evaluation results highlighted that cassava wine was generally well-received by respondents, with moderate to high ratings across appearance, taste, aroma, texture, and overall acceptability. The wine's light yellow-brown color, smooth texture, and mild alcoholic flavor contributed to its appeal. However, variations in fermentation parameters

resulted in differences in taste and texture, with some treatments producing a slightly sour or rough mouthfeel. These findings indicate the need for further refinement of fermentation conditions to optimize the balance between sweetness and alcohol content while improving mouthfeel and aroma. Consumer preference analysis showed cassava wine has market potential, particularly with Treatment 3 (3 kg cassava, 50 g yeast), which received the highest acceptance rate. A significant percentage of respondents expressed a willingness to consume cassava wine frequently, suggesting its viability as a commercial product. However, some respondents indicated they would only consume cassava wine occasionally, implying that further product enhancement and marketing strategies may be necessary to increase its broader appeal.

Based on the findings of this study, cassava wine demonstrates promising potential as a locally produced beverage with favorable sensory attributes. To enhance its appeal and commercial viability, the fermentation process can be further optimized by exploring traditional Ifugao methods, such as the Batad style, which involves either hanging the cassava inside the fermentation jar to allow natural filtration of the juice or soaking it in the jar and filtering the wine upon extraction. These methods may enhance the flavor profile and overall quality of the wine. The initial juice extracted from the fermented cassava is perceived as the sweetest and most palatable. Future production should maximize the yield from this first extraction to ensure superior product quality. Additional studies are recommended to explore variations in cassava-to-yeast ratios, fermentation durations, and storage conditions to refine the production process and improve the sensory characteristics of cassava wine.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Cay & Baniaga: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Gathering, Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation
Malinao: Supervise, Visualize, and write, reviewing, and editing.

6.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

7.0 Acknowledgment

The researchers sincerely thank the individuals and institutions that contributed to this research, especially our mentors and colleagues in the academe for their guidance.

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Stress and Academic Burnout among Nursing Students: A Regression Analysis

Christian V. Villan*, Gloria M. Cunanan

College of Nursing, Graduate Studies, Liceo de Cagayan University, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: christianvillan23@gmail.com

Date received: February 4, 2025

Date revised: February 24, 2025

Date accepted: March 16, 2025

Originality: 90%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 10%

Recommended citation:

Villan, C., Cunanan, G. (2025). Stress and academic burnout among Nursing students: A regression analysis. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 221-228. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.058>

Abstract. Attending nursing school is challenging. Students enrolled in a nursing program often complain of being academically burned out. As an educator, seeing, interacting with, and teaching learners suffering from burnout is tough. Nurse educators must be aware of this issue and act toward its resolution. Stress is a known predictor of burnout (Hwang & Kim, 2022). However, a gap exists in that current studies were focused on assessing these factors from countries outside the Philippines and only in the context of public educational institutions. Therefore, this article aims to close the gap by elucidating how stress predicts academic burnout in nursing students at both public and private colleges. The inquiry was participated in by 719 nursing students from 4 private and state universities in the Philippines, utilizing modified standardized questionnaires and a 5-point Likert scale. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and linear regression were also employed as statistical tools. The results revealed that student nurses were experiencing high levels of stress ($M=3.89$, $SD=.977$) and academic burnout ($M=3.65$, $SD=1.10$), implying that nursing learners studying in universities suffered from burnout and academic stress. Moreover, personal inadequacy, fear of failure, and inadequate study facilities were predictors of academic burnout, signifying these elements as crucial in shaping the students' psychological well-being. Recognizing the factors causing academic burnout among student nurses is a significant step toward enhancing the quality of education. Furthermore, policymakers, administrators, and educators can develop and implement regulations that advocate for a healthier school life by understanding students' challenges.

Keywords: Academic burnout; Academic stress; Nursing students.

1.0 Introduction

Attending nursing school is challenging. Students enrolled in a nursing program often complain of being tired, exhausted, or worse, academically burned out. Scholastic burnout is characterized by physical, emotional, and mental fatigue from continuous and severe scholastic pressure. It often results from an imbalance between the demands of academic work and the student's capacity to cope with those demands. Student nurses often experience stress in their studies due to heavy workloads from campus classes and clinical rotations, time constraints in making and submitting brain-draining requirements, reprimands from stern clinical instructors with high academic standards, and much more. Seeing, interacting with, and teaching learners suffering from burnout is tough. Nurse educators must be aware of these current issues and act toward their resolution.

According to a recent research study by Ma et al. (2022), 85.3% of nurses enrolled at a Chinese institution experienced significant to severe academic stress, while 36.1% indicated emotional tiredness. In addition, in a correlational study, Liasi et al. (2021) discovered that 16.3% of students enrolled in a medical program were experiencing burnout, and 42.1% had moderate to high stress. Similarly, Haile et al. (2019), in an inquiry of medical

students in Ethiopia, stated that 34% had academic burnout, with 79.9% being academically stressed from class dissatisfaction and uninteresting lectures. Based on these findings, stress is a significant predictor of academic burnout. However, a gap exists in that current studies were focused on assessing these factors from countries outside the Philippines and only in the context of public educational institutions. Therefore, this article aims to close the gap by elucidating how stress predicts academic burnout in nursing students at both public and private colleges.

This study aimed to examine stress as a predictor of academic burnout among student nurses. This report addresses the following research inquiries: First, what is the level of academic stress among student nurses in terms of fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, personal inadequacy, teachers' poor teaching methods, and inadequate study facilities. Second, what is the level of academic burnout among student nurses? Third, is there a significant relationship between academic burnout and academic stress? Lastly, which variables, singly or combined, best predict academic burnout in student nurses? Moreover, this inquiry aims to test the following hypothesis: H_{01} : there is no significant relationship between academic burnout and academic stress, H_{02} : no predictor variable best predicts academic burnout in student nurses.

This study may provide university policymakers, administrators, guidance and counseling departments, and nursing educators evidence of complex relationships between academic burnout and stress. By understanding students' challenges at school, these groups can develop and implement regulations that advocate for a healthier school life. Student nurses may also become aware of the factors that affect their mental well-being and can find ways to cope and manage their situations. With the findings of this paper, the body of knowledge in the field of nursing education and psychology that future investigators may use to bridge the gaps of previous studies and construct methodologies for utilization in future research is presented.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

Research methods that were employed in the study included descriptive-correlational and causal approaches. Descriptive studies look at a population's characteristics, identify problems within a unit, an organization, or a population, or look at variations in characteristics or practices between institutions or countries (Siedlecki, 2020). Conversely, correlational design is a form of nonexperimental research that aids in predicting and explaining the relationships between variables (Seeram, 2019). Causal research identifies cause-effect relationships between independent and dependent variables (Blakeslee, 2020; Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). By making use of the descriptive-correlational causal-comparative research design, the study will satisfy the objectives of the study.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was carried out at the following institutions: Liceo de Cagayan University – Paseo del Rio Campus, Capitol University, Mindanao State University Campus, and Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology. The former are private universities, and the latter are state universities. The selected schools ensure that student nurses in opposing sectors are represented and fill the gaps of previous studies focusing only on private or public universities. Liceo de Cagayan University's Paseo del Rio Campus is located at Barangay Macasandig, Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental, whose landmark is the barangay's Rotunda Circle. The Paseo del Rio campus houses Liceo de Cagayan University's Paramedical programs, including those in nursing, pharmacy, medical technology, radiologic technology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and the recently formed college of medicine. The survey was conducted explicitly at the College of Nursing on the 4th floor of the school building.

On the other hand, Capitol University is a non-sectarian, coeducational, and private university located at Corrales Extension, Cagayan de Oro City, proximal to the Agora Bus Terminal and huge malls like Gaisano City Mall and Ayala Centrio Mall. It operates with the authority of CHED for its tertiary, graduate, and postgraduate programs. Its College of Health Sciences is one of the oldest and most established nursing schools in Cagayan de Oro City and Mindanao, contributing many highly qualified, disciplined, and deeply committed registered nurses. Moreover, Mindanao State University-Main Campus (Pamantasan Pampamahalaan ng Mindanao) is a state university system in Marawi, Philippines. It is the first state university in Mindanao, Philippines, established through Republic Act 1387 (as amended). It is also the second state-sponsored institution in the country, following

the University of the Philippines. The College of Health Sciences at the university provides a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and a degree in Midwifery. The College of Health Sciences envisions being the country's leading college, offering excellence in various health (paramedical) programs and undertaking community extension, research, and health services. It is committed to the health development of the global community.

Finally, MSU-IIT is a public, coeducational research university in Iligan City, Philippines. It is part of the Mindanao State University system and became the first self-governing institution of Mindanao State University in 1975 after being created in 1968 by Republic Act 5363. MSU-IIT offers secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate education programs. This institution's College of Nursing (CON) has consistently ranked among the country's top three performing nursing schools through the National Nurse Licensure Examination (NLE).

2.3 Research Participants

The study participants were level 3 and 4 student nurses from different campuses of the College of Nursing. Specifically, level 3 and level 4 nursing learners were selected because these populations of students have already experienced most of what nursing education has to offer in terms of classroom and clinical situations. Academic stress and burnout levels in junior and senior student nurses are incomparable to students in earlier years (Valero-Chilleron et al., 2019). The students included in the study were those with regular status, which means their studies were strictly in line with the curriculum, and there were no records of failing marks or incomplete and dropped subjects. Those irregular students and transferees were excluded from the inquiry. Furthermore, the nursing learners had no mental or psychological discrepancies, which enabled them to participate in the survey; participating in the investigation requires a calm and sound mind with sufficient critical thinking skills. Students who were deemed psychologically unhealthy were excluded or advised to withdraw their participation. The inquiry employed a proportionate stratified random sampling to determine the number of participants. The total population was divided into four groups corresponding to the different university campuses involved in the study. The total population of students was 1446 from the four universities. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator, the total sample size achieved was 719. The specific number of populations, sample, and percentage of the participants are presented in the table below.

Table 1. *Distribution of Participants from Each University*

Participants	Population	Sample Size	Percentages (%)
University A	549	227	31.6
University B	450	208	29.0
University C	236	147	20.4
University D	211	137	19.0
Total	1446	719	100

2.4 Research Instrument

This study used two adopted and modified questionnaires to fit the study's goals. The first part of the survey tool is the Academic Stress Scale, improved by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1990), which was initially a 40-item survey tool used to assess academic stress. The investigator narrowed the statements down to 25 and modified them to provide an appropriate assessment of the variable. This second part of the questionnaire is divided into five sub-parts: fear of failure (7 items) previously 8 but 1 statement was omitted due to low reliability, interpersonal difficulties with teachers (9 items), personal inadequacy (8 items), teachers' poor teaching methods (7 items) and inadequate study facilities (9 items). This tool was adopted in a recent study by Berdida (2023), which explained the association between academic stress and self-directed learning of nursing students.

Lastly, the second part of the questionnaire is the Academic Burnout Scale by Maslach et al. (1997), a 16-item survey tool measuring academic burnout. The investigator has narrowed the statements to 10 because questions related to decreased academic achievement were excluded. After further scrutiny of the said concept, the investigator has improved and finalized 20 statements to assess the phenomenon, including the addition of physical and physiological manifestations of academic burnout. Maslach's Burnout Inventory/Scale has been a widely used tool in measuring the level of academic burnout of nursing students in recent studies (Chen et al., 2023; Ghods et al., 2023; Batista et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Lopes & Nihei, 2020; Fard et al., 2020; Valero-Chilleron et al., 2019). The researcher's dissertation adviser evaluated the survey tool for content and face validity to ensure the questionnaire items were related to the research problems. Additionally, three nursing education, psychology, and research experts further verified the questionnaire items to determine whether they were relevant

to the research problems. A reliability assessment of the instrument was conducted through a pilot test. 30 level 2 student nurses answered the questionnaire items. Moreover, the reliability of the survey items was determined using Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.70 and illustrated as follows: fear of failure = 0.824, interpersonal difficulties with teachers = 0.849, personal inadequacy = 0.881, teachers' poor teaching methods = 0.846, inadequate study facilities = 0.821, and academic burnout = 0.956.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The following procedures were applied to facilitate data gathering: First, the investigator asked permission to initiate research and obtained a letter of approval from the Deans of the College of Nursing of the respective study universities. The survey questionnaire and the consent letter were transcribed into Google Forms and distributed online via email. The investigator chose this survey distribution method because of the participants' unavailability due to non-uniformed schedules of classes and clinical duties. This approach also benefitted the participants because they could respond to the survey at their convenience and with no time constraints. The letter of consent to the participants contained a detailed explanation of the terms and ethical considerations that serve as protection from data misuse and abuse. Moreover, the informed consent form was placed on a separate page before the questionnaire so the participants could withdraw their participation by not confirming with the designated page. Data gathering commenced once the study university confirmed its participation in the investigation. Once the participants had all responded, the investigator meticulously tallied the responses and sent them to the university statistician for comprehensive data processing and analysis, ensuring the highest standards of accuracy and reliability.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards. A survey instrument and participant consent letters were attached to the manuscript before it was sent to the Liceo Research Ethics Board (LREB). If the ethics board approved the study's procedures and techniques, they were done ethically. The purpose of the study and the specific dates of participation (October–November 2024) are detailed in the informed consent statement. The possible benefits and drawbacks, including issues with anonymity and concealment, were also communicated to the participants. However, the investigator assured the participants their data was in good hands with the safety measures discussed below. The researcher also stressed the significance of participants knowing that their involvement was optional and that they might withdraw or decline at any moment, mainly if they were sick or unable to complete the survey. The participants were also guaranteed anonymity and that the information given to the investigator was confidential. In addition, the investigator's computer was used to store the files containing the participants' information and answers, and the emails containing these files were erased as soon as the investigator received them. Furthermore, the researcher stated that there was no bias or conflict of interest in this investigation and that all data was open and honest. The participants were also given no incentives because they were informed that their participation was voluntary.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Academic Stress among Student Nurses

Table 2 presents the Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Academic Stress among Student Nurses. As shown in the following table, the academic stress level among student nurses was high, with a mean score of 3.89 and a standard deviation of .977. Likewise, the stress level was high regarding fear of failure, followed by personal inadequacy, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, poor teaching methods, and inadequate study facilities.

Table 2. Summary of Mean Scores for the Level of Academic Stress among Student Nurses

Academic Stress	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
Fear of failure	4.28	0.83	Agree	High
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers	3.85	0.97	Agree	High
Personal inadequacy	3.92	0.94	Agree	High
Teachers' poor teaching methods	3.84	0.99	Agree	High
Inadequate study facilities	3.57	1.14	Agree	High
Overall Mean	3.89	0.977	Agree	High

Legend: 4.51-5.00 Strongly Agree/Very High Academic Stress, 3.51-4.50 Agree/High Academic Stress, 2.51-3.50 Neutral Moderately/High Academic Stress, 1.51-2.50 Disagree/Low Academic Stress, 1.00-1.50 Strongly Disagree/Very Low Academic Stress

Student nurses experienced significant academic pressure due to fear of failure, particularly in exams, return demonstrations, and case presentations. Alabduljabbar et al. (2022) linked this fear to heightened stress levels, as failure is not an option for aspiring healthcare professionals. Interpersonal conflicts with faculty and clinical instructors further intensified stress. Wang and Xian (2024) emphasized that such conflicts impact student motivation, engagement, and well-being. Nursing students strive to impress instructors, fostering a high-pressure learning environment. Personal inadequacy also contributed to academic stress, mainly due to difficulty focusing during study periods. Ghods et al. (2023) associated inefficacy and self-doubt with increased stress. Liasi et al. (2021) found that personal inefficacy impaired concentration, negatively affecting performance. The rigorous nursing curriculum amplifies these pressures, including exams, demonstrations, and clinical interactions.

Poor teaching methods, such as inflexible deadlines and unsupportive instruction, further stressed students. De la Fuente et al. (2021) reported that rigid teaching exacerbated stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the need for adaptive teaching strategies. Nursing students rely heavily on instructors, making ineffective teaching a significant barrier to learning. Inadequate study facilities and resources also contributed to high stress. Jagodics and Szabó (2023) found that limited access to study spaces, technology, and academic materials negatively impacted student engagement and mental health. Sufficient classrooms and study areas can minimize disruptions and enhance learning.

3.2 Level of Academic Burnout among Student Nurses

Table 3 shows the Level of Academic Burnout among Student Nurses. The overall mean score of $M = 3.65$ indicates high academic burnout. The standard deviation ($SD = 1.10$) suggests data variability. These results highlight that student nurses experience significant burnout due to excessive workload and emotionally demanding situations.

Table 3. *Level of Academic Burnout among Student Nurses*

Variable	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
Academic Burnout	3.65	1.10	Agree	High

Fard et al. (2020) and Aguayo et al. (2019) confirm that academic burnout occurs when students feel emotionally drained, depersonalized, and have diminished personal accomplishment. It stems from chronic academic stress and is shaped by individual, institutional, and contextual factors. Bauernhofer et al. (2019) further note that burnout symptoms worsen with excessive workload and study engagement. Given their demanding schedules, student nurses often juggle academic tasks and clinical duties, leading to burnout from overwork and difficulty balancing personal affairs. Similar patterns are seen in medical students, with burnout peaking during graduation due to overwhelming workloads (Kilic et al., 2021; Shadid et al., 2020).

In China, many nursing students experience emotional exhaustion, a key symptom of academic burnout, due to repeated stress and poor coping mechanisms (Ma et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Kong et al., 2021). A similar trend was observed in Spain, where burnout symptoms increased as the academic year progressed (Valero-Chilleron et al., 2019). Additionally, five state universities in Brazil reported that 36.3% of students exhibited high burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion. These findings underscore the intense academic and emotional pressures faced by student nurses.

3.3 Relationship between Academic Burnout and Stress

Table 4 presents the Correlation Analysis between Students' Academic Burnout and Academic stress.

Table 4. *Correlation Analysis between Students' Academic Burnout and Academic Stress*

Variables	Academic Burnout			Remarks
	R-value	Effect Size	P-value	
Academic Stress	.541	Large	.000	Significant
Fear of failure	.434	Moderate	.000	Significant
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers	.341	Moderate	.000	Significant
Personal inadequacy	.529	Large	.000	Significant
Teachers' poor teaching methods	.378	Moderate	.000	Significant
Inadequate study facilities	.346	Moderate	.000	Significant

As depicted in the table, a moderate positive significant relationship exists between academic burnout, fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, teachers' poor teaching methods, and inadequate study facilities. In addition, personal inadequacy and academic stress have a significant positive association with student nurses' academic burnout. Yildırım et al. (2023) confirm that burnout is strongly linked to fear of failure, with resilience and external motivation mediating this relationship. Wang and Xian (2024) found that a positive teacher-student relationship, supported by a conducive school climate, reduces student burnout. Similarly, Haile et al. (2019) reported that medical students' dissatisfaction with teaching methods, particularly during clinical rotations, contributed to burnout. A lack of student-centered activities and ineffective instruction heightened emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Cornér et al. (2023) also found that inadequate supervision and unequal access to research support increased doctoral students' stress, exhaustion, and cynicism. Rahmatpour et al. (2019) linked academic burnout to factors such as interest in the field, GPA, and study habits, with disengaged and underperforming students being more prone to burnout. Lastly, Allen et al. (2021) identified stress as a key predictor of exhaustion and cynicism among graduate students, with sleep quality moderating some effects.

3.4 Predictors of Academic Burnout

Academic stress is a predictor of academic burnout among student nurses, according to the results of the multiple regression analysis (Table 5). The table shows that the R-value is .616, signifying a strong positive relationship between students' academic burnout and the independent variables used. The R² value of .379 implies that the significant predictor variables, namely Fear of failure ($p < .05$), Personal Inadequacy ($p < .05$), and Inadequate study facilities ($p < .05$), explained 37.9% of the variability of students' academic burnout. The probability value $p = 0.00$ of $F = 39.24$ indicates a statistically significant relationship between the student's academic burnout and the independent variables used.

Table 5. Regression Analysis of Predicting Academic Burnout of Student Nurses by Academic Stress

Predictors	Stand. Coeff. (B)	P-value	Remarks
(Constant)	--	.002	Significant
Fear of Failure	.175	.000	Significant
Interpersonal difficulties with teachers	.051	.200	Not Significant
Personal inadequacy	.324	.000	Significant
Teachers' poor teaching methods	.069	.094	Not Significant
Inadequate study facilities	.144	.000	Significant

Note: $R = .616$, Adjusted $R^2 = .379$, ANOVA for Regression: $F = 39.24$, $P = .000$

Dependent Variable: Academic Burnout

Meanwhile, the variable that significantly best predicted or influenced students' academic burnout is Personal inadequacy ($p < .05$, $Beta = .324$), followed by Fear of failure ($p < .05$, $Beta = .175$), and Inadequate study facilities ($p < .05$, $Beta = .144$) while the rest of the variables statistically failed to predict or influence students' academic burnout. These findings are confirmed by the statements of Ghods et al. (2023) that feelings of inadequacy are integral to academic burnout among nursing students. Their findings also introduced incompatible learning styles as an additional dimension exacerbating the inadequacy experienced by students, suggesting that mismatches between teaching methods and learning preferences can intensify feelings of ineffectiveness. Likewise, Çam and Ögülmüş (2021) found that Fear of failure was a critical variable predicting school burnout alongside GPA, perceived social support, and maladaptive perfectionism, highlighting its broad implications in educational environments. Correspondingly, Jagodics et al. (2023) applied the demand-resource framework to secondary school students and found that inadequate school resources were a key predictor of student burnout. While demands, such as excessive workload, positively correlated with burnout, adequate resources, such as supportive facilities and teacher involvement, mitigated these effects.

4.0 Conclusions

The study depicts that student nurses were experiencing high academic stress caused by high levels of fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, personal inadequacy, poor teaching methods, and inadequate study facilities. Moreover, student nurses were suffering from high academic burnout. Additionally, the inquiry unveiled that academic burnout is positively associated with academic stress, fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, personal inadequacy, poor teaching methods, and inadequate study facilities. However, it was found that academic burnout among student nurses is influenced by personal inadequacy, fear of failure, and poor study facilities. The well-being of the pupils is heavily dependent on these elements.

The following suggestions were put out in light of the study's findings and conclusions:

Policymakers at universities may choose to implement frameworks highlighting the significance of understanding the factors contributing to academic stress, including anxiety over failing, feelings of personal inadequacy, problems in relationships between instructors and students, and academic burnout. Counseling that is up to par may result from identifying these elements. A policy may also be applied that directs focus to providing adequate classrooms, study areas, facilities, equipment, and teaching aids to the College of Nursing to prevent unnecessary stress and aid in better learning for the student nurses. Policymakers may also heavily monitor the performance of their lecturers and clinical instructors, which requires necessary training or coaching on proper classroom management and effective teaching strategies.

University administrators may provide training for faculty members to recognize early signs of academic stress and burnout and coaching sessions to enhance teaching techniques and approaches to fostering a healthy relationship between teachers and students. They may also allocate resources to building enough classrooms, study areas, and teaching facilities, and supply the nursing department with ample equipment and teaching aids to help prevent academic stress and improve the class engagement of the student nurses. Moreover, the administrators may extend their reserves to make mental health services such as mental health counseling accessible to every student. University administrators may also develop a strict performance monitoring system for every lecturer and clinical instructor handling nursing subjects and coordinate with the College of Nursing to implement this initiative.

The Colleges of Nursing may cooperate with the university to monitor its faculty members' performance in teaching and classroom management and identify areas where supplementary training can be provided. Moreover, the colleges may facilitate coaching sessions regarding the right approaches to handling their students. Doing so may foster a better working relationship between teachers and their learners. The nursing departments may encourage their teachers to be stern in identifying early signs and symptoms of academic stress and burnout and coordinate with the university's guidance and counseling department to address the mental health concerns of the student nurses.

Student nurses dealing with academic stress and burnout may get intensive mental health treatment from the school's guidance and counseling services, with an emphasis on practical strategies for coping with these issues. Departments may also work with the School of Nursing to monitor and identify students experiencing mental health issues.

Nursing educators may prioritize educating their students about the signs and symptoms of stress and academic burnout and teach them techniques to reduce and manage it effectively. Lecturers and clinical instructors may also participate in training and workshops on effective teaching strategies and build a healthy academic bond with the students. The faculty may also try a more flexible approach to handling their learners and focus on nurturing the student nurses' well-being to combat the adverse effects of stress and burnout.

Student nurses experiencing stress and academic burnout may seek mental health counseling and fully take advantage of other services offered by the university's guidance and counseling departments. They may also connect with classmates or schoolmates who have the same experiences so they can express their feelings to people who can fully relate to them and share coping strategies and stress management practices.

Lastly, this paper's gaps and methodologies may become initial steps for interested researchers in propelling their papers to new heights. Future investigators may conduct experimental studies to evaluate the effectiveness of specific stress-reduction techniques, strategies, and practices on academic burnout.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Christian V. Villan mainly constructed the manuscript with the approval and guidance of his research adviser Dr. Gloria M. Cunanan.

6.0 Funding

This research was self-funded by the primary author

7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The author would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the Deans of the different Colleges of Nursing where the study has been conducted, the staff of the universities who assisted the primary author in conducting the surveys, and the students who voluntarily participated in the inquiry. The author is forever grateful to his mother, Mrs. Jocelyn V. Villan, and to Ms. Johairah E. Dimalapang for their support and encouragement.

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Probing the Theory-To-Practice Gap Among Student Nurses: The Case of Bicol University

Alexa Nevee P. Amano*, Christian Dior L. Amaranto, Czarina Ysabelle N. Caya,
Monabelle S. Lastrella, Ma. Stephanie A. Musa
Bicol University - Polangui, Polangui, Albay, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: alexaneveeamano02@gmail.com

Date received: January 28, 2025

Date revised: February 25, 2025

Date accepted: March 17, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Amano, A.N., Amaranto, C.D., Caya, C.Y., Lastrella, M., & Musa, M.S. (2025). Probing the Theory-To-Practice Gap among student nurses: The case of Bicol University. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 229-248. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.045>

Abstract. Student nurses often struggle to transition from theoretical learning to real-world clinical practice. This study investigates the gaps between theory and practice among nursing students at Bicol University, aiming to develop solutions aligned with the program outcomes of the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) memorandum order no. 15 (CMO-15). Using a qualitative case study design, 24 RLE leaders from levels III and IV across three nursing schools were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via focus group discussions, and the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Gap Analysis Worksheet identified discrepancies between expected and actual practices. Findings showed gaps in 10 out of 14 program outcomes, particularly in applying sciences and humanities to nursing practice, which emerged as the most significant challenge. Responses revealed both commonalities and variations in performance indicators across campuses. The Guide in Advancing the Practices in Nursing 15 (GAPN-15) Model was developed to address these gaps. This model provides practical strategies to enhance students' skills and knowledge, ensuring they meet program outcomes before graduating. The GAPN-15 Model offers actionable steps to bridge theory-practice gaps and better prepare nursing students for clinical environments, contributing to improved educational outcomes and patient care quality.

Keywords: Nursing; Theory-practice gap; Clinical practice; Bicol University; GAPN-15 model; Educational outcomes.

1.0 Introduction

Transitioning from structured classroom learning to fast-paced clinical settings can overwhelm student nurses, highlighting the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world nursing practice. This discrepancy often leaves students struggling to provide optimal care, which may lead to decreased performance during their Related Learning Experience (RLE). Prolonged exposure to these challenges risks undermining their confidence and professional growth. Theoretical knowledge and practical experience are essential for nursing students to develop competencies in cognitive and psychomotor domains. However, the unpredictability of clinical environments and inconsistencies in learning approaches create challenges in translating theory into practice. Studies show differing perspectives on the preparedness of student nurses. Azharuddin and Villanueva (2021) argue that while students excel in planning care, they struggle with prioritization and implementation. In contrast, Relloso (2021) emphasizes the importance of psychomotor skills and confidence gained during lectures, which form the foundation for clinical practice. This divergence underscores a critical gap in nursing education.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 15, Series of 2017 (CMO 15, s. 2017) sets the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSG) for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in the Philippines. It outlines nursing graduates' core competencies, curriculum structure, and expected learning outcomes. The CMO emphasizes outcome-based education (OBE), competency-based training, and global competitiveness, ensuring that nursing students are well-prepared for professional practice. However, even with CHED's set guidelines, the nursing education faces several challenges that impact the quality of learning and the readiness of graduates for clinical practice. The theory-practice gap remains a significant concern, as highlighted by Khodaei et al. (2016), who identified factors such as instructor quality, student engagement, and educational planning as contributors. Addressing these issues is essential to improve the application of theoretical knowledge and enhance the quality of nursing services. Competency development early in the educational journey is crucial for shaping attitudes and ensuring adherence to core nursing standards, as Fukada (2020) suggested.

Bicol University consistently demonstrates excellence in nursing education, evidenced by its impressive performance in the 2023 Philippine Nursing Licensure Exam. Despite this achievement, student nurses at Bicol University still face challenges associated with the theory-practice gap. This study aims to identify the specific competency gaps in nursing education and explore how they affect student performance. By understanding these challenges, the research seeks to propose feasible solutions to bridge the theory-practice gap, enhancing nursing education and practice from the perspective of Bicol University student nurses.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

A qualitative case study was utilized to thoroughly analyze the gap between theory and practice faced by student nurses. The approach, which examines an identifiable problem using research to investigate a person, an event, or a theory, has been effectively used to develop solutions that will significantly contribute to bridging the gap because it is adapted to the needs of the study.

2.2 Research informants

The researchers used primary and secondary data to conduct the study. The responses from the face-to-face focus group discussions with the 4 level 3 RLE leader key informants and 4 level 4 RLE leader key informants that were held in each of the nursing departments of the three campuses of Bicol University: College of Nursing (Main Campus), Bicol University - Polangui, and Bicol University - Tabaco, served as the primary source of the study. The secondary sources of the study were the level 3 and level 4 coordinators of the three campuses that provided the researchers with the list of names of the level 3 and level 4 RLE leaders. Photos, audio, and video recordings of the focus group discussions were also relevant secondary sources. The researchers also provided consent forms for the key informants, filled out with their names and signatures following the Data Privacy Act, or RA 10173, which protects the individual's personal information.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

To select key informants, purposive sampling was employed to determine the target number of key informants per year level. Key informants were selected based on the following criteria; a. Regular 3rd and 4th year students, b. Rotated in different areas and different hospitals during their clinical exposure. Focus group discussion was conducted to allow all the 8 key informants per campus to interact with one another. Separate focus group discussions were conducted for each set of informants per campus. During the FGD, the key informants sat in a circle, with the two moderators and transcribers seated beside each other. The researchers requested the informants' consent to use an audiovisual recorder and transcription throughout the FGD. The discussion started with the researchers' introduction and an 'ice breaker' for the key informants to introduce themselves.

The FGD followed a semi-structured interview guided by the Gap Analysis Worksheet that was constructed by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), where the researchers asked a series of open-ended questions that revolve around the identification of theory and practice gaps in each program outcome listed on the CHED memorandum order no.15 series of 2017. Then, follow-up questions were used to expound the ideas of each research participant further. Questions in each FGD were the same, neutral and unbiased. By the end of the FGD, there was a rationalization portion, where the informants exchanged their thoughts and insights with each other.

Lastly, the researchers explained what will follow the FGD and, when doing so, be careful not to make any promises or raise expectations about what comes next.

After each FGD, the audio-visual record and transcripts were stored in a flash drive and were stored in another folder with a password and will be kept till the course of the study has been thoroughly analyzed. The data gathered from the FGD were synthesized using the gap analysis worksheet formulated by the ANCC. The synthesized data were analyzed using a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) Miner Software. This is to determine similarities or patterns within the answers provided by the informants to determine the possible course of action that will bridge the identified gaps and mitigate the effect of the discrepancies.

2.4 Instrumentation

The researchers used audio-visual recording, note-taking, and participant observation throughout the FGD. As one of the roles of the researchers in the discussion was to become a moderator, taking minutes throughout the discussion was challenging. An audio-visual recording of the forum was fundamental for the researchers when transcribing the gathered data, an ethical consideration occurred. After the key informants were informed of the procedures and were told of the voluntary nature of the participation in the study, adhering to their formal consent, they were assured that the information they provided was kept confidential and anonymous, that it was only used for research purposes, and that they could opt-out at any point if they have felt uncomfortable.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Exploring the Potential Gaps Between Theory and Practice Among Student Nurses in Bicol University

The Theory-to-Practice Gap has been a significant concern in the nursing curriculum nowadays. De (2020) supported this in their study, which said nurses' biggest problem today was integrating theoretical knowledge with guiding practice to close the theory-practice gap. The most challenging period has been said to be the shift from student to registered nurse. Some even experienced transition shock during this time, primarily because of the disconnect between the theory they were taught in school and their clinical experience. The differences between the knowledge and skills of student nurses have led to several challenges and misconceptions in the nursing field. Integrating theory and practice is necessary for effective performance in the actual settings; nevertheless, there is a disconnect between what students learn in the classroom and the experience they encounter in the actual settings.

During the study, it was evident that there were varied experiences, knowledge, and perceptions regarding how student nurses learn, handle a range of tasks, and carry out nursing care for their patients. Furthermore, the Theory-To-Practice Gap was visible and, thus, was confirmed by the Program Outcomes of the CHED Memorandum Order no. 15 series of 2017, which are the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program. The flow of the discussion in this chapter was based on the program outcomes of the CHED Memorandum Order no. 15 series of 2017 which were arranged from the program outcome with the most notable gaps to the minor identified gaps, namely: apply knowledge of physical, social, natural and health sciences and humanities in the practice of nursing, conduct research with an experienced researcher, practice beginning management and leadership skills using systems approach in the delivery of client care, apply technology-intelligent care systems and processes in health care delivery, report/document client care accurately and comprehensively, communicate effectively in speaking, writing, and presenting using culturally-appropriate language, apply guidelines and principles of evidence-based practice in the delivery of care, practice nursing in accordance with existing laws, legal, ethical and moral principles, apply entrepreneurial skills in the delivery of nursing care, collaborate effectively with inter-, intra-, and multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural teams, and lastly, engage in lifelong learning with a passion to keep current with national and global developments in general, and nursing and health developments in particular. The CHED Memorandum Order No. 15 series of 2017 program outcomes were utilized to determine whether the student nurses could meet the Commission on Higher Education standards regarding the important qualities of a student nurse. They functioned as a guide to identify the gaps and the factors contributing to the Theory-To-Practice Gap in the nursing curriculum of Bicol University.

3.2 Obstacles in Implementing Nursing Theoretical Knowledge in the Clinical Setting

A key focus of this study is the challenges student nurses encounter in translating classroom instruction and skills laboratory training into real-world patient care during their Related Learning Experience (RLE). Key informants

from different campuses highlighted several barriers, including situational constraints, patient-related concerns, intrapersonal factors, administrative policies, resource limitations, and variations in skills competency. These findings shed light on the gaps in nursing education and the need for enhanced strategies to strengthen clinical preparedness and competence among student nurses.

During the study, the key informants shared their experiences acquiring knowledge, learning a procedure, and applying what they learned in their RLE. It was evident that the student nurses from the different campuses had trouble overcoming the distinction between theoretical learnings and applying those learnings to practice during their RLE in the hospital and the community. Moreover, all the key informants from the three campuses expressed that there was a big difference between what they did during their Skills Laboratory and Theoretical Learnings from what they did in the actual Clinical Exposure. In this study, the first program outcome has the most gaps encountered by the student nurses during their education. The following obstacles were experienced in implementing nursing theoretical knowledge in the clinical setting: situational aspects, patient-related concerns, intrapersonal aspects of students, administrative regulations, lack of supply, skills competency, and experience.

Most key informants mentioned that they were not exposed to the same techniques during their clinical exposure as during their return demonstration.

"The procedures in the actual situation or setting were very different."

The key informants claimed that certain situational factors, such as patients needing immediate care in the actual setting, were the primary cause for the discrepancy between their performance in the skills laboratory and the clinical area.

"For example, if there is an emergency. You cannot apply the step-by-step procedures you learned in an emergency."

Furthermore, the key informants expressed feeling pressured to remember the necessary procedures or practices when the patient's significant other (SO) and clinical instructor were present during care delivery.

"Especially when there are guardians, and of course, as a student, you feel scrutinized by them, unlike in the skills lab where you just get nervous because of your clinical instructor."

During clinical practice, student nurses encountered a variety of stresses. Among these stressors were the demands of schoolwork, including workload and assignments. They also dealt with pressure associated with patient care, such as having accountability for the well-being and lives of their patients.

In addition, some key informants stated that patient-related problems and conflicts also became a component in the various approaches they used in patient care delivery, some of which were the use of mannequins during their return demonstrations:

"In the skills lab, you will not perform procedures on actual patients or patients experiencing symptoms."

Mannequins or "fake patients" in the skills laboratories do not always accurately replicate human anatomy. Martins and Pinho (2020) supported the idea that some "fake patients" cannot be altered to represent abnormal anatomy. That is one of the struggles of the key informants in performing accurate procedures that can be done in the actual setting.

Furthermore, the key informants emphasized some intrapersonal aspects contributing to their inadequate implementation of patient care within the clinical context. Some of which were when they were seeking validation,

"But when it comes to the professor, you must apply the theory, principles, and rationale, so it takes longer and is more comprehensive. That is also the factor, satisfying different needs - the patients and the professors."

Students have made it clear that they wish to impress their superiors with their abilities in a variety of settings and scenarios. However, they must also consider patients in the clinical context.

Moreover, some key informants mentioned that having doubts about doing patient care and having a lack of confidence make it challenging to apply what they know in the actual setting:

"Is my reading still correct? Is it still like this? Because during duty, no one will validate if your vital signs are correct because you are on your own already."

According to HealthStream (2021), patients and healthcare providers value confidence in their care. While providers must be confident in their ability to keep patients safe and assist them in achieving their goals, patients must have faith in their care. Resolving the issues on both ends is essential for improved satisfaction.

Among the factors identified by the key informants as contributing to variances in the appropriate provision of patient care were administrative regulations, noting that each institution has different rules and policies.

"It is different in every institution because each institution follows different policies, and what we demonstrated in RLE sometimes differs."

They have mentioned that some institutions correctly followed procedures. However, in some, they just used the basic techniques and what they were accustomed to, which caused the students distress in applying their learnings to practice.

"There were procedures that were not strictly followed there, depending on the hospital's practices or the specific ward they have."

This was justified in a study by Absalan et al. (2020), which concluded that a bad organizational culture in the clinical setting and unethical resource allocation will damage student-nurse relationships, which will ultimately damage clinical education.

The key informants also identified a lack of supply as a factor in their inability to deliver patient care appropriately.

"You need to be resourceful, especially in public hospitals, because supplies are often lacking. Sometimes, you cannot even practice certain procedures in the actual setting because the supplies are unavailable."

Key informants have emphasized the challenge of rendering appropriate patient care when equipment and supplies are lacking. In some instances, they need to be resourceful with what they have instead of using the proper equipment. During their return demonstration, they were equipped with supplies.

"It also depends on the availability of resources. While it may be listed on the checklist as ideal materials, when you are in the hospital, especially with resource scarcity, you always must be resourceful."

However, some key informants stated that their experience was the opposite. During their return demonstration, they lacked the equipment and were overwhelmed when using it in the actual clinical exposure.

Lastly, experience and skills were also identified as factors responsible for altered patient care delivery. Some key informants have expressed that their return demonstration was only done through videos and was taught online, which makes it challenging to apply it in the actual setting.

"I said, 'I do not know,' I tried it online and handled it right away."

Students were overwhelmed upon their exposure to the facility, knowing that their experiences were only through videos and online teaching or demonstrations. As there were identified factors causing discrepancies between theoretical knowledge and its actual application, there were also reportable variations in the responses of the key informants on the three campuses. As there were similar answers, there were also contrasting thoughts.

3.3 Challenges in Conducting Nursing Research in the Perspective of Student Nurses

Through the experiences of key informants from different campuses, several themes emerged, including group incompatibility, complex research topics, time constraints, research advisers, availability of resources, and research setting. Group collaboration issues and conflicts were identified as significant obstacles, along with difficulty selecting a feasible research topic and managing time effectively amidst academic demands. The role of research advisers was also emphasized, as their guidance significantly impacts the research process. Additionally, challenges in data collection, resource availability, and logistical difficulties in research settings further complicated the experience. These findings underscore the need for improved support systems to enhance the research capabilities of nursing students.

According to the University of Montana (2024), research allowed people to pursue their interests and challenge them in new ways. Research may be conducted individually or by the group. This can help you understand how to analyze the research problem you are going for. This can also be a contribution to future research and other significant aspects of the study. In this study, the researchers identified themes about the variables contributing to the challenges arising during research: group incompatibility, complex research topic, time constraints, research adviser, availability of resources, and the research setting. As per the Institute of Medicine, nurses conducted various research studies to develop clinical interventions to support patients needing nursing care. Because of its complex nature and wide-ranging application, nursing research frequently needs scientific support from multiple fields. As a result, nursing research crosses traditional research boundaries and incorporates techniques from other disciplines.

Several factors affected the key informants in conducting their research. This study presented different themes, and most of the key informants mentioned that group incompatibility was the major factor contributing to the challenges faced in conducting research. Numerous key informants emphasized the issue of group collaboration, citing it as the primary reason for emerging issues.

"One of our members, during meetings, always says, 'That is okay. It is up to you, like that.'"

Key informants highlighted the need to select cooperative group mates in conducting research, as this will lead to better results. According to Mitchell et al. (2004), having positive social relationships enhances the effectiveness of group work.

"You have to be well coordinated with your groupmates because they are your helpers, and even if we say that you are assuming that you are good, you still need them to work."

Team coordination can be a very effective tool for boosting productivity and quality of work, reducing mistakes and conflicts, fostering more creativity and innovation, raising motivation and engagement, and promoting customer happiness and loyalty. Additionally, it can foster a supportive and encouraging team environment where all members feel valued and respected. Efficiency in managing your staff can significantly enhance all these advantages.

In addition to group collaboration, the presence of conflict within the group was also a key factor identified by the key informants as a major contributor to research challenges.

"We fought, so we thought we should finish this (research) in separate ways."

In contrast, when managed well, conflict can help a group better understand the problems they confront. However, a poorly managed conflict that lasts too long might result in reduced cohesion. Even among those in the group who attempt to stay out of a fight, irritation or rage might nevertheless surface when it persists. Group inconsistencies, particularly when conducting research, negatively affect both the process and the results of the study.

A complex research topic was also one of the top factors identified by the key informants when starting their research.

"If you encounter a hard topic, stick with it."

The key informants have already selected a research topic, but some still have difficulty because it is not immediately apparent.

"Just like what they said, topic. In our research, we need to go far places during our data gathering. It is very tiring, and we must exert effort and time."

According to Mangla (2022), avoid having research topics that necessitate intensive computation unavailable or unaffordable. Also, the objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-specific. In addition, the key informants also emphasized that they find it challenging to apply the research topic in a real-life setting. The research topic of the key informant is a study of a disease,

"It is easier to study the disease, but it is so hard to understand its process."

Elfman (2022) explained that research can be used to solve problems in the real world, but it also plays a crucial role in addressing the problems. Whatever the research topic is, it will always be associated with expenses, public-private collaborations, and risk assessments. In addition, key informants shared recommendations about choosing a research topic that is favorable to the group,

"Choose a topic as a group. All of you should have the same thoughts and enjoy the topic and process."

Choosing a good topic will influence key informants and their groups. Choosing an interesting topic that will be approved by the group will ensure the success of the research (Zaveri, 2023).

Furthermore, time constraints were also mentioned as a contributing factor in the research process.

"And our deadlines were pressuring. Your defense should be before Christmas or December; it puts pressure on you."

Making time to do research is very essential in the process of doing research; however, due to the heavy workloads, time restrictions present several difficulties for researchers, such as the requirement for concurrent data collection operations, restricted respondent access, and implications for research design and planning. The amount of time to accomplish research is being compromised due to duties, activities, exams, etc. in nursing school.

"You will pass it two weeks from now, and there is no extension. If there will be extensions, they will probably be for three or four days."

Adhere to deadlines when conducting research to complete everything on time. Research takes a lot of time to gather reliable information that will be useful later.

Moreover, the key informants mentioned the role of the research adviser as a factor in conducting their research. Key informants shared that choosing an adviser well,

"Choose your adviser well because even if your group mates are okay, you will struggle if there is no proper guidance from your adviser. For instance, it is like you are doing it alone and groping in the dark. And then, even if you reach out to your adviser but cannot help you, they are just supporting you but not helping you."

The research adviser is responsible for assisting the researchers in making decisions throughout the research process. According to Loui (2024), the most important part of starting your research is choosing a good research adviser because having a research adviser who will support and, at the same time, help you will contribute to helping you meet your goals and have a successful research project.

Another factor was the research setting. They chose a research topic that they approved, but when it came to the data gathering, that is where they struggled,

Before, the location of our study was in Bangkirawan or somewhere high, and the jeep arrived only every 30 minutes; it was difficult there because you had to coordinate with the city. In our study, we needed to get information from different offices. Coordinating is hard when that is the case because they do not follow your time but their own time."

To support these statements, Rimando et al. (2015) stated that data collection is one of the most critical parts of the research process, and researchers may encounter challenges. The data should be accurate and reliable, so the key informants accepted the challenges they encountered to collect accurate and reliable data.

Lastly, the key informants identified the availability of resources. One key informant expressed,

"Because we have many materials that we could not procure, which was indicated in our chapter 3, it needs to be erased."

According to Refnwrite (2023), the materials and methods used in the research were among the common mistakes made by researchers. The methods will describe the research process, and it is essential to input accurate information, especially the materials used. Due to the lack and unavailability of materials, the key informants experienced using other materials to continue their experimental research. When the researchers analyzed the data collected, they noticed that key informants from BUCN identified the most important factors when conducting the research. Compared to the other campuses, BUCN still struggles with choosing groupmates, research topics, and research advisers. They also shared recommendations for future student nurse researchers. Key informants from all three campuses shared their experiences as research group members. There were positive opinions, but most key informants shared the negative factors influencing nursing research.

3.4 Influence of Leadership and Management in Patient Care Satisfaction

This section explores the key factors influencing student nurses' leadership and management capabilities in client care delivery. The study identifies several challenges, including patient noncompliance, group conflicts, time constraints, psychological stress, communication barriers, and lack of experience. Student nurses often struggle with patients who resist their guidance, notably when trust is lacking. Internal group conflicts further hinder teamwork, while academic pressure and workload demands contribute to stress and reduced confidence in clinical settings. Additionally, unfamiliar environments and leadership inexperience create further obstacles. Addressing these challenges requires strong mentorship, leadership development, and supportive strategies to enhance student nurses' adaptability and effectiveness in healthcare settings.

Leadership and management are crucial in ensuring effective client care delivery within healthcare settings. According to Hyeonmi Cho and Kihnye Han (2018), effective leadership is a significant factor in encouraging nurses to demonstrate increased accountability and engagement in physical tasks. To provide well-coordinated and integrated treatment, leadership was deemed essential by both healthcare professionals and patients. Additionally, functional management practices were essential for organizing resources, coordinating activities, and ensuring smooth workflow within healthcare facilities. Professionals observed a high correlation between leadership styles, quality care, and related indicators (Sfantou et al., 2017).

Several elements that influence the key informant's capacity for leadership and management in client care delivery include contravening patients and/or SO, group Impediment, time constraints, psychological consequences, utilization of jargon in communication, and lack of experience.

In the Contravening of Patients and/or SO, most key informants expressed that it is one of their struggles when patients do not want to follow their advice. One of the key informants stated that,

*"When we had our ward class in *redacted*, some patients did not want to follow the no bottle feeding policy, even though one of my groupmates reprimanded them. They did not care that they were told so."*

Though the student nurses' desire to teach their patients is there, it is often in vain, for they cannot foster an effective nurse-patient relationship with them, thus making their cooperation one-sided. Consequently, an informant added that,

"It depends on the patient whether they will follow or believe in you, even if you are therapeutic and you put effort in teaching them. It is up to them if they will listen to you, and you cannot do anything about that."

Suikkala (2021) emphasized that fostering nurse-patient relationships is vital to promoting the student's capacity to adapt to a clinical environment. Thus, the disconnect between the patient and student nurses creates a ground for ineffective health education.

Another identified factor in the Contravention of Patients and/or SO is the patients' lack of trust in their assigned student nurse alone. On the same campus, as mentioned above, a key informant expressed

"The patient will not take me seriously if I am not with my CI. Because some have a different perspective to us, student nurses, it 'feels like this is not like this, like that'. Sometimes, when assessing a patient, it feels like what they tell you differs from what they tell the CI or the staff there. That is it, and it depends on the patients. However, our experiences indeed vary."

Moreover, one more factor identified was the group impediment wherein the key informants expressed their concerns about the foundation of their respective groups. Most key informants emphasized their concerns regarding encountering conflicts within the group. A key informant stated that

"When we were in the third year, there was a conflict between two of my members, so the group was somewhat divided."

Conflicts within student groups can significantly impact teamwork, trust, and group dynamics. In a study conducted by Yanqing Wang and Zheng Zong (2019), task-related conflicts within learning groups can enhance the depth of students' understanding. However, it is important to acknowledge that specific research has highlighted the adverse effects of such conflicts, especially when they lead to relationship issues. Constructively resolving conflicts is crucial for achieving cohesion and integration within the group. This process involves addressing task conflicts, which can stimulate knowledge development, and relationship conflicts, which may hinder collaboration. Students can foster a more harmonious and productive learning environment by effectively managing conflicts.

Furthermore, another factor discussed by the key informants was the psychological consequences, which focused on the characteristics of the student nurses viewed throughout their observations. In one campus, two key informants expressed an evident presence of academic pressure. One of the key informants stated that,

"The pressure of last year's passing rate is severe, and the goal now is 100%, so I can say that greeting each other is still insufficient. With so much stress, you forget to check up on others."

The key informants highlight significant academic pressure among student nurses, including expectations of high passing rates and frequent exams. Such stress may affect interpersonal dynamics and well-being. According to Yuhuan et al. (2022), academic pressure leads to higher levels of self-regulatory fatigue, which can be alleviated through social support. Educational institutions should focus on enhancing social support for nursing students to help them manage self-regulatory fatigue and promote their overall well-being and academic success.

Lack of confidence, especially in unfamiliar situations like operating rooms or special areas, can lead to anxiety and self-doubt. Similarly, distractions and multiple factors can affect focus, impacting mental clarity and potentially contributing to stress or cognitive overload. This is backed up by the study conducted by Pandurugan et al. (2010), which states that confidence is crucial for nursing students in clinical settings. The study found that 90.5% of nursing students lacked confidence in patient care and management. One of the worries of the key informants was lack of experience. A key informant stated that,

"Both of my group members and I have been in one group since the second year, so only a few were removed and replaced. From my personal experience with them, I do not have enough experience as a leader since we are still young."

The key informant's concern about lack of experience in leadership roles highlights a common challenge students face in a group setting. Moreover, a key informant from a different campus stressed the time constraints due to the hectic schedule provided to them.

"Our schedule is super hectic, and we are under pressure."

3.5 Medical Equipment Proficiency of Student Nurses in the Clinical Area

This section explores student nurses' challenges in mastering medical equipment and technology in clinical settings. Key factors influencing their proficiency include limited exposure, equipment scarcity, lack of familiarity, and the sequence in which technologies are introduced. Many students struggle with using digital equipment such as ECGs, cardiac monitors, and dopplers, as they often encounter them for the first time in hospitals rather than in skills labs. The inadequate availability of equipment and inconsistent practice opportunities contribute to decreased confidence in patient care. Additionally, gaps in nursing education regarding informatics systems hinder students' ability to integrate technology into healthcare effectively. Addressing these issues through enhanced training, better resource allocation, and structured exposure to medical technologies is crucial for improving nursing competency and patient outcomes.

Technology developments are altering the way healthcare services are provided. It makes it easier for experts to collect, process, and evaluate data to give communities better care (Keck School of Medicine of USC, 2023). Applying technology systems in nursing provides nurses with accurate and detailed data. This also helps in saving the lives of the patients. In this study, key informants mentioned digital equipment, such as ECG, cardiac monitors, doppler, and CBG, taught and used during their RLE. They shared why they lack knowledge and skills about the technologies used in delivering care.

The factors that affect the key informants' equipment mastery include themes such as duration of exposure to the equipment, scarcity of equipment, familiarity with the equipment, and sequence of introduction to the equipment.

Key informants shared their struggles in using the technology or digital equipment as it was not taught during their return demonstrations, and it was their first time to try the equipment in the hospital. They shared,

I have not tried it yet in the skills lab; hence, my first experience was when we were in the ER."

These statements show that they learned the equipment during their RLE. In a study conducted by Relloso et al. (2021), one of the difficulties encountered by nursing students is the inadequate availability of equipment and materials necessary for their practice and mastery.

The scarcity of equipment was also a factor for the key informants. They mentioned their struggles because of the lack of equipment, especially the ECG, since, as stated by the key informants, it is the most known equipment in hospitals. Key informants shared their experiences,

"There is not enough equipment here; there is no ECG."

Medical equipment is essential in the medical field, but due to the lack of equipment in nursing schools, student nurses struggle to use it in the actual setting without learning how to use it in school. According to Berhe and Tigistu Gebretensaye (2021), the clinical learnings of student nurses affect their competencies. Their lack of knowledge and skills decreases their confidence in taking care of their patients because they are still struggling to use and apply the equipment in the delivery of care.

Moreover, the duration of exposure to the equipment is also a factor that the key informants mentioned. In every duty rotation, they were assigned to different hospitals and areas, so that is why they sometimes forget what they have learned. A key informant shared their experience,

"So, the last time you had a duty in the OR was last month, then you suddenly had a duty in the same area again; at some point, you will recall the procedures, so you need to refresh to learn to use the equipment."

The key informant expresses the need to recall the specific equipment due to the nature of nursing practice, where skills are developed through repeated practice. However, there is a potential that skills will become forgotten if there is a prolonged period without utilizing specific equipment, such as when a nursing student's last exposure to a procedure was weeks or even months ago. In healthcare, where precision and efficiency are critical, nurses must use equipment correctly and confidently. Therefore, the key informant stresses the importance of refreshing one's memory on equipment usage to ensure competence and effectiveness in providing patient care, especially after extended periods without practice.

In connection with the thematic area 'Medical Equipment Proficiency of Student Nurses in the Clinical Area,' the content analysis of the gap analysis worksheet further supports and demonstrates the existence of gaps within the twelfth program outcome. As stated by the key informants, they experience a lack of exposure to handling medical equipment or technologies in the skills laboratory before entering the clinical area. The lack of equipment was attributed to poor maintenance or unavailability. This leads to the negative implication of poor-quality nursing care, profession, and healthcare services (Moyimane, 2017). Thus, this gap defies the program outcome's first indicator: the utilization of appropriate technology to perform safe and efficient nursing activities.

The program outcome's second indicator was also unattained, as identified by the key informants. This refers to the implementation of a system of informatics to support the delivery of healthcare. Conforming to the statements given in the study's thematic analysis, the results of the context analysis yielded similar findings, which suggest the lack and absence of informatics in the actual area. Therefore, the informants expressed familiarity with nursing informatics theory rather than in practice. As specified by a study conducted by Stunden (2024), this leads to the implication that having a limited understanding of health informatics and its role brought by its limited integration in healthcare would result in negative repercussions in the future of healthcare. This gap would potentially evolve to the inability of future registered nurses to keep up and integrate with the evolution and changes in the clinical environment brought about by technological innovations.

3.6 Challenges Faced by Students in the Accuracy of Nursing Documentation

This section discusses the factors influencing student nurses' documentation skills, particularly in writing nurses' progress notes. Key informants identified themes such as intellectual discipline, student expertise, clinical experiences, and institutional policies as critical to their charting proficiency. The role of clinical instructors was highlighted, with students noting variations in teaching methods that impacted their learning. The transition from novice to more experienced student nurses was also emphasized, showing how exposure and confidence influence documentation accuracy. Additionally, differences in instructional approaches affected consistency in charting practices. Ensuring standardized training and fostering confidence in documentation are essential for preparing student nurses for professional practice.

Documenting the progress of the patient's care using nurses' progress notes or simply 'charting' has been an essential part of nursing practice. It has enabled nurses to keep track of the interventions done to a patient and be able to communicate vital information to the healthcare team systematically. In ensuring the authenticity of the data being added to the patient's chart, nurses follow strict guidelines based on ethics and the law. The themes that the key informants from the three chosen campuses identify are their skills, perceptions, and experiences in documenting. The recognized themes are intellectual discipline, student expertise, clinical experiences, and institutional policies.

The most frequently mentioned among the identified themes is 'Intellectual discipline.' Generally, this theme speaks of the key informant's drive to learn and explore the discipline that the nursing profession follows. It is their attitude and capacity to widen their perception and understanding. To put this in simple terms, as Rafii (2019) stated, a person's academic motivation is the main thing that sets into motion professional pursuits. In conjunction with this, they also claim that a person driven by motivation is the most eager among their peers to learn and translate their goals into reality. Clinical instructors are the prominent people of authority who are

accessible to the student nurses during their duty. They also supervise and guide the students in performing and delivering care to their patients. An informant stated that

"Another factor is the Clinical Instructor who taught you. Since we were in the 3rd year, what was taught to us was like summarizing, but the details were already there and still lacking. Then, when there were changes in the Clinical Instructor during our 4th year, the charting was taught to us in that manner. However, you can still see in other nurses that their charting is still summarized. Well, the charting our CI taught us was detailed in the charts; you can see it on one page. So, it is like she also instilled that in us."

Moreover, the key informant also mentioned the effects and their experiences in circumstances wherein they transitioned from one clinical instructor to the next. Both have different practices of educating their students. An informant stated that

"Even when it comes to our clinical instructors, it is very different. There were times when they did not approve of some things. The only thing we could do consistently was the procedures in the delivery room, since they have a format of how things are done."

We can deduce from this statement that clinical instructors' effectiveness in guiding and teaching student nurses is significant. As per a study by Mohsmed (2022), students learn from adapting their observations on how their CI does procedures and behavior or outlook of the profession. Thus, it is a must that clinical instructors are well informed of how their actions, behavior, and educational tactics are crucial in shaping and reinforcing their students' perception of the profession.

Student nurses begin at the bottom of Patricia Benner's 'Novice to Expert' theory. This signifies their stage of journey in the nursing profession. Novice is the stage all student nurses are in; they are described as having little to no professional experience, having a very rigid understanding and adherence to rules, and often having an ideal perception of the profession. In connection with this, the key informants' second most identified the expertise of a student nurse as a factor that influences their experience when it comes to documentation. An informant verbalized that,

"In our first experience, we said almost everything written on the FDAR, but now, we only say the important part. Like the problem-important matters only regarding the patient."

Key informants have expressed that their charting skills have grown more advanced as they have gained experience during their RLE. Additionally, they have stressed that their competence, confidence, and capacity to set priorities affect how accurately they do charting. Being confident entails having optimism regarding your capacity to fulfill an assignment or reach an objective. Nurses must possess competence and autonomy in their work. That capacity can be readily compromised by a lack of confidence, especially in doing charting.

3.7 Probability of Miscommunication during Nurse-Patient Interaction

This section highlights the significance of communication in nursing, emphasizing its role in effective nurse-patient interaction and care delivery. Key informants from Bicol University identified three major factors influencing their communication skills: articulability, student nurses' integrity, and institutional nurse-patient interaction. Language barriers were noted as a challenge, potentially leading to miscommunication. Integrity was emphasized as essential for building trust and sincerity in patient interactions. Additionally, student nurses stressed the importance of fostering rapport and adapting their communication approach based on patient needs. Effective communication enhances patient care, promotes trust, and strengthens nurse-patient relationships.

Communication is a vital aspect of the nursing profession. It facilitates the effectiveness of the nurse-patient interaction and nursing care performance, according to a study by Kwame and Petrucka (2021), underscoring the significance of patient-centered communication in healthcare delivery. Effective communication between patients and healthcare providers is crucial for ensuring patients receive appropriate care and facilitate recovery. Patient-centered communication aligns with traditional nursing values, emphasizing the individualized nature of care

tailored to each patient's unique health issues, beliefs, and contextual factors. This approach acknowledges patients' diverse needs and preferences, fostering a collaborative relationship between patients and healthcare providers. During the focus group discussion, the key informants were asked about their skills and experiences concerning charting their nurse's notes and endorsing them to the succeeding staff on duty. All the key informants from the three identified campuses of Bicol University noted that their skills had significantly improved when comparing their present status to their first clinical exposure in their Related Learning Experience (RLE). Furthermore, they have also identified notable factors that have influenced them and their capacity to communicate effectively and document their patients' status.

The factors that have contributed to the key informants' experiences in communicating with their patients, colleagues, hospital staff, and the patient's watcher during their R.L.E. consist of the articulability of communication skills, institute nurse-patient interaction, and student nurse integrity.

The most notable among the identified themes is the 'Articulability in Communication Skills', which refers to the ability of the key informants to grasp and construct in-depth conversation. A key informant shared that the different language or dialect is a factor under this theme,

"Our Bikol in Camarines Sur is easy so sometimes we ask (the meaning)."

Patients and student nurses may misinterpret the words they say due to their different language or dialect. Similar words may have different meanings, which may cause misunderstandings for both sides. According to Shamsi et al. (2020), language barriers are one of the challenges nurses face in providing care. They lead to miscommunication and reduce patients' trust in nurses.

The second identified theme is the 'Student Nurses' Integrity', alluding to the key informants' morals and principles. According to an article by Berlinger (2017), ethical communication is based on truthfulness, respect, clarity, and compassion. It supports and paves the way for the advancement of the patient's condition through the adherence towards their health goals. A key informant shared how they show their sincerity despite the struggle in understanding the patient,

"Sometimes, when I am doing NPI and they use the Bicol language, I cannot understand it, so sometimes I ask them, 'What is it, Ma'am?' and they adjust it for me."

Alongside sincerity, the key informants also emphasized the importance of trustworthiness when communicating with their patients. Building trust between the nurse and their patient is essential to making communication feasible and practical. Trust can be fostered through active listening and strengthening verbal and nonverbal communication skills (Shanahan, 2021).

The third and last identified theme, 'Institute Nurse-Patient Interaction,' refers to the experiences of student nurses interacting with their patients whenever they are on duty. As stated by Vurjanic (2022), nurse-patient interaction is the trusting relationship that is the foundation of quality health care. Additionally, safe and confidential nurse-patient interaction is important for patients' satisfaction with the care provided and treatment outcomes, as well as for nurses' satisfaction. In conjunction with NPI, the key informants also highlighted how communication and approach to the patient affect how they can build an effective rapport. A key informant stated that,

"When conducting NPI, I try to avoid coming off as passive-aggressive. I want to make them feel that I am sincere when I am taking care of them, and that is why, most of the time, I do not hesitate when it comes to my patients; I want to show my genuine care to them to build that thing we call rapport."

This is proven by the study of Kwame and Petrucka (2021), which also stated that the manner of communication between nurses and patients will vary depending on the relationship developed between them. Nurses' and patients' attitudes can influence nurse-patient communication and care outcomes since nurses and patients may have different demographics, cultural and linguistic origins, beliefs, and worldviews on health and illnesses.

3.8 Aspects of RLE Exposure that Causes Misconception in Nursing Practice

Nursing theories provide a structured foundation for practice, guiding nurses in delivering safe, effective, and evidence-based care. However, applying theoretical knowledge to real-world clinical settings challenges student nurses. This study explores key informants' difficulties in translating classroom learning into practice, particularly in areas such as charting, sterility, and vital sign assessment. Common mistakes, including documentation errors, failure to maintain sterility, and inaccurate recording of vital signs, highlight gaps between theoretical instruction and hands-on application. Addressing these issues through enhanced clinical training and reinforcement of theoretical principles is essential to ensuring patient safety and improving nursing competencies.

According to Duquesne University (2020), the nursing field is governed by organized, knowledge-based nursing theories. Along with following guidelines and policies in care delivery, we also follow specific principles acquired or learned through our theoretical learnings in the classroom. Nursing theories serve as conceptual models that explain the nature of nursing, health, and patient care. They encompass diverse perspectives, including holistic care, patient-centeredness, and evidence-based practice. Holistic care emphasizes addressing patients' physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs, while patient-centeredness involves upholding patients' autonomy and involving them in decision-making. Evidence-based practice integrates the best available research with clinical expertise and patient preferences to inform care decisions. These theories guide nurses in assessing patient needs, planning and implementing care interventions, and evaluating outcomes. By grounding practice in theoretical knowledge, nurses can deliver more effective and compassionate care, ultimately enhancing patient well-being and health outcomes.

The key informants identified different courses of action as routines that need improvement in their application in the actual setting. These include taking vital signs, charting, and violating sterility, all of which constituted challenges in applying what they know to what they do.

In this study, most key informants have verbalized having difficulty bridging their theoretical learnings regarding the principles and theories about a specific procedure to the actual setting. This includes their mistakes in charting.,

"Me, in charting. There is an institution; you must put a space when you write in the chart. So sometimes, I did not put a space. That is the second time I made a mistake; I forgot to put a space."

Other key informants also mentioned their common mistakes during charting, such as the wrong color of ink used, erasures, and taking pictures of the chart, which are all violations or lack of compliance about guidelines and principles during the delivery of care, as a patient's chart is one of the most important documents to safeguard since it contains important information about the patient. According to Natalia Cineas, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Executive at New York City Health and Hospitals (2023), In the acute care context, where charting is becoming progressively more important for patient care and safety, overcoming documentation problems is essential.

Additionally, a patient's chart also provides a chronological record of the patient's development, the care is given, and the patient's reaction to that care supplied by good nursing notes, which is why any errors in charting could lead to consequences. One key informant also added,

"Me, in chartings, it is not allowed to repeat, especially the messy double word—right? For example, if I got it wrong in writing the first word, I repeated it. I repeatedly spelled out the word and tried to spell it out. The spelling got cleared, but it is already messy."

This experience by the key informants goes against documentation guidelines. According to Principle 1 of the American Nurses' Association's Principles for Nursing Documentation (2010), high-quality documentation should be clear, concise, complete, and legible or readable.

Other than charting, the key informants also mentioned their mistakes about sterility. Other key informants have shared their experiences, especially when they are in special areas where sterility is essential,

"They saw that the gown was touching the floor, and they said, 'You should change that there.'"

Although they have mentioned that they have learned from their mistakes, understanding the guidelines and consequences, especially regarding sterility, is crucial. Patient safety is significantly compromised by nursing students' inadequate knowledge and proficiency and false confidence in their aseptic technique skills due to the differences between what is taught in the classroom and what is observed in practical settings.

Student nurses are in an uncertain position when providing the best possible care to patients because there are still significant distinctions within nursing education and practice. The improper application of scientific theories in conjunction with adherence to conventional traditional procedures in the medical setting might result from an imbalance between theoretical teaching and the performance of nurses in the clinical situation. Checking and recording a patient's vital signs was also a common mistake the students had made. One key informant shared that they sometimes make up a patient's respiratory rate without assessing and counting manually.

"Maybe if there is a mistake, the RR was wrongly counted."

However, Article III, Section VI from the Board of Nursing stated that quality and excellence in the care of the patients are the goals of nursing practice. In addition, Accurate documentation of actions and outcomes of delivered care is the hallmark of nursing accountability. Additionally, according to Brekke et al. (2020), clinical deterioration frequently remains undetected or is not discovered until it is too late to treat, even though changes in vital signs reliably predict it. This is primarily brought on by poor vital sign recording or improper reaction to abnormal values. Due to this, a thorough evaluation of a patient's vital signs is crucial in the profession, especially regarding the patient's health. As the name suggests, they are called "vital" because measuring and assessing them is an essential initial step in any clinical evaluation.

3.9 Probability of Errors by Student Nurses and its Impact on Practice

Nursing practice is guided by ethical, legal, and professional principles to ensure safe and effective patient care. However, this study reveals that while student nurses acknowledge the importance of adhering to nursing laws and guidelines, gaps in awareness and external pressures often lead to unintentional violations. Key factors influencing these challenges include pressure from clinical instructors, self-doubt, and the influence of senior colleagues. These elements impact decision-making, confidence, and adherence to proper procedures. Addressing these issues through enhanced education, mentorship, and structured support systems is essential in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and ethical clinical practice.

According to the Code of Ethics by the Board of Nursing (2004), The Code of Good Governance for the Professions in the Philippines served as the primary foundation for developing the Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses. In Article 3 Section 10 of the said promulgation, registered nurses know their actions have professional, ethical, moral, and legal dimensions. They strive to perform their work in the best interest of all concerned. In this study, key informants expressed that they conform to the existing nursing laws and principles according to the Board of Nursing (BON) guidelines. Although the key informants mentioned the essence of following rules and guidelines, they also stated a lack of awareness about most of the existing laws. Thus, they unintentionally infringe on some laws, policies, or principles.

The prior errors made by students and the several circumstances that affected the key informants and led them to commit violations are pressure from the clinical instructor, self-doubt, and overstepping colleagues. These factors prove that there is still a gap in program outcome 4 of the CMO series of 2017.

Key informants shared that their clinical instructor somehow pressured them, causing them to commit errors.

"They (clinical instructors) will be there, especially if you do dosage calculations. They will double-check it."

Clinical instructors play an important role in achieving the nursing program objectives. They influence the student nurses' performance during procedures in the skills lab or RLE (Allan, 2017). The pressure that the key informant feels affects their performance, resulting in a negative learning process.

The key informants also discussed excitement and overstepping colleagues, noting that they usually follow when a senior leader leads them because it seems like a superiority complex.

"Just because that senior was a fourth year, that senior acts like they have the authority. I do not have any choice but to follow."

A key informant pointed out her disbelief at following incorrect practices under the guidance of a senior even though they knew better.

"I was in the second year that time, and that senior was in the fourth year; I still followed."

According to Cao et al. (2023), the experience of verbal violence, along with the implicit negative self-esteem effect, will increase pupils deteriorated psychological status and decrease self-efficacy. Impaired self-esteem might last for an extended period if it is challenging to adapt immediately. Individuals, teams, organizations, and patient safety can all suffer because of disrespectful and uncivil behavior in healthcare settings, which can result in life-threatening errors, preventable complications, or patient harm. Identifying nursing students' challenges in the clinical learning setting could help improve training and student advancement.

In addition, a key informant added that they are having self-doubt while interacting with patients,

"Sometimes I am scared to interact with the patient."

A study by Panduragan et al. (2011) proves that student nurses usually lack confidence in skills. The confidence level of student nurses in the clinical area is crucial and can affect the patient's trust. Self-doubt may hurt student nurses' growth as they prepare to enter the industry.

3.10 Effectivity of Health Education on Patient's Recovery and Rehabilitation

Entrepreneurial skills in nursing extend beyond patient care to include education, research, and administration. However, barriers such as language differences and patients' difficulty expressing themselves can hinder effective health education. This study highlights how communication challenges impact the delivery of nursing care, emphasizing the need for innovative approaches in patient education. Nurses must develop creative strategies, such as visual aids and adaptive communication techniques, to enhance comprehension and adherence to treatment. By integrating entrepreneurial competencies, nursing students can improve patient outcomes and bridge gaps in healthcare education.

According to Malakoti et al. (2023), applying entrepreneurial skills in healthcare is not new. Nurses do not just provide care-related services; they also offer education, research, and administration services. Even though nursing entrepreneurship has promising opportunities for nurses, struggles and factors still cause barriers to applying entrepreneurial skills in the delivery of nursing care.

Most of the key informants mentioned that one of the factors that influence the efficacy of health education is that there are patients who are unable to comprehend the health teachings. A key informant shared that the language barrier is one of the problems why patients cannot comprehend health teachings,

"I am from Sorsogon, so there is a language barrier."

Norouzinia (2021) claimed that the language difference between nurses and patients prevents effective communication. Furthermore, cultural differences in the meanings of specific nonverbal communication acts such as head nodding, eye contact, and touch may make it difficult for patients and nurses to engage.

Another gap that was mentioned is the patient's inability to express themselves. The key informant mentioned that they have encountered patients who have difficulty expressing themselves due to manifestations of symptoms of an underlying disease.

"So, there was this one time I encountered a foreigner in the ER, but it turns out that his case, as the nurses there said, he keeps coming back, and he does not have any relatives or anyone with him there. So what he does is type on his phone; that is all he does. We could not read much because they said he has Parkinson's, so he cannot speak."

Some diseases can affect how patients speak, manifesting through slurring words, stuttering, or even aphasia. Patients who cannot communicate often feel frustrated whenever they cannot convey what they want to say directly. This frustration would eventually lead to challenges with managing multiple diseases and symptoms, as well as adherence to treatment recommendations (Gill, 2014). The statement emphasized above is a significant difference in applying entrepreneurial skills in nursing care delivery. It revolves around effectively communicating medical terms to patients and adapting to their comprehension level. Entrepreneurial skills in nursing should involve creative approaches to patient education, such as utilizing visual aids or relatable comparisons. Nurses should proactively anticipate common misunderstandings and adjust their communication style accordingly. In a study conducted by Jecklin et al. (2010), it was found that healthcare providers play a crucial role in recognizing when patients struggle to understand related instructions. They also can identify how patients usually handle complex health information; the significance lies in the ability to be innovative and discover fresh approaches to clarify concepts, representing strategic and entrepreneurial competencies. By using these skills, nursing students may ensure that patients understand what is important for their health, which is essential for a better care outcome.

3.11 Model to Fill in the Theory-To-Practice Gap Among Student Nurses in Bicol University

Transitioning from theoretical knowledge to practical application is a critical challenge for nursing students. While nursing theories provide a foundation for decision-making and patient care, real-world clinical exposure is essential for developing critical thinking, clinical judgment, and hands-on skills. To address this, the Guide in Advancing the Practices in Nursing-15 (GAPN-15) model was developed as a structured framework to bridge the theory-to-practice gap among nursing students at Bicol University. Created using the Gap Analysis Worksheet, this model serves as a guide for mitigating risks that may hinder students from achieving the desired program outcomes outlined in CHED Memorandum Order Number 15. Focused on Level 3 and 4 nursing students, who have significant Related Learning Experience (RLE) in clinical and community settings, GAPN-15 identifies key factors contributing to the gap. It provides strategies to enhance integrating theoretical knowledge into real-world nursing practice.

Nursing students' readiness for real-life professional exposure significantly influences the quality of nursing education. Active engagement in hands-on experiences during their RLE is crucial for enhancing students' mental and perceptual skills as clinical decision-making is supported by nursing theories, which also serve to define and direct nursing care. However, the dynamic nature of clinical environments often creates a disparity between theoretical knowledge acquired in lectures and the realities encountered in nursing practice. The discrepancies highlight that nursing students must have real-world experience in their RLE. By working in hospitals and clinics, they can correlate what they learn in class to what they will do in the clinical setting. This helps them develop critical thinking, decision-making, and clinical judgment skills. So, giving students many chances to learn in actual healthcare settings is essential for ensuring they become competent and skilled nurses. Moreover, student nurses must comprehend the integration of theory into practice within the clinical environment. Ensuring students can apply their theoretical knowledge in practical settings and bridging the knowledge gap between theory and practice is key to effective and efficient patient care.

Figure 1 shows the developed model by the researchers through the Gap Analysis Worksheet that will bridge the theory-to-practice gap perceived among student nurses of Bicol University entitled Guide in Advancing the Practices in Nursing-15 (GAPN-15). It indicates the visual representation of the guide on mitigating the risk of not meeting the desired program outcomes in the CHED Memorandum Order Number 15 before a student graduates from their nursing program. The model was developed centered on level 3 and 4 student nurses of Bicol University because they have the most experience during their Related Learning Experience (RLE) in various clinical and

community settings. With this, student nurses could identify the factors or reasons that caused the theory-to-practice gap when applying what they have learned in school to their clinical or community duties.

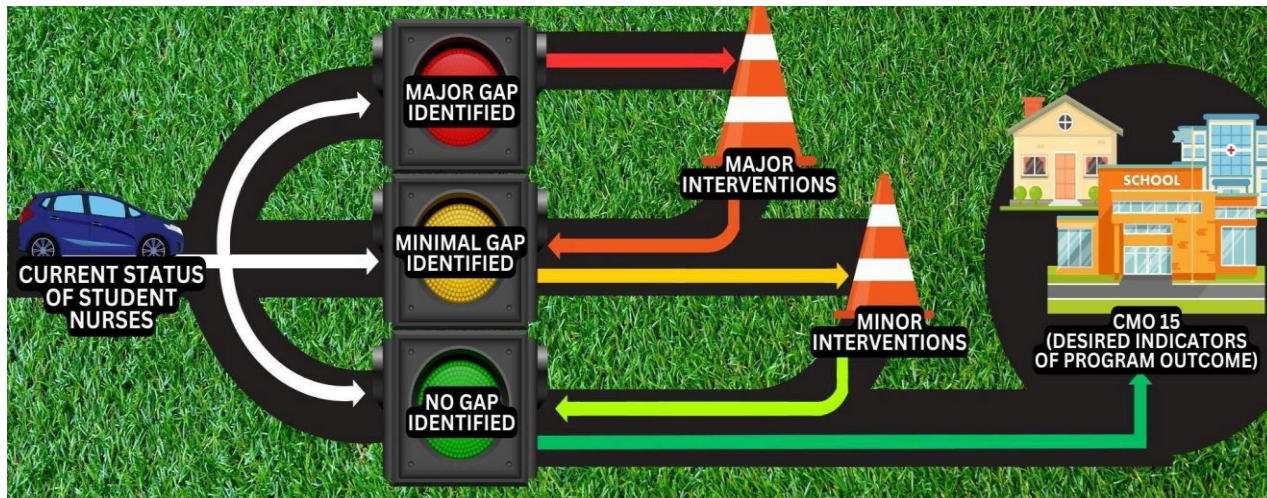


Figure 1. *Guide in Advancing the Practices in Nursing-15 (GAPN-15)*

GAPN-15 begins with the status of the students, which is represented as the ‘car.’ It indicates where the student nurses are academically and their capacity to integrate their theoretical knowledge into practice. The model is then divided into three (3) categories enclosed inside a box like a traffic light. Each of the three colors of the ‘traffic light’ represents the identified gaps encountered by student nurses by the program outcomes outlined in the CHED Memorandum Order No.15 Series of 2017. The red light is located at the topmost portion of the traffic light, representing the program outcome with the most identified gaps. The middle of the traffic light has the yellow light, which refers to the program outcome with a minimal gap, while at the bottom is the green light, which indicates the program outcome with no identifiable gap present. Regarding the colors of the traffic lights, there are arrows with corresponding colors that visualize the flow of traffic that the program outcomes take to reach the end destination or goal, fulfilling the desired indicators of each program outcome. Along the path of the arrows are the traffic cones representing the appropriate interventions for each gap.

When student nurses have experienced numerous disparities in applying theoretical knowledge in practice about a specific program, they will be classified as the red light or the one with a ‘major gap identified,’ which will signal them to stop and evaluate themselves. Then, they will meet the first obstacle, the first traffic cone, corresponding to the primary intervention that will help them overcome the gaps they are dealing with by enhancing their theoretical knowledge and skills. The major interventions will be based on administrative actions. Once they have accomplished the recommendations for the significant gap, they will immediately proceed to the next light, the yellow light or the ‘minimal gap identified.’ Here, they will be slowing themselves down and reevaluating the remaining gaps they are encountering and how they impact their experience as student nurses. Then, they can move on to the second traffic cone, which holds the minor interventions. Minor interventions will be implemented by implementing seminars or meetings in the department. As with the previous recommendation, once it is accomplished, they can proceed to the next light, which is the green light. Similarly to a traffic light, once reaching the green light, they can speed their way through the end destination, which is the desired indicator of the program outcomes because, at this stage, they have already bridged the gaps they once were facing. Furthermore, reaching this stage indicates that the student nurses are knowledgeable and well-equipped with the skills needed as future registered nurses in the Philippines following the CMO 2015.

Upon deliberation and analysis of the data gathered in this study, it was discovered that the program outcomes that hold the most gaps encountered by the key informants are program outcome numbers 1, 6, 8, 9, and 12. Thus, these identified gaps will be classified and placed under the red-light category. This will prompt significant recommendations to student nurses to mitigate the widening of the identified gaps and permanently bridge them to avoid future retrogradation. The program outcome, number one (1) states that there is a need to integrate the relevant social, physical, natural, and health sciences and humanities principles in a given health and nursing

situation to indicate that student nurses accomplish this program outcome. Therefore, the use of realistic scenarios and simulations during class discussions and their return demonstrations is suggested, so that student nurses' expectations in the scenarios in the Philippine healthcare setting are up to par with reality, making them more prepared and equipped in handling their patients. The ninth (9) program outcome revolves around the conduct of nursing research alongside an experienced researcher. With that being said, the implementation of having a high number of gaps encountered by student nurses when it comes to research indicates the unsuccessful realization of this program outcome, which leads to the recommendation of this study for an extensive preparation through numerous workshops before the execution of nursing research. On the other hand, program outcome no. Eight (8) indicators emphasized the importance of applying leadership skills in patient care delivery. To bridge the gap for this program outcome this study suggests for clinical instructors of student nurses to teach and demonstrate to student nurses' leadership and management during their RLE to enhance their confidence in influencing and becoming an effective educator towards their peers and especially their patients. For program outcome no. Six (6) it highlighted accurate and comprehensive documentation of patient care. Moreover, its indicators for accomplishment are the patient's response to care, promotion of patient safety, adherence to protocol, and confidentiality. To be sure that student nurses can fulfill these indicators, this study suggests the initiation of presentations to student nurses regarding the ethics followed in documentation and charting before they expose the students to the actual healthcare setting. Lastly, to address the gap in applying techno-intelligent care systems and processes in the healthcare system discussed in the program outcome no. Twelve (12), this study put forwards the importance of the presence of a variety of equipment in skill laboratories that is commonly found and used in the different wards and special areas of a healthcare facility for the student nurses to become familiarized and be equipped with the knowledge and skills to use these devices in providing an effective care towards their patients during their community and hospital exposure.

Program outcomes 4, 14, 7, and 10 are under the yellow lights where they only have minimal gaps and can be bridged with a few interventions. It is recommended for the program outcome 4 to teach the student nurses and successfully establish norms of conduct based on the Philippine Nursing Law and other legal, regulatory and institutional requirements relevant to safe nursing practice. Using strategic interventions in return demonstrations and real-life case simulations in their skills laboratory can help bridge the minimal gap in program outcome 14. The respective nursing departments are recommended to teach the student nurses how to collaborate appropriately with other healthcare staff, since key informants mentioned that they have minimal gaps under the program outcome 7. Finally, program outcome 10 is about student nurses engaging in lifelong learning in nursing. The recommendation is to allow students to join programs that aid in health promotion in the development of the nursing profession.

Despite the mention of gaps by the key informants for the program outcomes numbers 2, 11, 13, and 14, they are still classified under the green light, which pertains to the absence of a gap. The reason for this is that even though the key informants had perceived the presence of gaps, the current state of the key informants under these program outcomes suggests that they have met the desired outcome based on the CMO 15 series of 2017 and have unknowingly already fulfilled its indicators based on their account of what they have experienced during their RLE to the researchers.

4.0 Conclusion

The study discovered inconsistencies in integrating nursing theoretical knowledge into the healthcare setting within Bicol University's curriculum. To comply with CHED Memorandum Order No. 15 Series of 2017, nursing schools should implement better strategies to enhance student skills and produce competent nurses with the competencies outlined in CMO-15. The Guide in Advancing the Practices in Nursing 15 (GAPN-15) Model was developed to address these gaps, guiding students to achieve the desired program outcomes. The study explored the gap between theory and practice from the student's perspective. Still, its focus was limited to regularly enrolled RLE group leaders and did not include broader student experiences. The study also focused mainly on hospital settings, with limited information about community nursing. Future research should explore strategies like clinical simulations, seminars, leadership programs, and hands-on medical equipment training to improve the integration of theory and practice in nursing education. These approaches help prepare students for real-world practice and ensure they are ready to handle complex situations in patient care.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors equally contributed to every aspect of the research, collaborating closely on the design, data collection, and writing. Each member reviewed and carefully examined the final manuscript, ensuring the study's goals were aligned. After thorough discussions and revisions, all authors approved the final work, demonstrating their full involvement and commitment to the study's success.

6.0 Funding

This study did not receive any financial aid or funding throughout its implementation.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

Neither the researchers had any conflict of interest that would have influenced the study's outcome directly or indirectly.

8.0 Acknowledgment

With heartfelt gratitude, we acknowledge the many individuals and groups who have supported and guided us throughout this study. First and foremost, we sincerely thank our Almighty Father for His unwavering guidance. His divine wisdom has illuminated our path and provided us with the strength and gratitude necessary to complete this undertaking. We sincerely thank Christian Dior L. Amaranto, our adviser, for his continuous encouragement, guidance, and follow-up. His belief in our abilities has been a constant source of motivation, steering us toward the successful fulfillment of this study. Our appreciation also extends to Lorena V. Liao, our research professor, who consistently provided valuable information and guided us throughout the research process. We would also like to thank Michelle L. Gamba, our chairperson, and the panel of evaluators – Marvin U. Velacruz and Vivien P. Juarez – for their valuable insights, which significantly contributed to the success of this research. Their feedback and expertise have helped shape our study into what it is today. We also thank the Deans and Department Heads of the Nursing Departments of Bicol University for their unwavering support and guidance during the data gathering process across the respective campuses. The cooperation of the Level Coordinators of the three campuses was invaluable in allowing Level III and IV student nurses to participate in this study, and we are grateful for their assistance. A special thanks goes to the key informants, whose time, effort, and shared experiences have provided invaluable insights, allowing us to explore the key aspects of this research. Their contributions were fundamental in the success of this study. Finally, we owe our families and friends an immense debt of gratitude. Their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding throughout this journey have kept us motivated and focused. Their love and belief in us played a pivotal role in helping us overcome challenges and complete this study successfully.

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Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies among High School Students

Raymark Anthony P. Saluria*, Sadie Kassiopeia T. Tuale,
Keira Sofia V. Quiambao, Angelique Louise A. Lim
Saint Louis School of Don Bosco, Inc., Negros Oriental, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: raymarksaluria@slsdb.edu.ph

Date received: February 1, 2025

Date revised: February 25, 2025

Date accepted: March 17, 2025

Originality: 93%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 7%

Recommended citation:

Saluria, R.A., Tuale, S.K., Quiambao, K.S., Lim, A.L. (2025). Adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies among high school students. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 249-258.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.051>

Abstract. The phenomenon of perfectionism has emerged as a significant area of study within educational psychology, particularly in the context of high school students. This duality of adaptive and maladaptive dimensions presents a compelling area for exploration, especially considering the mounting pressures students face in increasingly competitive academic environments. This study determined the extent of high school students' adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies. This research used a descriptive survey design among 209 junior and senior high school students. The study employed the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS) Assessment Form devised by Frost in 1990. This questionnaire aimed to assess the various factors related to performance and motivation in academic settings. The results reveal that adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism learning profiles influence the high school students differently. The findings further indicate that while these students exhibit varying degrees of perfectionism, adaptive traits, such as goal-setting and organization, generally align with better outcomes. Maladaptive perfectionism, characterized by self-criticism and fear of failure, can hinder progress and well-being. This relationship suggests that the balance between adaptive and maladaptive tendencies plays a critical role in shaping students' learning experiences and achievements. The findings underscore the dual impact of perfectionism on student performance, emphasizing the need for tailored and targeted interventions that promote adaptive perfectionism while mitigating the adverse effects associated with its maladaptive counterpart.

Keywords: Academic performance; Adaptive perfectionism; Maladaptive tendencies; Perfectionism.

1.0 Introduction

The phenomenon of perfectionism has emerged as a significant area of study within educational psychology, particularly in the context of high school students. Perfectionism can be broadly categorized into two dimensions: adaptive and maladaptive. Adaptive perfectionism is associated with high personal standards and a constructive approach to achievement, often resulting in positive outcomes such as increased motivation and resilience (Stoeber et al., 2020). Conversely, maladaptive perfectionism is characterized by unrealistic expectations and a fear of failure, leading to negative consequences such as anxiety, depression, and decreased academic performance (Fallahchai et al., 2019). This duality presents a compelling area for exploration, especially considering the mounting pressures students face in increasingly competitive academic environments. The need for further investigation is underscored by the limited research focusing specifically on analyzing these two dimensions of perfectionism among high school students in the Philippines.

Despite the growing body of literature addressing perfectionism, a notable gap exists in understanding how these dimensions manifest within diverse cultural contexts, particularly in the Philippines. The unique socio-cultural landscape of the Philippines – where education is often viewed as a gateway to social mobility – adds complexity to students' experiences with perfectionism (Lubis et al., 2022). This cultural backdrop may exacerbate students' pressures, making it essential to explore how adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies influence their academic journeys. The current study aimed to address this gap by investigating the prevalence and impact of these perfectionism profiles among junior and senior high school students.

Statistical data highlight the urgency of this research on an international scale. Studies indicate that approximately 30% of students experience high levels of perfectionistic tendencies, which have been linked to increased anxiety and lower academic achievement across various cultural contexts (Vanstone & Hicks, 2019). In the Philippine setting, preliminary findings suggest that students may be particularly vulnerable to maladaptive perfectionistic pressures due to societal norms that emphasize academic success as a critical determinant of future opportunities (Kawamoto et al., 2022). By examining these dynamics within Filipino high schools, this study sought to provide insights that are relevant to educational stakeholders and beneficial for parents, guardians, and policymakers aiming to foster healthier academic environments.

In light of these considerations, this study aimed to investigate the prevalence of the learning profile – adaptive or maladaptive perfectionism – among junior and senior high school students in the Philippines. By employing quantitative research methods such as surveys and questionnaires administered to students across various grade levels, the researchers gathered data highlighting the differences in perfectionistic tendencies (Loscalzo et al., 2024). With this, the exploration of this research hoped to provide valuable insights into how adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism are manifested within the Filipino educational landscape. Ultimately, this study sought to contribute to developing targeted interventions that promote adaptive perfectionism while mitigating the adverse effects associated with its maladaptive counterpart.

Educators and mental health professionals could design programs to foster resilience and well-being among students by identifying the characteristics linked to each type. Workshops on self-compassion and stress management could help students navigate academic challenges without succumbing to detrimental perfectionistic pressures. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies that support student well-being and academic success amid increasing pressures. This research has implications for individual student outcomes and broader educational practices, potentially informing policy decisions that prioritize mental health alongside academic achievement.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative research approach. The study utilized descriptive and correlational research designs to determine and describe the relationships between and among the variables and use as basis to develop generalizations and formulate principles or theories based on its findings (Calmorin & Calmorin, 2007).

2.2 Research Participants

The research targeted Grades 9 and 10 junior high school students and Grades 11 and 12 senior high school students enrolled in Saint Louis School of Don Bosco. This study identified the respondents using proportional stratified sampling. Stratified sampling is a probability sampling method that is implemented in sample surveys. The target population's elements are divided into distinct groups or strata, and within each stratum, the elements are similar to each other to select characteristics of importance to the survey (Parsons, 2017). Therefore, the strata in the study were the grade levels from nine to twelve. From the overall population of 451 students, 208 respondents were drawn out from the aforementioned groups.

2.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in this study was the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS) Assessment Form by Dr. Randy Frost (1990), which was also issued by NovoPsych in 2023 – this questionnaire aimed to assess various factors related to performance and motivation in academic settings. The questionnaire was also revised to tailor it to the nature and scope of the study. Moreover, some items were deleted to fit the

study context. The original questionnaire consisted of 20 items designed to measure constructs such as motivation, focus, and performance anxiety among students. Moreover, the five-point Likert scale was employed in the survey, allowing respondents to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with each statement, which was adopted for the revised questionnaire.

The researchers modified the original questionnaire to better align with the specific objectives of the current study. Key revisions included removing certain items deemed less relevant, resulting in a revised total of 15 items. Additionally, some statements were rephrased for clarity and relevance to the study's focus on current educational challenges. Overall, while the core themes of motivation and performance remained intact, the adjustments enhanced the questionnaire's applicability to the target population and the research context. The Gunning Fog Index score is 8.88, which indicates a sufficient readability.

The questionnaire incorporated a five-point Likert scale for assessing perceptions and numerical scales for objective academic data, ensuring a well-rounded approach to data collection. In finalizing the questionnaire, some questions from related studies were adapted and modified to align with this investigation's variables and research questions. The questionnaire's development adhered to ethical guidelines, including informed consent procedures and considerations for participant confidentiality.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedures

The data were collected through a questionnaire method. Questions were adapted and modified to elicit vital information on the students' profile and the extent of their adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies. The researchers wrote a letter of authorization to the school's principal requesting permission to do a dry run of the revised research instrument. The instrument was deemed excellently reliable based on the Alpha Cronbach score of .926. The researchers sent a letter requesting permission to conduct the final survey to the school administrator after the survey passed the reliability test. The researchers obtained informed consents from the students and the parents. Following consent, 208 respondents participated in the study conducted by the researchers. The intent and the purpose of the study were explained to the respondents. They were assured that the data would be treated with utmost confidentiality. All relevant data were recorded, reviewed for accuracy, and processed. The study ensured that quality control measures were undertaken, the predetermined timeline was adhered to, and any potential limitation was acknowledged.

2.5 Data Analysis

The study employed a quantitative approach. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to describe and analyze the survey results. The data collected were analyzed using various statistical tools, such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, chi-square, and Spearman correlation.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

The researchers observed essential ethical regulations throughout the entire duration of the study. To guarantee the safety of both the respondents and the researchers, informed consent was obtained from participants, including the permission to use the data collected from the questionnaires for research purposes. The researchers also ensured the confidentiality of the data by not requiring respondents to provide their names, and any sensitive information was treated with care and consideration. To prevent any harm to the respondents and minimize potential risks, the researchers sought approval from their research adviser and handled all information collected with caution. The findings were used solely for educational and publication purposes, and the results were honestly reported based on the data. Any potential conflicts of interest or study limitations were transparently disclosed.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 displays the sex profile of high school students in grades nine through twelve. Of the 209 respondents, 116 (55.50%) are female and 93 (44.50%) are male. The results further indicate that the majority of the respondents are female. Table 1 also shows the socioeconomic status profile of students. According to the findings, 56 respondents (26.80%) have an average household income higher than ₱84000, 45 respondents (21.53%) have an average household income between ₱12000 and ₱24000, 43 respondents (20.57%) have an average household income

between ₱24000 and ₱48000, 42 respondents (20.10%) have an average household income between ₱48000 and ₱84000, and 23 respondents (11.0%) have an average household income below ₱12000.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	93	44.5
Female	116	55.5
Socioeconomic Status		
Less than ₱12000	23	11.0
₱12001-₱23999	45	21.5
₱24000-₱47999	43	20.5
₱48000-₱84000	42	20.1
Above ₱84000	56	26.8
Family Size		
2 to 4 members	109	52.1
5 to 10 members	95	45.4
Above 10 members	5	2.40
Academic Performance		
90 - 100	93	44.5
85 - 89	82	39.2
80 - 84	30	14.3
75 - 79	3	1.44
Below 75	1	0.48

The preceding information demonstrates that most respondents get more than ₱84000 on average for their household incomes. This may be linked to several studies. For instance, socioeconomic status was utilized in the study of Noor and Talib (2018), where income and other family socioeconomic status (SES) characteristics impact students' adaptive and maladaptive as well as their social anxieties and avoidance. In other studies, SES significantly impacts perfectionistic tendencies, as it shapes both opportunities and pressures. Lubis et al. (2022) highlight that students from higher-income families often experience elevated expectations to excel academically, as education is seen as a marker of success. Kawamoto et al. (2022) found that SES influences the development of perfectionism, with wealthier students often facing pressure to maintain family status, fostering adaptive or maladaptive behaviors. Madigan et al. (2024) explore SES disparities in perfectionism, noting that students from lower-income backgrounds may develop perfectionistic concerns tied to fear of failure, while higher-income students face societal and parental expectations. These findings suggest that SES is both a motivator and stressor, influencing students' learning profiles.

Table 1 further shows the family size profile of the respondents. As reflected in the table, 109 respondents (52.15%) have a family of two to four people, 95 respondents (45.45%) have a family of five to ten people, and five respondents (2.40%) have a family of more than ten people. In general, the majority of respondents have families with two to four individuals. Family size can shape the dynamics of perfectionism in meaningful ways, and this has been mentioned in a multitude of studies. Shafran et al. (2002) state that smaller families often focus more on individual children, resulting in heightened expectations and increased perfectionistic tendencies. Stoeber et al. (2018) note that children in smaller families are more likely to internalize these expectations, which can foster both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. In contrast, larger families may dilute parental attention, potentially reducing the intensity of perfectionistic pressures. Pedersen (2024) reinforces this idea, stating that family size can affect parental expectations distribution, influencing how children approach challenges and academic goals. These insights help contextualize how family dynamics impact learning profiles and coping mechanisms.

Table 1 also exhibits the respondents' profile regarding academic performance. The table displays that 93 of the respondents (44.50%) have an average grade of 90 to 100, 82 of the respondents (39.23%) have an average grade of 85 to 89, 30 of the respondents (14.35%) have an average grade of 80 to 84, 3 of the respondents (1.44%) have an average grade of 75 to 79, and 1 respondent (0.48%) has an average grade of below 75. In general, most of the respondents have an average grade of 90 to 100. Perfectionism has a nuanced relationship with academic performance, which has been discussed in many studies. Stoeber et al. (2020) found that adaptive perfectionism – characterized by high personal standards and effective goal-setting – positively correlates with academic success, motivating students to strive for excellence. Conversely, maladaptive perfectionism, linked to excessive self-

criticism and fear of failure, often hinders performance by increasing anxiety and procrastination. Vanstone and Hicks (2019) emphasize that while perfectionistic tendencies can drive high achievers, they may also lead to burnout and diminished performance if maladaptive patterns dominate. Gaudreau and Thompson (2010) provide additional insights through their 2x2 model, demonstrating that students with high perfectionistic strivings but low concerns achieve the best outcomes. These studies collectively underscore the duality of perfectionism's impact on academic performance.

3.2 Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies

Table 2 illustrates the extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies among the respondents.

Table 2. *Extent of Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies among Students*

Indicators		Mean	Description	Interpretation
1.	My parents have set very high standards for me.	3.40	Moderately Agree	Moderate
2.	Staying organized is extremely important to me.	3.64	Agree	High
3.	When I was younger, I was often criticized for not being perfect.	2.96	Moderately Agree	Moderate
4.	If I do not set very high goals, I worry that I might fail.	3.65	Agree	High
5.	My parents did not make an effort to understand my mistakes.	2.64	Moderately Agree	Moderate
6.	I must be highly skilled in what I do.	3.6	Agree	High
7.	I am very particular about keeping things neat and orderly.	3.56	Agree	High
8.	I make a strong effort to stay organized.	3.53	Agree	High
9.	I feel I have failed if I do not perform well in school or at work.	3.82	Agree	High
10.	I feel disheartened when I make a mistake.	3.63	Agree	High
11.	My parents expect me to excel in everything I attempt.	3.12	Moderately Agree	Moderate
12.	I set more ambitious goals for myself than most people do.	3.33	Moderately Agree	Moderate
13.	If someone performs better than I do, I feel like I have failed the entire task.	3.03	Moderately Agree	Moderate
14.	Even a minor failure feels as serious as a major one.	3.11	Moderately Agree	Moderate
15.	My family considers only outstanding performance to be acceptable.	2.69	Moderately Agree	Moderate
16.	I am skilled at focusing on achieving my goals.	3.34	Moderately Agree	Moderate
17.	Even when I put in much effort, I often feel that my work is not good enough.	3.60	Agree	High
18.	I have extremely high ambitions for myself.	3.61	Agree	High
19.	I dislike not being the best in any situation.	3.32	Moderately Agree	Moderate
20.	My parents have very high expectations for my achievements.	3.22	Moderately Agree	Moderate
21.	I worry that others might think less of me if I make a mistake.	3.66	Agree	High
22.	I never feel that I fully meet my parents' expectations.	3.43	Agree	High
23.	If my performance falls short compared to others, I feel it reflects poorly on me.	3.44	Agree	High
24.	Other people seem to accept lower standards for themselves than I do.	3.11	Moderately Agree	Moderate
25.	If I do not consistently perform well, I am concerned that I will not gain respect.	3.52	Agree	High
26.	My parents have always had higher expectations for my future than I set for myself.	3.44	Agree	High
27.	I strive to maintain a high level of tidiness.	3.38	Moderately Agree	Moderate
28.	I frequently question whether I do even simple tasks well enough.	3.69	Agree	High
29.	Neatness is fundamentally important to me.	3.55	Agree	High
30.	I expect to perform more daily than most people do.	3.26	Moderately Agree	Moderate
31.	I am a very organized person.	3.09	Moderately Agree	Moderate
32.	Sometimes I fall behind because I keep refining tasks.	3.27	Moderately Agree	Moderate
33.	It often takes me a long time to complete tasks perfectly.	3.65	Agree	High
34.	The fewer mistakes I make, the more I believe others will value me.	3.53	Agree	High
35.	I never feel that I meet entirely my parents' standards.	3.31	Moderately Agree	Moderate
Composite Value		3.38	Moderately Agree	Moderate

As reflected, the composite mean is 3.38, indicating a moderate perfectionism overall. Among the indicators, the highest weighted mean is 3.66 for the statement, *I worry that others might think less of me if I make a mistake*, followed by a weighted mean of 3.65 for both *It often takes me a long time to complete tasks perfectly* and *If I do not set very high goals for myself, I worry that I might not achieve success*. These items indicate a high level of alignment with perfectionism traits, reflecting a tendency to prioritize others' perceptions and strive for flawlessness in achieving goals. In contrast, the lowest weighted mean is 2.64 for the statement, *My parents did not try to understand my mistakes*, suggesting moderate agreement and indicating that parental criticism plays a less significant role compared to other factors.

The data reveal a combination of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies among respondents. The highest rated indicators highlight concerns about how others perceive mistakes, a need for perfection in task completion, and the importance of setting high goals to ensure success. These results suggest that respondents

often experience internal and external pressures to maintain high standards. Meanwhile, the lowest-rated indicator reflects moderate perceptions of parental criticism, suggesting that while it influences perfectionistic behavior, it is less impactful than the internalized drive to excel and the fear of others' judgments.

The findings align with Shinaberry's (2023) concept of adaptive perfectionism, where ambitious goal-setting and a strong focus on excellence are evident in high-scoring items. These traits are associated with achieving personal success and emotional resilience. However, the elevated concerns about how others perceive mistakes and the prolonged effort to ensure task perfection reflect maladaptive tendencies, as described by Dorevitch et al. (2020). Their research links such traits to internalized shame and self-esteem issues, often resulting in heightened anxiety and dissatisfaction.

The high interpretations strongly align with perfectionism traits, demonstrating a pronounced drive for achievement and organization. The moderate interpretations suggest partial adherence to perfectionistic tendencies, implying a balance between striving for high standards and coping with external pressures. Stoeber and Otto's (2006) study supports this idea, emphasizing that adaptive perfectionism can lead to positive outcomes when paired with effective emotional regulation, while maladaptive traits often result in emotional distress. Overall, the data illustrate a nuanced view of perfectionism, highlighting its motivating benefits and potential to create challenges. Educational and counseling interventions are recommended to foster healthy perfectionistic behaviors while mitigating their adverse effects.

3.3 Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies when Grouped according to the Respondents' Profile

Table 3 illustrates the extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies among students when grouped according to sex, indicating that females exhibit a higher level of both types of perfectionism, with a mean score of 3.44, interpreted as high, compared to males at 3.29, categorized as moderate. In conclusion, the results reveal that females have higher adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism levels. Furthermore, maladaptive perfectionism negatively impacted psychological wellbeing for both genders, with significant gender differences in the relationship between attachment insecurity and career adaptability mediated by maladaptive perfectionism.

Table 3. *Extent of Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies When Grouped according to Sex*

Sex	Mean	Interpretation
Male	3.29	Moderate
Female	3.44	High

Kruger et al. (2023) noted that perfectionism involves setting excessively high standards and critical self-evaluation, leading to adverse psychological outcomes. This is consistent with Jahng and Kim (2021), who found that for male and female students, the relationship between attachment insecurity and career adaptability is mediated by maladaptive perfectionism, emphasizing gender differences. However, Almaç et al. (2022) reported no significant differences in the self-oriented sub-dimension of perfectionism based on gender or variables such as daily working time or instrument type, although significant differences were noted in education level and perception of success, as well as in the socially prescribed sub-dimension related to gender.

Table 4 presents the extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to socioeconomic status. The data reveal that respondents with an average household income of above 84,000 pesos have a higher level of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism, with a mean of 3.50 indicating that the level of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism is high, compared to respondents who have a mean ranging from 3.30 to 3.37, which indicates that the level of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism is moderate. Thus, the respondents with an average household income of above 84,000 pesos agree that the level of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism is influenced by socioeconomic status.

Table 4. *Extent of Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies When Grouped according to Socioeconomic Status*

Age	Mean	Description
Less than ₱12000	3.37	Moderate
₱12001-₱23999	3.33	Moderate
₱24000-₱47999	3.34	Moderate
₱48000-₱84000	3.30	Moderate
Above ₱84000	3.50	High

Additionally, the relationship between family income and scholars' adaptability has been explored by Radetić-Paić and Černe (2019), who found that students from families with average or above-average incomes benefit from open communication styles that foster adaptability, while those from lower-income families often face restrictions on emotional expression. This suggests that socioeconomic factors significantly influence not only perfectionism but also emotional dynamics within families, aligning with the findings regarding the impact of income on perfectionism levels. However, while both studies emphasize the importance of socioeconomic status, Radetić-Paić and Černe (2019) focus on emotional expression and family adaptability rather than perfectionism directly. Furthermore, Lyu et al. (2019) highlight that family socioeconomic status has a more substantial positive effect on academic achievement in Western contexts compared to China, indicating that cultural context may also play a role in how these factors interact. Thus, while there is agreement on the significance of socioeconomic influences, the specific outcomes – perfectionism versus academic performance – differ across studies, suggesting a nuanced relationship between these variables (Radetić-Paić & Černe, 2019; Lyu et al., 2019).

Table 5 exemplifies the extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies among students when grouped according to family size. As reflected in the table, the means range from 3.27 to 3.39, which reveal a moderate extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies. Although families with 2 to 4 members have a slightly higher mean of 3.39, it is insignificant. Additionally, Adongo et al. (2022) found that family size significantly impacts academic performance, indicating that students from smaller families perform better than those from more prominent families. This suggests a potential correlation between family size and academic outcomes and perfectionism levels; however, while the findings indicate only a moderate level of perfectionism across family sizes, Adongo et al. (2022) highlight that smaller families may provide a more conducive environment for success.

Table 5. *Extent of Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies When Grouped According to Family Size*

Family Size	Mean	Interpretation
2 to 4 members	3.39	Moderate
5 to 10 members	3.36	Moderate
Above 10 members	3.27	Moderate

Furthermore, the study revealed that participants from maladaptive families experienced higher levels of depression, general anxiety, and suicidal ideation compared to those from adaptive or non-perfectionistic families. Those from maladaptive or non-perfectionistic families reported higher social anxiety, academic distress, eating concerns, and lower life satisfaction than those from adaptive families. These findings align with the conclusions drawn by Jun et al. (2022), who emphasize that family dynamics, particularly in size and structure, play a critical role in shaping psychological outcomes such as perfectionism and mental health. Thus, while both studies acknowledge the influence of family size on individual outcomes, they converge on the notion that more negligible family dynamics may foster better academic results and psychological well being without necessarily translating to higher levels of adaptive or maladaptive perfectionism (Adongo et al., 2022; Jun et al., 2022).

Table 6 indicates the extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to academic performance. It is evident from the table that respondents who have a grade of 90-100 have a higher level of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism when grouped according to academic performance with a mean of 3.46, implying that the level of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism when grouped according to academic performance is high, as opposed to the sub-variables with a mean spanning from 2.86 to 3.37, which means that the extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism when grouped according to academic performance is moderate. Hence, Saint Louis School of Don Bosco students with a grade of 90-100 agree that the extent of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism is subject to change when grouped according to academic performance.

Table 6. *Extent of Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies when Grouped according to Academic Performance*

Academic Performance	Mean	Interpretation
90 – 100	3.46	High
85 – 89	3.37	Moderate
80 – 84	3.19	Moderate
75 – 79	2.86	Moderate
Below 75	3.03	Moderate

The findings from subsequent studies provide additional insights into this relationship. For instance, a negative correlation between perceived performance discrepancies and active procrastination suggests that students with higher perfectionistic standards are less likely to procrastinate (Morpeth-Provost et al., 2022). Conversely, discordant perfectionists are linked to poorer academic outcomes (Karatzanos & Zbainos, 2020). Additionally, while creativity showed non-significant correlations with overall academic performance, adaptive perfectionism was associated with higher grades in specific subjects (Karatzanos & Zbainos, 2020). Collectively, these findings affirm that higher levels of adaptive perfectionism correlate positively with better academic performance while highlighting the negative consequences associated with maladaptive perfectionism.

3.4 Difference in the Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies when Grouped according to the Respondents' Profile

Table 7 illustrates the significant difference in the adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to sex. With a computed value of 3.173 and a p-value of 0.076, the data show no significant difference in adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to sex. On the contrary, the relationship between perfectionism and sex reveals notable distinctions in how learning profiles affect male and female students in a series of studies. Shinaberry (2023) notes that females are more likely to exhibit socially prescribed perfectionism, driven by external expectations, which may lead to heightened concerns about meeting others' standards.

Table 7. Significant Difference in the Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies when Grouped according to Sex

Variable	Computed Value	P-Value	Decision	Remark
Sex	3.173	0.076	Do not reject H_0	Not significant

In contrast, males often lean towards self-oriented perfectionism, focusing on personal achievements. Stoeber and Otto (2006) further explain that females frequently report higher levels of adaptive perfectionism, correlating with improved academic outcomes. Meanwhile, males may exhibit less frequent but more intense maladaptive perfectionistic behaviors. Additionally, Kawamoto et al. (n.d.) emphasize that females are more prone to relational concerns linked to perfectionism, which can influence their learning profiles differently than males. These differences may explain why perfectionism's effects can vary between sexes, even if the statistical results in this study did not find significant differences.

Table 8 reflects the significant difference in the adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to socio-economic status. With a calculated value of 0.844 and a p-value of 0.499, the findings reveal no significant difference in the adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to socioeconomic status. While it may be true for this data that socioeconomic status has no significant relationship with the effects of specific learning profiles, it could be argued that socioeconomic status (SES) and perfectionism highlights how external pressures and access to resources shape students' learning profiles.

Table 8. Significant Difference in the Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies when Grouped according to Socioeconomic Status

Variable	Computed Value	P-Value	Decision	Remark
Socioeconomic Status	0.844	0.499	Do not reject H_0	Not significant

Fallachai et al. (2019) discuss the role of societal norms, noting that students from higher-income groups often face intense expectations for success, while lower-income students may develop perfectionistic behaviors rooted in fear of failure. Loscalzo et al. (2024) emphasize that wealthier students are more likely to adopt high personal standards due to greater access to academic opportunities and support systems, fostering adaptive perfectionism in some cases. Similarly, Vanstone and Hicks (2019) examine how SES influences perfectionism across cultural and economic contexts, finding that external pressures vary significantly between income groups, ultimately shaping how perfectionism impacts academic outcomes.

Table 9 illustrates the adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to family size. With a calculated value of 0.144 and a p-value of 0.866, there is no significant difference in the adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to family size. However, in other studies, family size plays a crucial role in developing perfectionistic tendencies, as it influences the distribution of parental

attention and expectations. Hill et al. (2010) highlight that smaller families often concentrate higher expectations on individual children, intensifying both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. Stairs et al. (2012) observe that larger families distribute parental focus more evenly, potentially reducing the intensity of perfectionistic pressures on each child. Furthermore, Dunkley et al. (2000) add that children in smaller families often adopt higher personal standards and perfectionistic concerns due to greater parental scrutiny.

Table 9. *Significant Difference in the Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies when Grouped according to Family Size*

Variable	Computed Value	P-Value	Decision	Remark
Family Size	0.144	0.866	Do not reject H ₀ .	Not significant

Table 10 shows the significant difference between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to academic performance. With a computed value of 1.773 and a p-value of 0.136, there is no significant difference in the adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism tendencies when grouped according to academic performance.

Table 10. *Significant Difference in the Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism Tendencies when Grouped according to Academic Performance*

Variable	Computed Value	P-Value	Decision	Remark
Academic Performance	1.773	0.136	Do not reject H ₀ .	Not significant

Other studies would contend that perfectionism and academic performance are intricately linked, with adaptive perfectionism often associated with better outcomes. Stoeber and Otto (2006) note that students with high perfectionistic strivings but low concerns tend to perform well academically, as they set ambitious but achievable goals. Frost et al. (1993) provide a foundational understanding of this dynamic, showing that perfectionism's impact on performance depends on balancing personal standards and concerns over mistakes. Kline (2014) elaborates on this relationship, emphasizing that perfectionistic strivings can enhance academic success, while evaluative concerns undermine it through increased anxiety and procrastination.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be drawn that adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism learning profiles influence the high school students differently. The results indicate that while these students exhibit varying degrees of perfectionism, adaptive traits, such as goal-setting and organization, generally align with better outcomes. Conversely, maladaptive perfectionism, characterized by self-criticism and fear of failure, can hinder progress and well-being. This relationship suggests that the balance between adaptive and maladaptive tendencies plays a critical role in shaping students' learning experiences and achievements. Regardless of the classification as graduating or non-graduating, the findings underscore the dual impact of perfectionism on student performance, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions that foster adaptive traits while mitigating maladaptive influences.

Students should regularly assess their study habits and perfectionist tendencies, using self-reflection to identify whether their perfectionism is adaptive or maladaptive. They can then adopt strategies like time management and goal setting to enhance productivity while minimizing academic stress. Counselors and psychologists should use the insights from this study to tailor interventions and counseling programs for students exhibiting maladaptive perfectionism. Incorporating cognitive-behavioral strategies can assist students in overcoming self-critical thoughts and fostering resilience. Parents should engage in open and supportive communication with their children, focusing on understanding their academic challenges. They can help their children develop healthier learning profiles and manage perfectionism effectively by providing encouragement and realistic expectations.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors confirm their equal contribution to every part of this research. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of this paper.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors express their gratitude to all the unwavering dedication and ceaseless encouragement they received throughout the conduct of the study. Additionally, the authors would like to thank their parents for the immense support in their academic journeys.

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Rural Banking Dynamics: Assessing the Correlation Between Employee Work Performance and Financial Performance

Jaime A. Berbano^{*1}, Lovella T. Castrana², Jay Jay M. Pisueña³

^{1,3}College of Business Management & Accountancy, Carlos Hilado Memorial State University, Bacolod City, Philippines

²Department of Agrarian Reform, Bacolod City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: jamesberbano2020@gmail.com

Date received: December 15, 2024

Date revised: February 25, 2025

Date accepted: March 20, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Berbano, J., Castrana, L., Pisueña, J.J. (2025). Rural banking dynamics: Assessing the correlation between employee work performance and financial performance. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 259-270. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0683>

Abstract. This study evaluates the relationship between employee work performance and financial performance in a rural bank in Iloilo City. The research aims to determine whether employee performance influences the bank's financial strength. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire to assess task and contextual performance among all bank employees. Secondary data was analyzed using the CAMELS model, which evaluates financial health based on Capital Adequacy, Asset Quality, Management Efficiency, Earning Quality, Liquidity, and Sensitivity. A descriptive-relational analysis was conducted, with responses measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Results indicate that both task and contextual performance were rated moderately. The bank's financial performance was assessed as moderate to low over the past three years, with critical weaknesses in Return on Equity (ROE), Capital to Assets (CATA), asset quality, and management efficiency. Statistical analysis found no significant relationship between employee performance and financial performance. These findings suggest that other factors may have a stronger impact on the bank's financial health, highlighting the need for further investigation into external influences and operational strategies.

Keywords: Rural banking; Employee performance; Financial performance.

1.0 Introduction

Rural banking is pivotal in fostering economic development and financial inclusion in underserved regions. As an establishment that provides financial services to rural populations, it plays a significant role in supporting local businesses and communities. Understanding the dynamics within these banks is crucial, especially the connection between employee performance and the institution's financial performance. (Pasban et al., 2016). This research aims to explore this correlation, contributing to the broader discourse on how human capital influences organizational success in the rural banking sector.

On the other hand, various studies support the relationship between work performance and financial performance. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) argued that it would benefit the organization when team members effectively work harmoniously (Adham, 2023). Employee performance contributes to the growth and development of the company, according to the study of Vosloban (2012). According to Gould-Williams (2003), employees working hard for the organization are expected to deliver superior results (Rubel et al., 2020). Gruman

and Saks (2011) stated that high employee commitment yields increased performance. However, there are conflicting studies that prove otherwise. Malik et al. (2019) found that skills shortages are unrelated to a firm's profitability. Similarly, Emele (2024) research concluded that risk-taking, communication, business skills, and decision-making abilities do not significantly impact the performance of small and medium enterprises in Nigeria.

Maximizing employee performance to its fullest potential has become a challenge for many companies. In the banking sector, employee performance is vital in achieving financial success. Financial performance measures the contributions of individuals and groups that align with the company's financial objectives (Saad, 2016). The bank's profitability and financial soundness are crucial in meeting the compliance, economic, and financial regulations of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and maintaining financial health for its stakeholders. A well-functioning financial system of rural banks is fundamental as they perform essential functions in the growth of the rural economy.

The relationship between employee performance and financial outcomes has been extensively studied across various sectors, with findings indicating that enhanced employee engagement and productivity can lead to improved financial results. The performance of the banking industry directly affects the industrial and service sectors, as it performs essential functions of economic transformations (Kappagoda, 2018). According to Borman and Motwildo, work performance consists of two key components—contextual performance and task performance—both contribute equally to achieving organizational success (Pradhan et al., 2016). However, according to Campbell et al. (2015), work performance is an action or behavior itself and not the result of acts or a consequence; therefore, it can predict the failure or success of an organization, may it is a profit or a non-profit.

Ultimately, this study clarifies the conflicting results of research studies on the relationship between work performance and the organization's financial performance. As rural banks evolve in response to shifting market dynamics, understanding these correlations is crucial for ensuring their sustainability and effectiveness in driving economic growth within rural communities. While many studies have linked financial success to various fields, limited research solely focuses on task and contextual work performance. Moreover, limited studies cited financial institutions as the field of reference. As the foundation of the country's rural economy, the researchers were motivated to probe the relationship between work performance and the institution's financial performance of a rural bank in Iloilo City.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research method in gathering and presenting data about the characteristics of the population and the connection between variables involved in this research. A descriptive-correlational study describes the relationships among variables (Tankersley, 2015). Data collection included surveys and secondary data. The study examined the relationship between employees' work performance—both task and contextual—and the financial performance of the rural bank, focusing on profitability, liquidity, and stability using the CAMELS framework.

2.2 Research Participants

This study was carried out at a rural bank located in Iloilo City. The employees from the corporate office were the study's subject participants. The study participants included all 67 bank employees, representing departments such as loan, collection, Real and Other Properties Acquired (ROPA), administrative, accounting, and treasury, with performance ratings provided by their supervisors.

2.3 Research Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to gather primary data on employees' work performance at rural banks. The secondary data were excerpts from the bank's financial statements. In interpreting the level of performance, the three components: profitability, liquidity, and stability, were evaluated using the CAMELS rating, a standard analysis for financial institutions, and the latest tools today. The choice of ratios for each element, including Capital Adequacy, Asset Quality, Management Efficiency, Earning Quality, Liquidity, and Sensitivity, were based on the study established by Masood et al. (2016) using the combined range of CAMELS rating.

The formulated survey questionnaire designed for the study was subjected to a validation process using Lawshe's validity ratio by the eleven (11) panel of experts in their field. Of the 30 questions subjected to the validity test, all were essential and passed the content validity ratio of 0.95, thus making the questionnaires valid in finalizing the research instruments. The reliability test was piloted to 30 rural bank employees from the branches, rated by their supervisors. Using Cronbach's alpha to analyze the data, the value resulted in .835, which indicates a good result necessary for the instrument to be valid.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought the approval of the rural bank's Chief Executive Officer through a formal written letter. After permission was granted, the survey questionnaires were distributed to supervisors of different divisions who were tasked with rating their employees. The data were then gathered and reviewed to ensure the information in the survey form was complete. The data were collated, organized, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The results were presented in tabular form, interpreted, and discussed. The data needed to evaluate the financial performance were from the bank financial reports submitted to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). The bank's accounting department head furnished the financial information such as the income statement and the balance sheet. The researcher analyzed the financial data and computed ratios using the CAMELS framework to determine the success of the financial performance.

2.5 Ethical Consideration

The research was conducted with careful attention to ethical considerations throughout all stages of the study. At first, a letter was written to the president of the rural bank for permission to conduct research. It observed confidentiality with the identity of employees as participants by assigning codes to each of them. Before the survey, the researcher asked for informed consent from the supervisors and department heads who rated employees. The name of the rural bank was held in secrecy.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 Profile of the Participants

The demographic data obtained from the survey of 67 bank employees are shown in Table 1 below.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18 to 35 years old	44	65.7
36 to 55 years old	21	31.3
Above 55 years old	2	3.00
Sex		
Male	26	38.8
Female	41	61.2
Civil Status		
Single	35	52.2
Married	31	46.3
Widow/er	1	1.50
Years of Employment		
1-5 years	41	61.2
6-10 years	19	28.4
Above 10 years	7	10.4
Educational Attainment		
High School	4	6.00
Vocational	2	3.00
College	61	91.0
Department		
Loan	14	20.9
Collection	6	9.00
ROPA	3	4.50
Administrative	7	10.4
Accounting	24	35.8
Treasury	13	19.4

Of the responses received from the bank employees, 65 % were younger adults, which implies that most of the employees are newly hired. Female employees dominated the population at 61.2%, while most were single at

52.2%. Most employees, 61.2%, have worked at the bank for 1-5 years, which infers high employee turnover, as supported by the younger age group mentioned above. A high employee turnover creates an inexperienced workforce, presenting a significant risk to the bank. Employee turnover indicates the most expensive and difficult workforce challenges with harmful effects on efficiency, productivity, and performance (Surji, 2013). Most employees finished a college degree, comprising 91%, a qualification for bank employment. The most significant number of employees are assigned to the accounting department.

3.2 Task Performance According to Profile

Table 2 below describes the task-based performance of bank employees according to profile.

Table 2. *Task performance according to profile variable*

Variables	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Age			
18 to 35 years old	3.40	0.51	Moderate
36 to 55 years old	3.52	0.54	High
Above 55 years old	3.43	0.80	Moderate
Sex			
Male	3.46	0.50	Moderate
Female	3.43	0.54	Moderate
Civil Status			
Single	3.46	0.46	Moderate
Married	3.40	0.58	Moderate
Widow/er	4.07	0.00	High
Years of Employment			
1-5 years	3.38	0.50	Moderate
6-10 years	3.41	0.53	Moderate
Above 10 years	3.54	0.39	High
Educational Attainment			
High School	3.53	0.54	High
Vocational	2.90	0.33	Moderate
College	3.45	0.52	Moderate
Department			
Loan	3.44	0.62	Moderate
Collection	3.41	0.46	Moderate
ROPA	3.18	0.25	Moderate
Administrative	3.44	0.47	Moderate
Accounting	3.44	0.46	Moderate
Treasury	3.52	0.65	High

Legend: Very High – 4.50-5.00, High – 3.50-4.49, Moderate – 2.50-3.49, Low – 1.50-2.49, Very Low – 1.00-1.49

The study found age-related differences among age groups of the age-task-performance profile of bank employees. Middle adult employees age 36 to 55 years old performed above expectations (mean = 3.52), interpreted as high-performance level. Older workers can grasp difficult situations and concentrate on vital tasks (WHO, 2015). However, Brustio et al. (2017) stated that mobility and cognitive performance decrease significantly in the older group, similar to the findings of this study. Another negative predictive value of the age variable showed that as librarians in the university libraries of Nigeria advanced in age, the job performance declined (Ugwu, 2017).

Based on the study, male employees were more active and effective than female employees. The findings indicated that male employees scored higher (mean=3.46) than female employees. In one of the studies conducted by the American Time Survey from the U.S. Department of Labor (2019) on time spent at work, men work longer, with 8.4 hours, compared to women, who work 7.9 hours. Regarding civil status, the widower had the highest score (mean= 4.07), while married employees got the lowest score (mean=3.40). The lowest score of married employees is attributed to their daily multipart responsibilities. Based on research findings, employees having families is associated with decreased attendance (Trahan, 2017).

Employees' expertise is enhanced through the years of employment, as shown in the results; employees above ten years of tenure rated above expectations (mean=3.54), interpreted as a high-performance level. A study stated that length of service is positively correlated with the performance of the insurance salesmen in Nigeria (Hassan, 2014). The relationship between tenure and engagement points to a crucial untapped opportunity for most organizations

(Harter, 2015). Entry to higher-level jobs often required professional degrees; however, performance usually is not measured by academic aptitude. This study found an insignificant relationship between education and task performance, where high school graduates performed above expectations (mean=3.53), considered higher performance than other education levels. A study in the financial institution in Punjab further supported the idea that education negatively correlates with employee performance (Khan, 2014).

The evaluation of various departments of the bank showed dissimilar rating scores. Treasury rated above expectations (mean=3.52) on top of other departments. Employees assigned in the treasury department are more efficient with their assigned tasks than other departments, whose critically pressing functions cannot. The bank treasury is the custodian of financial and liquidity risk management, which manages cash, liquidity, and risk to meet regulatory requirements and stay in control (PwC, 2014). The task performance result is obtained through employee compliance with the organization's preset work standards, targets, and criteria (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016).

3.3 Contextual Performance According to Profile

Table 3 presents the contextual performance of bank employees according to the profile of participants.

Variables	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Age			
18 to 35 years old	3.30	0.41	Moderate
36 to 55 years old	3.39	0.47	Moderate
Above 55 years old	3.47	0.75	Moderate
Sex			
Male	3.43	0.43	Moderate
Female	3.27	0.42	Moderate
Civil Status			
Single	3.31	0.42	Moderate
Married	3.35	0.46	Moderate
Widow/er	3.60	0.00	High
Years of Employment			
1-5 years	3.29	0.41	Moderate
6-10 years	3.31	0.43	Moderate
Above 10 years	3.40	0.49	Moderate
Educational Attainment			
High School	3.45	0.41	Moderate
Vocational	2.97	0.05	Moderate
College	3.34	0.44	Moderate
Department			
Loan	3.40	0.54	Moderate
Collection	3.44	0.39	Moderate
ROPA	3.20	0.35	Moderate
Administrative	3.28	0.42	Moderate
Accounting	3.27	0.36	Moderate
Treasury	3.38	0.52	Moderate

Age profile showed that older workers possess better extra-role performance toward the organization. The age group above 55 showed the highest rating (mean=3.47). Employees developed soft skills like emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness with age (Witt et al., 2002). In a cross-national sample of white-collar employees from South Korea and U.S. automobile and bank companies, interpersonal, helping, and civic virtue are more likely to be regarded as in-role behaviors for senior than junior employees (Kang et al., 2016).

In this study, findings reflected that male employees displayed powerful personality traits with a higher score (mean=3.43) than female employees (mean=3.27). Employees with friendly personalities resolve personal and professional conflicts through cooperation and collaboration for the organization's benefit (Youshan et al., 2015). This study showed that as the length of tenure advanced, employees' level of commitment to perform beyond their formal job responsibilities increased. Employees above ten years of service obtained the highest rating (mean=3.40) compared to other groups. The study by Mustafa et al. (2021) found that longer organizational tenure resulted in higher affective commitment or the tendency of an employee to stay with the company because of emotional attachment. Based on their educational attainment, employees who completed high school were

more likely to go the extra mile for the organization. Employees who completed secondary education scored the highest (mean=3.45) than those who finished vocational or college. Kalia et al. (2019) study that education has no significant relationship with overall job performance. Employees connected with the collection department rated the highest (mean=3.44) compared to other departments. Similarly, the nature of work-related behavior in a specific occupational field, which Kapaggoda (2018) mentioned, is the importance of extra-role behavior in accomplishing organizational goals. Collectors must overcome the challenges of collecting and facing account holders who cannot pay their bills with excellent customer service while recovering the bank's past-due funds.

3.4 Bank Employees' Task and Contextual Performance

Table 4 below describes the level of the bank employees' task-based performance as rated by their supervisors.

Table 4. *Bank employees' task performance*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Completes tasks on time.	3.46	0.59	Moderate
2. Completes tasks accurately.	3.40	0.58	Moderate
3. Understands day-to-day tasks with minimal supervision.	3.45	0.78	Moderate
4. Fulfills job responsibilities specified in job description.	3.48	0.66	Moderate
5. Keeps in mind the results to achieve in work.	3.40	0.65	Moderate
6. Knows how to set the right priorities.	3.43	0.66	Moderate
7. Collaboration with others is very productive.	3.42	0.63	Moderate
8. Good at following instructions.	3.42	0.68	Moderate
9. Communicate information accurately both verbally and in writing.	3.31	0.61	Moderate
10. Exercises good judgment and makes appropriate decisions in performance of duties.	3.37	0.55	Moderate
11. Understands and follows department policies and procedures with a high degree of integrity and results.	3.49	0.53	Moderate
12. Observes work time responsibly.	3.34	0.73	Moderate
13. Attendance at work is above the norms.	3.51	0.77	High
14. Gives an advance notice when unable to work.	3.58	0.91	High
15. Observes required safety practices for the well-being of self and co-workers.	3.51	0.68	High
Overall	3.44	0.67	Moderate

Legend: Very High – 4.50-5.00, High – 3.50-4.49, Moderate – 2.50-3.49, Low – 1.50-2.49, Very Low – 1.00-1.49

The bank employee task performance level met expectations reflected in the mean score of the fifteen items of the instruments. Some of the highly performed tasks include: attendance at work is above the norms (mean=3.51, sd=0.77); gives an advance notice when unable to work (mean=3.58, sd=0.91); and observes required safety practices for the well-being of self and co-workers (mean=3.51, sd=0.68). These task behaviors mentioned conformed to the bank's code of discipline for employees in accomplishing essential tasks of processing and performing daily bank transactions. Organizations have even introduced an accurate and centralized approach to monitoring attendance (Duff & Angus, 2015) to increase efficiency in human resources management.

The lowest rating among the task-based performance pertained to communication and comprehension. Task performance revealed low ratings in the areas of communicating information accurately both verbally and in writing (mean=3.31, sd=0.61); exercising good judgment and making appropriate decisions in the performance of duties (mean=3.37, sd=0.55); and observing work time responsibly (mean=3.34, sd=0.73). Effective communication in the banking sector is a requisite for successfully implementing strategies and building solid relationships among bank stakeholders. Another essential ingredient in the successful implementation of strategies is the understanding and internalization of what to do. Oyewole and Popoola (2013) found communication and problem solving significant task performance indicators. Commercial banks in Nepal improved their communication practices and strategies to properly transfer information between employees and management (Shrestha, 2019). The study (Koopmans, 2011) indicates a concern for time and detail as one of the critical dimensions of task performance. Richardson and Beckham (2015) suggested that intervention strategies such as career growth, learning, etc., influence employee performance.

Overall, the fifteen-item questionnaire revealed a mean score of 3.44, implying that employees meet expectations as a moderate level of performance with their assigned tasks. The results denote improvement of employee task behaviors prompting management to craft effective development interventions for employees to be result-oriented and perform optimally. Appropriate rewards and motivation schemes are beneficial in encouraging workers to put in their best efforts. This conforms with the study of Orenuga et al. (2024), which showed a direct

and significant relationship between employee empowerment and the job performance of bank employees. Moreover, team building activities and ongoing employee development will enhance task-based performance, especially in communication skills.

The results in Table 5 showed that most of the bank employees met expectations (mean=3.33, sd=0.59) interpreted as moderate performance level based on the fifteen items of the contextual instrument reflecting their capabilities in performing extra-role behaviors in the workplace. The results also revealed the greatest strength of bank employees, who work effectively with others as outstanding team players and supportive to everyone, which scored above expectations (mean=3.55, sd=0.63) and was interpreted as a high-performance level. Bank employees are highly rated in teamwork. The relevance of collaboration created employee unity and increased performance, especially in banks. The study of Boakye (2015) exhibited a significant positive relation between teamwork and organizational performance.

Table 5. *Bank employees' contextual performance*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Takes extra responsibilities than the job requires.	3.22	0.57	Moderate
2. Actively participates in work meetings and / consultations.	3.25	0.61	Moderate
3. Coaches and helps co-workers accomplish their task.	3.34	0.57	Moderate
4. Empathizes, supports and encourages fellow employees with personal matters.	3.24	0.55	Moderate
5. Can build strong relationships across the organization.	3.37	0.57	Moderate
6. Endorses, supports and defends organizational objectives.	3.45	0.63	Moderate
7. Has a strong sense of belongingness with the organization.	3.49	0.66	Moderate
8. Enjoys providing best service to customers.	3.33	0.66	Moderate
9. Contributes new ideas for improving products, services, policies and procedures.	3.24	0.65	Moderate
10. Knows how to solve difficult situations and setbacks quickly.	3.16	0.54	Moderate
11. Displays initiative readily, independently and responsibly.	3.45	0.58	Moderate
12. Can deal skillfully and promptly with new situations and obstacles.	3.18	0.55	Moderate
13. Exercises personal discipline and self-control.	3.42	0.58	Moderate
14. Gives assistance above and beyond normal expectations.	3.27	0.45	Moderate
15. Works effectively with others as an outstanding team player and supportive to everyone.	3.55	0.63	High
Overall	3.33	0.59	Moderate

Legend: Very High - 4.50-5.00, High - 3.50-4.49, Moderate - 2.50-3.49, Low - 1.50-2.49, Very Low - 1.00-1.49

This study showed some weak points in knowing how to solve difficult situations and setbacks quickly (mean=3.16, sd=0.54); dealing skillfully and promptly with new situations and obstacles (mean=3.18, sd=0.55); and taking extra responsibilities than the job requires (mean=3.22, sd=0.57). Koopmans (2011) identified solving problems as another dimension of contextual behavior. This skill shared by experienced colleagues responds to immediate solutions for difficult situations in the workplace. The measurements include cooperating, taking on an extra load, and showing responsibility and initiative as part of contextual behaviors (Koopmans, 2011). The willingness of an employee to take on additional tasks or offer to help a colleague will positively impact the organization's performance. Based on the findings, bank management strives to strengthen strategies on contextual behavior development. Jena & Pradhan (2016) also suggested incorporating extra-role skills in hiring, appraisal, and training to promote better results. It conforms to a study on self-efficacy, task performance, and contextual performance: A Sri Lankan Experience, which concluded a significant and positive correlation between task performance and contextual performance (Kappagoda, 2018).

3.5 Bank Financial Performance

The bank's financial results obtained through CAMELS analysis for three years are in Table 6 below. The bank's capital adequacy, calculated as the ratio of shareholders' equity to total assets (Ahsan, 2016), was vital for three years, reflecting the bank's strong performance in terms of stability and efficiency. The results demonstrate the bank's ability to promote financial stability and efficiency and protect depositors (Rahman, 2017). CAR increased from 25.70% in 2017 to 29.35% in 2018, although decreased to 22.95% in 2019. Masood et al. (2016) stated that a capital adequacy ratio higher than 11% is considered very high. The study of Otmani et al. (2017) conceded a positive relationship between capital adequacy and financial performance in Nairobi Exchange Companies in Kenya. On the other hand, contrary to the study of Kablay and Gumbo (2021), CAR was found to hurt profitability.

Table 6. CAMELS analysis of bank's performance for the period 2017-2019

Rating Component	Predictors of:	Bank Performance			Bank Rating			Interpretation		
		2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Capital Adequacy	Stability	25.7%	29.3%	22.9%	5	5	5	S	S	S
Assets Quality	Stability	30.0%	19.2%	32.5%	1	1	1	U	U	U
Management	Stability	209%	354%	485%	1	1	1	U	U	U
Earnings (ROA)	Profitability	1.68%	0.91%	0.57%	5	2	1	S	M	U
Earnings (ROE)	Profitability	5.69%	2.76%	2.22%	1	1	1	U	U	U
Liquidity (ADR)	Liquidity	56.7%	60.6%	65.4%	5	4	3	S	SA	F
Liquidity (CATA)	Liquidity	37.1%	30.3%	23.5%	5	5	5	U	U	U
Sensitivity	Stability	No risk for marketable securities								

Legend: 5-Strong (S), 4-Satisfactory (SA), 3-Fair (F), 2-Marginal (M), 1-Unsatisfactory (U)

Another element of CAMELS predicting stability is the asset quality. The bank's financial performance on asset quality was not favorable for three years and rated unsatisfactory at 30.07%, 19.20%, and 32.59%, respectively, which indicates a significant credit deficit or high credit risk. It is essential to analyze the current situation of this asset quality and determine the possibility of future deterioration. The bank needs to review and improve its credit and collection policies. According to Masood et al. (2016), a percentage score of below 1.5% indicates a very high asset quality. Performance improved as the ratio kept lower. Asset quality constitutes the bank's loan quality, which also reveals the earnings of the institution. It describes the quality of advances and the type of debtors of the bank (Ab-Rahim, 2018). It reflects the volume of funds allocated in the event of bad investments (Ahsan, 2016). A high provision for non-performing loans would mean a greater risk of loan losses (Rahman, 2018).

Management efficiency shows the soundness of the bank operation through skillful management of controlling expenses (Ahsan, 2016). It likewise ensures the survival and growth of the financial institution (Rahman, 2017). A higher ratio worsens the bank's financial health (Cabaron, 2018). Based on the study of Masood et al. (2016), a ratio of 25% or lower reflects a very high rating. In this study, the bank rated unsatisfactory for three consecutive years based on the cost-to-income ratio of 209.01%, 354.23%, and 485.29%. In the study of Islam (2014), the rating showed how the management efficiently operates the bank activity at a much lower cost against income generated from the operation. In assessing the management quality ratio of the bank, the low rating is ascribed to the high administrative expense incurred by the company. The bank needs to reduce bank operating expenses through cost-cutting measures and increase the efficiency of its loan portfolios.

One of the most important measures of financial performance is earnings derived from business operations. Earnings quality measures the profitability and productivity of the bank as a significant indicator of growth (Ahsan, 2016). Profitability is calculated using the two criteria: return on asset (ROA) and equity (ROE). ROA aids the bank in its gripping capacity over unexpected losses while ROE evaluates stockholder's investment growth (Ahsan, 2016). According to Masood et al. (2016), profitability peaks at an ROA above 1.5% and an ROE equivalent or above 22%. This study showed that the bank's profitability based on ROA correspondingly decreased from strong at 1.68%, marginal at 0.91%, and unsatisfactory at 0.57% from 2017 to 2019. Notably, the bank had the highest rating in 2017, revealing high returns. Islam (2014) stated that a higher ROA ratio indicates better managerial performance and efficient use of company assets. ROE was unsatisfactory for three years at 5.69%, 2.76%, and 2.22%, respectively, presenting the poor financial ability of the bank to generate profits from its investments. ROE is the percentage of profit the bank makes for every peso of equity invested in the company (Berzkalne, 2014).

The bank's liquidity refers to the ability of the bank to quickly convert its financial assets to cash to pay its short-term obligations. The measurement used in the study by Masood et al. (2016), a ratio of below 60% for both liquidity ratios, indicates strong performance. The computed results showed that advances to deposits (ADR) decreased from strong to fair. The analysis showed that the highest ADR was in 2017 (ratio=56.73), and the lowest ADR was in 2019 (ratio=65.42). It interpreted adequate liquidity to cover loan losses and withdrawals of depositors, especially during an economic downturn. A study of ten commercial banks in Bangladesh showed a positive and significant influence of ADR on the financial performance, especially on the ROA.

Further, it concluded that an optimum ratio of advance to deposit enhanced ROA positively affects the financial health of banks (Das, 2020). Alternatively, the proportion of circulating assets to total assets (CATA) maintained strong performance for three years. According to Ahsan (2016), liquidity evaluates the unprecedented and

unforeseen risk that may cause the bank's insolvency. Findings from the study of some manufacturing firms in Ghana showed a significant positive relationship between the current to-total assets ratio with profitability (Akoto et al., 2013). Overall, effective working capital management is necessary for bank profitability.

3.6 Composite Rating for the period reflected based on CAMELS Framework

The composite rating presented in Table 7 further explains the bank's financial standing to the CAMELS rating analysis of Masood et al. (2016). Each indicator is rated according to the three-year financial performance.

Table 7. *Composite rating for the period reflected based on CAMELS framework*

Variables	Rating		
	2017	2018	2019
Profitability			
ROA	5	2	1
ROE	1	1	1
Liquidity			
Advances to deposits (AD)	5	4	3
Circulating assets to total assets (CATA)	1	1	1
Stability			
Capital adequacy	5	5	5
Asset quality	1	1	1
Management quality	1	1	1
Sensitivity	5	5	5
Composite Rating	2.7	2.43	2.30
Interpretation	Fair	Marginal	Marginal

Based on the CAMELS rating, a sound financial institution has a composite rating of at least "3" and a management score of at least "3" (BSP Circular No. 364). The bank's composite rating indicated a score of 2.7, 2.43, and 2.30 respectively for the three years, reflecting the bank's inner strength and susceptibility to market risks. The bank's fair rating is described by Masood et al. (2016) with the following conditions: financial, operational, or compliance weaknesses ranging from moderately severe to unsatisfactory; vulnerable to the onset of adverse business conditions; quickly deteriorate if actions are not effective in correcting weaknesses; and supervisory concern and more than regular supervision to address deficiencies. Further, the bank's financial performance declined in 2018 and 2019, both rated marginally. A marginal rating was interpreted as possessing the following characteristics: the immoderate volume of serious financial weaknesses; unsafe conditions are not being satisfactorily addressed; without corrections, these conditions could develop further and impair future viability; high potential for failure; and close supervision surveillance and a definite plan for correcting deficiencies (Masood et al., 2016).

According to Ashan (2016), there is a need to analyze the quality of these components. Furthermore, management efficiency has been unsatisfactory for three years, indicating a very low rating compared to the prerequisite score of at least 3. The findings displayed a deficiency in both requirements compared to the performance limit required by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Management efficiency is described as the adherence to prescribed norms, ability to adapt to the changing environment, leadership and administrative capability of the bank, and a strong result, which is an assurance of growth and endurance of a bank (Aspal, 2020).

3.7 Relationship Between Employee Work Performance and Financial Performance

Spearman's correlation was used to assess the relationship between the bank's employee work performance and financial performance. Using a 5-point Likert scale to interpret the level of performance of both primary and secondary data, the result showed no significant relationship at $p\text{-value} = .813$. The findings were confirmed in the study of Odriozola et al. (2018), rejecting female participation's relationship with the more excellent financial performance of the company. Other findings indicate no significant human capital intervention in the relationship between innovation strategy and financial performance (Hutayan, 2020).

Table 8. *Relationship between employee work performance and financial performance*

Variables	p-value	Interpretation
Employee Work Performance	.813	Not significant
Financial Performance	.813	Not significant

Significance level @ .05

The study of Rompho shows no connection between the level of human capital and the long-term financial performance of firms using different human resource management strategies (Rompho, 2020). Tran and Vo (2020) show no relationship between ROA and human capital efficiency across sectors. Results of other research are contrary to this study: extenuating the relationship between human capital and return on asset, return on equity, asset turnover, and price-to-book ratio (Soewarno et al., 2020); human capital efficiency and financial performance (Ozkan et al., 2017), human capital and coping ability and resiliency during economic stress (Yarovaya et al., 2020); employees' contributions, involvement, and improvement of skills and financial growth of the (Molla, 2019); employee's job commitment and job involvement, and service performance and productivity (Rahman, 2017); and employee competencies and service performance (Xu & Ye, 2014).

4.0 Conclusion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the interplay between employee performance and the financial outcomes of rural banks. They may also build awareness among bank management on the relative importance of both task and contextual performance behavior. Decisions can be made to improve bank employees' work performance by enhancing their communication and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, and commitment to work. Prompt attention to this valuable information will increase employee performance and prevent helpful employees from leaving the bank.

Results can contribute significantly to the academic literature in the banking sector to existing theories on organizational behavior by demonstrating how employee performance directly affects financial success in a rural banking context. This adds a nuanced understanding of the dynamics in smaller banking institutions compared to larger commercial banks. For practitioner applications, the findings underscore the necessity for effective human resource strategies that prioritize employee satisfaction and performance. Banks should focus on fair compensation, policy recommendations, strategic focus, recognition programs, and career development opportunities to enhance workforce motivation.

Efficient financial management is crucial for the success of a banking institution. The strategic use of financial instruments such as the CAMELS rating system will help managers determine the bank's financial strength. Based on the CAMELS rating, the bank's financial results have been decreasing for three years, implying a need for improvement in ROA and AD that is declining, and the unsatisfactory rating for ROE, CATA, asset quality, and management efficiency. These threatening results will prompt the bank management to evaluate every dimension of the bank's deficiencies, take preventive measures, and closely monitor performances.

Finally, the study found no significant relationship between employee work performance and financial performance. This study fills a gap in the literature regarding rural banking by focusing on employee dynamics, which have been less explored than larger banking entities. It provides empirical evidence that can be built upon in future research.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Castrana, Lovella: Gathering existing information and studies related to the topic. Develop a data collection plan, Data Collection, Designing and implementing methods for gathering new data encoding. Execute the data collection process. Create a bibliography or reference list.

Berbano, Jaime: Editing, writing, supervising, data analysis, Literature Review. Search for relevant articles, books, and studies. Prepare visual aids (charts, graphs) to support findings. Ensure ethical standards are maintained.

Pisueno Jay Jay: Analyze and report the collected data and prepare a report for presentation. Use appropriate methods (statistical analysis, thematic analysis) to analyze the collected data and summarize key findings.

6.0 Funding

No funding agency, the authors contributed to this research.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict or non-conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

This research becomes a reality with the help of the following persons to whom we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude: Dr. Teresa B. Ballados, Dr. Ma. Fara J. Magada, and Dr. Eric Arthur N. Dio, who extend their expertise with their valuable comments, suggestions, and critiques, Ms. Ann Baynosa for sharing her knowledge and technical know-how in the statistical analysis and interpretation; To the management of the rural bank (though I cannot mention) for the most welcomed support and help, the department heads for my data gathering and the head of the accounting department for the financial data needed in this study; and to all friends and co-workers for their encouragement and unwavering support to finish this study.

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The Lived Experience of Filipino Stroke Survivors

Yolric Henry B. Dela Cruz^{*1}, Colyn Drew Benneth A. Almarines², Alyssa Mae R. Aquino³,
Beatrice Monic A. Aranza⁴, Madel Angel S. Garo⁵, Girlie Mannphy A. Lacambra⁶, Marc Lester F. Quintana⁷
^{1,2,3,4,5,6}College of Nursing, Canossa College San Pablo City-Inc., San Pablo City, Laguna, Philippines
⁷Department of Arts and Sciences, City College of Calamba, Laguna, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: yulecdelacruz@gmail.com

Date received: November 20, 2024

Date revised: February 25, 2025

Date accepted: March 20, 2025

Originality: 98%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 2%

Recommended citation:

Dela Cruz, Y.H., Almarines, C.D.B., Aquino, A.M., Aranza, B.M., Garo, M.A., Lacambra, G.M., Quintana, M.L. (2025). The lived experience of Filipino stroke survivors. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 271-283.
<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0662>

Abstract. This study addresses the lack of qualitative research on stroke survivors' experiences in the Philippines, aiming to improve nursing interventions and risk prevention strategies. Using a qualitative transcendental phenomenological design, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with ten Filipino stroke survivors selected through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis identified seven key themes: behavioral risk factors, pre-stroke lifestyle patterns, recognition of warning signs, experiences during the stroke, medical interventions, social support post-stroke, and adaptation to a new lifestyle. Findings highlight the varied pre-stroke lifestyles and the emotional challenges survivors face during recovery, stressing the importance of social connections. The results suggest that holistic nursing interventions focusing on physical, emotional, and social needs are essential for improving care quality and fostering resilience. These insights can guide healthcare providers in developing targeted support strategies for stroke survivors.

Keywords: Lived experienced; Neurological disorder; Stroke; Stroke survivors; Transcendental phenomenology.

1.0 Introduction

Stroke is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, significantly impacting the lives of millions. In the Philippines, the prevalence of stroke is alarmingly high, yet qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of stroke survivors remains limited. Existing studies primarily focus on quantitative data, leaving a gap in understanding the personal narratives and emotional challenges survivors face. For instance, while research by Zhang et al. (2020) highlights the neuropsychiatric issues such as depression and anxiety that often follow a stroke, it does not delve into survivors' perspectives on their recovery journeys. Similarly, Ogunlana et al. (2023) explored stroke experiences in Nigeria, but findings may not directly apply to the Filipino context due to cultural differences.

This study aims to bridge this gap by employing a qualitative transcendental phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of Filipino stroke survivors in San Pablo City, Laguna. By focusing on their narratives before, during, and after the stroke, the research seeks to uncover the complexities of their recovery processes and the support systems that influence their well-being. Understanding these experiences is crucial for developing holistic nursing interventions that address not only the physical but also the emotional and social needs of stroke survivors. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on stroke care and aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3, which emphasizes health and well-being.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative transcendental phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of stroke survivors in San Pablo City, Laguna. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' narratives and the meanings they ascribe to their experiences.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in San Pablo City, Laguna. As of the 2020 Census, the total population was 285,348 and there were 80 barangays. The participants were interviewed in their respective homes or the vicinity of the two selected rehabilitation units within San Pablo City. This helped the researchers conduct their study because it was accessible and bordered by barangays. Additionally, one of the criteria used to choose the research locale was the quantity of morbidity and mortality cases in San Pablo City, Laguna. Lastly, one of the motivations of the researchers was to bridge the population gap in the said locale.

2.3 Research Participants

The participants in this qualitative research were identified as first-time stroke survivors, consisting of 10 adults who had experienced their first stroke. A non-probability snowball sampling technique was used, facilitated through referrals from doctors at two rehabilitation centers in San Pablo City, Laguna. Participants were required to have first-hand experience of the phenomenon within zero to six months post-stroke and a score between zero and three on the modified Rankin Scale, where zero indicates no symptoms and three represents a moderate disability. All participants were medically diagnosed with either an ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke. To ensure comprehensive data collection, companions were included in the interviews if participants had difficulty recalling their experiences. However, stroke survivors with cognitive impairment or significant communication difficulties were excluded from the study. All participants were located in San Pablo City, Laguna.

2.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was adapted from the study published by Ogunlana et al. (2023). Semi-structured interview guides were developed based on existing literature and expert consultations. The guides included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about the participants' experiences before, during, and after their strokes.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through one-on-one interviews conducted in participants' homes or the vicinity of the rehabilitation units. Each interview was audio-visually recorded with participants' consent and lasted 60-90 minutes. The researchers ensured a comfortable environment to facilitate open communication.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis, following Moustakas's analytical framework. This involved transcribing the interviews, identifying significant statements, and developing emergent themes through a systematic coding process.

2.7 Ethical Consideration

The study was approved by Canossa College San Pablo City, Inc., which adheres to the ethical guidelines set by the Commission on Higher Education. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Pre-stroke Lifestyle Patterns and Health Behaviors

Physical Activity and Work Routine

Table 1 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme Pre-stroke Lifestyle Patterns and Health Behaviors, specifically under the sub-topic of Physical Activity and Work Routine. The table provides essential information about the everyday lives and occupational activities of individuals who have had a stroke before their stroke occurred. Out of the 39 coded

responses, the pattern that occurred most frequently was the designation of persons as Workaholics, with 10 occurrences. The exemplar illustrates a widespread commitment to job obligations, frequently to the detriment of personal health or recreational pursuits. Participants demonstrated unwavering endeavors to secure employment possibilities, going so far as to engage in mundane duties to guarantee financial security, thus demonstrating the stresses linked to their work ethic prior to experiencing a stroke. Wang et al. (2019) found that physical activity is a predictor of morbidity and mortality. While the impact of physical activity is influenced by age, it remains a significant risk factor in the occurrence of stroke. This suggests that independent basic tasks are an individual's fundamental needs.

Table 1. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Physical Activity and Work Routine

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
High Physical Activity	"Back then, there were so many of them, and life was really hard. But from the very beginning, Mother was already doing something—she used to sew... and back then, she was always doing a lot of things."
Job or Career	"When we were young, we would buy brooms... and coconut husks, and we would split them." "Ah... well, I used to work as a factory worker in a company. It wasn't a big company, just a small one. The products were glass items, and my role was as a mixer. I mixed chemicals..."
Livelihood	That's why I'm always tired... I travel because I sell things. I sell in the market, and I'm always on the go. I often travel to Divisoria, bringing items there to sell. Sometimes, I go to Divisoria twice a week, and about three times a week to Tanauan, so I hardly get any rest."
Workaholic	"Well, because... as I said... I don't want to be idle. I don't want to... I don't want to earn nothing, even a little. I even take on cleaning bathrooms... just to make some money."
Light Physical Activities	"Yes, before, that was what she did every day.. sweeping and such. The only thing was, she would sleep around 9:00 in the morning... until 11:00, then eat at 12:00, and sleep again until 2:30. By 4:00, she would sleep again."
Not Employed	"Retired employee. In... in personnel."

Social Engagement and Leisure Activities

Table 2 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme Pre-stroke Lifestyle Patterns and Health Behaviors, specifically under the sub-topic of Social Engagement and Leisure Activities. The table provides essential information about the everyday lives and occupational activities of individuals who have had a stroke before their stroke occurred. Out of the eight coded responses, the pattern that occurred most frequently was Limited Social Activities, with six occurrences. The exemplar illustrates that individuals who are less socially active or have limited social interactions may be at a higher risk of experiencing a stroke. It underscores the importance of maintaining social connections and engaging in social activities for overall health and well-being, including stroke prevention.

Table 2. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Social Engagement and Leisure Activities

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Limited Social Activities	"Ah... it's been a long time since I've socialized, it's been a long time, even for birthdays. I haven't joined in a long time, since way back."
Sports Activities	"I've been out of the loop since then." "No, back in your youth, didn't you play... basketball?" "It used to be just basketball."

Fini et al. (2022) underscores the importance of including questions about pre-stroke physical activity in every post-stroke assessment. Clinicians need to be aware that stroke survivors tend to overestimate their activity levels, necessitating specific and targeted questioning. Notably, the study shows that stroke survivors can potentially return to their pre-stroke physical activities. Collaborative efforts between clinicians and survivors are crucial in facilitating participation in preferred physical activities. Even those with a history of inactivity may be capable of behavior change and becoming physically active post-stroke.

Stressors and Stress Management Strategies

Table 3 presents the codes and annotated exemplars on the experience of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme of Pre-stroke Lifestyle Patterns and Health Behaviors, in particular, the sub-topic of Stressors and Stress Management Strategies. The table provides details on how stressors affect an individual who has had a stroke daily and how they manage them before the stroke occurs. Out of 14 coded responses, the

most common pattern was the Very Low Stress Level, with five occurrences. The exemplar explains that stress before a stroke was not a problem. One of the reasons stresses cannot conquer someone's life is their emotional stability, considering that the family's foundation is well intact in helping each one of the family members. The family enhances the participant's coping ability using emotional and financial support. Therefore, before the incidence of stroke, individuals had relatively low stress levels due to a supportive system and a healthy environment.

Table 3. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Stressors and Stress Management Strategies

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Depression	"It happened... on September 19, and then the stress just kept piling up because my brother passed away in May, my mother passed away in August, and then in September... that's when I had my stroke."
Home Responsibilities	"For myself? I only get stressed when things are messy, and when my child has problems at school, like with assignments. Maybe about 4 out of 10."
Community Stressors	"Oh, when someone doesn't pay me, it annoys me, hahaha! Because I should be able to buy more with that money... it's a weekly thing, you see. If they borrow money, they should pay it back by the end of the week. But I see them, hey! They're not paying me, but they can buy from others. It really annoys me."
Letting the Stress Pass	"Well, I've learned now that the problem is, don't make it your problem. Don't... it becomes a problem if you keep worrying about it. Yes... when you realize it, just go with it, let it go. Don't stress about it, that's how I've come to see things in life."
Very Low Stress Level	"Nothing, she's not stressed."
	"As for me, I don't get stressed anymore and I always have [peace]. She doesn't think too much about the problems."

Holland (2023) found that emotional stress, whether short- or long-term, raises the risk of stroke, although it can be reduced with preventive measures or by creating new strategies to cope with stress. This study explains that there is no direct effect of getting a stroke immediately after exposure to a stressful situation. Still, when a person is under stress, the compensatory mechanism of the heart is to exert extra effort, and the blood vessels will start to constrict because of the high pressure. If this process continues, a comorbidity like hypertension can potentially heighten the risk of acquiring a stroke.

Health Monitoring and Awareness

Table 4 shows the codes and the annotated exemplars of the stroke survivors' experiences before stroke occurrence under the theme of Pre-stroke Lifestyle Patterns and Health Behavior. Specifically, it focuses on the sub-theme of Health Monitoring and Awareness, which emphasizes individuals' approach to health monitoring and their awareness of their health. The table provides crucial information regarding health monitoring, such as scheduling check-ups or consultations and understanding their health status before stroke. Out of 30 coded responses, the pattern that occurred most was hypertension, with 10 occurrences. The corresponding examples show that most participants were aware of having hypertension.

Table 4. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Health Monitoring and Awareness

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
No Regular Checkup	"Well... it's like I don't go for check-ups because I don't feel anything."
Occasional Checkup	"Only when something bothers me, that's when I go for a check-up."
Defiance of Medical Advice	"Do you have any maintenance [medication]?" "Yes, but I don't follow it." "He stopped it, that's why it triggered his condition. When he was 26 years old, he started maintenance, but then he stopped."
Hypertension	"Sometimes it's one-forty, other times it even goes up to two hundred, before."
Diabetes	"Diabetes. It actually started in 2010. I already had a lot... a lot of... what do you call it... maintenance. In 2010, diabetes, cholesterol, kidney problems, I had two surgeries for my kidneys... What else... that's it."
Hyperthyroidism	"That's it, thyroid, hyperthyroid."
No Health Problem	"I don't have any illness. I was normal until... (I had an attack)."

Elsevier (2020) observed hypertension in approximately 64 percent of stroke patients based on 30 study findings. With most occurrences in the interview in the exemplar, most knew about having hypertension, which is a major contributing risk factor for stroke occurrences. It is also supported by the study of Panuganti (2019), stating that hypertension is the greatest significant factor for both individuals and populations.

3.2 Behavioral Risk Factors and Environmental Influences

Lifestyle Choices and Habits

Table 5 displays the coded responses and annotated exemplars about the lived experiences of stroke survivors before the phenomenon occurred under the theme of Behavioral Risk Factors and Environmental Influences, particularly under the sub-theme of Lifestyle Choices and Habits. The table provides the necessary data to peek into the choices and habits of the survivors regarding their lifestyle before the stroke happened. Out of the 33 coded responses, the pattern that occurred the most frequently was the code No Dietary Plan or Food Restriction, with 13 occurrences. The exemplar illustrates that there were no controls or restrictions on the dietary habits of the survivors before the stroke happened, the portrayal of foods high in cholesterol consumed the most, and a lack of a healthy and balanced diet was observed. The participants demonstrated uncontrolled behavior in terms of consuming foods that led to the trigger of the phenomenon, linked as the stress reliever of the survivors, and considered as the management done in dealing with stressful circumstances encountered.

Table 5. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Lifestyle Choices and Habits

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Alcohol Dependence	"Yeah, sometimes it's twenty-four hours, hahaha... back then, I used to drink a lot."
Cigarette Dependence	"That stopped when our grandchild was born, there, just toned it down."
Coffee Dependence	"Maybe a whole pack when I'm drinking,"
No Dietary Plan or Food Restriction	"And I drink a lot of coffee."
Healthy Diet	"They love pork head and pork hocks. If they don't get to taste meat within a week, they won't cook anything, but chicken... our least preferred dish is tilapia."
Not Having Vices	"Yes, he wakes up early, he eats quaker oats followed by milk Anlene for the bones."
	"Oh nothing, it's just that I grew up in hardship. What a waste... it's just a waste of money."

Hellicar (2023) found that dietary practices have a significant impact on blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and inflammation, which all play a part in preventing and treating stroke. Dietary changes that target symptoms like difficulty swallowing are crucial for both recovery and preventing more strokes after a stroke. Prevention diets usually consider comorbidities like diabetes or hypertension and emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-salt foods.

Sleep Patterns and Quality

Table 6 shows the codes and interpreted exemplars on stroke survivors' experiences in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme of Behavioral Risk Factors and Environmental Influences, specifically under the sub-theme of Sleep Patterns and Quality. The table provides essential information regarding stroke survivors' daily routines and sleep quality prior to their stroke. Out of the 16 coded responses, the pattern that had the highest occurrence was the Poor Quality of Sleep, with 13 occurrences.

Table 6. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Sleep Patterns and Quality

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Adequate Sleep	"Woke up at around... early morning, sometimes she says it's four and then can't go back to sleep, but she goes to bed early, around seven for example."
Poor Quality of Sleep	"Before, he used to sleep well. Lately, when he got into the habit of playing video games... on cellphones, he sleeps late... around two or three in the morning and then wakes up at six... that's what triggered to have a stroke."

The results may be attributed to the understanding that the bidirectional relationship between sleep and stroke is essential for developing comprehensive strategies to mitigate stroke risk, optimize treatment outcomes, and improve stroke survivors' quality of life. In the study by Wang et al. (2022), sleep durations of less than five hours or more than eight hours significantly raised stroke incidence and mortality risks. Recognizing sleep as a fundamental human need vital for overall health, sleep evaluation, and management should be integrated into the routine assessment of stroke patients.

3.3 Recognition of Warning Signs and Stroke Indicators

Knowledge and Awareness of Stroke Symptoms

Table 7 represents the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme of Recognition of Warning Signs and Stroke Indicators. It is precisely under the sub-topic of Knowledge and Awareness of Stroke Symptoms. The table provides significant information regarding the recognition of warning signs and stroke indicators of stroke survivor individuals before their stroke occurred.

With seven coded responses, the pattern that occurred the most was the code Asymptomatic, with several three occurrences. The exemplar illustrates that there were no signs felt and that the patient did not have any prior knowledge and awareness regarding the symptoms of stroke.

Table 7. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Knowledge and Awareness of Stroke Symptoms

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Frequent headaches	"I used to feel dizzy... I didn't pay attention to it, maybe... my blood pressure had already risen... and my blood."
Involuntary Movements	"Before I had a stroke, there was only one thing I noticed. For several nights I couldn't sleep, and my hands and feet kept on twitching. I said Oh oh..no matter how sleepy I was, I can't.. I still couldn't stop the twitching of my feet and hands, I should have taken paracetamol at that time. But I didn't know that.. I didn't pay attention, I didn't want to take anything right away..."
Asymptomatic	"I didn't feel anything, and I didn't think of anything... when I woke up... I couldn't get up."

National Institute on Aging (2023) mentioned several possible signs and symptoms of stroke that the patients may experience. In the case of the participants and the result of the coded responses, the signs and symptoms of stroke that aligned with the study of NIH are headache and involuntary movements. In a study by Hickey and Strayer in 2020, people described the symptoms of headache as "the worst headache" they had experienced. These studies showed that the awareness and knowledge of the two mentioned symptoms of the participants are aligned with the signs and symptoms mentioned in the studies by NIH (2023) and Hickey and Strayer (2020).

Perception of Health Risks and Early Detection

In Table 8, the coded response, and annotated exemplars concerning the lived experiences of the stroke survivors belong to the theme of Recognition of Warning Signs and Stroke Indicators, respectively the sub-theme of Perception of Health Risks and Early Detection. The tabulated data provides an overview of the risks and the survivors' perceptions that were inclined with the stroke occurrence. Out of the eight coded responses, the pattern that occurred most frequently was the classification of persons who experienced overfatigue, with four occurrences. The exemplar illustrated that the risks were first greatly affected by the over-usage of the body, frequently linked to overworking with the risk of health detriment. The participants demonstrated determination as evidenced by maximizing their strength and body capacity to work, thus demonstrating the straining of the physical body until it has collapsed, experiencing a stroke.

Table 8. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Perception of Health Risks and Early Detection

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Hereditary	"It's in the genes and hereditary because his mother died of an aneurysm, and his father, just like him, died of... ah... a heart attack."
Over Fatigue	"Uhm, I think that's what triggered my stroke, that over-fatigue. I wasn't resting."
Poor Diagnosis	"There's nothing anymore, but I still went for a check-up. The neurologist said it wasn't a stroke, so I felt relieved that it wasn't really one. Then I was surprised when the stroke suddenly followed. The doctor said it was like a second one, so we're also thinking about why it happened like that."

Soelton et al. (2020) found that family factors heavily influence work-related fatigue. Family can be a strong motivator for pushing the body beyond its limits to meet the family demands, thus acting as a compensatory mechanism for stress. This stress stems from the inability to meet the demands of both work and family due to several factors. This aligns with the coded responses of the stroke survivors, which identify factors affecting bodily functions and maximal work capacity. Furthermore, the study by Pourasgari and Mohamadkhani (2020) supports the role of family history as a primary risk factor for stroke, suggesting a familial component to stroke occurrence. Lastly, a poor diagnosis may be related to the stroke mimickers that led to the progression of stroke. This is supported by the study by Buck et al. (2021), stating that stroke mimics are often the cause of poor diagnosis as it presents the same features as stroke per se.

3.4 Experience and Perception During the Stroke Episode

Physical Symptoms and Sensations

Table 9 presents the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors during the phenomenon, generated the theme of Experience and Perception During the Stroke Episode under the sub-theme of Physical Symptoms and Sensations. The table provides essential information about the manifestations that have mostly dominated during the stroke attack. Out of 74 coded responses, "Sudden onset" (16 occurrences) has

occurred the most frequently. The exemplar illustrates various presentations and sensations, ranging from the most common factors to signs and symptoms. Participants clearly described what they had felt during the attack and the early signs that were ignored, thus highlighting the variations of symptoms per individual and how fast it progressed. A person who experiences a stroke will undoubtedly have an impact on their daily activities.

Table 9. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Physical Symptoms and Sensations

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Attacks in the bathroom	"My child overheard him calling out, saying he couldn't get out of the bathroom. He was in the bathroom, and it was locked. When my child saw him, my child woke me up and said, "Why can't you get out?" He said he was feeling dizzy and had a headache, so we forced the bathroom door open and saw him lying there."
Blood Pressure Monitoring	"There it is, it's not good for me when there's a sudden drop, it's high and then suddenly drops, my blood pressure drops, uh that's where I had a stroke due to the very low blood pressure."
Chest Pain	"Symptoms? Sometimes, my chest tightens, something like that."
Consciousness	"Of course... uhm... there is (conscious) but really this has no feeling, even the feet."
Difficulty Speaking	"I told my helper that it seems like my speech can't be understood... I can't... I'm having a hard time, it's like I'm biting my tongue."
Dizziness and Headache	"My headache feels like it's not a normal headache, really ah.. ah.. it hurts..."
Facial Distortion	"Where am I now, am I in a critical area? It seems like I can already feel it in myself, that I am kind of..like my... face. It tilted like that.. Then I couldn't move my eyes very well at that time."
Feeling Sleepy	"Worsening? The feeling I have right now? I'm okay now.... Before I felt sleepy, groggy, and had a headache."
High Cholesterol	"The only maintenance she has is for cholesterol."
Immobility	"It's hard... because, well... you want to move, but you can't move. I... I already gave up then. When I first experienced that, I gave up... I was giving up. I told my children, I made my wishes known, I told them, 'I can't do it anymore.'"
Numbness	"It was also fast, because my [face] felt numb, I said, 'Ah, this must be what they're talking about when, um, my [face] feels numb, it becomes thick like this,' I was doing this to my face, and I thought, 'This must be what they mean when they say someone might have a stroke.'"
Vomiting	"I went to the bathroom because I was coughing. I vomited, and I thought it was because of my cough."
Rapid Progression	"There were no symptoms, it's just that I really felt it. But... maybe... It was only like that for about three days, and then I had a stroke. It was only about three days... the symptoms I experienced were like a twitch, I only felt that for three days."
Sudden Onset	"There was a twitch, but I ignored it and kept going. Then slowly, I started to feel dizzy, so I sat down because I was afraid I might hit my head if I fell."

Stroke causes a wide range of cognitive, psychological, and social repercussions for approximately one-third of survivors (Pedersen et al., 2019). According to the National Institute on Aging (2023), stroke patients may experience sudden numbness or weakness, particularly on one side of the body, in the arm, leg, or face: sudden confusion, speaking impairment, or difficulty understanding words, sudden vision problems in one or both eyes, sudden dizziness, unsteadiness or loss of coordination, or difficulty walking, and sudden intense headaches without apparent cause. The stroke survivors experienced some of this manifestation during the occurrence of stroke.

Emotional and Psychological Responses

Table 10 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme of Experience and Perception During the Stroke Episode, specifically under the sub-topic of Emotional and Psychological Responses. The table provides essential information about the emotional and psychological responses experienced by stroke survivors during their medication and recuperation processes. Out of the five coded responses, the pattern that occurred most frequently was frustration. The exemplar illustrates that when frustration is common among the participants in the table, it shows the contrasting emotional responses experienced by stroke survivors. Frustration may stem from various challenges. This highlights the complex emotional journey that stroke survivors navigate during their medication and recuperation process. Devereux and Berns (2023) underscores stroke's profound psychological toll, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, impairing quality of life and community engagement. Post-stroke depression (PSD) poses severe consequences for survivors and families, increasing stroke recurrence and mortality risks. With Delaware's growing and aging population, stroke incidence and emotional fallout are expected to surge. Screening for PSD, re-assessment, and clinical interventions are crucial.

Table 10. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Emotional and Psychological Responses

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Fear of Dying	"I prayed to the Lord, saying, 'Lord, not now, please. I might suddenly disappear, so not now.'"
Frustration	"Well... there at the hospital, I was... bored. The food there... I couldn't handle it, everything was bland, just rice porridge. I was so bored."
Panic Attacks	"It wasn't on my mind that I might die because I was strong at that time, and I wasn't nervous. Maybe that's why my recovery process was quick."
Sudden Fright	"Then I was afraid that I might... I might... not be able to walk, not be able to speak properly. That's the fear I felt."

Social and Environmental Factors

Table 11 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experience of stroke survivors in terms of their lives during stroke under the theme of Experience and Perception During the Stroke Episode, to the subtopic of Social and Environmental Factors. The table presents important details about the socio-environmental problems that a stroke survivor may face during the incidence of the stroke. Out of seven coded responses, the most frequent pattern was financial constraints, with four occurrences. The exemplar denotes that in the event of health issues like a stroke, a financial crisis is one of the most vital concerns. Furthermore, besides the hospital bill, one major factor that added to the financial constraints of the participant was the recurrent hospitalization and follow-up checkups. They need transportation since their house is far from the hospital, which leads them to require periodic payments that add to their burden.

Table 11. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Social and Environmental Factors

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Financial Constraints	"They just explained to me that I only need to have a blue card, and when we go for therapy, I just need to show my ID and our marriage contract. I just need to submit it there, and that's it."
	"Because for medical check-ups, it's 800 pesos, and the follow-up is also 800, not to mention the transportation costs."
	"For medical follow-ups, it's 800."
Hospital Challenges	"It's very hard, my children are struggling to take care of me, they also have their own families."

Xu et al. (2024) discovered that stroke patients may face severe financial hardships as a result of the occurrence. This involves feeling like a burden to their family or reliant on others. This study is related to the codes of financial limitations and hospital difficulties, where patients feel like a burden to their families because they anticipate significant responsibility.

3.5 Medical Interventions and Recovery Process

Diagnostic and Treatment Procedures

Table 12 shows the annotated exemplars and codes on the experiences of stroke survivors about their lives during medication and the process of recuperation under the theme of Medical Interventions and Recovery Process under the sub-theme of Diagnostic and Treatment Procedures. The table provides information about the procedures to diagnose stroke, including the non-invasive ones and the experiences in hospital admission. Of the 19 responses, the most common pattern was the Basic Measures (10 occurrences). The exemplar shows the basic information regarding the condition of stroke survivors during hospitalization and the non-invasive measurement for diagnosing the disease delivered by the doctor. Finally, with nine occurrences, the least frequency was the "period of hospitalization," indicating the number of stays in the hospital.

Table 12. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Diagnostic and Treatment Procedures

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Basic Measures	"Then said... I needed to be admitted, then they did a CT scan, an X-ray, and a laboratory test. The doctor said that there was a small stroke detected, but the problem with him was just this..."
Period of Hospitalization	"So... just two... two days or three?"
	"About ten... ten."

Anusha Bai and Sangeetha (2023) highlight the usage of non-invasive procedures such as Computed Tomography Scans and other medical diagnostics. Furthermore, because these diagnostic procedures produce accurate data, they are a good choice for application in critical care environments. This leads to a better diagnosis of the disease and its prognosis.

Initial Reactions and Action Taken

Table 13 presents the codes and annotated exemplars of the stroke survivors' experiences with medication and the recuperation process. This information aligns with the theme of Medical Interventions and Recovery Process and falls under the sub-theme of Initial Reactions and Actions Taken. It emphasizes the individual's initial reactions and actions during the stroke episode, including those taken by family members, relatives, or friends, and instances of a lack of awareness regarding appropriate actions.

Table 13. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Initial Reactions and Action Taken

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Accompanied by family members, relatives, or friends	"I called my siblings because I needed help, because he was big back then, and I couldn't do it alone. My child couldn't handle it either, so..."
Lack of Stroke Awareness	"My mother, you know, my mother took hot water and mixed garlic in it, then made him drink it. But it turns out it was forbidden to make him drink that time, yet my mother still managed to make him drink it."

Wang et al. (2021) found that the knowledge and awareness of the family members affect the initial reactions and actions taken to provide immediate intervention during the attack of stroke. It is mentioned that they play a significant role since most of the time, family members, relatives, or friends are the ones who were the first ones to notice it. They immediately called for help to seek medical attention. Their decision-making skills provide a great help to lessen the severity of stroke to the survivors. However, the study also highlights that a lack of stroke awareness among family members can cause delays in seeking immediate attention or treatment, potentially serving as a barrier, and contributing to the severity of the stroke's impact on survivors.

3.6 Adaptation and Adjustment to Post-Stroke Lifestyle

Physical Changes and Functional Limitations

Table 14 illustrates the coded responses and interpreted exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in their life after stroke under the theme of Adaptation and Adjustment of Post-Stroke Lifestyle, under the sub-theme of Physical Changes and Functional Limitations. The tables show the different changes in terms of their physical abilities and functioning after the stroke happened. Out of 54 coded responses, the pattern that had the highest occurrence was the "Loss of Mobility and Dependence on Assistance " with 17 occurrences, which refers to the most common and frequent changes after stroke the survivor experienced, specifically in terms of their physical ability. After the stroke, most of them lost the ability to perform ADL (Activities in Daily Living).

Table 14. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Physical Changes and Functional Limitations

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Difficulty in Balance	"As for walking, that's it, but I think I can manage, I just keep going straight. I can already take steps, I'm strong now."
Difficulty with fine motor tasks	"Then next, the... it's not just that now... the only thing I can't do is what comes next, I should be able to do it by three o'clock... but I can't keep up because my hand hurts. I'm still doing exercises for it, I'm still massaging it... once it feels better, I'll be able to do it."
Hand Weakness	"I suddenly became weak, it felt like everything I was holding just slipped away, my hand was going numb. When I was... I don't know, just like this, I fell down, I was like this."
Lifestyle Change	"That's when everything changed, it was like a wake-up call. What happened to me was really dangerous. Maybe because of my old habits, I know I can't go back to them."
Loss of Mobility and Dependence on Assistance	"When she got out of the hospital, of course, she hadn't had a bowel movement there, so I made sure to feed him papaya... and she thought there was a lot in his diaper. She was wearing a diaper..."
Physical Pain	"Now, by the grace of God, I can move it a little... but it's still not normal, it still hurts to move, it still hurts to use... that's why these [pertaining to her family] get mad at me, because I used it to cook again, I made it work again."
Unfulfillment of Responsibilities	"That's always the case when we get home. He chops firewood. He has changed so much. He's the only one I rely on in my house. You know, he passed away there. He was the only one who helped me." (The participant's mother is crying.)
Shift in responsibilities	"Before, I did everything... so it's a big thing that I ended up like this, all the work was mine... now it's all on him, but he can't handle it all by himself with so much to do."

The stroke survivors seek assistance from their family members. According to the National Institute on Aging (2023), stroke patients may experience sudden numbness or weakness, particularly on one side of the body, in the arm, leg, or face, sudden confusion, speaking impairment, or understanding words, sudden vision problems in one or both eyes, abrupt dizziness, involuntary movements, unsteadiness or loss of coordination, or difficulty walking, and sudden intense headache without apparent cause. In the study by Dongen et al. (2021), some physical

dysfunction persists after stroke, and one of the daily obstacles is stiff or tight muscles, which threaten some stroke survivors even after months or years of recovery.

Dietary Modifications and Health Monitoring

Table 15 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme of Adaptation and Adjustment to Post-Stroke Lifestyle, specifically under the sub-topic of Dietary Modifications and Health Monitoring. The table provides essential information about the necessary lifestyle modifications and health monitoring that they made. Out of the 22 coded responses, the most frequent pattern was the Dietary Adjustments, with 18 occurrences. This exemplar illustrates the significant impact of the participants' eating habits. This suggests a widespread need for dietary modifications post-stroke, often involving reduced salt, sauce, and fat intake. Additionally, the emphasis on regular health monitoring, with four occurrences, reflects the participants' proactive efforts to manage their health and prevent complications following stroke.

Table 15. *Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Dietary Modifications and Health Monitoring*

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Dietary Adjustments	"Everything has no taste because he used to like dipping in fish sauce and soy sauce, but now it has no flavor because I'm the one who cooks. Maybe soft foods first, but no fats, just boiled or steamed, as long as there are no fats."
Regular Health Status Monitoring	"My priority now is to lower my lab results. I need to... check every three months so at least I know, 'Oh, I didn't drop here.' But I still need to... lower it some more. I need to... get lab tests, I need to lower it again and again. I don't want it to stay high."

Lin (2021) emphasizes the significant impact of plant-based diet patterns, such as the DASH, Nordic, Mediterranean, and vegetarian diets, and lowering blood pressure, diabetes, and other risk factors for stroke, particularly ischemic stroke. The findings suggest that besides reducing salt intake, adopting a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, seeds, nuts, and dairy while limiting meat, sweets, and alcohol can effectively reduce the risk of stroke. Epidemiological and observational studies consistently support the beneficial effects of plant-based diets on stroke prevention and management strategies.

Emotional and Psychological Well-being

Table 16 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme of Adaptation and Adjustment to Post-Stroke Lifestyle, specifically under the sub-topic of Emotional and Psychological Well-being. The table provides essential information about emotions and behaviors after a stroke. Out of the 47 coded responses, the pattern that occurred most frequently was Frustration with Inactivity, with 24 occurrences. This exemplar illustrates that the participants with frustration due to inactivity have a profound impact of physical limitations on their emotional well-being. Inactivity often exacerbates feelings of helplessness and dissatisfaction as the participants grapple with the loss of mobility and independence post-stroke. This frustration underscores the importance of addressing physical rehabilitation and promoting activity to enhance the participant's physical and emotional recovery.

Table 16. *Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Emotional and Psychological Well-being*

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Embarrassment and Discomfort	"It's okay... it's just that sometimes it feels embarrassing to talk, it's not like before."
Frustration with Inactivity	"Well, when I went back to the hospital... I couldn't sew anymore. Before, I was earning, even just from doing repairs... I had money. Now, it's really hard. I want to buy something, but I can't, I have no money."
Irritability and Mood Swings	"Ah... I'm always angry, I'm always hot-headed, I can feel it. And then... of course, for example, with you, I scold you for something... and then later on, I'd think, 'Why did I get angry over that, it was such a small thing?' Even with small things, I get angry. Even my grandchildren are adjusting, they say I'm always angry. I tell them, 'Okay, fine, put yourself in my shoes then,' I say that."
Feeling of Hope	"I think there is, because of... I don't know, I just don't think about going back to work. I just really want to be able to move properly, the basic movements. But my company is ready to transfer me to any task, they said they're ready for that. I still have a job to go back to, that's important. But for now, I'm focusing on my rehab."
Self-Reliance and Resilience	"Because my mindset is that I don't want to be a burden, I want to be the one taking care of others. Maybe that's why I recovered quickly, because my focus was on not wanting to be watched over, since I'm not used to it. I'm used to working and supporting myself."

Nimwegen et al. (2023) systematically review interventions aimed at improving stroke survivors' psychosocial well-being, explicitly focusing on interventions deliverable by nurses. The review identifies practical intervention components, such as mood management, coping strategies, and medication management, often delivered through active information and physical exercise. However, the study suggests a need for further understanding of how different intervention components interact and the contexts in which they are most effective. Additionally, there is a call for research on the effectiveness of these interventions for various stroke survivors and their feasibility for implementation by nurses in daily practice. Further exploration of stroke survivors' specific needs for psychosocial well-being is also recommended.

Health Properties and Goal Setting

The tabulated responses present in Table 17 are the codes and annotated exemplars from the stroke survivors surviving the phenomena. This table encloses the extensive life after experiencing stroke under the theme of Adaptation and Adjustment to Post-Stroke Lifestyle with a sub-theme of Health Priorities and Goal Setting, providing the lens of the survivors' everyday life after. Out of 26 coded responses, the pattern that occurred most frequently was the designation of persons who adhered to the doctor's advice and those with regular exercise, with 10 occurrences. The individuals exhibited resolute efforts towards pursuing a path of recovery, even going so far as to partake in healthful activities and comply with guidelines. This demonstrated the drive associated with their resolve following a stroke.

Table 17. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Health Properties and Goal Setting

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Adherence to doctor's advice	"And that's it, those... Those doctors who are really needed, when they say you need a check-up, you need to do it. Don't be like... as much as possible, schedule it right away, don't say you don't have time, give it some time... Before, I always used to say I didn't have time, it's like that, you'll only find out your illness if you don't have a check-up. But now, it's really needed. When the doctor says you need to come back for this, I really schedule it immediately."
Regular Exercise	"Exercise is necessary and then relax yourself so that... so that you won't experience the stroke that I went through."
Back to Regular Routine	"Because... my grandchildren, when they like something... or my children, it's me who cooks, I really cook. I don't even rely on others for cooking... if I can do it, I do it myself. It's just that I get tired because... I'm tired from writing in the store, and when I get home, I can still cook."
Government Support	"Nothing... nothing, just myself... there... the ones... the ones who sometimes ask from... from the government... yes, government, they give. There, little by little, ah, it helps."

Pedersen et al. (2019) state that the aftermath of a stroke changes an individual not only physically but also how they perceive themselves and what moves them to surpass the phenomena. Therefore, this affects the progress in achieving self-esteem and self-actualization, fueled by the motivation to bring back the everyday life that they are used to; setting goals and priorities is the first step in adaptation to the new lifestyle. In support of this, a study by Pereira et al. (2021) states that regaining one's control in life is influenced by a customized rehabilitation strategy that emphasizes common goals and offers the stroke victim and their caregivers one-on-one or group support.

3.7 Social Support and Coping Strategies Post-Stroke

Social Relationships and Family Support

Under the theme of Social Support and Coping Strategies Post-stroke, specifically under the sub-topic of Social Relationship and Family Support, Table 18 presents the codes and annotated exemplars of the experience of stroke survivors regarding their lives after stroke. Information about social support that can improve their perception of rehabilitative treatment following a stroke is included in the table. The Support from the Family pattern emerged as the most often occurring pattern out of 23 coded responses, with 15 occurrences. The exemplar provides information with regards to the stroke survivors for not taking for granted the support that they receive from their loved ones. This reduces the degree of stress for the participants because of the family's understanding of their needs. Moreover, financial assistance plays a vital role in preventing stress for stroke survivors in any situation.

According to the study by Kosasih et al. (2020), in the first months after the discharge of a stroke patient, the family shares a common goal with them. Every family with a stroke patient aims to enhance their quality of life. The family should embody the need for motivation and support for the survivors by their full potential and transcend the phenomenon of stroke. Lastly, it suppresses the stressors from entering the life of a survivor because of the family's good connection and being intact with them.

Table 18. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Social Relationships and Family Support

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Family Support	"Well, I don't think about it because I have a child who helps and supports me. I just ignore it, at least I have someone to help. My husband and my child help with the bills, so it's not a big deal anymore."
Support from Friends	"The kind of help that's not financial, just seeing you... I don't see that. What I was expecting to see is... 'I know, ma'am, you won't give anything,' but atleast you're there... I see you... I know you remember me and that I'm sick. It feels so good... but... maybe that's why, when I had a stroke, when I got sick, I was able to recover."
Intimate activities with life partner	"Nothing. He just wants to always be kissed. That's all. He's being affectionate. Maybe later something will happen... if we do that."

Sleeping Patterns

Table 19 indicates the codes and annotated exemplars in terms of the experiences of stroke survivors concerning their lives after stroke. This is under the theme of Social Support and Coping Strategies Post-Stroke, specifically under the sub-topic of Sleeping patterns. The table presents the necessary details about the coping strategies done post-stroke, such as the sleeping patterns of the survivors after they were affected by stroke. Out of the seven coded responses, all seven occurrences pointed at the sleeping pattern. The exemplar states that the sleeping pattern changed after the stroke, and he was already sleeping earlier than before.

Table 19. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Sleeping Patterns

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Sleeping Pattern	"Oh, I sleep early now, unlike before, because my blood pressure also rises when... hmm, it's like when I take medicine, I get sleepy right away, but sometimes I also wake up early."

Wang et al. (2022) said that sleep disturbances contribute to stroke incidence and recurrence. Being fully aware of the relationship between stroke and sleep is said to be essential in order to mitigate the risk of stroke and improve the quality of life. The changes in the participants' sleep patterns enable them to mitigate the risk of stroke recurrence. According to the study by Brunetti et al. (2022), the efficacy of sleep interventions as a therapeutic avenue for stroke patients ought to be prioritized.

Entertainment Hobbies

Table 20 illustrates the codes and interpreted exemplars on stroke survivors' experiences of their lives after stroke under the theme of Social Support and Coping Strategies Post-Stroke, specifically under the sub-theme of Entertainment Hobbies. The table shows how stroke survivors entertain themselves after the stroke. Out of four coded responses, Entertainment Hobbies is the only coded response.

Table 20. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Entertainment Hobbies

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Entertainment Hobbies	"Sometimes, you know, I entertain myself by watching movies, that's it, or playing video games."

According to Deegan (2002), in the study of Pedersen et al. (2019), the entire process entails adaptation to one's new existence in order to return to one's previous level of functioning. Accepting and realizing the stroke occurrence, stroke survivors can understand the importance of having entertaining hobbies to keep their minds off the difficulties and anxiety they face every single day.

Ongoing Therapy and Rehabilitation

Table 21 shows the codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of stroke survivors in terms of their lives before stroke under the theme of Social Support and Coping Strategies Post-Stroke, specifically under the sub-topic of Ongoing Therapy and Rehabilitation. The table provides essential information about the stroke survivor's ongoing therapy and rehabilitation after a stroke. There are 11 total occurrences. This exemplar illustrates a commitment to maximizing recovery and improving quality of life. It signifies recognition of the importance of continued support in regaining lost abilities, enhancing mobility, and preventing secondary complications. These efforts aim to promote independence, functional ability, and overall well-being for individuals affected by stroke.

Table 21. Codes and Annotated Exemplars for Ongoing Therapy and Rehabilitation

Code	Exemplar from the Interview
Ongoing Therapy and Rehabilitation	"That's the thing with therapy, if you don't work on what the therapist is doing for you, and you just rely on them, it's all for nothing. You need to do what they've worked on with you, you have to exercise it again."

Saraiva et al. (2023) highlights diverse rehabilitation interventions for stroke survivors' balance challenges. From conventional exercises to technology-based approaches like virtual reality, each offers unique benefits for functional recovery. Healthcare professionals are urged to tailor programs to individual needs. Dual-task training effectively addresses motor and cognitive aspects, enhancing motivation. Technology-assisted interventions, such as virtual reality, show promise in improving engagement. Future research should explore long-term effects and compare intervention modalities to advance stroke rehabilitation.

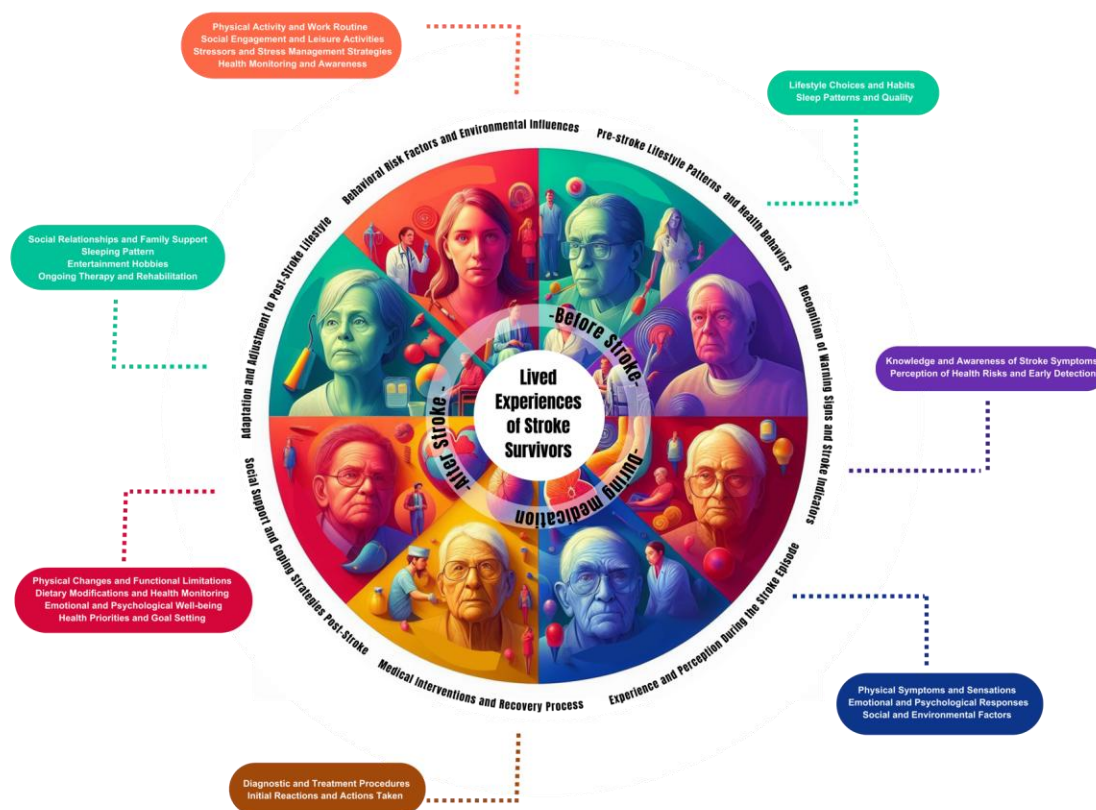


Figure 1. Lived Experience of Stroke Survivors

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of stroke survivors emphasizing the critical interplay between emotional, psychological, and physical recovery. The findings highlight the necessity for healthcare providers to adopt holistic rehabilitation approaches that address not only the physical limitations post-stroke but also the emotional and social needs of survivors. The study underscores the importance of strong support systems, as participants with robust family and community networks reported better recovery outcomes. These insights contribute to the growing body of literature advocating for integrated care models in stroke rehabilitation. Future research should explore the long-term effects of various rehabilitation strategies, particularly those that incorporate mental health support and community engagement. Additionally, studies examining the effectiveness of technology-assisted interventions, such as tele-rehabilitation and virtual support groups, could further enhance recovery outcomes for stroke survivors. By addressing these areas, future work can continue to improve the quality of care and support available to individuals affected by stroke, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes and quality of life.

5.0 Contribution of the Authors

The authors, YD, CA, AA, BA, MG, GL, and MQ contributed equally to every section. They have also reviewed and approved the final version of the work.

6.0 Funding

This research was conducted without the support of any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

No conflicts of interest were identified at any stage of the process.

8.0 Acknowledgement

The researchers extend their deepest gratitude to the administration and faculty of Canossa College San Pablo City, Inc., especially Sr. Lina L. Amante, FdCC, Sr. Rita D. Nedtran, FdCC, Dr. Marc Lester F. Quintana RN, MAN, Ms. Girlie Mannphy A. Lacambra, RM, RN, MAN, and our clinical instructors, for their guidance and expertise. The researchers are also immensely thankful to the content validators, research intercoder, and the directors of the partner hospitals for their invaluable contributions and permissions. Special thanks to the participants who willingly shared their experiences, our supportive friends and classmates, and our loving families who stood by us throughout this journey. Above all, we give glory and gratitude to God, whose wisdom and grace made this endeavor possible.

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Development and Evaluation of a Purposive Communication Module for Industrial Technology Students

Deborah Leah T. Denso

North Eastern Mindanao State University, Tandag City, Surigao del Sur, Philippines

Author Email: dlt Denso@nemsu.edu.ph

Date received: February 4, 2025

Date revised: February 26, 2025

Date accepted: March 21, 2025

Originality: 90%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 10%

Recommended citation:

Denso, D.L. (2025). Development and evaluation of a Purposive Communication module for industrial technology students. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 284-294. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.061>

Abstract. This study develops a Purposive Communication course module for Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (BSIT) students at North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU) in Surigao del Sur, Philippines. Addressing the lack of instructional materials tailored to their academic and professional needs, the study follows the ADDIE model, including Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation phases. A needs analysis identifies students' communication challenges, forming the basis for module creation. Subject-matter experts and faculty validate the module before field trials with students. It is assessed based on subject matter, vocabulary and structures, exercises, illustrations, physical make-up, learner focus, usability, and accessibility. Results show that the module is highly valid and effective, with no significant evaluation differences among experts, faculty, and students. The findings confirm its relevance and adaptability in improving communication skills within industrial technology disciplines. This study underscores the importance of learner-centered materials and suggests integrating digital and multimedia elements in future research to enhance effectiveness and applicability across various educational contexts.

Keywords: ADDIE model; BSIT students; communication skills; Purposive Communication; technical education.

1.0 Introduction

Given the evolving career landscapes, digital advancements, and intense competition in academic institutions and workplaces, mastering communication is the paramount life skill for students, making practical interpersonal skills indispensable (Popworth, 2019). Acknowledging the swiftly changing global environment highlights the growing significance of practical communication skills and technical proficiency. There is an amplified emphasis on the vital role of proficient verbal and written communication in all university courses, more so than ever before (Kettering University Online, 2023). The role of communication courses is to teach students to appreciate the essence of communication as a discipline, comprehend its content, and proficiently hone their communication skills (Campbell et al., cited by Delos Reyes, 2020). To foster student growth, teachers should enhance their oral communication skills and guarantee equitable opportunities for all students to engage in classroom discussions.

Instructional materials are essential resources that enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student performance. These materials must suit students' age, social and emotional development, and ability levels for English or communication instruction while offering diverse difficulty levels, broad appeal, and varied perspectives. The goal of learning extends beyond numerical outcomes, emphasizing the confidence to apply acquired skills and knowledge in practice (Kusuma & Apriyanto, 2018). De la Torre (2018) stated that students

and teachers value student-centered learning, personalized instruction through modules, and technology integration, which align with 21st-century classroom needs. These approaches foster essential skills like communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, cultural understanding, and ICT proficiency. Learners' modules, akin to textbooks, play a key role in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the UN in 2015 to address global challenges. It is highlighted that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks often embed SDG content, raising awareness and promoting sustainability education in higher education (Lasekan et al., 2023).

In the revised General Education Curriculum by Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines, Purposive Communication (GE-PC) is a core course focused on "writing, speaking, and presenting to different audiences and for various purposes" (CMO No. 20, s. of 2013, p. 6). Formerly English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this course addresses communication skills and their application in specific professions (Tiongson, 2018, p. 44). Advocates of ESP argued that traditional literature-focused or general English programs fail to sufficiently address the varied needs of English learners globally. They emphasized the importance of designing curricula tailored to meet different learner groups' distinct requirements (Bolton & Jenks, 2022). Educators affirmed that training and skill enhancement, curriculum restructuring, and adapting diverse teaching methods equipped them to manage the Purposive Communication course. However, challenges and concerns occurred during the course implementation, such as limited access to technological devices and difficulties arranging the subject matter sequence (Eustaquio & Tandoc, 2020). Additionally, the conventional teaching approach within the Purposive Communication module must cater to the university students' needs and preferences. The instructional material plays a crucial role in the learning process, fostering student proficiency and skill development (Mallillin, 2023). The core competencies within student modules guarantee a proficient communication, enabling learners to engage in real-world practices of effective communication as an integral aspect of the learning process (Mallillin & Caranguian, 2022).

In a study of assessing learning needs assessment in Purposive Communication at Kalinga State University by Malao et al. (2022), it has been expressed that educators should consider students' perceptions of their needs. Another study recorded a notable distinction in integrating 21st-century skills into Purposive Communication when respondents were grouped according to their category profiles. The findings were the groundwork for creating the "21st Century Skills-Integrated Module in Purposive Communication." The module aimed to emphasize authentic materials and practical tasks, ensuring the relevance and experiential nature of learning. Through these activities, students were anticipated to cultivate essential life skills for their future careers and success in the professional arena (Francisco, 2023).

The Philippines, one of the world's largest English-speaking nations, recognizes English as an official language. However, assessments like the EF English Proficiency Index, TOEIC, and IELTS have revealed a decline in English proficiency among Filipinos. With English proficiency critical in the workplace, inadequate communication skills can hinder job prospects (Clement & Murugavel, 2018). In particular, oral communication proficiency is essential for graduates to perform effectively (Shuhaimi & Awaludin, 2018). At North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU) - Cantilan Campus, the flagship program Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (BSIT) faces challenges in English communication such as technical writing, interacting with diverse individuals, and engaging in online communication. During the second semester of AY 2022-2023, 31% of BSIT students (87 out of 283) failed the Purposive Communication course, despite prior exposure in senior high school. Faculty members also observed students struggling with reading and listening comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary acquisition. Although the NEMSU system acknowledges the importance of a standardized syllabus and utilizes a uniform module for GE-PC, the study's needs analysis revealed a strong demand for a context-specific approach. While various modules are available through online platforms and the university, they tend to be broad in scope and lack the necessary contextualization for the course. To effectively address the specific needs of BSIT students specializing in areas like Architectural Drafting, Automotive, Computer, Electrical, Electronics, Food, Garments, and Mechanical Technology, the course content should be customized to align with the principles and objectives of the ESP approach.

As one of CHED-mandated general education courses, Purposive Communication is a crucial course for Filipino students' skill development, fostering competence in oral and written communication. It advances verbal

proficiency in speaking and various elements within the communication process. The course also holds significance for students in higher education institutions, ensuring success in contemporary teaching methodologies. Aligned with the requirements of effective purposive communication, it caters to the realities and attitudes of the learners (Mallillin, 2023). Hence, developing new modules in GE-PC tailored to the specific needs of BSIT students at NEMSU is vital, given the numerous overseas job opportunities available to them.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive and a developmental approach to facilitate the development of the Purposive Communication course module. According to Siedlecki (2020), the descriptive approach seeks to depict individuals, events, or conditions as they naturally occur. It entails examining the characteristics of a population, identifying prevalent issues within a unit or organization, and scrutinizing differences in practices among institutions or even across countries. The researcher examined the students' response to the developed Purposive Communication course module in this study. On the other hand, developmental research design involves a methodical investigation into the creation, development, and evaluation of educational programs, procedures, and products, with a focus on meeting criteria for internal consistency and effectiveness (Cabral, 2023). These approaches are considered suitable for accurately and systematically depicting a population, situation, or phenomenon and determining the effects of a specific intervention. Additionally, these methods ensured the acceptability of the module, which will serve as instructional material for teaching Purposive Communication to students specializing in industrial technology.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at the North Eastern Mindanao State University – Cantilan and Cagwait Campus, where both campuses offer Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology. NEMSU Cantilan is located in Pag-antayan, Cantilan, Surigao del Sur, Philippines. It is situated along the Pacific coast, approximately 3 kilometers from the inter-island wharf in Cantilan. The campus is recognized as the College of Technological Education. NEMSU Cagwait, meanwhile, is situated in the center of Poblacion Cagwait and is just a short tricycle ride from Cagwait White Beach, a well-known tourist attraction in Surigao del Sur. Its primary academic program is the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (NEMSU, n.d.). The research involved Cagwait Campus to complete the desired number of classes in conducting field-tryouts by an instructor holding either a master's or a doctorate degree.

2.3 Research Participants

The study included five (5) experts who are actively producing instructional materials for two to five years, have served on module-making committees, or hold a position as school heads. Additionally, five (5) language faculty members from North Eastern Mindanao State University Cantilan and Cagwait campus in the Department of Industrial Technology, holding either a master's or a doctorate degree, also participated as respondents. The experts and faculty assessed the validity of the developed Purposive Communication course module. Student respondents also rated the course module. They consist of BSIT students enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023. This group comprises students who previously completed the Purposive Communication course, with a sample size of 150 students. The selection of respondents was determined using a purposive sampling method. Out of the 150 expected student respondents, only 139 provided ratings for the module, as some were absent, attending training, or unresponsive.

2.4 Research Instrument

The tool used in the research consisted of two (2) parts. Part I of the instrument is a modified questionnaire from Daoud and Celce-Murcia's (1979) checklist. Part II is adapted from the Educational Soundness rating tool for a learning resource material. The instrument was validated by three (3) faculty members from North Eastern Mindanao State University – Cantilan Campus. Part I evaluates the validity of the Purposive Communication course module, wherein experts and faculty utilize a Likert scale questionnaire with ratings of 4 (strongly agree), 3 (agree), 2 (disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree). This section assesses five (5) factors: subject matter, vocabulary and structures, exercises, illustrations, and physical make-up. Part II measures the educational soundness rating of experts, faculty, and students to the developed Purposive Communication module. This section evaluates learner focus, usability, and accessibility of the module, utilizing a Likert scale questionnaire as well. The evaluations provided by experts, faculty, and students in this section were utilized to test the study's null

hypothesis, which stated that no significant differences would exist among the respondent groups regarding educational soundness.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The study used the ADDIE Model which is extensively employed for designing instructional strategies in educational settings, aiding educators in the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of teaching and learning activities (Handrianto et al., 2021). The model guides through a carefully devised development plan encompassing the formulation of learning objectives and content creation (Artman, 2020). Before commencing the research, a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was drafted and directed to the Campus Directors of North Eastern Mindanao State University - Cantilan and Cagwait Campus. The researcher conducted a needs analysis among the student respondents of NEMSU Cantilan to identify the problems they had encountered in their Purposive Communication course. This aided in crafting the content of the module (Phase I). The researcher planned and created a course module on Purposive Communication specifically designed for BSIT students based on the needs analysis results. The developed module has undergone initial evaluation by the researcher's adviser (Phase II). Before conducting field-tryouts, five (5) experts validated the module, and the researcher made any necessary changes (Phase III). Field try-outs were carried out for two (2) weeks to the student respondents in alignment with the Implementation stage of the ADDIE model. The researcher distributed printed copies of the module to each instructor and shared an unofficial digital version to conserve paper and printing resources. The researcher recorded feedback from instructors and students. Five (5) language faculty members rated the course module after the field-tryouts have been conducted. The faculty distributed questionnaires to 150 BSIT students (or five classes) with the researcher's guide (Phase V). Findings were then assessed and interpreted.

2.6 Data Analysis

The collected data underwent analysis and interpretation using Average Weighted Mean (AWM) in assessing the validity and educational soundness of the module, and One-way ANOVA in determining a significant difference between perceptions by experts, faculty, and students regarding the educational soundness of the Purposive Communication course module.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Adams et al. (2013) and Mirza et al. (2023) emphasize that ethical considerations involve preventing exploitation, coercion, or undue pressure on participants; ensuring that the methodology does not impact their legal status; acknowledging ethnicity and cultural structures; and offering suitable compensation. In this study, all participants, including experts, faculty members, and students, were informed about the study's purpose, objectives, and procedures. They were given a consent form that highlighted their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any point without any repercussions. Their participation was confirmed through signed consent forms prior to the start of data collection. The confidentiality of all respondents was meticulously maintained. Personal information was anonymized by assigning unique codes to each participant, ensuring no identifiable details were connected to the collected data. Results were presented in aggregate form to safeguard the identities of individual participants.

Before collecting data, the appropriate authorities, including the Campus Directors of NEMSU Cantilan and Cagwait, secured the necessary approvals. The research process also complied with the university's ethical guidelines for studies involving human participants—all digital or physical data were stored securely. Digital files were encrypted and password-protected, while physical documents were kept in a locked cabinet accessible exclusively to the researcher. The data was retained only for the necessary duration of the research and was disposed correctly afterward. Feedback from experts, faculty, and students was utilized exclusively to enhance the module. Personal critiques or negative evaluations were neither disclosed nor misused in any way.

The study was carefully structured to ensure that participants faced no physical, psychological, or emotional risks. The module validation and feedback process was carried out in a respectful and supportive environment. Cultural sensitivity and inclusivity were given priority in the development and implementation of the Purposive Communication module to honor the respondents' diverse backgrounds and experiences. Appropriate compensation was provided to all participants.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Contents of the Developed Purposive Communication Module

Table 1 provides a concise overview of the lessons, objectives, assessments, and time frames incorporated into the instructional material developed for the Purposive Communication course.

Table 1. Course Map

Intended Learning Outcomes	Topic	Assessment Tasks	Time Frame
Cognitive Articulate a comprehensive and accurate definition of communication, encompassing its elements and process.	Module 1: Communication in the 21st Century	Produce a collaborative video in depicting communication processes that happen in laboratories/shops.	3 hours
Socio-emotional Display empathy in communication, demonstrating an awareness of how understanding others contributes to effective communication.	Lesson 1. Nature of Communication	Identify words related to communication.	
Behavioral Test active listening skills by asking relevant questions and providing thoughtful feedback.			
Cognitive Compare various forms of communication, demonstrating an understanding of their unique purposes and effectiveness in different contexts.	Lesson 2. Forms of Communication	Analyze and explain the communication failures in the YouTube video “The Art of Communication”. Discuss some frequent communication failures encountered during hands-on laboratory classes in respective majors and their prevention in the future. Demonstrate understanding of the topic by completing a Modified True or False activity focused on the Forms of Communication.	3 hours
Socio-emotional Integrate social awareness by recognizing and respecting cultural nuances in various forms of communication.			
Behavioral Express nonverbal communication cues, such as body language and facial expressions, in diverse interpersonal settings.			
Cognitive Compare communication models, accurately applying theoretical knowledge to assess real-world communication scenarios.	Lesson 3. Models of Communication	Evaluate which model best represents the communication that takes place within respective families. Predict how communication might evolve in the future workplace and determine which model best represents the communication.	3 hours
Socio-emotional Manage and navigate conflicts effectively.			
Behavioral Reflect the principles of various communication models in practical situations, adapting their communication approaches based on context and audience.			
Cognitive Criticize ethical dilemmas in communication, applying principles to assess the consequences of communication choices.	Lesson 4. Ethics of Communication	Assess ethical communication behaviors. Discuss the ethical implications of current national issues, such as international relations, using ethical communication principles.	3 hours
Socio-emotional Adapt a sense of integrity and empathy in interactions with others.			

Behavioral Display ethical communication behaviors by consistently incorporating transparency, honesty, and respect.			
Cognitive Identify the socio-cultural factors influencing the development of World Englishes.	Module 2: Communication and Globalization Lesson 1. World Englishes	Record observations on the variations of English and assess how to establish connections and reduce miscommunication.	3 hours
Socio-emotional Display empathy and respect for individuals who communicate in various World Englishes.		Produce a video presenting the tools, equipment, and processes in laboratories, utilizing three different varieties of English; concluding the video on how these English variations impact industrial technology.	
Behavioral Relate World Englishes with effective cross-cultural communication to promote linguistic diversity in interactions.			
Cognitive Detect bias and cultural sensitivity in written and verbal communication.	Lesson 2. Culturally-sensitive and Bias-free Language	Evaluate self in communicating with people from different cultures.	3 hours
Socio-emotional Execute inclusivity and respect through language choices and communication behaviors.		Examine sentences and determine if they use bias-free and culturally-sensitive language.	
Behavioral Adapt culturally-sensitive and bias-free language in written and verbal communication.			
Cognitive Execute delivery techniques in public speaking such as pacing, tone, and other factors contributing to effective message delivery.	Module 3: Public Speaking in the Modern Age Lesson 1. Delivery Techniques in Public Speaking	Identify various delivery techniques in public speaking.	4.5 hours
Socio-emotional Prepare one’s self in public speaking scenarios, fostering a positive self-image and the ability to manage anxiety.		Persuade an audience of senior high school students to consider a respective degree program and major through a 5-minute video.	
Behavioral Display delivery techniques, such as effective body language, vocal modulation, and audience engagement for clarity, confidence, and persuasiveness in oral presentations.			
Cognitive Assess multimedia elements to be used for effective presentations.	Lesson 2. Multimedia Presentation	Collaborate to produce and share a 3-minute TikTok video promoting your degree program and major, utilizing the principles of effective multimedia presentation.	3 hours
Socio-emotional Present an inclusive presentation that respects the audience's emotional responses to multimedia elements.		Create 3-5 videos to be posted as Facebook reels, showcasing the highlights of respective majors.	
Behavioral Integrate proficiency of multimedia presentation tools and techniques, incorporating engaging visuals and other multimedia elements effectively.			

Cognitive Post vlogs applying different storytelling techniques. Socio-emotional Display self-confidence and authentic self-expression in vlogging. Behavioral Film engaging and well-edited video content, incorporating storytelling elements, and utilizing visual and auditory techniques to capture and maintain audience interest.	Lesson 3. Vlogging	Criticize critically a popular vlogger. Demonstrate understanding of the topic by completing a Modified True or False activity.	4.5 hours
Cognitive Write application letter and resume, demonstrating a deep understanding of the conventions, formatting, and content. Socio-emotional Integrate skills and qualifications contributing to adaptability in the employment-seeking journey. Behavioral Write a compelling application letter and resume, showcasing a proactive approach in aligning qualifications with job requirements.	Module 4: Communication in the Workplace Lesson 1. Application Letter and Resume for Employment	Create an application letter and resume tailored to a job-specific major. Review and provide feedback on classmate's work.	3 hours
Cognitive Prepare for job interviews, effective response strategies, and adapt communication styles. Socio-emotional Display confidence during job interviews, fostering a positive self-image and ability to manage stress. Behavioral Present self professionally to create a positive impression on interviewers and secure job opportunities.	Lesson 2. Job Interviews	Assess a video to determine why the applicant may have poor interview skills, and provide brief recommendations for improvement. Ace a mock job interview.	3 hours
Cognitive Adapt communication behaviors based on the specific dynamics of each meeting. Socio-emotional Display respectful and inclusive communication behaviors for positive and collaborative meeting environments. Behavioral Reflect etiquette in both physical and virtual settings.	Lesson 3. Physical and Virtual Meetings and Etiquette	Distinguish terms related to physical and virtual meetings. Assess the disadvantages of physical and virtual meetings in industrial technology.	3 hours
Cognitive Summarize understanding of the ethical and academic implications of plagiarism. Socio-emotional Adapt a sense of academic integrity and responsibility, nurturing as well as an	Module 5: Academic Integrity and Identity Lesson 1. Plagiarism	Rewrite passages in own words. Assess one's self of plagiarism tendencies.	3 hours

increased self-accountability in written works.

Behavioral

Manage and cite sources, paraphrase appropriately, and avoid plagiarism in written assignments.

Cognitive

Present a good research topic, problem, and clear objectives.

Lesson 2.

Research Topic Proposal

Brainstorm an innovation that could serve as a topic for an industrial technology research relevant to the respective majors.

3 hours

Socio-emotional

Rate one's self in proposing research topic, gaps, and objectives

Formulate objectives for your chosen topic.

Conduct a literature review on a selected topic.

Behavioral

Prepare a compelling proposal, incorporating effective literature review and research questions.

Cognitive

Select appropriate research methods based on the nature of the research question.

Lesson 3. Research Methods

Determine which method would be suitable for future study by providing relevant evidence.

3 hours

Socio-emotional

Adapt a positive attitude toward facing challenges and uncertainties inherent in research methods.

Behavioral

Determine appropriate research methods for studies, design research instruments, and adhere to ethical considerations.

The module's content is varied and advantageous for learners, and it was developed based on a needs analysis. As Chegeni et al. (2016) states, differentiated instruction enables educators to adapt content, teaching methods, and assessments to effectively meet the diverse needs of their students.

3.2 Validity of the Course Module Assessed by Experts and Faculty

Table 2 presents the results of validity of the instructional material, as assessed by experts and faculty using Daoud and Celce-Murcia's adapted checklist. The assessment was based on five (5) criteria: Subject Matter, Vocabulary and Structures, Exercises, Illustrations, and Physical Make-up. The results are presented in Table 2. In parameter 1, Subject Matter, the weighted mean of 3.82, interpreted as "Strongly Agree," suggests that experts and instructors find the module's content highly relevant and aligned with the learning objectives for industrial technology students. Including real-world examples and discipline-specific topics is critical in modular design for technical education (Hallinger & Nguyen, 2020). Real-world alignment ensures knowledge transferability to workplace scenarios, a core requirement for industrial technology courses. One of the instructors remarked: "Most of Industrial Technology students are males and male students seem not to love the English subject that much. With this module, you made Purposive Communication learning easier".

Table 2. Validity of the course module

Indicators	Experts		Instructors		Overall	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
Subject Matter	3.92	Strongly Agree	3.72	Strongly Agree	3.82	Strongly Agree
Vocabulary and Structures	3.80	Strongly Agree	3.68	Strongly Agree	3.74	Strongly Agree
Exercises	3.72	Strongly Agree	3.84	Strongly Agree	3.78	Strongly Agree
Illustrations	3.68	Strongly Agree	3.64	Strongly Agree	3.66	Strongly Agree
Physical Make-up	3.84	Strongly Agree	3.68	Strongly Agree	3.76	Strongly Agree

For the second parameter, Vocabulary and Structures, a score of 3.74 indicates the module employs vocabulary and grammatical structures appropriate for its target users. Camargo et al. (2022) stated that domain-specific language enhances comprehension and practical skills, particularly in technical education. Using industry-

relevant terminology also bridges the gap between academic instruction and workplace communication. Exercises, the third parameter, achieved a mean of 3.78, reflecting the effectiveness in reinforcing learned concepts. Arnaiz Sanchez et al. (2019) emphasized that interactive and scenario-based exercises contribute to active learning, improving problem-solving and critical thinking skills among students in technical fields. These findings validate the module's focus on applied learning strategies. One expert also suggested additional activities incorporating industrial technology concepts in other topics.

As its fourth parameter, the module's illustrations have a weighted mean of 3.66, which can be interpreted as effective but may also benefit from further enhancements. Research highlights the importance of visuals in simplifying complex concepts, particularly in STEM and technology courses, where visual aids like diagrams and charts are crucial for comprehension (Phan et al., 2022). The last parameter in assessing the module's validity is the Physical Make-up, scoring 3.76. This reflects a well-organized and user-friendly layout. As experts commented: "The overall structure, presentation, and packaging of the module are commendable and easy to use". Studies state that explicit and visually appealing materials reduce cognitive load and improve learning outcomes, especially for technical courses requiring step-by-step instruction.

3.3 Educational Soundness of the Course Module Assessed as Perceived By Experts, Faculty And Students

Table 3 shows the level of educational soundness of the developed Purposive Communication course module as perceived by experts, faculty, and students, using the criteria Learner Focus, Usability, and Accessibility. For Learner Focus, the mean score of 3.78 demonstrates that the module meets students' diverse learning needs. Studies advocate for learner-centered designs, emphasizing integrating adaptive and participatory methods that align with students' prior knowledge and career goals (Hallinger & Nguyen, 2020). This approach fosters engagement and knowledge retention.

Table 3. Educational soundness of the course module

Indicators	Experts		Instructors		Students		Overall	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
Learner Focus	3.64	Strongly Agree	3.92	Strongly Agree	3.77	Strongly Agree	3.78	Strongly Agree
Usability	3.64	Strongly Agree	3.76	Strongly Agree	3.75	Strongly Agree	3.72	Strongly Agree
Accessibility	3.76	Strongly Agree	3.64	Strongly Agree	3.67	Strongly Agree	3.69	Strongly Agree

Secondly, with a mean score of 3.72, the module was deemed user-friendly. Usability in educational materials ensures seamless navigation and effective content delivery, especially in modules designed for technical disciplines (Camargo et al., 2022). A score of 3.69 indicates the module's inclusivity and ease of access. Accessibility has been increasingly prioritized in education, as studies emphasize materials designed for students of varying abilities and backgrounds (Arnaiz Sanchez et al., 2019). An expert also suggested including alternative activities tailored to the different majors within Industrial Technology. This recommendation addresses potential accessibility issues, such as limited internet access, by ensuring that all students can engage with the assessments, even when external links or online resources are unavailable. This adjustment would enhance the module's inclusivity and relevance for a diverse student population.

3.4 Differences of Perception for Educational Soundness

Table 4 presents the significant values on the difference between the perception of experts, faculty, and students regarding the educational soundness of the developed course module in terms of Learner Focus, Usability, and Accessibility. The data shows no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of experts, faculty, and students across all three parameters (Learner Focus: $p = 0.258$; Usability: $p = 0.718$; Accessibility: $p = 0.825$). Thus, there is no significant difference in the perception of the three groups regarding the Educational Soundness Rating Sheet on the developed course module regarding Learner Focus, Usability, and Accessibility. The null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 4. Differences of perception for educational soundness

Indicators	F-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Learner Focus	1.369	0.258	Failed to reject H_0	No significant difference
Usability	0.332	0.718	Failed to reject H_0	No significant difference
Accessibility	0.193	0.825	Failed to reject H_0	No significant difference

The absence of significant differences in the perceptions suggests consensus on the module's educational effectiveness. This supports the notion that collaborative design fosters balanced educational outcomes by incorporating feedback from diverse three groups of respondents (experts, instructors, and students). A non-significant result indicates no substantial differences in how respondent groups evaluate the module's effectiveness. This suggests that the material is impartial and does not favor any specific group, allowing for a more efficient implementation process. This result is beneficial as it demonstrates that the module effectively fulfills the expectations and requirements of all three groups, making it well-structured and adaptable for instruction. Similar findings are observed in studies analyzing educational soundness in higher education, emphasizing participatory approaches in module development to ensure alignment with academic and industry expectations.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the study findings, the researcher concludes that the developed module is an effective and comprehensive tool for supporting the learning objectives of industrial technology students in Purposive Communication course. It is well-designed to provide an engaging, practical, and accessible learning experience for its target users. It is also concluded that the module is widely accepted as effective and sound by experts, faculty and students, ensuring its relevance and usability in various educational contexts. Instructors must incorporate the validated module into their purposive communication courses to enhance student learning outcomes. Gathering regular feedback from students will allow continuous refinement, while collaboration with instructional designers to improve visuals can enhance the module's clarity and appeal. School administrators should support the module's implementation by providing professional development opportunities for instructors, ensuring they are equipped to maximize its potential. Investments should be made to enhance the module's physical and digital formats, making it accessible to diverse students, including those with specific needs. Administrators should periodically evaluate the module's impact on student outcomes and actively collaborate with industry stakeholders to align the instructional material with evolving workforce demands, ensuring its relevance and utility in practical settings. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the module's long-term impact on students' professional communication skills and workplace readiness, as well as experimental research comparing students' performances before and after the module's implementation.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

As the sole author of this study, the researcher solely contributed to all aspects, making equal contribution unnecessary.

6.0 Funding

No specific grant from any funding agency was received for this work.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author states that there are no conflicts of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The author thanks the research advisory board and mentor for their valuable guidance and recommendations.

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Moderating Role of Religious Orientation in the Relationship of Perceived Mental Illness Stigma and Suicidal Ideation Among Filipino Young Adults

Hanna Mae A. Caparas*, Ian I. Llenares

Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Sta. Mesa, Manila, Philippines

*Corresponding Author email: hannamaecaparas@gmail.com

Date received: January 29, 2025

Date revised: February 26, 2025

Date accepted: March 21, 2025

Originality: 89%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 11%

Recommended citation:

Caparas, H.M., Llenares, I. (2025). Moderating role of religious orientation in the relationship of perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation among Filipino young adults. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 295-304. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.047>

Abstract. Due to underreported suicide cases and increasing mental health issues, the study examined the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation among young adults in a religious country like the Philippines, focusing on the moderating role of religious orientation. Through quantitative research employing a moderation model, 137 Filipino young adults working in private Catholic schools in Bulacan were purposively sampled. Three standardized questionnaires were adapted. Results revealed that perceived mental illness stigma was present at a below-average level. Suicidal ideation levels were generally very low over the year, but some participants had already experienced it from a young age. Filipino young adults exhibited high extrinsic and low intrinsic religious orientations. Using Pearson's correlation, findings indicated a positive significant relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation, suggesting that higher levels of perceived stigma were linked to increased suicidal thoughts. As individuals perceive that they will be devalued and discriminated against for having a mental illness, there is also a higher tendency for them to be preoccupied with suicidal thoughts. However, the result of Hayes Process moderation analysis shows that neither extrinsic nor intrinsic religious orientation has an interaction effect with perceived mental illness stigma on suicidal ideation. The absence of interaction effect indicates that the correlation between the perceived stigma of having a mental illness and having suicidal thoughts remained consistent regardless of the religious orientation of Filipino young adults. Since it focused on a single religious group, the findings cannot be generalized due to sampling limitations.

Keywords: Extrinsic religious orientation; Filipino young adults; Intrinsic religious orientation; Perceived Mental illness stigma; Suicidal ideation.

1.0 Introduction

The World Health Organization (2021) considers suicide a serious public health concern, with more than 700,000 reported deaths every year. More than 70% of individuals with mental health problems did not seek help because of fear of prejudice and expected discrimination for being diagnosed (Henderson et al., 2013). In 2019, the suicide rate reported in the Philippines was 2.5 per 100,000 population (Department of Health, 2022). There is a significant level of stigma and discrimination toward mental health problems in the Philippines, wherein fear of being labeled as crazy and destroying family reputation keeps them from seeking professional help (Tanaka et al., 2018). Experiencing perceived or internalized stigma due to mental disorders and being burdened by harsh labeling and discrimination suggests a significant risk for suicide (Carpiniello & Pinna, 2017).

As proposed by Modified Labeling Theory (Link et al., 1989), stigmatization brings harmful consequences toward people with mental health conditions, wherein when people started to believe more that they would be devalued and discriminated against for having a mental illness, the more they began to feel threatened to interact with others. This approach proposed that mental illness stigma has a positive relationship with the suicidal ideation of people labeled as mentally ill by mental health services but not for unlabeled individuals (Oexle et al., 2017). In terms of perceived stigma, it is the one stigma mechanism shared by individuals with and without mental illness (Fox et al., 2018). Also, suicide cases are likely to be underreported in the Philippines because of cultural differences in the country, like religious beliefs, stigma towards the family, as well as lack of knowledge about suicide (Bangalan et al., 2023). There are also religious beliefs suggesting that having a mental illness results from having sinful behavior and its causes, as well as treatment, is spiritually oriented (Wesselmann & Graziano, 2010).

In a study with Filipino samples, it was found that there is very little difference between the rate of suicidal ideation of those who were currently religious-affiliated and those religious-none affiliated, but those who have religion but lost it have a higher chance to succumb to suicidal ideation (Quintos, 2018). Still, there are inconsistent findings on how religious orientation takes part in mental health issues, specifically stigma and suicidal ideation. As defined, suicidal ideation occurs when someone has contemplations and preoccupation with wishes or ideas of death and suicide (Harmer et al., 2022). The combination of perceived burdensome and perceived social isolation is where suicidality stems from, and their simultaneous presence is the cause of the perilous suicidal desire (Van Orden et al., 2010). There were controversies about the role of religiosity in suicidal ideation because of contradicting results in different studies (Dueñas et al., 2019). It was reported in the study of Lester (2012) that the association between religiosity and suicidal ideation is not always found, such as in his research wherein suicidal behavior is not significantly associated with any variables in the study, including intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. Religious orientation was used as a moderator in a study about religiosity and prejudice (Vazquez & McClure, 2017). However, based on the reviewed studies, its moderating role in the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation is still unknown. Moreover, the protective effect of religiousness is found to be most salient among older adults (Levin, 2010), but little is known among young adults.

Furthermore, the study of Levin (2010) suggests that individuals' religious lives, including their religious identity, might have something significant to say in describing their mental health. Since the Philippines is a predominantly Roman Catholic Country, it is also possible that the social norms and beliefs associated with their religion contribute to suicide prevention (Redaniel et al., 2011). Previous studies suggest that religious involvement serves as a factor that protects people against psychological distress and mental illness (Levin, 2010), and spiritual coping shields individuals from experiencing stigma (Tanaka et al., 2018). However, a study with Filipino samples suggested that their sense of religiosity or spirituality is one of the sociocultural barriers to their formal help-seeking (Martinez et al., 2020).

As religion and religiosity are separate concepts, being religious does not necessarily mean having a religious affiliation (Pace, 2014). Religious orientation is one way of conceptualizing and operationalizing a person's religiosity (Vazquez & McClure, 2017). Allport and Ross (1967), in their Intrinsic-Extrinsic Framework of Religious Orientation, highlighted that the best way to differentiate the poles of subjective religion is when people "use" their religion, they are extrinsically motivated, while those who "live" their religion are intrinsically motivated. It is assumed in this framework that intrinsic religious orientation (IRO) is embodied with more positive consequences of religion, such as lower suicidality. In contrast, extrinsic religious orientation (ERO) is related to having more negative outcomes (Lew et al., 2018). Extrinsic religious orientation (ERO) is described as instrumental, wherein individuals use their religiousness to meet their social and psychological ends, while intrinsically religious-oriented (IRO), individuals tend to seek reward within their beliefs in the supernatural realm (Lavrič & Flere, 2011). It is essential to understand if there are any religious-based stereotypes regarding mental illness for them to be targeted in anti-stigma campaigns (Wesselmann & Graziano, 2010).

In particular, the goal of the study was to examine if there is an interaction effect between perceived mental illness stigma and being intrinsically or extrinsically religious oriented on suicidal ideation among Filipino young adults. Using religious orientation as a moderator is based on the notion that it has opposing associations with the individual's well-being, either harmful or helpful (Doane et al., 2013). Figures 1 and 2 show the hypothesized correlation models of perceived mental illness stigma (X) and suicidal ideation (Y) as moderated by extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation (W), respectively. The current study aimed to examine if there is an interaction effect

between perceived mental illness stigma and being extrinsically religious oriented (see Figure 1) or intrinsically religious oriented (see Figure 2) on suicidal ideation among Filipino young adults. In particular, the study aimed to examine the following research questions: (1) What is the level of perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation, and religious orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic) of Filipino young adults? (2) Is there a significant correlation among perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation, and religious orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic) of Filipino young adults? (3) Does religious orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic) moderate the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and the suicidal ideation of Filipino young adults?

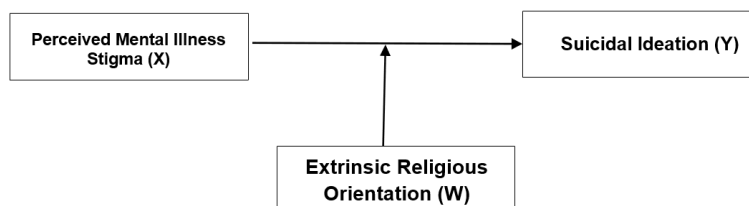


Figure 1. *The hypothesized moderation model of perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation and extrinsic religious orientation*

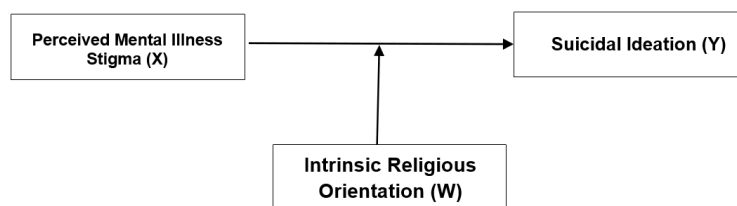


Figure 2. *The hypothesized moderation model of perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation, and intrinsic religious orientation*

As anchored to the Modified Labeling Approach, the objective of the study was to examine whether the association of perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation found in previous research also applies to how unlabeled individuals perceived mental illness in a predominantly religious country like the Philippines. Unlike in previous studies, the moderating role of religious orientation was also analyzed. It is to test whether having a low perceived mental illness stigma also lowers the tendency of a person to experience suicidal ideation, and if it is true, more for those with high intrinsic than extrinsic religious orientation. In the current study, the association of perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation was tested not only with individuals diagnosed with mental health problems but also with nonclinical samples to test how the public perceives mental illness and how it affects the risk of having suicidal thoughts of those living in a religious community. Due to prevalent mental health issues and underreported suicide reports, the study is beneficial in improving mental health literacy in a religious country like the Philippines. Results will bring awareness to suicide prevention by breaking the stigma that having a mental illness is caused purely by a lack of faith and poor religious involvement of a person.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized explanatory, non-experimental quantitative research using a moderation model. Moderation analysis is used when the goal of a study is to test when or under what condition the independent variable (IV) exercises an effect on the dependent variable (DV), as well as to test whether a third variable or moderator influences the magnitude of the causal effect of IV on DV (Hayes & Little, 2022). The study examined whether the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation was moderated by being extrinsically or intrinsically religious-oriented, of a person. The time dimension is cross-sectional because it was conducted over a single period.

2.2. Research Participants

Participants were purposively sampled from selected religious Catholic schools in Bulacan. The sample comprised 137 Filipino young adults aged 18-35 working as personnel (teaching/non-teaching staff) in private Catholic schools. In purposive sampling, particular persons or settings were selected purposefully to give substantial information that cannot be obtained from other choices and warrants inclusion (Taherdoost, 2016). In this study, participants exposed to religious environments and practices were purposively sampled. Based on Green's formula, the general rule of thumb is to have no less than 50 participants for regression or correlation, wherein $N > 50 + 8m$ for analyzing multiple correlations and $N > 104 + m$ for analyzing individual predictors (Memon et al., 2020). The m in the formula is the number of independent variables used. In this study, there is one independent variable and one moderator. The researcher followed Green's general rule of thumb for regression of $N > 104 + m$, wherein m equals 2. Replacing the values, $N > 104 + 2$, the $N > 106$. Thus, the minimum sample size in the study should be 107 or more.

2.3 Research Instrument

Three standardized instruments were adapted to measure perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation, and religious orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic). These instruments were also reviewed and utilized in other published studies. The Perceived Devaluation-Discrimination (PDD) Scale (Link et al., 1989) measures how most individuals negatively view people with mental illness and is oriented toward evaluating what others think and grasp their social perception of devaluation and discrimination regarding mental illness (Oexle et al., 2017; Mora-Rios & Ortega-Ortega, 2021). It can be answered by patients and nonpatients, wherein labeled individuals may feel that these beliefs about other people's opinions may apply to them. At the same time, for those unlabeled, they may be an innocuous array of beliefs of what others perceive those with mental health conditions. It was measured via a 6-point level of agreement scale with "strongly agree = 1" to "strongly disagree = 6" to measure the level to which participants perceive how most individuals will discriminate or devalue a person with a mental illness. It has 12 items, wherein 6 of them are reversely scored. In the PDD Scale, higher mean values indicate higher perceived mental illness stigma. A reliability of $\alpha = 0.79$ was reported for the 12-item PPD scale.

The Suicidal Ideation Scale (SIS) (Rudd, 1989) evaluates the intensity or severity of a person's suicidal ideation via self-report. SIS is a 10-item self-report screening tool that assesses the absence or presence of suicidal ideation, the intensity of suicidal thoughts, and even the absence or presence of former suicide attempts. It was designed to measure suicidal ideation that can be used for both non-clinical and clinical populations (Rudd, 1989; Luxton et al., 2011). Items on SIS are rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never=1" to "always=5" to assess how the respondents behaved or felt over the past year. In SIS, higher total scores indicate higher suicidal ideation. A reliability of $\alpha = 0.95$ was reported for the 10-item SIS scale.

Being intrinsically and extrinsically religious oriented was measured using the 21-item Intrinsic-Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (IEROS). The initial 20-item self-report Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) developed by Allport and Ross in 1967 was modified by members of the Harvard University seminar as a 21-item scale by adding one extrinsic item (item 21) from Feagin's revision in 1964 (Brewczynski & MacDonald, 2006; Khodadady & Golparvar, 2012). Items are scored wherein a response of "agree" (4) or "strongly agree" (5) on the extrinsic subscale items (12 items) indicates a greater extrinsic religious orientation, whereas a score of a response of "agree" or "strongly agree" on intrinsic subscale (9 items) indicate greater intrinsic religious orientation; a higher total score for each of the subscale corresponds to greater level of the respective religious orientation. The reliability for extrinsic and intrinsic subscales was $\alpha = 0.79$ and $\alpha = 0.82$, respectively (Ghazaei et al., 2020).

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The proposed study was presented to a panel of Psychology experts to review its objectives and procedure. After obtaining clearance from the Ethics Review Board, the researcher sought permission from the administration of the selected private Catholic schools to conduct the survey. The researcher utilized printed and online survey forms. Due to the busy schedules of the personnel, some requested that the survey be conducted online for easy access. In line with this, the researcher sought assistance in forwarding the Google form survey to their personnel. To ensure the integrity of the data, participants can only access and respond to the Google form once. Aligned with the APA code of ethics, the researcher obtained informed consent from the participants using language they could easily understand. Informed consent was attached to the survey form explaining the nature and purpose of

the study and their rights as participants, including their right to withdraw. The researcher took adequate measures to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the gathered data in surveys. The names of the institutions were kept anonymous as per their requests. Participants were asked to complete three standardized questionnaires, which may take 10-15 minutes only. Since suicidal ideation is a sensitive mental health issue, the researcher explained that it is entirely voluntary, and they are free to withdraw anytime. The data collection was from November 17, 2023, until February 16, 2024.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed to ensure that no study participants were harmed. Informed consent was given to explain their rights as participants. Participation is voluntary; money or any form of compensation was not given. Since the research has a sensitive topic that may pose minimal risk, respondents are also free to withdraw at any time without any consequence. In cases wherein participants may feel uncomfortable with some questions and want to withdraw from the research, they are free to do so and may contact the researcher for proper debriefing if needed. Results were treated anonymously to protect the identity of the participants and the institution. All survey results were treated with the utmost confidentiality and were viewed only by the researcher. The researcher secured the personal information following the RA 10173-Data Privacy Act of 2012 to maintain confidentiality. If there were any concerns, such as the need for debriefing, the participants may contact the researcher via email.

2.6 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized for data analysis. The demographic profile of the participants and level of study variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics. It includes measures of central tendency, frequency distribution, percentage analysis, and standard deviation. Tests of assumptions were also initially addressed. The normality of data was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk Test, while multicollinearity was analyzed by calculating the variance inflation factor (VIF). Autocorrelation was tested using the Durbin-Watson test, while the Breusch-Pagan test was used to determine the presence of heteroscedasticity. Pearson's r correlation was used to measure the degree of correlation of the study variables: perceived mental illness stigma, religious orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic), and suicidal ideation. Hayes Process Macro Moderation Analysis was utilized to test the moderating effect of religious orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic) in the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicide ideation. A simple moderation model in the Hayes Process with a variable moderating the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable can be estimated using model=1 (Hayes & Little, 2022). The moderation analysis examines how the moderating variable changes or influences the strength or direction of the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables (Cunningham & Lucksted, 2017). Moderation assumptions were initially addressed before performing the moderation analysis.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Participants

Based on the analyzed profile of the participants, their average age was 27 years old. All participants were Catholic. The majority of them were female (73%) than male (27%). Most were teachers (74.5%) and some were non-teaching personnel (25.5%). In tracing the history of mental illness, 6.6% of the respondents had been clinically diagnosed with mental illness, and the rest were not. In terms of knowing people with mental illness, about 48.2% of the participants knew someone (e.g., family, relatives, friends, colleagues, acquaintances) who was diagnosed with mental illness. Also, about 35 % of the participants felt the need to consult a mental health professional for help but were afraid to do so because of fear of stigma attached to it. In terms of having a history of suicidal ideation, 35% of the respondents have already experienced having suicidal thoughts or been preoccupied with ideas of ending their life. It was at the age of 17-26 years old wherein 24.8% of the respondents started to experience suicidal ideation, while 6.6% at age 13-16, and 3.6% at age 27-35 years old.

3.2 Perceived Mental Illness Stigma, Suicidal Ideation, and Religious Orientation

Table 1 shows the level of perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation, and religious orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic) of Filipino young adults. The results show that participants have a below-average level of perceived mental illness stigma ($M=3.47$; $SD=0.76$), indicating a milder degree of negative perception, discrimination, and devaluation against having a mental illness. Filipino young adults working in Catholic schools, regardless of whether they were clinically diagnosed with mental illness or not, have a minimal level of

negative perception towards people with mental illness. Based on the reported profile, only 35% of Filipino young adults reported that they had felt the need to seek consultation from a mental health professional but were afraid to seek help because of fear of stigma attached to having mental illness. It can be implied that, in general, Filipinos in this age group were more accepting and understanding of mental health issues, viewing them as less stigmatizing.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics of perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation and religious orientation*

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1. Perceived Mental Illness Stigma	3.47	0.76	Below Average
2. Suicidal Ideation	1.52	0.74	Very Low
3. Intrinsic Religious Orientation (IRO)	2.35	0.58	Low
4. Extrinsic Religious Orientation (ERO)	3.47	0.50	High

Participants also experienced very low levels of suicidal ideation over the past year ($M=1.52$; $SD=0.74$) since the study was conducted. Even if the overall mean score suggests a low frequency of suicidal ideation, the results show that some participants experience underlying pain and hopelessness in some of the items, which call for support and intervention. Some of the participants reported that they had already experienced suicidal thoughts as early as the age of 13-16 (6.6%), some around age 17-26 (24.8%), and others at age 27-35 (3.6%). Findings imply that even if suicidal ideation may not be prevalent overall, its seriousness and effects should not be undervalued.

Based on the result, Filipino young adults have high levels of being extrinsically religious oriented ($M=3.47$; $SD=0.507$) and low levels of ($M=2.35$; $SD=0.584$) being intrinsically religious oriented. Consistently, individuals have various motivations for their religious involvement, such as seeking solace in times of personal troubles, having spiritual growth, and building supportive social relationships (Doane et al., 2013). Extrinsically religious oriented individuals see their religion as acquiring certain self-serving ends. This is less significant for those intrinsically oriented because they make their needs and wants compatible with their religious beliefs (Moradi & Langroudi, 2013). The result implies that participants working in religious institutions were highly extrinsically religiously oriented, which is usually manifested in their active participation in various religious activities. In contrast, they were less inclined to be intrinsically religiously oriented, which can be observed in their level of conviction, internalization, and personal dedication to their religious creed. Results suggest that the divergent patterns discovered between extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation underscore how individuals participate and extract significance from religion.

3.3 Relationship between Mental Illness Stigma, Suicidal Ideation and Religious Orientation

Table 2 shows the correlation matrix of the study variables. Perceived mental illness stigma has a significant positive relationship with suicidal ideation ($r=.257$, $p=.002$) which suggests that as the level of perceived mental illness stigma increases, the level of suicidal ideation of an individual increases at the same time. As young adults perceive that they will be devalued and discriminated against for having a mental illness, there is also a higher tendency for them to be preoccupied with suicidal thoughts. The greater the perceived mental illness stigma in the environment where an individual lives, the more likely they are to experience intense thoughts of ending their own lives.

Table 2. *Correlation matrix of perceived mental illness stigma, suicidal ideation and religious orientation*

	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Mental Illness Stigma	—			
2. Suicidal Ideation	0.25**	—		
3. Intrinsic Religious Orientation (IRO)	0.04	0.07	—	
4. Extrinsic Religious Orientation (ERO)	-0.11	-0.09	-0.40***	—

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

The findings were consistent with previous studies indicating that stigma associated with mental illness contributes significantly to suicidal ideation (Carpiniello & Pinna, 2017; Oexle et al., 2016; Hirsch et al., 2019). Besides people who were labeled as mentally ill, those individuals who are experiencing problems in emotional clarity have increased vulnerability to suicidal ideation because of perceived stigma (Oexle et al., 2016). In addition, it is supported by what Schomerus et al. (2015) hypothesized that having higher levels of social acceptance among persons with mental illness leads to lower suicide rates, and the presence of stigma is associated with higher suicide prevalence. The null hypothesis suggesting the absence of a significant correlation between

perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation was rejected. In terms of religious orientation, intrinsic religious orientation was negatively correlated with extrinsic orientation ($r = -0.406$, $p < .001$), suggesting that as people see their religious involvement more as embracing their religion's creed, they see their religion as less instrumental, not using it to satisfy their needs.

Meanwhile, the result shows that perceived mental illness was not significantly correlated with both extrinsic ($r = -0.114$, $p = .186$) and intrinsic ($r = .042$, $p = .629$) religious orientation. No significant correlation was also found between religious orientation, whether it is extrinsic ($r = -.096$, $p = .266$) or intrinsic ($r = 0.077$, $p = .374$), and suicidal ideation. Inconsistent with the belief that a conception of a religious individual on faith and prayer may also affect how they view mental illness (Wesselmann & Graziano, 2010), there is not enough evidence to conclude that individuals experiencing suicidal ideation do not pray nor attend church (extrinsic) or have no faith in the supernatural realm (intrinsic). The result suggests that a person cannot easily associate someone's suicidal ideation with having poor religious involvement.

The present findings answer a few of the most infamous quotes and beliefs of many Filipinos that a person who experiences mental health problems is "Kulang sa dasal" and "Hindi kasi nagsi-simba" (Brillantes & Rodenas, 2022). It is consistent with the study of Wang et al. (2014), which found that religious involvement and suicidal ideation, planning, or attempt were not significantly correlated even with a religious group known for having the lowest rate of suicide in the world. It only suggests that even a religious person may experience having suicidal thoughts. However, it is not related to having poor faith because there are still other factors that may contribute to it. Furthermore, Hills and Francis (2005) found that no significant difference was found between the suicidal ideation scores of those churchgoers who attended church at least weekly and those who attended less frequently. It is supported by Lawrence et al. (2015) that being part of a religious group and regularly attending religious services could serve as protective factors against attempting suicide, although not necessarily against having suicidal thoughts.

Moreover, it suggests that religious involvement may act as a preventive factor in suicidal attempts, but it is not the same as having suicidal thoughts. It implies that a person may have suicidal thoughts but would never put them into action because of their religion. The findings suggest the importance of continuous and long-term comprehensive programs that focus more on reducing the negative impact of perceived mental illness stigma towards risk of suicidal ideation.

3.4 Role of Religious Orientation in the Relationship between Perceived Mental Illness Stigma and Suicidal Ideation

In analyzing the results, moderation assumptions were initially addressed before the moderation analysis. The data has acceptable normality (Skewness = 0.00769 to 1.81 < 2.00, acceptable), based on the general guideline of Hair et al. (2022) and George and Mallery (2010) that a skewness value between -2 and +2 is acceptable and can be considered adequate to prove normal data. The calculated variance inflation factor (VIF) in the study suggests the absence of multicollinearity ($VIF = 1.013$ to $1.211 < 5.00$); multicollinearity only exists if VIF is greater than five (Kim, 2019). The Breusch-Pagan test was used to determine the presence of heteroscedasticity, wherein a null hypothesis assumes that homoscedasticity is present, and rejecting it suggests the presence of heteroscedasticity (Bobbitt, 2022). The data shows the presence of homoscedasticity (BP test = 0.87277, $p = 0.6464$). Autocorrelation was tested using the Durbin-Watson test; values range from 0 to 4, wherein a value close to 2 or in the middle of the range suggests less autocorrelation, while values closer to 0 or 4 suggest greater positive or negative autocorrelation, respectively (Statistics Solutions, 2021). The result shows non-autocorrelation (DW Statistic = 1.94; $p = 0.3221$). After checking these assumptions, the Hayes Process moderation analysis was performed with means centered on constructing products for continuous variables in the model. Two moderation models were run in the study.

Tables 3 and 4 show the Hayes Process Macro Moderation analysis results in examining the moderating role of extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation. Based on the result presented in Table 3, perceived mental illness stigma ($B = 2.477$, $p = .003$) significantly predicts suicidal ideation, unlike extrinsic religious orientation ($B = -.089$, $p = .378$), and their interaction term ($B = -0.208$, $p = .131$) is statistically not significant. Overall, the variables contributed an 8.7% variance in suicidal ideation ($F(3,133) = 4.198$, $p = .007$). Still, the interaction of perceived mental

illness stigma and extrinsic religious orientation only had a 1.6% additional variance to suicidal ideation ($\Delta R^2=.016$, $p=.131$). Adding extrinsic religious orientation in the regression model did not moderate the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation. Thus, there is no interaction effect between perceived mental illness stigma and extrinsic religious orientation on suicidal ideation of Filipino young adults. The findings suggest that the correlation between the perception of stigma towards having mental illness and the tendency to have suicidal thoughts is relatively consistent regardless of the instrumental motivation of individuals toward their religious involvement or their extrinsic orientation as defined. It is aligned with previous studies that found that the history of suicidal ideation was not significantly related to extrinsic religiosity (Lester, 2017; Walker et al., 2014). Furthermore, the study of Lester and Walker (2016) found that being extrinsically religious-oriented, such as the associated benefits of attending church, does not significantly predict suicidal ideation.

Table 3. Moderation analysis of extrinsic religious orientation in the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation

Variables	Suicidal Ideation (Y)					
	B	SE B	T	p-value	Decision	Remarks
(Constant)	15.2*	0.61	25.0	0.00	Reject Ho	Significant
Perceived Mental Illness Stigma (X)	2.47*	0.81	3.05	0.00	Reject Ho	Significant
Extrinsic Religious Orientation (W)	-0.08	0.10	-0.88	0.37	Accept H0	Not Significant
X x W	0.20	0.13	1.51	0.13	Accept H0	Not Significant

Note. $R^2=.087$, $F(3, 133)=4.198$, $p=.007$; $\Delta R^2=.016$, $F(1,133)=2.309$, $p=.131$, * $p<.05$

Meanwhile, Table 4 presents the result of regression analysis in examining the moderating role of intrinsic religious orientation in the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation. Altogether, 9.1% of the variability in suicidal ideation was predicted by the study variables ($R^2=.0908$, $F(3, 133)=4.4272$, $p=.0053$). Consistently, perceived mental illness stigma ($B=2.3015$, $p=.0053$) was a positive significant predictor of suicidal ideation, while intrinsic religious orientation ($B=.1060$, $p=.3616$) was not. The interaction effect between perceived mental illness stigma and intrinsic religious orientation was statistically not significant ($B=-0.2608$, $p=.0874$), and this interaction only had 2% additional variance towards suicidal ideation ($\Delta R^2=.0203$, $F(1,133)=2.9661$, $p=.0874$).

Table 4. Moderation analysis of intrinsic religious orientation in the relationship between perceived mental illness stigma and suicidal ideation

Variables	Suicidal Ideation (Y)					
	B	SE B	t	p-value	Decision	Remarks
(Constant)	15.2*	0.60	25.1	0.00	Reject Ho	Significant
Perceived Mental Illness Stigma (X)	2.30*	0.81	2.83	0.00	Reject Ho	Significant
Intrinsic Religious Orientation (W)	0.10	0.11	0.91	0.36	Accept H0	Not Significant
X x W	-0.26	0.15	-1.72	0.08	Accept H0	Not Significant

Note. $R^2=.091$, $F(3, 133)=4.427$, $p=.005$; $\Delta R^2=.020$, $F(1,133)=2.966$, $p=.087$, * $p<.05$

Findings suggest that although intrinsic religious orientation (IRO) or being involved in religion to embrace their religious creed may have some effect on mental health outcomes, its influence on having suicidal thoughts seems to be fairly insignificant when compared to the impact of perceived mental illness stigma. The finding aligns with the study of Lawrence et al. (2015) that intrinsic religious orientation, like praying and being affiliated with a particular religion, is not a sufficient protective factor for suicidal ideation. It suggests that religiosity may act as a preventive factor in suicidal attempts but not in suicidal ideation. It can also be further explained by the study of Hajiyousouf and Bulut (2022) that regardless of their faith, even individuals from religious communities that condemn the act of suicide may also experience suicidal ideation or have thoughts to end their life to end problems or suffering, as the likely the same way from those in non-religious societies.

In the two moderation models, it was consistently shown that the substantial influence of perceived mental illness stigma on suicidal ideation among Filipino young adults, wherein the influence of either extrinsic or intrinsic religious orientation seems to be insignificant in this situation. Results align with prior studies suggesting a positive relationship between the perception of stigma surrounding mental illness and the occurrence of suicidal thoughts (Arria et al., 2011; Lew et al., 2018). Findings also emphasized that the chances of having suicidal ideation may still occur, and even a very religious person may still experience having suicidal thoughts because of different life factors. Again, these results were consistent with the claims of Ooi et al. (2021) that there is inconsistency in the findings in research concerning religious orientation. Lawrence et al. (2015) further suggest that while religious individuals may have various strategies to manage their suicidal ideation, it does not necessarily mean they will

have fewer suicidal thoughts, nor does it always lead to completely preventing them. Findings imply that caution should be made in generalizing the predictive power of religious orientation in mental health concerns and various factors like stigma could have more influence on the risk of having suicidal thoughts.

4.0 Conclusion

The findings highlight that among the study variables, only perceived mental illness stigma has a positive, significant relationship with suicidal ideation of Filipino young adults. As individuals perceive that they will be more devalued and discriminated once they are labeled as mentally ill, they also have a higher tendency to experience suicidal ideation. Meanwhile, the absence of a significant interaction effect of religious orientation implies that the connection between how mental illness stigma is perceived and having suicidal thoughts remains consistent regardless of an individual's motivation for their religious involvement. Regardless of the motivation of Filipino young adults towards their religious involvement, it is for embracing religious creed (intrinsic) or for personal gain (extrinsic), it is not related to how they negatively perceive people with mental illness and their risk of having suicidal thoughts. Adding extrinsic or intrinsic religious orientation in the moderation model only contributed to a minimal variance in suicidal ideation compared with the impact of perceived mental illness stigma. Thus, the correlation between the perception of stigma surrounding mental illness and the presence of suicidal thoughts remains consistent regardless of an individual's religious orientation.

Generally, the study provides insights about the complex nature of suicidal ideation and the harmful impact of perceived mental illness stigma in a religious country like the Philippines, while also explaining the various ways in which religious orientation may or may not influence it. Furthermore, even if suicidal ideation and stigma against mental illness may not be prevalent overall among the age group of Filipino young adults, its seriousness and effects should not be undervalued. It is essential to recognize the potential severity and significance of even brief suicidal thoughts. In line with this, the study encourages mental health professionals to constantly remind the public to be cautious in making broad generalizations about the predictive power of religious orientation and enlighten them that although it may have some effect on mental health outcomes, a multitude of factors like stigma can have more impact in terms of having suicidal ideation. It includes acknowledging that the influence of religious involvement may not be uniform across different populations. Despite existing mental health programs, the findings recommend the need for accessible and long-term anti-stigma programs to combat mental health stigma in the Philippines.

The findings, however, should be interpreted with caution due to the sampling limitation. Additionally, focusing on single religious groups means that the conclusions may only apply to some religious settings and cannot be generalized. It is recommended for future researchers to include a varying level of religiosity in different religious denominations in studying the aspects of religious orientation, perceived mental illness stigma, and suicidal ideation.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The research was conceptualized, analyzed, and finalized by the corresponding author, Hanna Mae A. Caparas, under the supervision and insightful feedback of her thesis adviser, Dr. Ian I. Llenares.

6.0 Funding

No funding agency funded this research.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest in this research.

8.0 Acknowledgement

The authors would like to sincerely thank all the Catholic schools and personnel who participated in the study.

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Premna odorata Blanco against *Ascaris* spp. Ova Found in Dewormed Swines of Tanauan, Philippines

Rodmie Oliver E. Pumaras*, Shanica Mycah Gozon, Baniaga Osama, Francesca Nicole Mosquera,
Marialo Clarez Pizarro, Kezia Arielle Rodrin, Allyssa Loraine Sambrano
National University, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: roepumaras@nu-moa.edu.ph

Date received: February 10, 2025

Date revised: February 27, 2025

Date accepted: March 22, 2025

Originality: 94%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 6%

Recommended citation:

Pumaras, R.O., Gozon, S.M., Osama, B., Mosquera, F.N., Pizarro, M.C., Rodrin, K.A., Sambrano, A.L. (2025). *Premna odorata* Blanco against *Ascaris* spp. ova found in dewormed swines of Tanauan, Philippines. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 305-316. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.078>

Abstract. This study investigated the effectiveness of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract against swine *Ascaris* spp. ova. *Ascaris* is a common intestinal parasite in the Philippines, affecting animals and humans. Recent studies have highlighted the increasing antiparasitic resistance among parasites, which has led to the exploration of alternative conventional options and therapeutics to combat parasitic infections effectively. This growing resistance underscores the need for novel treatments, such as plant-based extracts, to address the limitations of current anthelmintic drugs. Researchers aimed to assess the ovicidal activity of the aqueous leaf extract. The study involved collecting *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) leaves from Cavite City, verifying the plant identity, and preparing various extract concentrations. Swine fecal samples were collected in Tanauan City, Batangas, and examined for *Ascaris* spp. prevalence and intensity using Modified Kato-Katz. Results showed a moderate infection rate; 15 out of 90 pigs tested positive. Farms 1 and 6 had light infections, suggesting partial effectiveness of previous deworming. Farm 5 showed a high infection even after recent deworming. The *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract exhibited low efficiency against *Ascaris* spp. ova, with 15 to 45 minutes exposure times. However, extended exposures of 60 to 120 minutes showed promising results. The 25% extract concentration was ineffective, while 50% and 75% concentrations partially disrupted the eggs. Notably, the 100% concentration successfully penetrated and disrupted the ova. These findings suggested that higher concentrations of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract have a better ovicidal effect against *Ascaris* spp.; however, it requires prolonged exposure. Further research is needed to optimize the extract's use as a potential alternative anthelmintic drug.

Keywords: *Ascaris* spp.; Ovicidal; *Premna odorata* Blanco; Soil-transmitted helminths; Swine.

1.0 Introduction

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is a crucial target established by the world's nations when they adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. UHC ensures everyone can access the full range of quality health services without financial hardship (Department of Health, 2019). In 2019, the Philippines took a significant step toward achieving this goal with the passage of Republic Act No. 11223, the Universal Health Care Act (UHC Act). This law guarantees all Filipinos free access to a comprehensive array of quality healthcare services at the point of delivery (Department of Health, 2019). The National Government, through the Department of Health (DOH), funds essential preventive and public health programs offered free at the point of service (Department of Health, 2020). However, achieving UHC requires more than just human healthcare; it demands a holistic approach

that recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. This is where the One Health framework becomes essential.

The One Health framework acknowledges the critical link between animal health and global health outcomes, addressing challenges that transcend traditional healthcare boundaries (World Health Organization, 2019). In the Philippines, One Health has been instrumental in tackling neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) (Tenorio, 2022), such as soil-transmitted helminths (STH), which are prevalent in resource-limited rural areas. For instance, *Ascaris* spp., a common STH, not only infects humans but also companion animals, which can act as reservoirs for human re-infection (Mationg et al., 2021; Labana et al., 2021). While mass drug administration (MDA) for humans is a critical component of STH control, neglecting animal deworming and inadequate community education can perpetuate the cycle of infection (Ackley et al., 2021). Despite the nationwide MDA program, STH prevalence in the Philippines remains high, ranging from 24.9% to 97.4%, due to limited awareness, program mistrust, and misconceptions (Mationg et al., 2021). Integrating UHC with the One Health framework can address these gaps by ensuring a coordinated approach to health that includes animal and environmental interventions, ultimately strengthening the Philippines' efforts to achieve sustainable health outcomes for all.

Across the globe, the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) leads swine health and welfare (World Organization for Animal Health, 2024). In the Philippines, the Philippine government prioritizes aggressive disease control through policies like Administrative Order No. 22, which enforces strict adherence to the "National Zoning and Movement Plan for ASF." This plan, outlined in DA Circular No. 12 (S.2019), aims to contain the highly contagious virus through targeted movement restrictions and control measures (Official Gazette, 2020). The Bureau of Animal Industry implements programs to enhance productivity, safeguard health, and promote sustainability (PCAARRD's Industry Strategic Science and Technology Programs, n.d). Thus, local programs like the Swine R3 Credit Program in Batangas collaborate with national authorities for coordinated control measures and industry revitalization (Office Portal of the Department of Agriculture, 2021).

Furthermore, the Philippines, a tropical archipelago famed for its vibrant culinary heritage, holds a deep affinity for pork. This succulent meat, ranking Filipinos among the world's top consumers and producers, finds its way onto countless plates nationwide (Yan, 2020). However, amidst this love affair with pork lies a concealed public health concern: the potential presence of diverse parasites within Philippine swine. Studies have revealed both well-known and newly discovered species residing within these animals, such as the common gastrointestinal (GIT) parasites, which include *Trichuris* spp., *Strongyloides* spp., *Taenia* spp., *Isospora* spp., *Balantidium coli*, and *Ascaris* spp., some of which pose a potential zoonotic threat, meaning they can be transmitted from animals to humans (Ybañez et al., 2017; Ybañez et al., 2019).

Several studies investigated the prevalence and impact of parasitic diseases in swine across the Philippines. One research by Ybañez et al. (2017) focused on gastrointestinal parasites in industrial swine farms in Cebu. They found a high prevalence of 78.2% and identified parasites with zoonotic potential. The study also investigated the link between farm equipment and parasite numbers, highlighting the need for further research on transmission pathways and their impact on swine health and productivity (Ybañez et al., 2017). Another study by Ybañez et al. (2019) examined the prevalence of *Toxoplasma gondii* in humans, cats, and swine in Cebu. They found a 13.4% seroprevalence in swine, indicating a potential risk of transmission to other animals (Ybañez et al., 2019). Moreover, studies in the Philippines have documented widespread resistance among livestock parasites to deworming drugs, posing a significant challenge to the livestock industry. One particularly concerning example is *Haemonchus contortus*, a prevalent and pathogenic ruminant parasite that Cabardo and Portugaliza (2017) identified as having developed resistance to common anthelmintic treatments such as Ivermectin (Cabardo & Portugaliza, 2017). In swine, there are limited reports of resistance against pyrantel, levamisole, and benzimidazoles in *Oesophagostomum dentatum*. Also, benzimidazole, including fenbendazole and flubendazole, demonstrates resistance activity against both adult and immature stages of the *Ascaris suum* (Vercruysse & Claerebout, 2023).

In connection with the world of animal health, the effectiveness of anthelmintic drugs can diminish over time due to a phenomenon known as anthelmintic resistance (Center for Veterinary Medicine, 2023). This process, unfortunately, poses a significant challenge to animal health management, necessitating the development of new

strategies to combat resistant parasites. After exposure to an anthelmintic drug, susceptible parasites succumb, yielding resistant parasites to reproduce and pass on their resistant genes to their offspring, creating a lineage increasingly immune to the medication, rendering the once-effective drug ineffective. Notably, parasites are often called worms and anthelmintic drugs as dewormers (Center for Veterinary Medicine, 2023; Campbell & Faulkner, 2023).

According to the Morphology, Anatomy, and Secondary Metabolites Investigations of *Premna odorata* Blanco (P. odorata B) study by Youssef et al. (2021), *Premna odorata* Blanco, also known as alagao, is a small evergreen tree or shrub in the Lamiaceae family, is around 10 m tall and has a diameter breast height (DBH) of 15–30 cm (Youssef et al., 2021). It is from the Greek word premon, which means tree stump and refers to the short and twisted trunks (Youssef et al., 2021). Preliminary phytochemical screening of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) crude leaves extract showed the presence of iridoids, triterpenes, flavonoids, phenylethanoid, and acylated rhamnopyranosides (Elmaidomy et al., 2019). Flavonoids offer antioxidant and anti-inflammatory qualities; phenyl ethanoids have anti-inflammatory action, antibacterial, and anticancer properties; acylated rhamnopyranoside functions in defense mechanisms, and iridoids contribute to anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and neuroprotective activities. (Youssef et al., 2021; Elmaidomy et al., 2019). In recent years, flavonoids have generated interest as potential therapeutic agents, particularly in an anthelmintic activity (Mead & McNair, 2006; Toklo et al., 2021), that can be used to develop alternatives to commercial anthelmintic drugs further.

Driven by the need to find an alternative anthelmintic source that could be a potential solution for managing anthelmintic drug resistance in swine raised in selected animal farms of Tanauan City, Batangas, this study aims to determine the ovicidal activity of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract in varying concentrations against *Ascaris* spp., ova collected from recently dewormed swine. Despite its objective, the study acknowledges its limitations. It does not apply to in vivo conditions; further research involving live animals is crucial to confirm the effectiveness in a practical setting. The study focuses on ovicidal activity and other parasitic life stages requiring different extraction methods or concentrations. Further studies are needed to determine the ideal dosage for maximum effectiveness while ensuring animal safety. Hence, this research aims to determine the prevalence rate of infected swine intensity of infection, investigate the efficacy of alagao against the parasitic activity of swine that focuses on the time exposure measurement needed for the complete ovicidal activity of the *Ascaris* spp., and determine the minimum concentration required for the elimination of *Ascaris* spp., ova.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Study Area

The fecal samples were collected from six different swine farms in Tanauan, Batangas, under the supervision of a registered veterinarian and the swine farm owner to guarantee adherence to proper collection procedures. Also, *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) leaves were obtained from a designated farm in Cavite City.

2.2 Plant material

Green, healthy, and mature leaves of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) were collected from a designated farm in Cavite City, verified and certificated by Mr. Alex S. Pedroso of the Bureau of Plant Industry - Crop Research and Production Support Division (BPI-CRPSD), and screened its phytochemical content at the University of Santo Tomas Research Center for the Natural Sciences and Applied Sciences- Analytical Services Laboratory (UST RCNAS-ASL).

2.3 Plant extraction

Premna odorata Blanco (Alagao) leaves were extracted through the decoction process. The leaves are cleaned with tap water to remove contaminants; after washing, they are crushed using a mortar and pestle to achieve powdered alagao leaves. The alagao powder was mixed with distilled water with a ratio of leaves: water = 1:1 (w:v). Then, the mixture was heated to the boiling point under cooling reflux to avoid water loss with evaporation. After that, the mixture was removed from heat, stood for 20 minutes, and filtered through filter paper (Khajehei et al., 2017).

2.4 Different concentrations of Plant Extract

The varying concentrations of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extracts were achieved using the crude extract and the addition of distilled water. 20 ml of the plant extract was diluted with 80 mL of distilled water to

achieve a 25% concentration. For 50% concentration, 40 ml of the extract was diluted with 80 ml of distilled water. Alongside 70%, 60 ml of alagao was diluted to 80 ml of distilled water. Lastly, 80 ml of alagao crude extract was diluted with 80 ml of distilled water to achieve 100% concentration (Garcia et al., 2022).

2.5 Data analysis

The fecal samples were collected from six Tanauan City, Batangas swine farms. Each swine farm collected 15 swine stool samples. They transported the specimen using the cooler with a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius and utilized 10% formalin for its preservative while on transport. After collection, they proceeded to the experimentation process, where Modified Kato-Katz Techniques were tested to determine the prevalence and intensity of infection in the collected sample. After Modified Kato-Katz, the positive samples were subjected to the Formalin Ether Concentration Technique (FECT) to extract sediments containing *Ascaris* spp., ova. They subjected the samples from FECT for ova destruction using the varying concentrations prepared. The experiment proceeded until the samples were disposed of. The disposal of the samples complied with the standard protocols of the World Health Organization (1947) and Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (2017), which consider all stool samples highly infectious to avoid spreading disease (World Health Organization, 2019).

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict guidelines to ensure the safety of researchers, animals, and the environment. No direct handling of swine was performed during the study. Instead, researchers patiently waited for the natural defecation of the swine to collect fecal samples, ensuring minimal disturbance to the animals. The collection of fecal samples was conducted under the supervision of a registered veterinarian and the swine farm owner to guarantee compliance with proper procedures and animal welfare standards.

Safety protocols were strictly followed throughout the study. Researchers wore appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves and masks, during sample collection and handling to minimize exposure to fecal samples. Local government regulations treated and disposed of all waste to prevent environmental contamination.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Prevalence Rate and Intensity of Infection

Table 1 shows the *Ascaris* spp., ova count, prevalence rate, eggs per gram, and intensity of infection found in recently dewormed swine on selected farms in Tanauan City, Batangas, Philippines. Out of 90 swine tests examined, 15 (17%) were positive for *Ascaris* spp. infection. Farm 1 has 2 *Ascaris* spp., with a 13% prevalence rate. Farms 2,3,4 have a 0 *Ascaris* spp.; the count indicates no infection was detected. Farm 5 has 7 *Ascaris* spp., with a prevalence rate of 46.67%, and Farm 6 has 6 *Ascaris* spp., counted with a prevalence rate of 40%. In addition, only Farms 1,5,6 yield a positive intensity of infection. Farm 1 had an EPG (eggs per gram) of 48, while Farm 6 had an EPG of 1152, resulting in a light-intensity infection. Farms 2, 3, and 4 had an EPG of 0. Farm 5 had a significantly higher EPG of 70176, indicating a high-intensity infection.

Table 1. *Prevalence and intensity of Ascaris spp. infections in selected Swine farms in Tanauan City, Batangas*

Study Site	No. Examined	% Positive	EPG	Intensity of Infection
F1	15	13.0%	48	Light Intensity Infection
F2	15	0.00%	0	0
F3	15	0.00%	0	0
F4	15	0.00%	0	0
F5	15	47.0%	70176	High Intensity Infection
F6	15	40.0%	1152	Light Intensity Infection
Total	90	17.0%		

Legend: >50,000 epg, Heavy Intensity Infection, 5,000-49,999 epg, Moderate Intensity Infection, 1-4,999 epg, Light Intensity Infection. F signifies Farm.
*EPG = Eggs per gram

Overall, 15 out of 90 swine (17%) tested positive for *Ascaris* spp., indicating a relatively common occurrence of this parasite among the sampled farms. The result suggests that deworming might not have been practical or that re-infection is happening relatively quickly. Additionally, the prevalence of infection varied significantly between

farms. Farms 1, 5, and 6 had positive cases, whereas Farms 2, 3, and 4 showed no detected infection. This variation could be due to differences in sanitation practices, swine housing conditions, or the timing of deworming relative to the parasite's life cycle (Pettersson et.al, 2021). The intensity of infection is based on the numerical grading, in which light-intensity infection only has an EPG of <4999, moderate-intensity infection contains 5000-49999 EPG and high-intensity infection with an EPG of >50,000 (Eyayu et al., 2021). Among the infected farms, Farms 1 and 6 displayed a light intensity of infection with EPG values below 5000. It indicates that deworming might have been partially successful in these cases. However, Farm 5 has a significantly high EPG with 70176 eggs per gram, indicating a high-intensity infection despite recent deworming, highlighting the need to investigate the effectiveness of the deworming program used on this farm.

In contrast to the findings of Pettersson et al. (2021), a study by Petterson et al. (2021) reported a lower prevalence rate of *Ascaris* spp. in swine. Petterson et al. (2021) also noted that altered farming routines focusing on improved pig welfare have not solely resulted in a higher occurrence of parasites, most likely due to the adequate biosecurity and hygiene practices instituted. Thus, there seems to be no conflict between implementing measures to promote pig welfare and adequately control the more pathogenic and economically important parasites. Additionally, the intensity of infection in Petterson et al. (2021) study produced 50–8,250 EPG values, showing light to moderate intensity, unlike the high-intensity infection observed. This further underscores the variability in infection dynamics and the potential influence of farm-specific factors such as sanitation and deworming efficacy. Both studies agree on the importance of monitoring EPG levels to assess the success of deworming programs and the need for tailored interventions based on farm-specific conditions.

3.2 Time of Exposure Required for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Figure 1 illustrates Trial 1 of the experiment that shows results of a low-level efficiency to satisfactory efficacy of the *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract. An undestroyed egg envelope with no recorded egg decay and embryo dissolution (Low efficiency) was observed between 15 minutes, 30 minutes, and 45 minutes. Hence, satisfactory efficiency, meaning a partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decay, and destroyed larvae egg, was seen between 60 minutes, 75 minutes, 90 minutes, 105 minutes, and 120 minutes. The positive and negative controls used showed low efficiency throughout the experiment's time requirement, showing no significant effect on the *Ascaris* spp., ova.

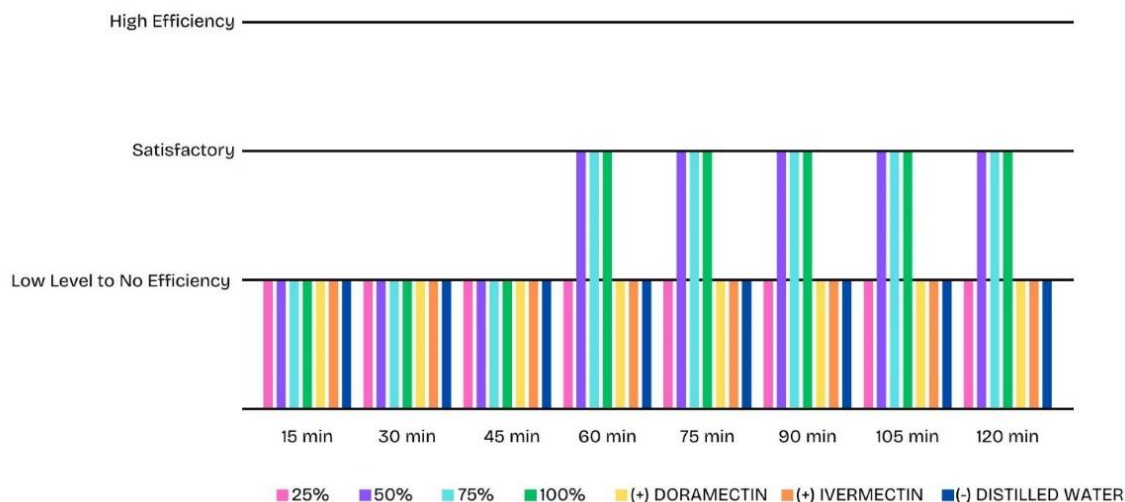


Figure 1. Trial 1 of Experiment to Determine the Time of Exposure Required for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficiency (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Figure 2 presented the results of Trial 2, which demonstrate a gradual increase in the effectiveness of the *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract against *Ascaris* spp., ova. An undestroyed egg envelope with no recorded egg decay and embryo dissolution (Low efficiency) was seen earlier during the 15, 30, and 45 minutes. However, the efficacy improved to satisfactory levels, meaning a partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decay, and destroyed larvae egg are observed at 60, 75, 90, 105, and 120 minutes later. The positive and negative

controls exhibited consistently low efficacy throughout the experiment, indicating minimal impact on the *Ascaris* spp., ova.

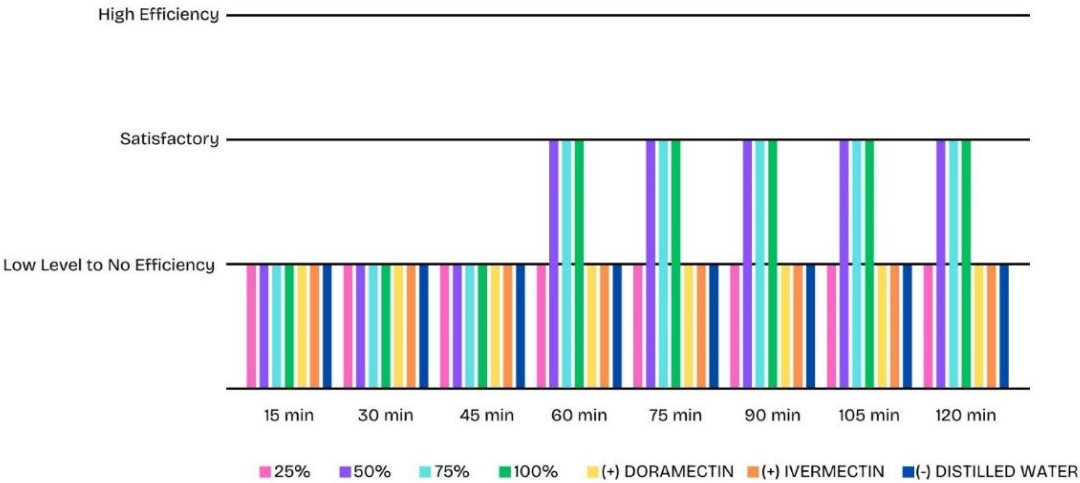


Figure 2. Trial 2 of Experiment to Determine the Time of Exposure Required for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficacy (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Figure 3 illustrated the effectiveness of the *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract against the ovicidal activity of *Ascaris* spp. in Trial 3. The results reveal a varied effect on ova disruption times. Lower concentrations, corresponding to 15, 30, and 45 minutes, exhibited low effectiveness, demonstrating an undestroyed egg envelope with no recorded egg decay and embryo dissolution. However, there was a significant improvement in ova disruption between 60 and 120 minutes, partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decay, and destroyed larvae egg (satisfactory efficacy) observed at these concentrations. Both the positive and negative controls displayed minimal impact throughout the experiment.

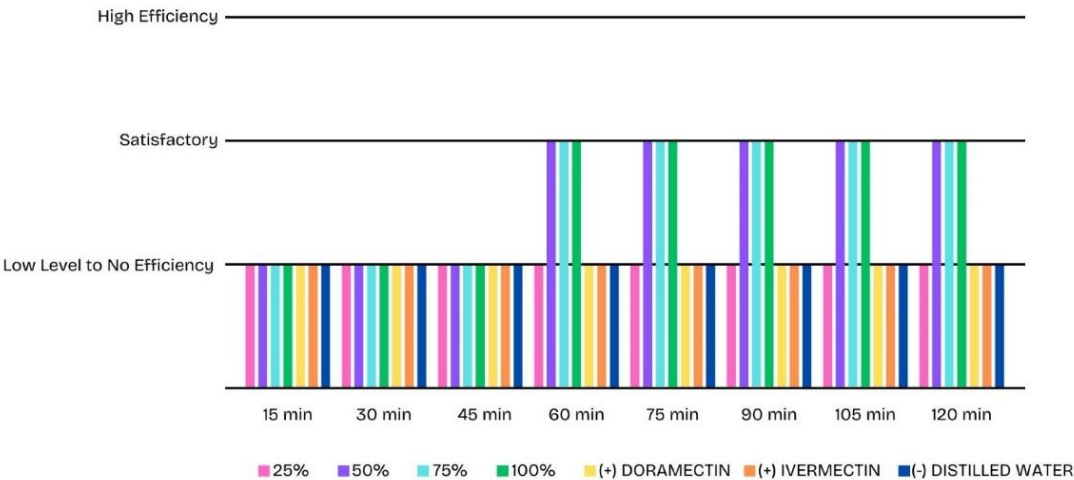


Figure 3. Trial 3 of Experiment to Determine the Time of Exposure Required for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficacy (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Figure 4 presents the results of Trial 1, which investigated the minimum concentration of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract required for ovicidal activity against *Ascaris* spp., ova. The three trials showed that the 25% concentration consistently exhibited low efficacy across all exposure times.

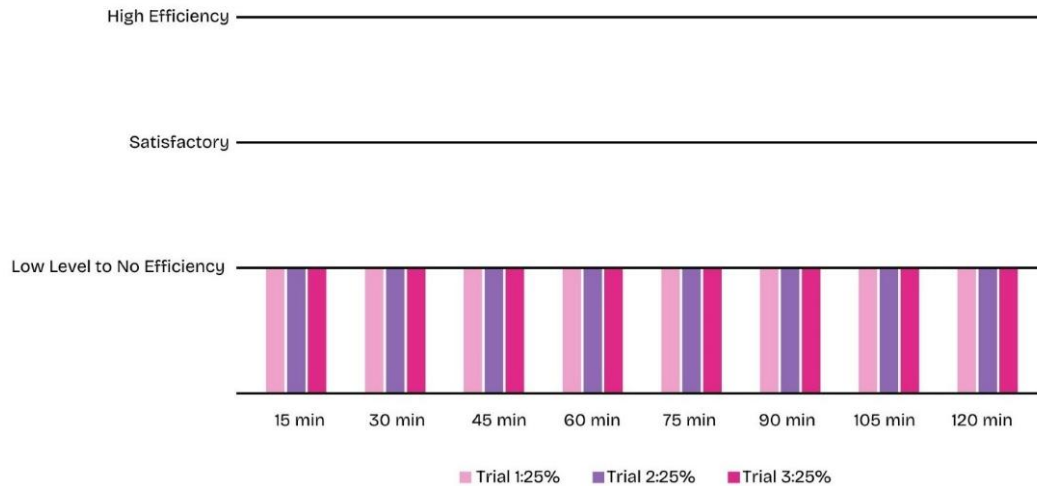


Figure 4. 25% Concentrated *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficacy (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Figure 5 revealed that the 50% concentration of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) demonstrates satisfactory efficacy in disrupting *Ascaris* spp., ova. It also showed that effective ovicidal activity with the 50% concentration begins at the 60-minute exposure time point.

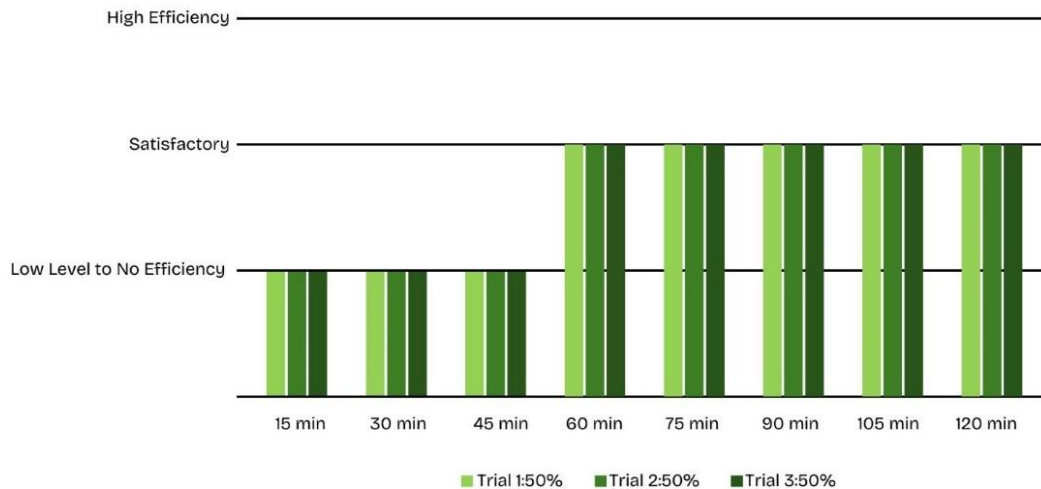


Figure 5. 50% Concentrated *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficacy (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Figure 6 demonstrated the results of all three trials, highlighting the efficacy of the 75% *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract concentration against *Ascaris* spp., ova. The extract displayed satisfactory efficacy in disrupting the *Ascaris* spp., across all trials. Hence, it also reveals that 60 minutes of exposure was required to achieve this 75% efficiency level.

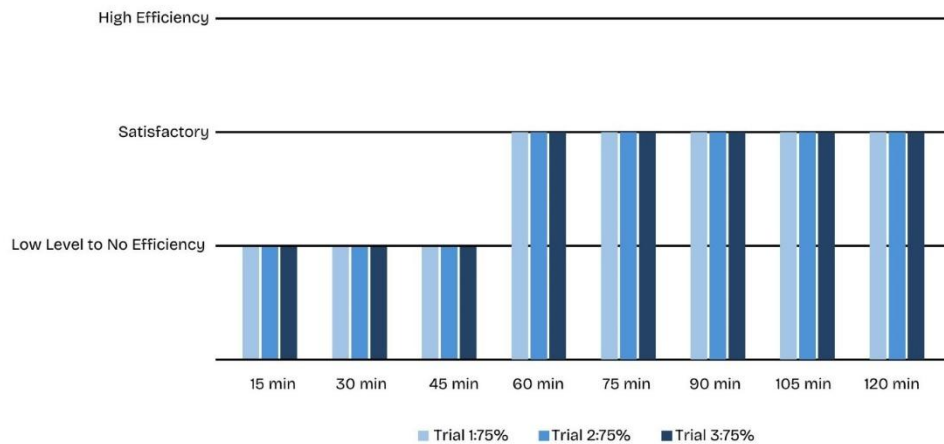


Figure 6. 75% Concentrated *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficacy (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Figure 7 confirmed the effectiveness of the 100% *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract concentration in disrupting *Ascaris* spp., ova across all three trials, potentially achieving even faster disruption than the 75% concentration.

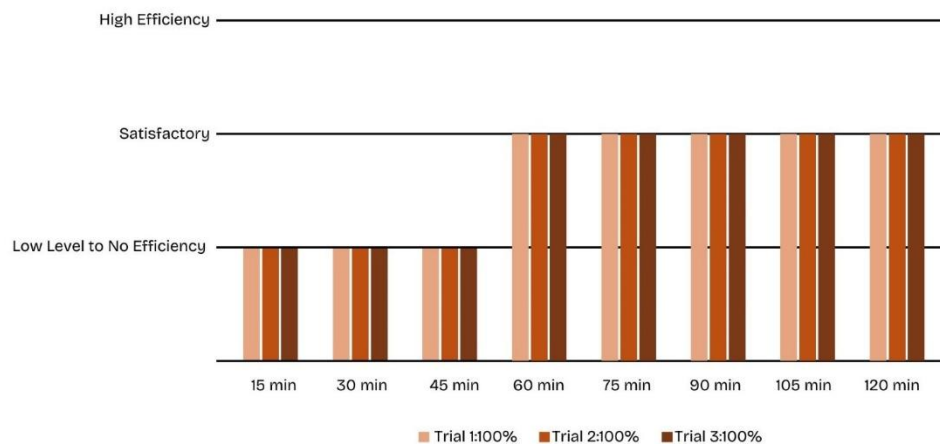


Figure 7. 100% Concentrated *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficacy (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Figure 8 revealed that neither positive nor negative control group had any significant ovicidal activity against *Ascaris* spp., ova over the tested period. Figures 2, 3, and 4 investigated the effectiveness of an aqueous leaf extract from *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) against *Ascaris* spp., ova collected from recently dewormed swine. Three separate trials were conducted, and aqueous leaf extract was tested in varying concentrations: 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%. Doramectin and Ivermectin were used as positive controls, and distilled water served as the negative control; the required time for exposure ranged from 15 minutes to 120 minutes (2 hours). The results, consistent across three separate trials, reveal a variety of efficacy depending on the extract's concentration and the exposure duration. The efficacy was determined by examining the following characteristics (Melnychuk & Yuskiv, 2018). It consistently reveals a low-level efficiency to satisfactory efficacy of the *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract. Among the time required to disrupt the *Ascaris* spp., ova, there was a low efficiency observed between 15 minutes, 30 minutes, and 45 minutes. Hence, satisfactory efficiency was seen between 60 minutes, 75 minutes,

90 minutes, 105 minutes, and 120 minutes. The positive and negative controls used showed low efficiency throughout the experiment's time requirement, showing no significant effect on the *Ascaris* spp., ova.

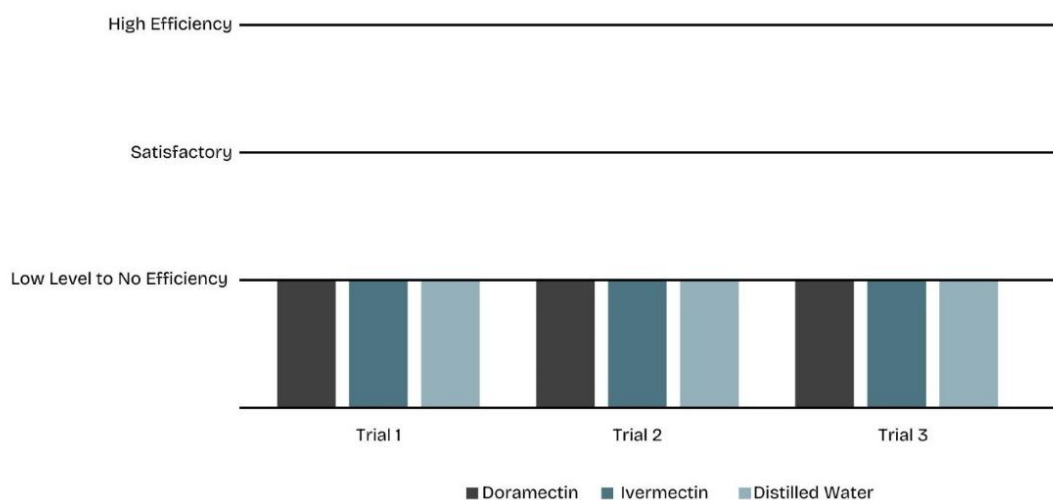


Figure 8. Control Groups for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

Note: *Low Level to No Efficiency (LL) = undestroyed egg envelope, no recorded egg decays, and embryo dissolution; Satisfactory (S) = partially destroyed egg envelope, partial egg decays, and destroyed larvae egg; High-Level Efficacy (HLE) = entire destruction of the egg envelope of *Ascaris* spp. ova, decays of eggs into separate fragments, larvae that may present are found dead and embryo is dissolved.

Low-level efficiency at shorter exposure times could be attributed to several factors. *Ascaris* spp., ova possess a thick shell (Keyzers, 2019) that might require more than 15 to 45 minutes to penetrate and disrupt the internal structures. Also, the 25% concentration might be insufficient to disrupt the ova within a short timeframe, while higher concentrations such as 50%, 75%, and 100% might achieve better results. Since the specimens were collected from recently dewormed swine, the swine immune system might have already partially deactivated them (Sulik et.al, 2023), making them less vulnerable to the extract's action even at shorter exposure times.

The study demonstrated the ovicidal efficacy of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract against *Ascaris* spp. ova at varying concentrations. Figure 5 revealed that a 50% concentration of the extract exhibited satisfactory efficacy, with effective ovicidal activity beginning at the 60-minute exposure mark. Similarly, Figure 6 highlighted the results of three trials using a 75% concentration, which also demonstrated satisfactory efficacy in disrupting *Ascaris* spp. ova, with a minimum of 60 minutes of exposure required to achieve this level of effectiveness. Figure 7 further confirmed the enhanced efficacy of the 100% concentration, which disrupted *Ascaris* spp. ova across all trials and potentially achieved faster disruption compared to the 75% concentration. In contrast, Figure 8 showed that neither the positive nor negative control groups exhibited any significant ovicidal activity over the tested period, underscoring the specific effectiveness of *Premna odorata* Blanco extract. These findings collectively suggest that higher concentrations of the extract yield faster and more efficient ovicidal activity, with the 100% concentration being the most effective. The lack of activity in the control groups further validates the extract's potential as a natural anthelmintic agent.

In comparison to the findings on *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract, a study by Panjaitan et al. (2021) demonstrated that *Cawat Anuman* (*Bauhinia* Sp.) leaf extract exhibited anthelmintic activity against *Ascaris* spp., with a 50% concentration achieving significant disruption after 900 minutes of exposure, which is slower than the 60-minute efficacy observed with *Premna odorata* Blanco at the same concentration. Similarly, a study by Husori et al. (2016) found that *Allium fistulosum* (welsh onion) leaf extract required a 100% concentration and 232 minutes of exposure to achieve comparable anthelmintic activity, highlighting the superior efficacy of *Premna odorata* Blanco in disrupting *Ascaris* spp. ova at lower exposure times. However, both studies align with the observation that higher concentrations of plant extracts generally yield faster and more effective anthelmintic activity, as seen in the 100% concentration of *Premna odorata* Blanco. These comparisons emphasize the potential of *Premna odorata* Blanco as a promising natural anthelmintic agent, particularly due to its faster action at lower concentrations compared to other plant extracts.

3.3 Minimum Concentration Required for Ovicidal Activity of *Ascaris* spp.

The observed results suggests that higher concentrations of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract might be more effective against *Ascaris* spp., ova, but requires a longer exposure time for optimal results. Among the varying concentrations prepared, 50% of the concentration shows significant results in partially disrupting the *Ascaris* spp., which serves as the minimum concentration required for the ovicidal activity of *Ascaris* spp. Figure 9 illustrated the *Ascaris* spp., ova at 50% concentrated *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao), the thick mammalian albuminous layer of *Ascaris* spp. was partially destroyed, showing half coverage only of its thick mammalian albuminous layer. Alongside 50% concentration efficacy, 75% and 100%, can also disrupt the *Ascaris* spp., ova.

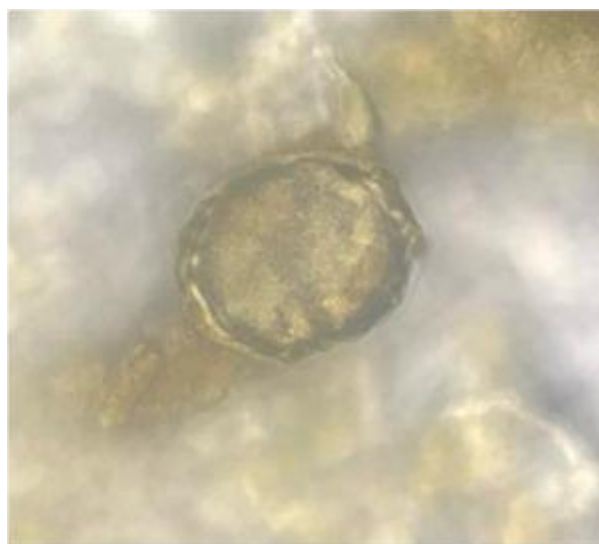


Figure 9. *Ascaris* spp., ova at 50% concentration of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous extract under Oil Immersion Objective

Figures 10 and 11 revealed that 100% of *Premna odorata* Blanco (alagao) aqueous leaf extract penetrated and disrupted the ova. It penetrated the thick mammalian albuminous layer of the *Ascaris* up until the germ cell, showing no content of its embryo. This result can significantly determine the effectiveness of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extracts as an alternative anthelmintic agent.

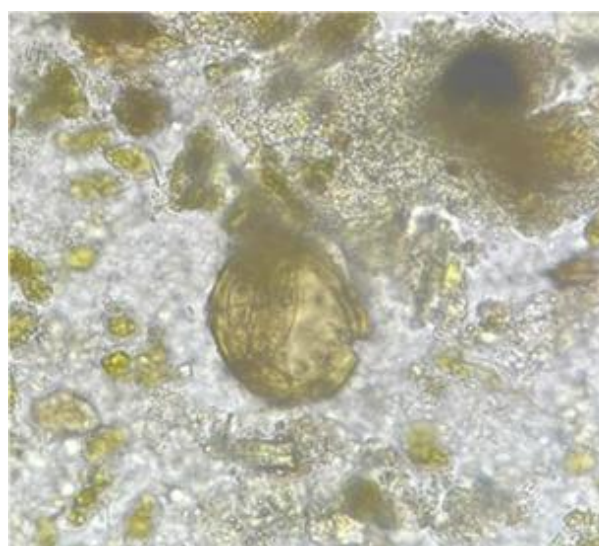


Figure 10. A photo of *Ascaris* spp., ova partially destroyed of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous extract under Oil Immersion Objective

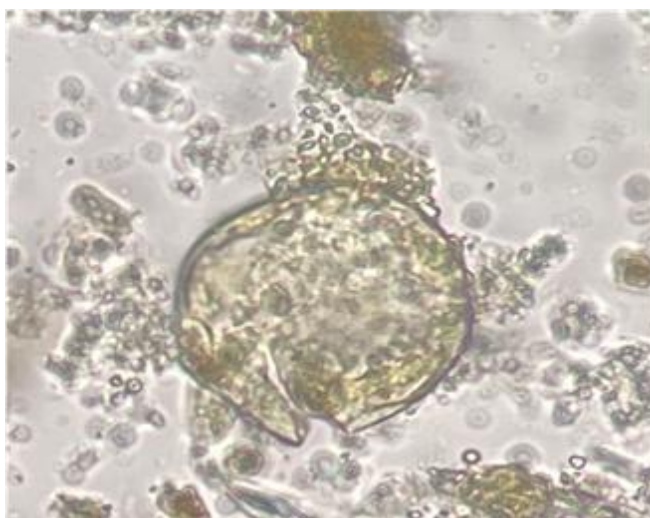


Figure 11. A photo of *Ascaris spp.*, ova partially penetrated by *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous extract under Oil Immersion Objective

4.0 Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrated the potential of *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) aqueous leaf extract as an effective anthelmintic treatment against *Ascaris spp.*, ova in swine. The extract, derived from the Lamiaceae family plant, provides a valuable alternative for managing emerging anthelmintic drug resistance in Tanauan City, Batangas, Philippines swine farms. In recent years, flavonoids have generated interest as potential therapeutic agents, particularly in an anthelmintic activity (Toklo et al., 2021) that can be used to develop alternatives to commercial anthelmintic drugs further. *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) exhibits a multifaceted mode of action. The aqueous leaf extract effectively penetrates *Ascaris spp.*, ova at various concentrations (50%, 75%, and 100%), disrupting their membranes and embryo development. Notably, compared to Doramectin and Ivermectin, the positive controls in this study showed lower effectiveness within the same timeframe. *Premna odorata* Blanco (Alagao) demonstrated significantly faster penetration within 60 minutes.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

R.O. Pumaras- Conceptualization; methodology; formal analysis; data curation; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing; supervision
 S.M. Gozon- Conceptualization; methodology; formal analysis; data curation; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing; supervision
 B. Osama- Methodology; formal analysis; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing
 F.N. Mosquera- Conceptualization; methodology; formal analysis; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing
 M.C. Pisarro- Conceptualization; methodology; formal analysis; data curation; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing;
 K.A. Rodrin- Methodology; formal analysis; data curation; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing; supervision
 A.L. Sambrano- Conceptualization; methodology; formal analysis; data curation; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgments

To Mr. Julius S. Villapando, the Medical Technology Laboratory Technician, for his unwavering support in conducting the study and for facilitating access to the laboratory facilities. Also, thank you to the Office of the City Veterinarian in the City of Tanauan for your overall support in collecting the specimen needed to perform the study.

The researchers' family, friends, and loved ones for helping, supporting, and motivating the researchers. They will never forget the continuous love and support they received, which contributed significantly to their mental, emotional, and spiritual growth and stability.

To the research associates, Mr. Steven Francois Dio Colina and Mr. Rovin Zachary Pimentel, for preparing our paper for its formal publication.

Lastly, the researchers are grateful and honored to the National University –Mall of Asia for the holistic learning offered by the university. Thus, the researchers have an environment of optimism and righteousness, allowing them to conduct this research.

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Impact of Teachers' Mindset, Skills, and Resilience on Teaching Performance

Ariel O. Planos Jr.*, Kim Chester P. Estillero, Jesselle C. Depiña, Rhezar Kent C. Evarrola, David G. Parsons
Rosario National High School, Division of Northern Samar, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: arielplanos661@gmail.com

Date received: February 5, 2025

Date revised: February 28, 2025

Date accepted: March 22, 2025

Originality: 95%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 5%

Recommended citation:

Planos Jr., O., Estillero, K.C., Depiña, J., Evarrola, R.K., Parsons, D. (2025). Impact of teachers' mindset, skills, and resilience on teaching performance. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 317-327.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.065>

Abstract. This study examines the relationship between teachers' mindset, ability-based practices, and adversity quotient in relation to teaching performance. It aims to determine how these factors influence teaching effectiveness and whether demographic characteristics play a significant role. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 108 randomly selected public school teachers through a validated survey questionnaire. Results indicate that teachers' demographic profiles do not significantly affect their mindset, ability-based practices, or adversity quotient, suggesting that these factors are influenced more by personal traits and experiences. A slight positive association was found between teachers' mindset and their implementation of ability-based practices, though not statistically significant, implying that other factors may play a greater role. However, teachers with a positive and growth-oriented mindset demonstrated higher resilience in facing challenges, which can enhance their teaching performance. A strong significant relationship was observed between ability-based practices and adversity quotient, indicating that teachers who effectively apply these practices tend to cope better with adversities, leading to improved performance. These findings highlight the importance of fostering a positive mindset and resilience among teachers to enhance their effectiveness.

Keywords: Ability-based practices; Adversity quotient; Teachers' mindset; Teaching performance.

1.0 Introduction

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, the effectiveness of teaching practices is more crucial than ever. The teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of their students, and their ability to adapt and grow can significantly impact on student success. According to (Dweck, 2006), teachers who embrace a growth mindset tend to create more engaging and supportive learning environments. Research indicates that teachers with a strong growth mindset and high AQ are generally more effective in their roles, resulting in improved student engagement and success (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Many existing studies concentrate on only one aspect, leaving teachers and policymakers without a comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact.

Dela Cruz (2023) emphasizes that a teacher's mindset plays a crucial role in their teaching performance. Research shows that teachers who adopt a growth mindset are more likely to adapt their teaching strategies to address the diverse needs of their students and are better prepared to face challenges in the classroom. Additionally, Muenks et al. (2018) highlight that implementing ability-based practices, such as differentiated instruction, is essential for meeting the varied learning needs within the classroom. Teachers who employ these strategies successfully create an inclusive environment that supports students with different ability levels. Research by Ronfeldt et al. (2018)

further supports the idea that teachers who employ ability-based practices, such as scaffolding and formative assessments, see improved performance. Moreover, Harris and Jones (2019) found that teachers who focus on building strengths through personalized learning strategies report greater job satisfaction and improved teaching performance. The study by Santos and Cruz (2020) stated that teachers with high adversity quotient (AQ) are equipped to handle challenges and stressors in the classroom, leading to improved teaching performance. These teachers demonstrate resilience when facing difficulties and are equipped to adapt to varied classroom environments. In a study by De Leon & Reyes (2021), teachers with a strong AQ showed improved problem-solving skills, positively affecting student engagement and achievement. As a result, the researchers were motivated to conduct the study to determine the influence of teachers' mindsets, ability-based practices, and adversity quotient on teachers' teaching performance.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to explore the nature and strength of relationships among various variables without manipulating them. According to MacDonnell (2021), this design effectively helps understand how psychological factors, such as mindset, influence teaching outcomes. Supporting this approach, Niu (2019) demonstrated that examining teacher strategies and their personal qualities can provide insights into their effectiveness in the classroom. In line with the descriptive-correlational design, this study utilized a survey questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. This method allows the researchers to gather comprehensive information on teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and performance. The correlational aspect of the design will help identify whether there is a significant relationship between the independent variables – teacher mindset, ability-based practices, and AQ – and the dependent variable – teaching performance. This design provides an understanding of how these factors influence the teaching performance of elementary and secondary teachers in the District of Rosario.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the District of Rosario, Division of Northern Samar. The municipality of Rosario is considered a 4th class municipality in the entire province of Northern Samar. The municipality's land area is 350 per square kilometers (900 per square mile) with 11 barangays, two of which are island Barangays, Barangay Buenavista and Barangay Ligaya, and an estimated population of 10,949. The Rosario District is composed of ten Elementary Schools, namely: Rosario Central School, considered the largest elementary school, composing of thirty-one teachers; Salhag Elementary School has fourteen teachers; Buenavista Elementary School has eight teachers; Kailangan Elementary School has five teachers; Guindaulan Elementary School has nine teachers, Bantolinao Elementary School has nine teachers, Aguada Elementary School has five teachers, Jamoog Elementary School has seven teachers, Ligaya Elementary School has six Teachers, and R. F Tobes Elementary School with four teachers). For the secondary schools in the district, Rosario National High School is considered as the largest school in the district, comprising a total of forty-two secondary teachers; Buenavista National High School with ten teachers; and lastly, Guindaulan National High School with nine teachers.

2.3 Research Participants

The total population of elementary and secondary teaching personnel in the Rosario District, Division of Northern Samar, is 148. A minimum acceptable sample size of 108 teacher-participants was recommended for the survey at a 5% margin error and 95% confidence interval. These public elementary and secondary teachers were randomly selected from the target population through stratified random sampling. These teachers also came from eleven elementary schools and three secondary schools in the Rosario, Division of Northern Samar district. They were chosen regardless of their gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, seminars, and training attended.

2.4 Research Instrument

This study used an adapted survey questionnaire from three different sources as the main instrument and the primary data source to answer the research questions of this study. The study followed ethical considerations such as providing respondents with informed consent, and respondents' participation was voluntary. Several steps were taken to validate the instruments. Education and assessment experts reviewed the adapted and modified questionnaires to ensure study objectives were met. Second, a pilot test with a small sample of respondents

identified question-wording ambiguities and assessed the instruments' clarity and comprehensiveness of the content indicators.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study used rigorous and systematic steps to collect data. Initially, the school principals and school heads sought permission to conduct the study. Second, the researchers introduced themselves and explained the study's rationale to the teacher-participants who would fill out the questionnaires. Teachers were asked to evaluate the influences of mindset, ability-based practices, and adversity quotient in their teaching performance. Third, the researchers briefly explained to the teachers how each research questionnaire was completed and returned. Fourth, once all the respondents had answered and completed the research questionnaires, the researchers personally collected them. Lastly, the researchers assured the respondents that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and that the study's findings would only be used for academic and educational purposes.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines. The informed consent was provided to the teacher-participants. The researchers explained the purpose and objectives of the study, which was to safeguard the respondents' fundamental rights. The respondents' participation was voluntary, and they were to dismiss themselves from the study at any time they felt uncomfortable. The teachers' participation was protected from harm: physical, social, psychological, and all other forms of harm were kept to an absolute minimum. The dignity and well-being of the teacher-participants who responded were always protected. The research data remained confidential throughout the study, and the teacher-participants' rights were protected, ensuring scientific or academic integrity. Furthermore, proper communication of results must be practiced to ensure this research study is free of plagiarism or research misconduct.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Participants

The results (see Table 1) showed diverse ranges of ages among the respondents. As illustrated in the table above, many respondents fall from 31-40 years of age, gaining the highest percentage of 37.04%. The fact that many of the respondents were considered in the middle category of ages suggests that they were more skillful and had high enthusiasm for the student's learning engagement compared to those younger or older. However, only 5 or 4.63% were considered 61 years and above and were found little and considered few in the district. Mohd et al. (2018) noted a notable distinction between age, experience, and teacher effectiveness and the ability to contribute to their capacity to construct more effective and engaging learning experiences for students.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of respondents' demographic profile according to age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
61 years and above	5	4.63%
51 - 60 years	13	12.0%
41 - 50 years	32	29.6%
31 - 40 years	40	37.0%
21 - 30 years	18	16.6%

The result (see Table 2) indicated that the respondents' gender distribution was unequal among the 108 samples. In the given table, females predominantly cover the population of the respondents, with 92 in total (85.19%). In contrast, males, with 16 in total, occupied the remaining 14.81% of the total population of the respondents. The data revealed that females over-represented the whole study among the teacher participants, implying that teaching is regarded as suitable for women. Cultural expectations and social norms shape this perception. This societal perception has contributed to the over-representation of women in the teaching workforce (Bongco et al., 2020).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of respondents' demographic profile according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	16	14.8%
Female	92	85.1%

It was indicated in the result (see Table 3) that there was a predominance of married respondents, with 86.11% of the total population of the respondents. No divorce or separation was noted among teacher participants; single individuals represented 11.11% and widowed, with only 2.78% of the respondents. The table shows that many of the teacher-participants were married and had stable and committed relationships. Mishra (2020) explains that it is conceivable that educators may possess more robust social support structures or that the inherent nature of their profession imbues a sense of purpose and significance, potentially serving as a stabilizing factor for marital relationships.

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics of respondents' demographic profile according to civil status*

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	12	11.1%
Married	93	86.1%
Widowed	3	2.78%
Divorced/Separated	0	0.00%

The data in Table 4 showed a varied pattern in the educational attainment of the teacher-respondents. Teachers with finished master's degrees comprise the highest percentage in the given data, 51.85%. This implies that respondents are considered proficient in teaching, able to utilize different effective teaching practices, and can personally develop a good mindset and handle teaching adversities. Pursuing higher education among teachers helps them grow and deepen their pedagogical knowledge, providing them with advancements in the curriculum to enhance their teaching skills and improve student learning outcomes. Omer & Mehmet (2021), based on their study it was determined that the reasons why teachers pursue master's degrees are for personal development or self-improvement in increasing knowledge in the field of education.

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics of respondents' demographic profile according to educational attainment*

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bachelor's Degree	18	16.6%
Master's Degree Level	31	28.7%
Master's Degree Graduate	56	51.8%
Doctorate Degree Level	2	1.85%
Doctorate Degree Graduate	1	0.93%
Post-Doctorate Degree	0	0.00%

The study result showed a varied distribution of respondents regarding teaching experience (see Table 5). In the table given, the most significant teaching experience was those teachers with 6-10 years of experience, accounting for 33.33% of the total population of the respondents. It implies that more experienced teachers understand their subject matter better and can explain concepts more clearly. Sancar et al. (2022) stated that a robust teaching community where a culture of continuous learning and mutual support flourishes ultimately benefits educators and, by extension, the students they serve. Through these collaborative efforts, educators create an atmosphere conducive to growth, innovation, and the sustained advancement of the educational landscape.

Table 5. *Descriptive statistics of respondents' demographic profile according to teaching experience*

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21 years and above	24	22.2%
16 – 20 years	8	7.41%
11 - 15 years	28	25.9%
6 - 10 years	36	33.3%
5 years and below	12	11.1%

Table 6 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of seminars and training attended by the teacher-respondents. In the given result, teachers who attended division-level seminars and training comprised 58.33% of the total population of the respondents. It implies from this study that distribution illustrates how teachers address the need to enhance their skills and knowledge for effective teaching. Seminars and Trainings offered an avenue to help teachers update and align their teaching skills and expertise in the vast, changing educational landscape. However, few attended regional and national seminars and training; maybe because of the fewer opportunities for teachers to attend, sometimes it is costly for the teachers.

Table 6. *Descriptive statistics of respondents' demographic profile according to seminars and training attended*

Seminars and Trainings Attended	Frequency	Percentage (%)
National Level	7	6.48%
Regional Level	12	11.1%
Division Level	63	58.3%
District Level	22	20.3%
School-Based	4	3.70%

3.2 Influence of Teacher's Mindset on Teaching Performance

The findings revealed (see Table 7) that the highest-ranked item was teachers' belief in student potential (growth mindset) on student effort, with a mean score of 4.67, indicating a very high influence. This study demonstrates that teachers' positive beliefs in their students' potential significantly enhance student effort. The second most influential factor was teachers' positive classroom management, which had a mean score of 4.57 and underscored the importance of maintaining students' focus. The third factor was teachers' use of differentiated instructions, with a mean score of 4.56, highlighting the need to tailor teaching methods to meet diverse student needs. These findings imply that fostering positive relationships and effective communication is essential for minimizing adverse impacts on student outcomes. Ultimately, the overall mean score of 4.17, with a high influence interpretation, indicates that teachers' mindset is crucial to their teaching performance. While many factors demonstrated very high influence, there remains room for improvement in addressing negative aspects and reinforcing positive teaching behaviors to optimize student learning experiences and outcomes. Moreover, Dweck (2006) examined the role of teachers' mindsets in shaping student success. She found out that teachers with a growth mindset believe intelligence and abilities are not fixed traits but can be developed through effort, persistence, and learning from mistakes.

Table 7. *Influence of teacher's mindset on teaching performance*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Teacher's belief in student potential (growth mindset) on student effort.	4.67	0.53	Very High Influence
Teacher's belief in innate ability (fixed mindset) on student persistence.	4.43	0.61	Very High Influence
Teacher's high expectations of student achievement. Teacher's low expectations on student self-confidence.	4.25	0.71	Very High Influence
Teacher's low expectations on student self-confidence.	3.70	1.09	High Influence
Teacher's belief in student potential on student classroom engagement.	4.42	0.64	Very High Influence
Teacher's belief in student limitations on student participation.	4.07	0.85	High Influence
Teacher's teaching enthusiasm on student motivation.	4.48	0.66	Very High Influence
Teacher's use of differentiated instruction on student understanding.	4.56	0.53	Very High Influence
Teacher's positive classroom management on student on-task behavior.	4.57	0.80	Very High Influence
Teacher's negative classroom management on student anxiety.	3.86	1.14	High Influence
Teacher's use of formative assessment on student learning progress.	4.41	0.87	Very High Influence
Teacher's lack of formative assessment on student understanding of goals.	3.69	1.26	High Influence
Teacher's positive feedback on student self-efficacy.	4.29	0.81	Very High Influence
Teacher's negative feedback on student emotional well-being.	3.69	1.20	High Influence
Teacher's positive relationships with students on student academic performance.	4.31	0.83	Very High Influence
Teacher's negative relationships with students on student behavior.	3.68	1.22	High Influence
Teacher's clear communication of expectations on student task completion.	4.26	0.85	Very High Influence
Teacher's unclear communication of expectations on student frustration.	3.68	1.27	High Influence
Teacher's mindset on student test scores.	4.17	0.80	High Influence
Teacher's mindset on overall student academic performance.	4.31	0.74	Very High Influence
Grand Mean	4.17	0.87	High Influence

3.3 Influence of Ability-Based Practices on Teaching Performance

The mean scores and standard deviations (SD) consistently indicated positive ratings, reflecting excellent implementation of practices (see Table 8). The result indicates that teachers identify individual student learning needs with a mean score of 4.65, making it the most influential teaching practice and highlighting excellent implementation. This underscores the importance of tailoring instructions to meet each student's unique learning requirements, serving as the cornerstone of effective teaching. Secondly, teachers accurately use assessments to measure students' understanding, with a mean score of 4.64. This emphasizes the critical role of precise and practical assessment in guiding instruction and enhancing student learning. Additionally, the use of technology to support diverse learning needs ranked third, with a mean score of 4.62. This demonstrates the significant impact of integrating technology to accommodate various learning styles and abilities. Furthermore, the study by Torres (2017) explored the effectiveness of ability-based teaching practices among teachers in the Philippines. Ability-

based practices, such as differentiated instruction, involve tailoring teaching methods to meet student's diverse learning needs and abilities. The study found that teachers who applied these practices could create a more inclusive classroom environment where every student could succeed. Using strategies like varied learning materials, flexible grouping, and formative assessments, teachers could cater to individual learning paces and provide targeted interventions.

Table 8. *Influence of ability-based practices in teaching performance*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The teacher identifies individual student learning needs.	4.65	0.53	Excellent Implementation
The teacher differentiates instruction for various learning styles.	4.54	0.60	Excellent Implementation
The teacher uses diverse teaching methods for different abilities.	4.57	0.56	Excellent Implementation
The teacher allows students to learn at their own pace.	4.54	0.58	Excellent Implementation
The teacher provides individualized feedback and support.	4.59	0.58	Excellent Implementation
The teacher uses assessments to measure student understanding accurately.	4.64	0.58	Excellent Implementation
The teacher sets challenging but achievable goals for each student.	4.59	0.56	Excellent Implementation
The teacher facilitates collaboration among students of varying abilities.	4.51	0.63	Excellent Implementation
The teacher encourages risk-taking and learning from mistakes.	4.43	0.61	Excellent Implementation
The teacher creates a supportive and inclusive classroom environment.	4.47	0.58	Excellent Implementation
The teacher uses technology to support diverse learning needs.	4.62	0.54	Excellent Implementation
The teacher provides resources for students with learning difficulties.	4.51	0.59	Excellent Implementation
The teacher monitors student progress and adjusts instruction.	4.55	0.52	Excellent Implementation
The teacher encourages self-reflection and goal-setting.	4.49	0.57	Excellent Implementation
The teacher allows students to demonstrate learning in various ways.	4.56	0.52	Excellent Implementation
The teacher incorporates student choice and autonomy.	4.44	0.58	Excellent Implementation
The teacher uses formative assessment to guide instruction.	4.54	0.57	Excellent Implementation
The teacher provides clear expectations and rubrics.	4.48	0.60	Excellent Implementation
The teacher fosters a positive and motivating learning environment.	4.52	0.60	Excellent Implementation
The teacher seeks feedback from students to improve teaching.	4.58	0.64	Excellent Implementation
Grand Mean	4.54	0.58	Excellent Implementation

3.4 Influence of Adversity Quotient on Teaching Performance

The results indicate that teacher respondents demonstrated exceptional resilience during times of adversity. The highest-ranked statement, "I remain calm and focused even during stressful situations in the classroom," received a mean score of 4.56, highlighting the importance of maintaining composure under pressure. This suggests that emotional regulation is a crucial factor in teachers' resilience. The second statement, "I can effectively deal with difficult students," had a mean score of 4.52, emphasizing the necessity of effective behavior management strategies for constructively handling challenging learners. The third statement, "I keep a positive attitude even when facing setbacks," garnered a mean score of 4.51, indicating that optimism significantly contributes to a teacher's ability to overcome adversity.

Table 9. *Influence of adversity quotient on teaching performance*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I remain calm and focused even during stressful situations in the classroom.	4.56	0.53	Exceptional Resilience
I quickly identify and implement solutions to classroom problems.	4.45	0.63	Exceptional Resilience
I see challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.	4.47	0.55	Exceptional Resilience
I keep a positive attitude even when facing setbacks.	4.51	0.54	Exceptional Resilience
I effectively manage my time and workload to prevent feeling overwhelmed.	4.43	0.51	Exceptional Resilience
I bounce back quickly from disappointments or failures.	4.24	0.69	Exceptional Resilience
I seek support from colleagues or mentors when needed.	4.43	0.58	Exceptional Resilience
I proactively address potential problems before they escalate.	4.48	0.57	Exceptional Resilience
I can effectively manage my stress levels to prevent burnout.	4.48	0.57	Exceptional Resilience
I maintain a healthy work-life balance.	4.44	0.57	Exceptional Resilience
I adapt my teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of my students.	4.50	0.60	Exceptional Resilience
I persevere through challenging situations without giving up.	4.48	0.54	Exceptional Resilience
I learn from my mistakes and use them to improve my teaching.	4.48	0.54	Exceptional Resilience
I can effectively communicate with parents and administrators.	4.40	0.64	Exceptional Resilience
I am confident in my ability to handle unexpected events.	4.42	0.56	Exceptional Resilience
I effectively manage conflict in the classroom.	4.49	0.54	Exceptional Resilience
I can maintain a positive and encouraging classroom environment.	4.49	0.57	Exceptional Resilience
I can effectively deal with difficult students.	4.52	0.54	Exceptional Resilience
I can effectively deal with criticism.	4.42	0.68	Exceptional Resilience
I can maintain my enthusiasm for teaching despite the challenges I face.	4.44	0.68	Exceptional Resilience
Grand Mean	4.46	0.58	Exceptional Resilience

The overall grand mean of 4.46 reflects a strong exceptional resilience level across all measured indicators. However, despite the consistently high scores, the findings suggest potential areas for improvement, particularly in recovering from failure and managing criticism. Enhancing these skills could improve teaching performance by developing a more robust adversity quotient. Additionally, Stoltz (2016) examined the Adversity Quotient (AQ) concept and its influence on teachers' performance in various educational settings. His research found that teachers with a high AQ are more resilient and can maintain high levels of teaching effectiveness, even when facing personal, institutional, or student-related challenges.

3.5 Relationship Between Demographic Profile Variables and Teachers' Mindsets

The chi-square was utilized to determine the relationship between demographic profile variables and the influence of teachers' mindsets on teaching performance. The findings presented that the computed chi-square value for age was 9.32, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296 at a 0.05 significance level. The null hypothesis was not rejected since the chi-square value was less than the critical value. The findings indicate that age has no significant relationship with the influence of teachers' mindsets on teaching performance. For the gender, the computed chi-square value was 2.04, with 4 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This shows that gender has no significance in influencing teachers' mindsets. The computed chi-square for the civil status value was 3.53, with 12 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 21.026. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant relationship between civil status and teachers' mindset. The computed chi-square value for educational attainment is 21.57, with 20 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 31.41. The null hypothesis was not rejected, showing no significant relationship between educational attainment and teachers' mindset. In the years of teaching experience, the computed chi-square value is 21.13, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Indicating no significant relationship between teaching experience and teachers' mindset. Lastly, for the seminars and training attended, the computed chi-square value is 5.76, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296. The null hypothesis was not rejected, meaning no significant relationship exists between seminars/trainings attended and teachers' mindsets. The result indicates that demographic factors, including age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and seminars and training attended, do not significantly influence teachers' mindset in teaching performance. This suggests that mindset development may depend more on personal attributes, intrinsic motivation, or school environment than demographic characteristics. Educational institutions should prioritize inclusive mindset enhancement strategies for all teacher demographics, focusing on fostering growth-oriented attitudes and resilience through targeted interventions emphasizing cognitive, emotional, and professional growth for improved teaching outcomes.

Table 10. *Test of the relationship between the demographic profile and teachers' mindset*

Variables			Chi-square Value	Critical-Value	df	Level of Significance	Decision	Interpretation
Demographic Profile	Age	Teachers' Mindset	9.32	26.29	16	0.05	Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Gender		2.04	9.488	4		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Civil Status		3.53	21.02	12		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Educational Attainment		21.5	31.41	20		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Years of Teaching		21.1	26.29	16		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Seminar and Trainings Attended		5.76	26.29	16		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant

3.6 Relationship Between Demographic Profile Variables and Ability-Based Practices

The result (see Table 11) showed that the computed chi-square value for age was 3.01, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296 at a 0.05 significance level. The null hypothesis was not rejected since the chi-square value was less than the critical value. It indicates that age does not have a significant relationship with the influence of ability-based practices in teaching performance. For the gender, the computed chi-square value was 0.15, with 4 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 9.488. Therefore, the hypothesis statement was not rejected; it indicates that gender was not significantly related to the influence of ability-based practices. For the civil status,

the computed chi-square value was 0.42, with 12 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 21.026. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant relationship between civil status and the influence of ability-based practices. The computed chi-square value for educational attainment was 7.83, with 20 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 31.41. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant relationship between educational attainment and the influence of ability-based practices. For the years of teaching experience, the computed chi-square value was 8.92, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296. The null hypothesis was not rejected, showing no significant relationship between years of teaching experience and the influence of ability-based practices. Lastly, for the seminars and training attended, the computed chi-square value is 9.09, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant relationship between seminars/training attended and the influence of ability-based practices. The findings suggested that demographic factors do not significantly influence the use of ability-based practices in teaching performance. This implies that other factors, such as professional development quality, instructional support, or intrinsic motivation influence the adoption and effectiveness of ability-based teaching strategies. Educational institutions should focus on enhancing teaching practices through targeted training and resources that address specific teaching challenges rather than relying solely on demographic characteristics to foster more effective and adaptive teaching methodologies.

Table 11. *Test of the relationship between demographic profile and ability-based practices*

Variables			Chi-square Value	Critical -Value	df	Level of Significance	Decision	Interpretation
Demographic Profile	Age	Ability-based Practices	3.01	26.29	16	0.05	Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Gender		0.15	9.488	4		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Civil Status		0.42	21.02	12		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Educational Attainment		7.83	31.41	20		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Years of Teaching		8.92	26.29	16		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Seminar and Trainings Attended		9.09	26.29	16		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant

3.7 Relationship Between Demographic Profile Variables and Adversity Quotient

In the given result (see Table 12), the computed chi-square value is 0.65, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296 at a 0.05 significance level. Since the chi-square value was less than the critical value, therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. It indicates that age does not significantly relate to the adversity quotient in teaching performance. For the gender category, the computed chi-square value was 1.07, with 4 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected; it shows that gender was not significantly related to the adversity quotient. For the civil status of the teacher-respondents, the computed chi-square value was 1.49, with 12 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 21.026. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant relationship between civil status and the adversity quotient. The educational attainment, the computed chi-square value was 10.47, with 20 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 31.41. The null hypothesis was not rejected, meaning there was no significant relationship between educational attainment and the adversity quotient. For the years of teaching experience, the computed chi-square value was 9.3, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected; it shows no significant relationship between teaching experience and the adversity quotient. For the seminars and training Attended, the computed chi-square value was 2.96, with 16 degrees of freedom and a critical value of 26.296. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected; it indicates no significant relationship between seminars/training attended and the adversity quotient. The results revealed that demographic factors, including age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, and seminars/training attended, do not significantly affect the adversity quotient in teaching performance. The findings suggest that resilience and the ability to manage adversity are likely influenced more by personal traits, professional attitudes, or institutional support rather than demographic characteristics. Educational stakeholders should prioritize fostering a supportive work environment, offering mentorship, and providing resilience-building programs to enhance the adversity quotient among teachers across diverse backgrounds, ensuring that all educators are better equipped to handle challenges in the teaching profession.

Table 12. *Test of the relationship between the demographic profile and the adversity quotient*

Variables		Chi-square Value	Critical -Value	df	Level of Significance	Decision	Interpretation
Demographic Profile	Age	0.65	26.29	16	0.05	Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Gender	1.07	9.488	4		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Civil Status	1.49	21.02	12		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Educational Attainment	10.47	31.41	20		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Years of Teaching	9.3	26.29	16		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Seminar and Trainings Attended	2.96	26.29	16		Fail to reject Ho	Not significant
	Ability-based Practices						

3.8 Relationship Between Teachers' Mindset, Ability-based Practices, and Adversity Quotient

The result (see Table 13) showed that the Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.18$ indicates a weak positive correlation between the influences of teachers' mindset and ability-based practices in teaching performance. This suggests that as teachers' mindset influence their ability-based practices, there was a slight tendency for their teaching performance to improve, but the relationship was weak. The calculated t-statistic value of 1.88 and p-value of 0.06 indicated that the relationship was not statistically significant, as the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected, and it can be concluded that there was no significant relationship between teachers' mindset and their ability-based practices in teaching performance. The findings suggest that there is a weak positive correlation between teachers' mindset and their ability-based practices; the relationship was not statistically significant.

Table 13. *Test of the relationship between the influences of teachers' mindset and ability-based practices*

Variables	Pearson-r		Interpretation	
	t-stat value	p-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Influences of Teachers' Mind-Set and Ability-Based Practices	1.88	0.06	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant

This implies that factors other than mindset may play a more prominent role in determining how effectively teachers implement ability-based practices in their teaching. Investigating other potential influences, such as teaching experience, training, or institutional support, may be beneficial to understanding the key drivers of effective teaching practices. Given that the relationship was insignificant, future research could explore deeper factors that might help strengthen teachers' ability-based practices and enhance their overall teaching performance.

The Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.25$ indicates a weak positive correlation between the influences of teachers' mindset and their adversity quotient in teaching performance. This suggests that as teachers' mindsets improve, there is a slight tendency for their adversity quotient (resilience) to improve teaching performance. The calculated t-statistic value of 2.66 and p-value of 0.01 indicate that the relationship was statistically significant, as the p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it can be concluded that there was a significant weak positive relationship between teachers' mindset and their adversity quotient in teaching performance.

Table 14. *Test of the relationship between the influences of teachers' mindset and adversity quotient*

Variables	Pearson-r		Interpretation	
	t-stat value	p-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Influences of Teachers' Mind-Set and Adversity Quotient	2.66	0.01	Reject Ho	Significant

The findings suggested that teachers with a more positive and growth-oriented mindset tend to exhibit higher levels of resilience in facing challenges in their teaching. This indicates that fostering a positive mindset may

enhance teachers' ability to manage adversity, improving their teaching performance. Given the significant relationship, it may be beneficial for educational institutions to focus on developing and nurturing teachers' mindsets through professional development programs aimed at building resilience and a growth-oriented approach to challenges. This could contribute to better teaching outcomes and a supportive teaching environment.

The result (see Table 15) showed that the Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.76$ indicates a strong positive correlation between the influences of ability-based practices and adversity quotient in teaching performance. This suggests that as teachers apply more ability-based practices, their ability to handle adversity improves. The calculated t-statistic value of 12.04 and p-value of 0.00 indicates that the relationship was statistically significant, as the p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it can be concluded that there is a significant, strong positive relationship between the use of ability-based practices and the adversity quotient in teaching performance.

Table 15. *Test of the relationship between the influences of ability-based practices and adversity quotient*

Variables	Pearson-r		Interpretation	
	0.76		Strong Positive Correlation	
Influences of Ability-Based and Adversity Quotient	t-stat value	p-Value	Decision	Interpretation
	12.04	0.00	Reject Ho	Significant

The findings suggest that the more teachers implement ability-based practices, the better their ability to cope with adversity in their teaching roles. This highlights the importance of ability-based strategies in enhancing teachers' resilience, which can improve teaching performance. Given the strong and significant relationship, educational institutions and policymakers should consider incorporating ability-based practices into teacher training programs, as these practices might be key to improving teachers' ability to manage challenges effectively. Such initiatives can lead to enhanced teaching outcomes and more resilient educators equipped to handle the demands of the teaching profession.

4.0 Conclusion

Most of the teachers in the district exhibit a growth mindset and demonstrate resilience in their practices and challenges, persist in consistently applying ability-based practices and managing classroom adversities, particularly among those with lower AQ. Teachers with a high growth mindset and strong AQ are more adaptable, resilient, and effective in their teaching, contributing to better student engagement and learning outcomes. It is necessary to foster a growth mindset, improve ability-based teaching practices, and build teachers' resilience. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from school administrators, policymakers, and education stakeholders to provide targeted professional development programs, emotional support, and teacher resources. Only through such a comprehensive approach can we support teachers in their professional growth and ensure that they remain effective in the face of challenges, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes in the District of Rosario.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors indicate equal contribution to each section. The authors reviewed and approved the final work.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

First and foremost, the researchers would like to express utmost gratitude to the Almighty Father, the source of everything and who made this study possible. To Dr. David G. Parsons, our research adviser, who gave us unending help and research advice and guidance, and for sharing his knowledge and assistance that we needed, which helped us greatly enrich our study. To Mr. Mark Christian C. Tingzon, thank you for your continuous expertise and guidance in the computations and statistical interpretations of our data, which have contributed significantly to the improvements of the study. The researchers would also wish to express their gratitude to all the principals and school heads in the district of Rosario, who worked actively to provide us with the necessary data and other study information. To the teacher-participants of our study, we are truly grateful for the hard work and enthusiasm each of us has put into this task; without your cooperation, it would not have been possible to finish this commendable work of ours. To our family and friends, thank you for their fullest support, understanding, financial assistance, and continuous emotional and moral encouragement, which the researchers needed the most, and for encouraging and motivating the researchers to continue and finish the task.

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Development and Sensory Evaluation of Herbal Tea Products from Leaves and Fruits of Mulberry (*Morus alba*)

Glennadi R. Rualo*, Rose F. Cortez, Crystal Monique J. Estipular, Michelle V. Reyes, Jervin S. Aquino
Department of Biological and Physical Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences,
Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State Univesity, Agoo, La Union Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: grualo@dmmmsu.edu.ph

Date received: November 15, 2024

Date revised: February 28, 2025

Date accepted: March 23, 2025

Originality: 88%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 12%

Recommended citation:

Rualo, G., Cortez, R., Estipular, C.M., Reyes, M., Aquino, J. (2025). Development and sensory evaluation of herbal tea products from leaves and fruits of Mulberry (*Morus alba*). *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 328-335. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0620>

Abstract. This study explores the development and evaluation of two innovative herbal beverages: mulberry tea and mulberry-flavored kombucha tea. Leveraging the therapeutic potential of mulberry leaves and fruits (*Morus alba*), the research aims to create affordable, nutritious, and consumer-accepted alternatives to conventional beverages. Mulberry is renowned for its health-promoting properties, including antioxidant, antidiabetic, and anti-inflammatory effects, while kombucha, a fermented tea, is celebrated for its probiotic and detoxifying benefits. An experimental research design assessed the beverages' sensory, microbial, and nutritional properties. Mulberry tea was prepared using sun-drying and air-drying methods, with air-dried samples showing superior sensory attributes. Kombucha was prepared by fermenting mulberry tea with a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY) over two fermentation phases. An analysis of sensory evaluations from 100 respondents, using the Mann-Whitney U test, highlighted the acceptability of air-dried mulberry tea and kombucha prepared with 10 tea bags, achieving a more balanced flavor profile than other formulations. Microbial analysis confirmed the safety of the beverages, with no detection of harmful bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *Escherichia coli*. Nutritional analysis revealed that the kombucha samples contained essential macronutrients and were free from fats and cholesterol. Sample 1 offered higher protein content and caloric value, making it suitable for energy-conscious consumers. The results demonstrated that mulberry and kombucha tea are viable health-oriented beverages with significant commercial potential. Both products received high overall acceptability scores, showcasing their ability to meet consumer preferences. The study underscores the potential of mulberry-based beverages to align with the growing global demand for functional and wellness-oriented drinks. In conclusion, this research highlights the versatility and economic value of mulberry leaves and fruits, paving the way for innovative, health-promoting beverage options suitable for large-scale production.

Keywords: Functional beverages; Kombucha; Mulberry tea; Sensory evaluation.

1.0 Introduction

The increasing popularity of herbal beverages is attributed to their health-promoting properties, including anticancer, antibacterial, antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant effects. This trend is aligned with the growing global emphasis on wellness, further driving the expansion of the herbal tea market (Chandrasekara et al., 2018). Herbal beverages are prepared by boiling or steeping plant-based materials such as leaves, flowers, roots, and seeds. These ingredients can be utilized individually or in combination to create flavors and confer potential health benefits (Piljac-Žegarac et al., 2013).

Globally, tea ranks as the second most consumed beverage after water, with a per capita daily consumption of approximately 0.12 liters. Its regular consumption is recommended based on well-documented health benefits and demonstrated safety (Pastore et al., 2006). Among various plant-based teas, the mulberry (*Morus spp.*, Moraceae) stands out for its therapeutic properties. The primary species of interest include red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), black mulberry (*Morus nigra*), and white mulberry (*Morus alba*) (Yigit et al., 2010). Mulberries are cultivated worldwide, particularly in temperate, tropical, and subtropical regions, with significant concentrations in Asia, especially China, Japan, Korea, and India (Sanchez et al., 2000).

Historically, the mulberry tree has served diverse purposes. In sericulture, its leaves are an essential food source for silkworms. Mulberry fruits are consumed fresh or processed into products like jams and wines. Additionally, mulberry leaves have been widely used in traditional medicine, particularly in Asia, where mulberry tea is valued for its nutritional and medicinal benefits (Wang et al., 2018). The bioactive compounds present in mulberries are regarded as nutraceuticals due to their effectiveness in addressing various health conditions, including anemia and diabetes (Acharya et al., 2022). Beyond medicinal uses, mulberry is also incorporated into culinary applications, underscoring its versatility.

In the Philippines, mulberries (*Morus spp.*) are widely cultivated for their versatile uses, mainly fruits and leaves. The fruits are consumed fresh or processed into various products, while the leaves are essential in sericulture, serving as the primary food source for silkworms (*Bombyx mori*). Additionally, in some provinces such as Pampanga, mulberry leaves are processed into tea (De leon, 2023). This study aims to explore the utilization of mulberry tea in kombucha production, incorporating mulberry fruit as a natural flavoring to enhance its appeal and value."

Kombucha, a fermented tea beverage, is produced by fermenting sweetened tea with a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY). Originating in China over 2000 years ago, kombucha has gained global recognition for its energizing properties and potential health benefits. It is referred to by various names, including red tea fungus (Malbaša et al., 2011), and is commonly prepared using black or green tea (Dubey et al., 2020). Green tea enhances fermentation, facilitating faster beverage production (Greenwalt et al., 2000). The fermentation process of kombucha involves a symbiotic interaction between yeast and bacteria. Yeasts hydrolyze sucrose into glucose and fructose, which are metabolized into ethanol. Acetic acid bacteria oxidize ethanol into acetic acid, imparting kombucha's tangy flavor while acting as a natural preservative (de Miranda et al., 2022). The final product is mildly acidic, effervescent, and slightly alcoholic, with a flavor profile evolving from fruity and sour to a mild vinegar-like taste over time (Goh et al., 2012). Kombucha is widely recognized for its benefits, including enhanced gut health, improved digestion, detoxification, and stress reduction. Additionally, it is linked to cardiovascular health and the prevention of oxidative stress-related illnesses such as cancer and neurological disorders (Martinez et al., 2018).

The rising popularity of kombucha as a health-oriented beverage has catalyzed significant market growth. The global tea market, valued at approximately \$207.1 billion in 2020, is projected to reach \$266.7 billion by 2025 (Statista, 2017). Within this context, the kombucha tea market is anticipated to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.3%, reaching \$1,655.6 million by 2032. Despite regulatory challenges, such as alcohol content restrictions, the industry continues flourishing, supported by over 350 producers and substantial investments. This study evaluated the potential of utilizing mulberry leaves for tea production and its fruits as a natural flavoring for kombucha, highlighting the plant's dual-purpose functionality and potential for value-added products. This creates affordable and nutritious alternatives to conventional soft drinks and commercial beverages while showcasing mulberry cultivation's health benefits and economic potential.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed an experimental research design to systematically evaluate the acceptability and quality of mulberry and kombucha tea. Evaluation of these herbal teas followed procedures of Civile et al. (2024) for food sensory evaluation. Two preparation methods for mulberry tea (sun-dried and air-dried) were developed and compared to a commercial tea product to assess their sensory appeal and consumer preference. In the kombucha

product, varying numbers of mulberry tea bags were used during fermentation to determine their impact on flavor, aroma, and overall acceptability.

A preliminary assessment by trained panelists was conducted to refine the experimental formulations before a more considerable sensory evaluation was performed with 100 respondents (Civille et al., 2024). To ensure a robust evaluation, the study utilized sensory evaluation questionnaires to capture respondents' perceptions of the experimental products compared to commercial alternatives. Beyond sensory attributes, microbial contamination and nutrient content analyses were conducted to assess the beverages' safety, hygiene, and nutritional properties, further justifying the experimental approach. This comprehensive methodology underscores the scientific rigor of the study, aiming to explore the feasibility of mulberry tea and kombucha as innovative and health-oriented beverage options.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted at Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University, South La Union Campus, specifically at the College of Arts and Sciences in Agoo, La Union, and the College of Agriculture in Rosario, La Union. However, the mulberry leaves and fruits were handpicked from Imelda Naguilan, La Union. Only whole, unblemished leaves free from insect damage or brown spots were selected. The leaves were washed thoroughly with water before further processing.

2.3 Tea Preparation

Two types of mulberry tea were prepared by modifying the methods of Raja et al. (2019). In the original method, leaves were blanched in hot water, thoroughly washed with cold distilled water, and then pat-dried. However, since mulberry leaves are thin, they were not blanched in this study but were thoroughly washed and pat-dried. Either sun-drying or air-drying subsequently processed the leaves. All materials were thoroughly cleaned, and tea bags were autoclaved to ensure sterility.

Sun-Dried Mulberry Tea

Ten kilograms of mulberry leaves were washed three times with distilled water, pat dried, and exposed to direct sunlight for three days, enclosed in a net cage to minimize contamination. Once brittle, the leaves were crushed using a blender at high speed. Approximately 1.5 grams of crushed leaves were placed into sterilized tea bags, which were then oven-dried at 120°C for 15 minutes.

Air-Dried Mulberry Tea

Another 10 kilograms of mulberry leaves were washed three times with distilled water, pat-dried, and air-dried for one day in the multi-commodity solar tunnel. The dried leaves were pulverized using a grinder, and 1.5 grams of the resulting powder were placed in sterilized tea bags and oven-dried at 120°C for 15 minutes.

2.4 Evaluation of Tea

Four trained panelists from the College of Agriculture at DMMMSU conducted a preliminary sensory evaluation. All panelists held bachelor's degrees in food technology, and two had master's degrees in food science. The evaluation focused on appearance, taste, tartness, and overall acceptability. The tea samples were labeled with randomly generated three-digit codes to minimize bias. The sun-dried tea was eliminated due to sensory issues, such as throat itchiness, while the air-dried and commercial green tea advanced to the final sensory evaluation. There were 100 randomly selected respondents from the DMMMSU community, including students, teachers, non-teaching personnel, and nearby residents. Among them, 34 respondents were between the ages of 18–30, 33 were between 31–50, and 33 were aged 51 and older. The acceptability of both products – air-dried mulberry and commercial tea – was evaluated using a 9-point Hedonic Scale. The scale, adapted from Su et al. (2022), ranged from 1 to 9, where: 1 = dislike extremely, 2 = dislike, 3 = dislike moderately, 4 = dislike slightly, 5 = neither like nor dislike, 6 = like slightly, 7 = like, 8 = like very much, and 9 = like extremely. Respondents had to be free from cold or cough symptoms for at least a week before participation. Distilled water was provided as a palate cleanser and sensory rating sheets were used to record the data.

2.5 Preparation of Kombucha Tea

The preparation of kombucha tea followed the methods of Freitas (2020), where kombucha is produced by fermenting sweetened tea with a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY) in two stages. In Phase 1, or tea fermentation, sweet tea is prepared by dissolving sugar in boiling water, steeping tea, and cooling it to room temperature. Starter tea and the SCOBY are added, and the mixture is left to ferment in a covered jar at room temperature for 7–14 days. On Phase 2 or second fermentation, flavorings like fruit or herbs are added, and the bottles are sealed to allow carbonation to develop over 1–3 days at room temperature. Once fizzy, the kombucha is refrigerated to halt fermentation. Equipment and materials were sanitized using cost-effective home-based procedures. The SCOBY and starter tea were sourced from Cainta, Rizal, while mulberry fruits were procured from Wenceslao Caba, La Union.

2.6 Fermentation Process

Phase 1: Tea Fermentation

Sixteen liters of distilled water were boiled, and two cups of white sugar were dissolved in each pot (2 liters). Mulberry tea bags (10, 20, 30, and 40 bags per pot) were steeped for 15 minutes, removed, and the solutions cooled to room temperature. The mixtures were transferred to one-gallon glass jars, and a SCOBY pellicle and 250 mL of starter tea were added. The jars were covered with sterilized paper towels and secured with rubber bands. Fermentation was conducted at room temperature in a dark environment for 14 days.

Phase 2: Flavor Addition

After 14 days, the SCOBY was removed, and one cup (100 g) of chopped mulberry fruits was added to each jar. The jars were sealed and allowed to ferment for another 14 days. The final kombucha was filtered and bottled in 250 mL glass bottles, yielding 15 bottles per sample.

2.7 Microbial and Nutritional Analysis

Twenty 250-mL kombucha tea samples were sent to the DOST-CAR Regional Standards and Testing Laboratory for microbial and nutritional analysis. The samples were tested for contaminants such as *Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Escherichia coli*, as well as nutrient content, including total fat, carbohydrates, protein, sugar, and caloric content.

2.8 Evaluation of Kombucha Tea

As with the mulberry tea, four trained panelists conducted a preliminary evaluation of kombucha tea samples based on appearance, taste, flavor, tartness, and overall acceptability. If the intensity or quality of these attributes falls outside acceptable ranges or expectations, the product is rejected. Samples 1 and 3 met the acceptable ranges and expectations of the panel and proceeded to the final sensory evaluation. Sample 2, with 20 tea bags, was rejected due to its extreme sourness and bitterness, and sample 4, with 40 mulberry tea bags, was also rejected due to the absence of mulberry flavor. As with the mulberry tea, the one hundred respondents evaluated the qualified kombucha samples (1 and 3) using the 9-point Hedonic Scale. Data were collected to assess consumer preferences and product acceptability.

2.9 Data Analysis

Data collected from sensory evaluations were analyzed using the Shapiro-Wilk test to assess normality. Non-parametric analysis (Mann-Whitney U Test) was applied to identify significant differences among samples at a 0.05 significance level.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Sensory Evaluation of Mulberry Tea

The sensory properties of mulberry tea, including appearance, taste, tartness/texture, and overall acceptability, were evaluated to determine its quality and consumer satisfaction. A total of 100 respondents rated the air-dried mulberry tea against commercial tea. The sun-dried mulberry tea was excluded after being rejected by the trained panelist during preliminary screening. Sensory evaluation data were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test, as the Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed non-normal distribution. Table 1 summarizes the mean ranks for the acceptability of air-dried and commercial mulberry tea, with significant differences indicated. The higher mean ranks observed

for air-dried tea in taste, tartness, and overall acceptability suggest that evaluators found it more favorable in these attributes than the commercial product.

Table 1. Mean Ranks for the Acceptability of Mulberry Tea (n=100)

	Air dried	Commercial
Appearance	99.82	101.19
Taste	124.08*	76.92*
Tartness	124.03*	76.98*
Overall Acceptability	129.13*	71.88*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that commercial tea and air-dried mulberry tea are comparable in terms of appearance, with no significant difference. This indicates that the visual appeal of the air-dried mulberry tea is comparable to that of commercial tea, suggesting that the air-drying process preserved the tea's visual quality. However, the air-dried mulberry tea scored significantly higher than the commercial tea in terms of taste, suggesting that respondents found the flavor profile of the mulberry tea to be more enjoyable than the commercial tea. The higher mean rank in tartness or texture of the air-dried tea contributed positively to its overall sensory evaluation. This result highlights the potential of air-dried mulberry tea as a favorable alternative to commercial teas.

3.2 Sensory Evaluation of Kombucha Tea

The sensory properties of kombucha tea, such as appearance, taste (sourness, sweetness, bitterness), flavor (vinegar and mulberry), tartness (acidity/texture), and overall acceptability, are critical to consumer preferences (Larasati et al., 2017). Appearance, including color and clarity, significantly influences consumer perceptions of quality, while flavor is a key determinant of satisfaction and preference. In this study, kombucha tea samples prepared with 10 mulberry tea bags (Sample 1) and 30 mulberry tea bags (Sample 3) were evaluated by 100 respondents following initial screening by trained panelists. The sensory evaluation results, analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Ranks for the Acceptability of Kombucha (n=100)

	Sample 1	Sample 3
Appearance	100.76	100.24
Sourness	118.47*	82.54*
Sweetness	118.36*	82.65*
Bitterness	114.01*	86.99*
Vinegar Flavor	117.81*	83.19*
Mulberry Flavor	95.07	105.93
Tartness	114.87*	86.14*
Overall Acceptability	118.49*	82.52*

*Significant difference at $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 2, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed significant differences between Sample 1 and Sample 3 for most sensory attributes, including sourness, sweetness, bitterness, vinegar flavor, tartness, and overall acceptability. Sample 1 consistently scored higher mean ranks for these attributes, indicating a more favorable sensory profile. Respondents preferred the balanced sourness, sweetness, and tartness of Sample 1, while Sample 3 was perceived as overly sour and bitter. The vinegar flavor in Sample 1 was also rated more acceptable, contributing to its overall appeal.

Sample 1, made with 10 tea bags, achieved a more balanced and consumer-friendly flavor profile than Sample 3. This balance contributed to its higher overall acceptability, making it the preferred option among respondents. The results underscore the importance of optimizing ingredient concentrations in kombucha production to meet consumer expectations and preferences, positioning Sample 1 as a promising candidate for commercial success. In contrast, Sample 3 scored slightly higher in mulberry flavor, likely due to the increased concentration of tea bags. However, this did not result in higher overall acceptability, as the excessive intensity of other flavors detracted from the sensory experience. Additionally, there was no significant difference in appearance between the two samples, indicating that both kombucha tea formulations were equally visually appealing to respondents.

3.3 Microbial Analysis

Microbial safety is a critical consideration in the production of kombucha tea, as harmful bacteria such as *Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Salmonella* are common causes of foodborne illnesses ranging from mild

gastrointestinal infections to severe health conditions. Table 3 presents the results of microbiological analysis conducted on kombucha tea samples tested by the Department of Science and Technology-Cordillera Administrative Region (DOST-CAR) laboratory using standard methods.

Table 3. Microbiological Analysis Results

Bacterial Analysis	Sample 1 (CFU/g)	Sample 2 (CFU/g)	Sample 3 (CFU/g)	Sample 4 (CFU/g)
Total Coliform	<10	<10	<10	<10
<i>E. coli</i>	<10	<10	<10	<10
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	45	<10	<10	<10
<i>Salmonella</i> Detection	Negative at 25g sample	Negative at 25g sample	Negative at 25g sample	Negative at 25g sample

The results in Table 3 indicate that all kombucha tea samples had total coliform and *E. coli* counts below 10 CFU/g, and *Salmonella* was not detected in any of the samples at a 25-gram detection limit. However, sample 1 exhibited a *Staphylococcus aureus* count of 45 CFU/g, which, although higher than the other samples, remains within the acceptable safety limit for human consumption as outlined by Gilbert et al. (2000). The acceptable limit for *Staphylococcus aureus* is less than 103 CFU/g, and values above 104 CFU/g indicate potential health risks. The microbial safety of kombucha can be attributed to the fermentation process, during which symbiotic cultures of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY) produce organic acids, ethanol, and antimicrobial compounds that inhibit the growth of harmful pathogens (Villarreal-Soto et al., 2018). Kombucha demonstrates antibacterial activity against gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria, including *E. coli*, *Shigella*, *Vibrio cholera*, and *Salmonella*. Studies by Kitwetcharoen et al. (2023) and Al-Mohammadi et al. (2021) confirm kombucha's efficacy as a preservative and its role in safeguarding against foodborne pathogens.

The low counts of total coliforms and *E. coli* (<10 CFU/g) across all samples suggest proper hygiene and sanitary practices during kombucha preparation, minimizing fecal contamination risk (Jnani et al., 2024). *E. coli* levels above 20-100 CFU/g are considered indicators of compromised hygiene and potential health risks (Gilbert et al., 2000). The absence of *Salmonella* in all samples further ensures product safety, as *Salmonella* contamination is a significant cause of foodborne illness globally (Hald et al., 2013). Kombucha's antimicrobial activity, driven by the metabolic by-products of acetic acid bacteria (e.g., *Komagataeibacter*, *Gluconobacter*) and lactic acid bacteria (e.g., *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*), plays a critical role in inhibiting pathogens (Villarreal-Soto et al., 2018). Additionally, its acidic environment and ethanol content create unfavorable conditions for microbial growth, making kombucha a safe beverage when produced under controlled conditions.

These findings align with studies emphasizing kombucha's role as a functional beverage with inherent antimicrobial properties (Kitwetcharoen et al., 2023; Al-Mohammadi et al., 2021). Although sample 1 had a higher *Staphylococcus aureus* count than the others, the results confirm that the kombucha tea samples meet microbiological safety standards and are suitable for human consumption. Kombucha tea prepared under appropriate sanitary conditions demonstrates low microbial risk, reinforcing its status as a safe and healthful beverage alternative. Regular monitoring and adherence to good manufacturing practices are essential to ensure consistent product safety and quality.

3.4 Nutrient Content

Table 4 provides the nutritional analysis of kombucha, sample 1 and sample 3, offering insights into their caloric and macronutrient composition. One serving (240 ml) of kombucha sample 1 contains 140 calories, 17 grams of sugar, 2 grams of protein, and 32 grams of carbohydrates. This sample has no detectable fat or cholesterol. In comparison, sample 3 has a lower caloric value of 120 calories, 26 grams of carbohydrates, and 19 grams of sugar but contains less than 1 gram of protein. The nutritional data reveal variations in calorie content, total carbohydrates, sugar, and protein levels between the two samples. Sample 1 offers slightly higher calorie and protein content, potentially more suitable for individuals seeking an energy-boosting beverage with moderate protein. In contrast, sample 2 has lower protein content but slightly higher sugar levels, which may appeal to consumers prioritizing lower caloric intake.

Table 4. Nutritional Analysis Results of Kombucha Tea

Amount per Serving (240 ml)	Sample 1	Sample 3
Calories (kcal)	140	120
Calories from Fat	0	0
Total Fat (g)	0	1
Total Carbohydrates (g)	32	26
Sugar (g)	17	19
Total Protein (g)	2	<1

The absence of fats and cholesterol in both samples highlights kombucha as a low-fat beverage option. Macronutrients like protein, fat, and carbohydrates perform vital functions in the body: proteins aid in tissue growth and repair, fats protect organs and contribute to cellular health, and carbohydrates serve as the primary energy source (Streit, 2021). Additionally, the calorie content reflects the energy the beverage provides, which can support daily energy requirements for adults engaging in moderate physical activity (Richards, 2020).

4.0 Conclusion

The study demonstrates that mulberry leaves can effectively produce mulberry tea, which is highly acceptable to consumers. Furthermore, adding mulberry fruits and the fermentation process to create kombucha tea offers an innovative beverage enriched with probiotics, enhancing its functional value. Sensory analysis of the kombucha tea confirmed its acceptability among consumers, highlighting the potential for further refinement and optimization of the formula for large-scale commercial production. Nutrient and microbiological analyses revealed that mulberry-flavored kombucha tea contains essential nutrients and meets safety standards for human consumption. These findings emphasize its viability as a health-promoting and safe beverage option. In conclusion, mulberry tea and kombucha tea derived from mulberry leaves and fruits offer affordable, nutritious, and consumer-accepted alternatives to traditional beverages. Their potential for commercial production aligns with growing consumer demand for functional and health-oriented drinks.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Glennadi R Rualo – Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, supervision, review, and editing
 Rose F. Cortez – Investigation, data curation, writing draft
 Crystal Monique J. Estipular – Investigation, Formal Analysis, writing draft
 Michelle V. Reyes – Investigation, resources
 Jervin S. Aquino – Investigation, resources

6.0 Funding

Personal funds were used in this study

7.0 Conflict of Interests

No conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

We would like to express our gratitude to the Department of Biological and Physical Sciences and the administration of the College of Arts and Sciences for allowing us to use the Natural Products Laboratory facilities for the experiment.
 Also, to the College of Agriculture, DMMMSU, for allowing us to use their Food Production Laboratory and Multi Commodity Solar Tunnel for the experiment.

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The Mediating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Relationship between Personality Traits and Work Engagement of Library Personnel

Rosecil S. Bayot*, Garry L. Bastida
University of Mindanao, Davao City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: r.bayot.521916@umindanao.edu.ph

Date received: February 6, 2025

Date revised: February 28, 2025

Date accepted: March 23, 2025

Originality: 89%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 11%

Recommended citation:

Bayot, R., Bastida, G. (2025). The mediating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between personality traits and work engagement of library personnel. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 336-343. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.067>

Abstract. Limited research has examined emotional intelligence as a mediator between personality traits and work engagement, particularly among library personnel. Despite its essential role in shaping work experiences, engagement in the library workplace has received little attention, and the personality traits of library personnel remain understudied. Addressing this gap, the study examined the degree of personality traits, the level of work engagement, and the emotional intelligence of library personnel. It also explored the relationships between these factors and whether emotional intelligence significantly linked personality traits to work engagement. The study used a non-experimental, quantitative design with a descriptive-correlational approach and mediation analysis. Data were collected through adapted questionnaires measuring personality traits, emotional intelligence, and work engagement. A total of 311 library personnel were selected through convenience sampling. Statistical tests, including correlation and mediation analyses, were conducted to determine the relationships between the variables. Findings indicated that library personnel demonstrated strong personality traits, high emotional intelligence, and high levels of work engagement. Personality traits and emotional intelligence were both significantly linked to work engagement. The other thing was the mediation of emotional intelligence on the relationship between personality traits and work engagement-indirect effect exceeding the direct effect. This highlights the importance of emotional intelligence for enhancing job performance, improving professional relationships, and heightening engagement in library work. Enhancement of emotional intelligence can enable library personnel to deal effectively with different challenges encountered in their workplaces and to adapt quickly to varying work tasks to provide enhanced quality service. Emotional intelligence training should be incorporated into leadership programs and recruitment strategies, alongside working seminars, coaching, and mentoring, to increase work engagement and productivity and enhance effective service delivery.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; Mediation analysis; Personality traits; Work engagement.

1.0 Introduction

Work engagement is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in organizational achievement, yet many employers struggle to understand how to motivate and meet the needs of their employees effectively (Mansor et al., 2023). Low work engagement can severely hinder individual and organizational performance, frequently caused by a lack of recognition, poor communication, a misalignment with organizational goals, and a lack of management support (Harter, 2021). Reduced job satisfaction, higher absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and worse job performance are likely outcomes for disengaged workers (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Examining the

fundamental elements that affect work engagement and filling in the gaps in the literature are essential, given their importance to the success of an organization. Furthermore, understanding how different variables affect worker engagement in the workplace can help create more successful plans to cultivate an inspired workforce (Kossyva et al., 2023).

On the other hand, several organizational advantages have been associated with high levels of work engagement, such as improved customer service, job satisfaction, productivity, and profitability (Gallup, 2021). Engaged workers are more likely to go above and beyond their duties, which enhances organizational success and business efficiency (Travisano, 2016). However, disengaged workplaces frequently have high levels of conflict, a bad work culture, and ambiguous expectations (Munavar, 2019). These problems can be especially harmful in settings like libraries, which are many institutions' primary knowledge and service centers. Low work engagement among librarians can impact service quality, retention, productivity, and institutional success (Akinola, 2020). Library settings remain underexplored despite the growing body of research on work engagement across disciplines. As a result, it is critical to investigate how engagement is demonstrated in this context and the factors contributing to its development. Recognizing the importance of work engagement in libraries can result in more effective policies and interventions to increase job satisfaction and institutional efficiency (Martin, 2019).

Furthermore, studies show that companies that meet their employees' basic psychological needs foster higher work engagement, indicating an urgent need for engagement-enhancing work environments (Herr et al., 2021). Individual differences in working engagement are accepted because personality traits significantly impact how individuals interact with their workplace. Their levels of involvement differ significantly even when they have the same function since each person has distinct personality traits (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Nonetheless, the mechanisms by which personality traits influence engagement warrant further investigation despite their importance in determining work engagement levels. The significance of carrying out a more comprehensive analysis of how personality traits interact with other psychological categories, such as emotional intelligence, to affect workplace engagement outcomes is highlighted by this discrepancy (Akhtar et al., 2014).

Despite extensive research on work engagement, limited studies explore emotional intelligence as a mediating factor between personality traits and work engagement, particularly among librarians. Engagement in the library workplace has received little attention in the literature (Martin, 2019). Additionally, there is little literature on emotional intelligence for librarians, particularly in academic libraries, even though it significantly impacts an individual's work experience (Villagran & Martin, 2021). Few researchers have examined the personality features of librarians despite the significance of personality (Williamson & Lounsbury, 2016). This literature gap is important because it acknowledges that personality traits can affect work engagement levels and that emotional intelligence can affect these effects. This relationship can be further investigated to understand better the psychological factors that influence work engagement in library environments.

Developing strategies that increase engagement levels requires a greater comprehension of the relationship among personality traits, emotional intelligence, and work engagement. Emotional intelligence is essential to workplace dynamics in jobs like libraries that need customer service and interpersonal contacts. Potential research topics include how Emotional Intelligence (EI) mediates the relationship between personality traits and work engagement. This would close a gap in the literature and offer helpful advice on developing a more engaged library workforce. Organizations can develop customized interventions that raise worker motivation and general job satisfaction by comprehending and applying these crucial psychological characteristics. Therefore, this study investigates the mediating function of emotional intelligence in the relationship between personality traits and library personnel's work engagement. It aims to provide valuable insights into improving library personnel's work engagement, wellness, and institutional performance.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive-correlational design. Descriptive correlational research is used when a researcher wants to determine the characteristics of groups of people or investigate the connections between different variables. In a descriptive correlational design, the researcher focuses on a single group and seeks to establish the

relationship between two variables (Brodowicz, 2024). The research also involved mediation testing to explore the relationships between predictor, mediator, and criterion variables.

2.2 Research Locale

The research focused on library personnel in South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City (SOCCSKSARGEN) Region XII, located in the central part of Mindanao, Philippines. As of School Year 2021-2022, there are 2,525 schools in DepEd Region XII. It encompasses 1,697 elementary schools, 120 high schools, 38 senior high schools, 353 combined junior-senior high schools, 150 schools from Kindergarten up to Grade 10, and 167 schools from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Department of Education, n.d.). Additionally, Region XII has 97 colleges and universities (Commission on Higher Education, 2024). The official directory of the National Library of the Philippines reveals that the region is served by two provincial libraries, four city libraries, 26 municipal libraries, and 114 barangay reading centers (National Library of the Philippines, 2023).

2.3 Research Participants

This study's research participants were library personnel working in Region XII. It included library personnel from diverse libraries in the region. As of 2023, there were approximately 208 librarians across all regional libraries, not including additional staff. To ensure a representative sample, the researcher used a convenience sampling technique. This non-probability sampling approach selects the most accessible or contactable individuals. While convenience sampling does not eradicate selection bias, it is valued for its ease and speed (Hassan, 2024). Participants aged 23 and older from various ethnic origins and gender identities in Region XII were invited to ensure a diverse sample. A total of 311 responses were collected.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study utilized adapted questionnaire surveys designed to assess library personnel's personality traits, work engagement, and emotional intelligence. These included the Big Five Inventory, a 44-item questionnaire developed by John et al. (1991), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), a 17-item questionnaire developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006) to assess work engagement, and a 50-item Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire by Leading Across London (2014). Experts reviewed the questionnaires for validity, and a pilot test confirmed their reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.903 for the personality traits questionnaire, 0.944 for the work engagement questionnaire, and 0.956 for the emotional intelligence questionnaire.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study undertook specific steps, including validating the adapted and modified questionnaires. After validation, the researcher sought permission from several schools, libraries, and offices within Region XII through direct communication with School Presidents and Library Heads. Approved questionnaires and informed consent were personally delivered to nearby libraries, while distant localities were engaged via e-mail or platforms like Google Forms. The researcher recorded and subjected the data gathered to statistical computation and analysis after collating the responses from each respondent.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The research study adhered to ethical guidelines, obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring data security through encryption and passwords. Access to data was limited to authorized personnel, avoiding plagiarism and disclosing conflicts of interest. The researcher addressed potential risks, such as confidentiality breaches, emotional distress, time commitments, and data security, with strong security measures, clear expectations, support resources, and open communication.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Personality Traits

Table 1 illustrated the personality traits among respondents, yielding an overall mean of 3.69, categorized as high. Conscientiousness has the highest mean score among all personality traits, with a mean of 4.05, categorized as high. This is followed by agreeableness, with a mean of 4.03, also classified as high, and openness to experience, with a mean of 3.91, likewise categorized as high. The mean score for extraversion is 3.61, indicating a high level, while neuroticism has the lowest mean score at 2.86, classified as neutral.

Table 1. *Level of Personality Traits*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Extraversion	3.61	0.583	High
Agreeableness	4.03	0.666	High
Conscientiousness	4.05	0.634	High
Neuroticism	2.86	0.804	Neutral
Openness to experience	3.91	0.65	High
Overall Result	3.69	0.434	High

People often evaluate their conscientiousness and agreeableness as moderate to high (Fraga, 2019). This shows that these characteristics are often seen in a range of groups. In many cases, agreeableness, openness, and extraversion show moderate levels of leaning toward positive personality characteristics. This supports the view that most people, at least many, possess moderate amounts of positive personality traits, regardless of individual differences (Shuai et al., 2023). The job characteristics of libraries, for information resources, cataloging, and patron assistance, require precision, orderliness, and attention to detail; therefore, the high conscientiousness of librarians was justified (Akbar et al., 2024).

High conscientiousness can lead to both professional achievement and work benefits in the library area, resulting in high-performing librarians (Scott, 2024). Reliability, accountability, and a dedication to quality are characteristics of conscientious people crucial for librarians' work in guaranteeing proper information processing and customer pleasure (Feng et al., 2024). However, the neutral degree of neuroticism indicates that librarians are resilient and well-adjusted, capable of effectively handling stress. Lower neuroticism aligns with the job's demands since librarians frequently must keep a steady demeanor in various occasionally stressful situations while offering consumers regular, composed help. The idea that conscientiousness and emotional stability are positive qualities is supported by these personality traits (Lindner et al., 2023).

3.2 Work Engagement

Table 2 showed the respondents' level of work engagement, with an aggregate mean score of 3.94, which is considered high. Dedication has the highest mean score for work engagement, at 4.13, which is considered high. Vigor, with a mean of 3.87, is next. Finally, absorption, similarly classified as high, has the lowest mean score of 3.86.

Table 2. *Level of Work Engagement*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Vigor	3.87	0.687	High
Dedication	4.13	0.728	High
Absorption	3.86	0.712	High
Overall Result	3.94	0.634	High

Individuals with high work engagement frequently report an intense sensation of activity, commitment, and absorption in their tasks. These people usually have much energy and enthusiastically tackle their duties. Their dedication is shown in their commitment and love for their profession, which frequently leads to increased productivity and job satisfaction (Sonnetag, 2017). High work engagement correlates with enthusiasm and devotion to work responsibilities (Arcadio et al., 2021).

Librarians are intrinsically motivated by their work, and dedication frequently ranks high among them. They are usually deeply committed to their roles, which align with a sense of purpose in supporting community learning and facilitating access to information (Daly, 2024). However, absorption is lesser even if it is likewise high. This might be because librarians' work is complicated and frequently unpredictable, making it more challenging to focus deeply and continuously (Cunningham, 2023). The constant juggling of maintaining collections, helping patrons, and other duties may affect a librarian's ability to focus on a single activity for an extended period.

3.3 Level of Emotional Intelligence

Table 3 displayed the respondents' emotional intelligence level, with an aggregate mean of 3.98, categorized as high. The highest mean score for emotional intelligence is self-awareness, with a mean of 4.13, categorized as high. Motivating oneself is at 4.02, also categorized as high, and social skills are at 4.01, likewise categorized as high.

Empathy comes next, scoring a mean of 3.97, which is considered high. On the other hand, managing emotions has the lowest mean score (3.66), which is also considered high.

Table 3. *Level of Emotional Intelligence*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Level
Self-Awareness	4.13	0.588	High
Managing Emotion	3.66	0.673	High
Motivating Oneself	4.02	0.634	High
Empathy	3.97	0.668	High
Social Skill	4.01	0.637	High
Overall Result	3.98	0.541	High

Additionally, the results aligned with research demonstrating that many people consistently demonstrate emotional intelligence in various contexts. For example, it emphasizes how emotional intelligence—which encompasses motivation, managing emotion, self-awareness, empathy, and social skills—is often present in a sizable section of the population and plays a role in successful interpersonal relationships and career success (Cherry, 2023). Further highlighting the significance of these skills in various personal and professional contexts, emotional intelligence is an area where people appear to differ, typically falling between the moderately able and the highly proficient (Antonopoulou, 2024).

A crucial component of librarianship is its reflective practice, in which practitioners continuously examine themselves to improve user interactions and the general caliber of services they offer. Wallbridge (2023) asserts that self-awareness is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence because it allows people to precisely assess their emotional reactions, strengths, and shortcomings, fostering professional and personal development. On the other hand, although being ranked as "High," emotion management has a lower mean score. This might reflect the difficulties librarians have controlling their emotions due to pressures like high service expectations, few resources, and frequent encounters with a wide range of users, all of which can cause emotional tiredness (Newman, 2024).

3.4 Correlation Analysis of the Variables

Table 4 illustrated the correlation analysis of the variables.

Table 4. *Correlation Analysis of the Variables*

Pair	Variables	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Remarks
IV and DV	Personality traits and Work engagement	0.690	<0.001	Significant
IV and MV	Personality traits and Emotional intelligence	0.712	<0.001	Significant
MV and DV	Emotional intelligence and Work engagement	0.743	<0.001	Significant

Significant connections between personality traits, emotional intelligence, and professional engagement are shown by the correlation analysis in Table 4. With a p-value of less than 0.001, there is a substantial positive association (0.690) between personality traits and work engagement, suggesting that those with favorable personality traits are more engaged at work. The data have revealed a strong positive correlation between personality traits and work engagement. Since conscientiousness and agreeableness promote proactive and decent work cultures, they have been associated with higher levels of work engagement. Work engagement and positive personality traits correlate positively, highlighting people's more significant commitment to their positions (Laguia et al., 2024).

Similarly, there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and strong (0.712) correlation between emotional intelligence and personality traits, suggesting that people with positive personality traits tend to have higher emotional intelligence. Furthermore, the evidence indicates strong correlations between emotional intelligence and personality traits. The evidence of a link goes back to the premise that those high on emotional intelligence are more likely to be invested with positive personality traits. High emotional intelligence correlates strongly with positive personality traits such as openness and agreeableness (Alegre et al., 2019). This suggests that individuals with these traits can better understand and regulate their emotions. Furthermore, the fact that emotional intelligence is influenced by openness and emotional stability supports the link between favorable personality traits and high emotional intelligence (Chen, 2023).

Additionally, emotional intelligence shows a solid positive correlation (0.743) with work engagement, again with a p-value of less than 0.001, demonstrating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are highly engaged in their work. This association is highlighted in supporting literature. For instance, workers with high emotional intelligence are more invested in their jobs because they can easily manage stress and foster productive relationships (Landry, 2019). Moreover, emotional intelligence strongly predicts work engagement and that those who can control their emotions are deeply connected and dedicated to their jobs (Darko et al., 2023). The constant rejection of null hypotheses for each pair affirms the importance of these interactions. Emotionally intelligent individuals will develop positive personality traits leading to work engagement and motivation.

3.5 Direct and Indirect Effects of X and Y

Presented in Table 5 is the direct and indirect effect of Personality Traits (IV) on Work Engagement (DV) through the mediator of Emotional Intelligence. The direct effect of personality traits on work engagement, controlling for emotional intelligence, is significant (Effect = 0.4776, $p < .0001$, 95% CI [0.3311, 0.6241]). It showed a significant direct effect of personality traits on work engagement, even when controlling for emotional intelligence.

Table 5. *Direct and Indirect Effects of X and Y*

IV → DV	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	95% Confidence Interval
						ULCI
IV → DV	0.4776	0.0745	6.4148	.0000	0.3311	0.6241
95% Confidence Interval						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI			BootULCI
emotion	0.5300	0.0673	0.3978			0.6633

Through the mediator of emotional intelligence, personality traits (IV) indirectly impact work engagement (DV). Through emotional intelligence, personality traits also substantially and indirectly impact work engagement, suggesting partial mediation. Emotion has a substantial indirect impact on Y (Effect = 0.5300, 95% CI [0.3978, 0.6633]). A significant mediation effect exists since zero is not included in the bootstrap confidence interval. In conclusion, this analysis supports a partial mediation model where personality traits, directly and indirectly, affect work engagement through emotional intelligence. The indirect effect (0.5300) is slightly more significant than the direct effect (0.4776), suggesting that a substantial portion of the effect of personality traits on work engagement is mediated by emotional intelligence. However, the significant direct effect indicates that personality traits influence work engagement independently of its effect on emotional intelligence.

3.6 Mediation Analysis of Emotional Intelligence Between Personality Traits and Work Engagement

Figure 2 illustrated the mediation investigation of the relationships between personality traits, emotional intelligence, and work engagement. The impact size estimations for the mediation test among the three components indicate partial mediation because the effects are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The path from Personality Trait to Emotional Intelligence has a coefficient of 0.8882 with an SE of 0.0498. The path from Emotional Intelligence to Work Engagement has a coefficient of 0.5968 with an SE of 0.0597. The direct path from Personality Trait to Work Engagement has a coefficient of 0.4776 with an SE of 0.0745. This suggests that while emotional intelligence (EI) mediates some of the effects of personality traits on work engagement, the continuing component is mediated by other factors.

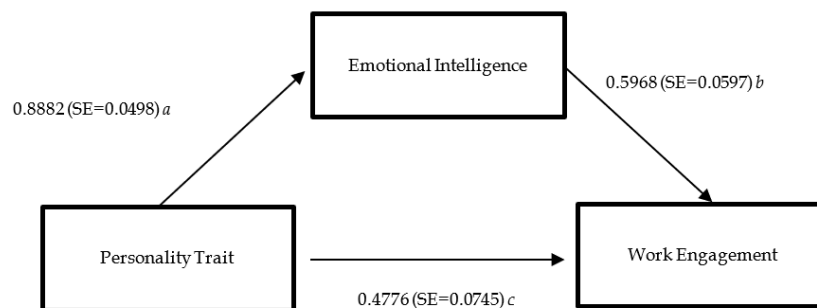


Figure 2. Med graph showing the mediation analysis

Emotional intelligence predicts that life satisfaction is influenced by other personality traits and environmental factors (Kartol et al., 2024). This suggests that emotional intelligence is a partial mediator among the many variables affecting results, like work engagement. Taking emotional intelligence into account as a mediating variable, a study examined the impact of leadership styles on organizational commitment and work engagement. According to the study, emotional intelligence, which partially mediated the relationship between leadership styles and work engagement, is crucial but not the only factor determining work outcomes (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020). Emotional intelligence acts as a partial mediator, demonstrating the complex interactions between several factors in the relationship between personality traits and work engagement.

4.0 Conclusion

The study revealed that among library personnel in Region XII, conscientiousness is the most valued personality trait, according to the study; they are less neurotic, which suggested better emotional stability and a lower likelihood of experiencing negative emotions; they are dedicated to their work and feel motivated, proud, and excited about their roles; and they possess emotional intelligence, which is an essential trait for library professionals because it allows them to recognize and understand their emotions, values, strengths, and weaknesses. Work engagement is strongly linked to personality traits, with a strong correlation between these traits and commitment, focus, and activity levels. The association between personality traits and work engagement is partially mediated by emotional intelligence. The results are corroborated by the Five-Factor Model, also known as the Big Five, which asserts that personality traits significantly impact the growth of emotional intelligence and work engagement. To improve emotional intelligence and work engagement, libraries should implement training programs, foster conscientiousness and low neuroticism, and create a supportive work environment. Initiatives that improve worker engagement and emotional intelligence should be given top priority by library administration. A work culture that encourages diligence and mental stability, supportive policies, and focused training programs can all help achieve this. The library personnel will become more dedicated, driven, and effective if these factors are strengthened. Further research should explore the relationship between personality traits, work engagement, and emotional intelligence, using qualitative approaches and longitudinal studies better to understand the long-term effects of treatments and environmental factors.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

RSB drafted the manuscript and carried out the study, while GLB assisted with editing and conducting the survey. They also developed and modified the research instruments and the research design. Both authors did editing, revising, and writing.

6.0 Funding

No funding agency issued a particular grant for this work.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

Regarding this paper's publication, the authors disclose no conflicts of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researcher would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their invaluable assistance in pursuing this study: Dr. Garry L. Bastida, the thesis adviser, for his patient guidance, expertise, and approachability whenever help was needed. To the panel of examiners and validators, led by Prof. Brigida E. Bacani, Dr. Estela R. Dequito, Dr. Chosel P. Lawagon, Dr. Joel B. Tan, Dr. Ramcis N. Vilchez, and Ms. Khristine Brylle B. Mancao, along with the external validator Dr. Jovita J. Felongco, for their constructive criticisms and suggestions that significantly improved this manuscript. To Dr. Vicente E. Montaña for sharing his essential expertise on the statistical instruments used in the study, and to the librarians and library staff in Region XII for their valuable time and assistance during the study. To Ma'am Marivet and Ma'am Vanessa for their financial and moral support. To the researcher's friends and classmates for their steadfast presence, help, and unwavering support throughout the study. Special thanks to the researcher's parents for their enduring inspiration. Sincere appreciation is extended to the researcher's helpful siblings, whose support helps the researcher overcome feelings of weariness and uncertainty. The researcher is most grateful to Almighty God the Father, whose unwavering direction and incomprehensible inspiration have given her courage and insight along her path.

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Teachers' Lived Experiences in the Transition to the MATATAG Curriculum: A Phenomenological Inquiry into Adaptation, Challenges, and Growth

Josephine C. Torrefiel^{*1}, Estelita S. Cagape², Onabelle V. Galan³, Venice P. Doydora⁴, Tejie D. Pintac⁵

¹Department of Education, Cayacay High School, Alicia, Bohol, Philippines

²Department of Education, La Union Elementary School, Candijay, Bohol, Philippines

³Tambongan, Candijay, Bohol, Philippines

^{4,5}Department of Education, Del Monte Elementary School, Alicia, Bohol, Philippines

* Corresponding Author Email: curayjosephine12@gmail.com

Date received: January 26, 2025

Date revised: March 1, 2025

Date accepted: March 24, 2025

Originality: 94%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 5%

Recommended citation:

Torrefiel, J., Cagape, E., Galan, O., Doydora, V., Pintac, T. (2025). Teachers' lived experiences in the transition to the MATATAG Curriculum: A phenomenological inquiry into adaptation, challenges, and growth. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 344-350. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.041>

Abstract. This study seeks to explore teachers' lived experiences in transitioning to the MATATAG Curriculum amidst inadequate instructional materials, limited time for teaching, the diverse needs of learners, lack of teacher training, unclear implementation guidelines, heightened levels of stress, and the necessity to innovate in teaching. Using a phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews with teachers from selected schools in Candijay, Bohol, were conducted to gain insight into challenges, strategies of adaptation, and professional growth. These have demonstrated that the curriculum was implemented inconsistently because of the vague guidelines and poor training, forcing the teachers to fall back on the old instructional materials and teaching methods. Again, the limitation in instructional time constrained their capacity to deliver quality education. Moreover, teachers found it hard to meet the diverse needs of learners due to insufficient resources and training. The study has underlined the requirement for more explicit curriculum guidelines, government support, enhanced teacher training, mental health interventions, and innovative teaching strategies. These challenges are aligned with UN SDG-4 on Quality Education, which ensures that educators and students experience inclusive, equitable, and effective learning. Strengthening systemic support will enhance the MATATAG Curriculum's sustainability and impact on Philippine education.

Keywords: Adaptation; Challenges; Growth; MATATAG curriculum; Transition.

1.0 Introduction

The MATATAG Curriculum, as it is being implemented by the Department of Education in the Philippines, is a significant shift in instructional strategies, assessment methods, and even the overall curricular content; hence, teachers must adapt to new pedagogical approaches. Literature on curriculum reforms points out that the successful introduction of a new curriculum requires institutional support, adequate teacher training, and teacher willingness to change (Fullan, 2020; Darling-Hammond, 2021), although challenges in the form of resources, increased workload, and resistance to change are ubiquitous (Javier et al., 2019; Bernardo & Mendoza, 2020). Schleicher (2018) points out that limited instructional materials, mismatched training, and logistical constraints often impede curriculum reforms. Bautista et al. (2019) indicate that teachers may resist changes when

inadequately prepared. This would also bring about new opportunities for professional growth, in which teachers could sharpen their teaching strategies and firm up their professional identities (Guskey, 2002; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Most of the existing literature investigates the policy-level implications of curriculum reforms, while few studies center on the lived experiences of teachers who navigate these transitions within the Philippine context. Understanding their narratives will, therefore, be critical in crafting policies and support mechanisms that ensure effective curriculum delivery. Using a phenomenological approach, this study gives a voice to the educators, struggles, resilience, and growth that have emerged amid the MATATAG Curriculum change. In doing so, the study hopes to provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, school administrators, and teacher-training institutions on how these stakeholders can support educators during the curriculum reform period.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

A qualitative design in nature—phenomenology—was used to examine teachers' lived experiences during the transition into the MATATAG Curriculum. Phenomenology emphasizes the description and interpretation of ways people experience certain phenomena, the process of teacher adaptation, challenges, and personal growth regarding curriculum change. Using this approach, the researchers managed to look into the innermost life experiences of teachers, considering their adjustment to the new circumstances, challenges they faced, and what strategies they worked out for themselves in coping with such changes to move on with their lives.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected schools within the municipality of Candijay, Bohol. Specifically, the research focused on La Union Elementary School, Tambungan Elementary School, and Cambane Elementary School. These schools were chosen due to their accessibility, relevance to the study, and representation of the educational context in the area.

2.3 Research Participants

In selecting participants, this qualitative-phenomenological study followed the suggestion of Creswell (2013) in using a sample size between five to ten. Heeding this proposal, participant teachers comprised eight from Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 4, and Grade 7 from selected schools in Candijay, Bohol. Participants were purposively chosen to have diverse experiences of the MATATAG Curriculum implementation to get in-depth insights, which could also be sourced through In-Depth Interviews (IDIs). Therefore, the study focused on a small but purposeful sample to draw rich descriptive data reflecting teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of the curriculum transition. Selection criteria were used as the basis for the selection of participants. The criteria for inclusion stipulated that participants should be currently teaching the MATATAG Curriculum in the district of Candijay, specifically in Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 4, and Grade 7 classrooms; have at least 5 to 7 years of teaching experience; and have had training or professional development regarding the MATATAG Curriculum to ensure that they would be able to reflect meaningfully on their experiences in adapting it.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study uses in-depth interviews (IDI) as the primary instrument to explore teachers' lived experiences navigating the transition to the MATATAG Curriculum. A semi-structured interview guide was utilized, featuring open-ended questions aligned with Creswell's (2013) framework for qualitative research. These questions focused on teachers' challenges, coping strategies, and perceptions of professional growth during the curriculum transition. The semi-structured nature allowed flexibility, enabling participants to share detailed and personal insights. All interviews were conducted face-to-face to ensure a deeper and more personal understanding of the teachers' lived experiences during the transition to the MATATAG Curriculum.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The study adopted an organized manner in investigating teachers' personal experiences during the MATATAG Curriculum phase. Preparation included purposive sampling, in which participants were selected. Kindergarten, Grades 1, 4, and 7 teachers from selected Candijay, Bohol teachers were picked based on inclusion criteria. They were included if directly involved in the curriculum shift. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data, assisted by open-ended questions that allowed participants to describe their experiences fully. This format was flexible enough to explore emerging themes while maintaining a structured approach to

data gathering. Recordings of interviews, with consent, were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the leading patterns and themes. The analysis focused on identifying challenges, coping mechanisms, and personal growth related to implementing the MATATAG Curriculum.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study, with informed consent obtained and confidentiality and voluntary participation of the respondents ensured. Following this extensive process, the research captured rich insights into teachers' adaptive strategies and experiences, thus leading to valuable knowledge in understanding the implementation of curriculum reform. In this research, the ethical treatment of participants was given high priority, explicitly ensuring that participants would not be caused any harm or discomfort during the research process. Informed consent was sought from the respondents before the study was undertaken. It stated explicitly the purpose, procedures, and possible outcomes. The teachers, as participants in the transition to the MATATAG Curriculum in selected schools in Candijay, Bohol, were duly informed that their privacy and confidentiality would be respected; personal data was kept securely, and all were anonymized. Participation was entirely voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any stage without any repercussions. The entire research process involved open and truthful communication, transparency, and respect for the dignity and well-being of all the participants.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Lack of Learning Resources, Insufficient Time, Addressing Diverse Learners

The theme in this question comes from the specific research question: 'What specific challenges have you encountered in implementing the MATATAG Curriculum?' This theme encapsulates teachers' primary challenges while implementing the MATATAG Curriculum, reflecting the new system's multifaceted operational and pedagogical demands. These challenges hinder effective instruction, increase stress due to workload demands, and necessitate adaptive strategies that many teachers feel unprepared for. Derived from the research question, the theme highlights how these interconnected issues impact curriculum adoption. It underscores the importance of systemic support through improved resource allocation, professional development, and inclusive teaching policies to ensure the curriculum's success.

T7: "The challenges I have encountered are preparing instructional materials and handling diverse learners."

T6: "Time allotment challenges me a lot, especially in handling grade 1 and 2 learners. Not all competencies can be catered to in a day."

Recent local studies in the Philippines have pointed out that teachers face many challenges in curriculum implementation, particularly in the lack of resources, time constraints, and dealing with learners' diverse needs. Studies highlight disparities in access to educational resources between urban and rural areas and between high- and low-income communities (UNESCO, 2020). Rural schools often lack basic infrastructure, such as textbooks, internet access, and laboratories. Another study on special education in the City Division of Ilagan, Isabela, pointed out problems such as inadequate training of teachers in special education and a lack of resources designed for children with learning disabilities. These factors contributed to the generally poor quality of primary education in the area, especially in schools for children with learning disabilities (Magno & Dela Cruz, 2021). In addition, studies on implementing the MATATAG Curriculum highlighted that limited resources are the main challenge in the effective implementation of inclusive education in schools, which leads to unequal learning opportunities and outcomes among students with varying needs. Physical infrastructures in rural and isolated areas were one of the biggest challenges to implementing inclusive education (Santos & Reyes, 2023). These studies have implicated the continuing problem that Filipino teachers face regarding curriculum implementation: the necessity for adequate resources, enough time, and support to duly take care of the variegated concerns of the learners.

3.2 District-Level Training for Teacher-Implementors

The theme in this question comes from the specific research question: "What kinds of professional development or training have you received to assist in adapting to the MATATAG Curriculum?" This theme underscores the importance of district-level professional development programs in effectively preparing teachers to implement the MATATAG Curriculum. Teachers often rely on district-organized training sessions to gain the skills, knowledge, and strategies necessary to adapt to the new curriculum. However, the effectiveness of these training

programs can be influenced by various factors such as content relevance, instruction quality, and the sessions' timing.

T1: "Joining the District training on the MATATAG Curriculum for Teachers."

T2: "Joining the Enhance Content Pedagogy seminar."

Teachers face multiple challenges as they adapt to the new curriculum, including a need for better resources and more comprehensive training to manage diverse learners effectively. A study by the Department of Education (2024) discusses the importance of continuous training programs aligned with the MATATAG Curriculum's goals. These professional development initiatives enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and aim to reduce stress and improve overall teaching efficacy by ensuring educators are well-prepared to manage the curriculum's demands. Research has shown that well-structured professional development is crucial for curriculum adaptation, mainly when it involves complex changes like those found in the MATATAG Curriculum. The Philippine government supports various educational programs, specifically in basic education, to ensure that Filipino students receive quality education (Ampo, 2023). Studies indicate that when professional development is aligned with teachers' actual classroom needs and allows for practical application, it enhances their ability to implement the curriculum effectively (Guskey, 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). However, challenges such as limited training time and lack of follow-up support can diminish the overall impact of these programs (Liu, 2018).

3.3 Ambiguous Implementation of Guidelines

Without clear guidelines on its implementation, the MATATAG Curriculum ruins the promise of reforming the education system in this country. Without such guidelines, teachers and administrators are prone to inconsistent interpretations that might also lead to varied teaching practices and uneven learning outcomes. This gap affects teacher training, resource allocation, and monitoring processes simultaneously and hence makes it difficult to determine if there is uniformity and effectiveness. This will short-change the students because they may not fully realize the improvements that the curriculum has to offer. To this end, DepEd should provide detailed guidelines, intensive training, and transparent evaluation frameworks for successful implementation.

Research has shown that the reason many educational reforms are not successful is because of unclear policies and ambiguous implementation frameworks. Fullan (2020) points out that curriculum implementation is a complex process requiring systematic planning, clear communication, and adequate teacher support. When policies are ill-defined, educators find it challenging to interpret and apply them, resulting in inconsistent teaching methodologies across schools (Darling-Hammond, 2021). This inconsistency impacts learning quality since students in different schools receive varying levels of instruction. One such study on K-12 Transition in the Philippines by Bernardo and Mendoza, 2020, established that ambiguity in policy direction brought about tremendous confusion among teachers, particularly about assessment techniques and competency alignment. In support of this idea, Bautista et al., 2019, noted the lack of implementation details that hindered timely resource allocation for effective teacher training programs. These studies underline that results will not meet expectations when curriculum reforms are carried out without proper structuring of policies and necessary communication. Teachers' capacity for successful implementation of new curricula rests squarely on professional development and clear instructional frameworks (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

When curriculum changes are brought about without detailed implementation guidance, teachers are uncertain of pedagogical expectations. Consequently, this brings about disjointed instruction and ineffective strategies in teaching and learning (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). Schleicher (2018) points out that well-structured curricular guidelines provide a base that will help build teachers' competencies in terms of the training needed for successful change realization. In the Philippine context, Javier et al. (2019) noted during the transition to the K-12 curriculum that teachers did not have standardized instructional materials and clear training modules, resulting in inconsistent teaching methods. The same is likely true for the MATATAG Curriculum unless the policymakers ensure that teachers have well-structured training and concrete guidelines before full implementation.

3.4 Innovative Teaching Strategies

The theme for this question emanates from the specific research question: "What are the coping strategies that you have found most effective in managing curriculum changes?" This theme highlights the coping strategies teachers

have found effective in managing the shifts in curriculum demands, focusing on integrating creative and adaptive teaching methods. Teachers have adopted innovative strategies for engaging students and addressing diverse learning needs effectively. These are important strategies in managing curriculum change complexity and help teachers make learning relevant and engaging for the students. Through these methods, teachers could be seen to have increased student participation, developed critical thinking, and improved general academic performance, thus making the implementation of the new curriculum successful. This theme underlines the importance of teacher creativity and flexibility when navigating curriculum transitions.

T3: "Using technology in various teaching"

T5: "Focus on fundamental skills, balance cognitive skills, reduce learning areas."

A study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2019) points out that project-based learning has been successfully implemented to improve student engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration. PBL makes it easier for students to apply what they have learned in real-world contexts, making the learning experience more relevant and active. This aligns with the emphasis on dynamic teaching strategies found in the MATATAG Curriculum. Moreover, as stated in the article by Mioduser et al. (2022), digital tools have been integrated into teaching, with results showing increased participation and better student academic performance. Technology enables teachers to facilitate learning more flexibly, adaptively, and engagingly, serving diverse learning styles.

3.5 Stress Reduction Strategies

This theme is derived from the research question: "What are the techniques or practices you use to manage stress related to these changes?". This theme discusses how teachers cope with stress linked to curriculum change, like that brought about by the MATATAG Curriculum. Teachers reported using various means to cope with the demands of these changes, from mindfulness practices to time management strategies and seeking support from peers. Mindfulness and relaxation exercises counteract immediate stress and increase clarity of mind; good time management allows teachers to balance their workload and not experience burnout, while collaborative support from colleagues affords them both emotional relief and practical advice in creating a shared space for problem-solving. The strategies are pertinent in helping educators negotiate the pressures of implementing a new curriculum, ensuring their well-being and continued effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers can maintain a positive teaching environment by managing stress, which means better outcomes for them and their students.

T1: "Seek professional guidance"

T4: "Breaking down the task, prioritizing self-care and setting boundaries, mindfulness and deep breathing techniques, and practicing flexibility and embracing imperfection."

Related research has emphasized how teachers might buffer the impact of curriculum changes, such as those brought about by the MATATAG Curriculum, through stress reduction strategies. In this line, mindfulness practices such as meditation and relaxation exercises significantly reduce stress and improve teachers' emotional resilience. A study by Roeser et al. (2013) found that mindfulness interventions decreased teachers' stress and emotional exhaustion but elevated well-being and job satisfaction. The authors added the role of mindfulness in enhancing teachers' self-regulation and resilience, resulting in improved classroom management and student motivation. Considering the interrelationship between teacher motivation and school goal structures, the present study discovers that a mastery climate increases self-efficacy and job satisfaction and thus decreases emotional exhaustion (Skaalvik, 2017). These findings underline the importance of comprehensive stress management practices in supporting teachers during curriculum transitions, ensuring their effectiveness in the classroom and overall well-being.

3.6 Time Management

The theme identified in this question is taken directly from the research question: "How do you prioritize tasks to deal with the workload and increased time demands?" In this theme, teachers describe various strategies to deal with increased workload and time demands from curriculum changes like those in MATATAG. Teachers reported using time management techniques and employing different strategies to reduce the load by changing curriculum, including those in the MATATAG. These strategies are critical in balancing lesson planning, grading, administrative tasks, and professional development. The creation of effective time management systems will,

therefore, help teachers handle the complexities in their roles and achieve a work-life balance that will be sustainable. Prioritizing tasks allows teachers to focus on high-impact activities that ensure the curriculum goals will be met. In this way, stress and potential burnout are avoided. Efficient time management enhances the teacher's productivity and the general quality of instruction for the benefit of both teachers and students.

T2: *"Schedule important work for most productive times."*

T5: *"Minimize interruption; review workload regularly; task focusing"*

The research noted different time management techniques teachers use to manage their tasks properly. A study by Jerrim and Sims (2020) revealed that effective planning and prioritizing might help to decrease teacher stress and boost productivity. Teachers who tended to break down big tasks into smaller, manageable steps, set deadlines for themselves, and use technology tools to lighten administrative loads coped better with the workload. Teachers who were able to manage their workload effectively reported lower levels of stress and greater job satisfaction. Utilization of collaborative planning and support networks within schools also contributed to more balanced workloads and enhanced productivity.

4.0 Conclusion

The study pointed out some of the significant challenges to implementing the MATATAG Curriculum: a lack of instructional materials, time constraints, diversity in learners' needs, lack of teacher training, ambiguous guidelines, high levels of stress, and teaching innovation. Without clear policies and adequate resources, educators can hardly provide effective instruction, which leads to inconsistent learning outcomes. Such would require more support from the government, better training of teachers, and systematic guidelines in implementing programs, attaining the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UN SDG) 4 on Quality Education. Another primary concern is the lack of instructional materials, which forces teachers to use out-of-date resources. Reducing non-teaching workloads and curriculum streamlining will save time, allowing teachers to focus on instruction. In addition, the needs of diverse learners must be addressed through differentiated teaching strategies and inclusive education training. Transparent, standardized implementation guidelines are necessary so that curriculum execution is consistent. High levels of teacher stress have implications for teacher well-being and effectiveness, so the promotion of mental health programs, workload management, and peer support systems will be highlighted. Lastly, teaching innovation will be achieved through technology integration to promote research-based strategies that improve student engagement. Systemic support, improvement of policies, and professional development initiatives will empower educators to implement the MATATAG Curriculum more effectively and sustainably toward UN SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The researchers indicate equal contribution to each section.

6.0 Funding

The work received no funds from any agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

We declare no conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

We acknowledge Bohol Island State University, particularly the School of Advanced Studies, for giving us this opportunity to accomplish this publication.

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Senior High School Students' Entrepreneurial Skills, Knowledge, and Competencies

Joreme L. Jambo*, Denmark S. Macalisang, Michelle S. Calimpong, Ligaya G. Novida
Southern Capital Colleges, Oroquieta City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: joreme.jambo@deped.gov.ph

Date received: May 13, 2024
Date revised: March 2, 2025
Date accepted: March 24, 2025

Originality: 90%
Grammarly Score: 99%
Similarity: 10%

Recommended citation:

Jambo, J., Macalisang, D., Calimpong, M., Novida, L. (2025). Senior high school students' entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and competencies. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 351-356.
<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0205>

Abstract. This study examined the entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and competencies of Grade 12 students to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Using a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from a sample of Grade 12 students, and analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, frequency count, and percentage. Results showed that students demonstrated strong competencies in continuous learning, practical business skills, and risk management. However, they reported challenges in networking, presenting business plans, and financial literacy. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions, such as mentorship programs and skill-based training, to enhance students' entrepreneurial readiness. Providing adequate support and resources can further empower students to navigate the demands of entrepreneurship effectively.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial competencies; Entrepreneurial knowledge; Entrepreneurial skills; Senior high school.

1.0 Introduction

Individuals need to develop business knowledge, skills, and abilities to drive innovation, encourage creativity, and boost economic growth in today's fast-paced and competitive global economy. Scholars stressed that being an entrepreneur requires a wide range of skills and traits, from seeing opportunities to being resilient and from being willing to take risks to being bold. People who are entrepreneurs are more likely to be proactive, which means they look for chances and take calculated risks to reach their goals. Entrepreneurial skills are becoming more and more valuable in areas other than standard businesses. These areas include social entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship within organizations, and even personal growth.

Entrepreneurial education has become an important way to help students develop an entrepreneurial attitude and set of skills. Hatak et al. (2018) said that including entrepreneurial education in school curriculums gives students the skills to start their businesses. This education includes various activities meant to teach valuable skills, encourage new ideas, and encourage a willingness to take risks and be creative (Fayolle et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial schooling is important for many reasons, but one of the most important is that it helps people deal with the uncertainty of the modern job market. Hatak et al. (2018) say that skills like creativity, adaptability, and problem-solving are increasingly valued in many jobs. This shows that entrepreneurial skills can be used in many situations. Entrepreneurship education also helps the economy and society grow by giving people the skills to spot and take advantage of new chances.

Because teaching people how to be entrepreneurs is so complex, schools use various methods, such as internships, startup incubators, and entrepreneurial contests, to help students learn by doing. Urban et al. (2021) say that these hands-on activities give students real-life experience with business, letting them use what they have learned in the classroom and gain important skills. According to Shane and Venkataraman (2018), entrepreneurial education also encourages an entrepreneurial mindset that is resilient, curious, and quick to act. These qualities are needed to solve complex problems and bring about good change.

The lack of empirical evidence regarding developing and assessing entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and competencies within the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strand at the secondary education level presents a significant gap in the existing literature. This gap in empirical evidence regarding the development and assessment of entrepreneurial skills and characteristics within the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strand at the secondary education level not only hampers their understanding of the educational needs of Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) students but also impedes the formulation of effective pedagogical strategies tailored to their unique requirements. The Fourth Industrial Revolution accelerated the integration of automation, artificial intelligence, and digitalization across sectors, reshaping job roles and skill requirements. This shift was necessitated by the recognition that graduates needed to excel in established roles and innovate, lead, and create new opportunities in rapidly changing markets.

This study addresses this gap by thoroughly examining the business skills, knowledge, competencies, and employability of ABM students. By focusing on this understudied group, the research aims to illuminate ABM students' distinctive entrepreneurial mindset and skills, identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and developmental needs comprehensively. Consequently, the findings hold practical significance for secondary school educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, offering actionable insights to foster an entrepreneurial mindset and equip ABM students for success in today's dynamic economy.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive survey research design to provide a detailed analysis of the relationship between students' entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and competencies. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive research aims to systematically describe a phenomenon by collecting quantifiable data without manipulating variables. It focuses on providing an accurate account of the characteristics, behaviors, or conditions of a given population. The chosen descriptive-survey research design allowed for meticulous documentation and exploration of the diverse aspects of students' entrepreneurial skills. By providing a detailed analysis, it intends to contribute valuable insights that can inform interventions and strategies to enhance students' entrepreneurial capabilities.

2.2 Research Participants

The respondents of the study were senior high school accountancy, business, and management students. The total population of the study was 156 students' a breakdown of fifty-four (54) from Accountancy, Business, and Management 1, fifty-four (54) from Accountancy, Business and Management 2, and forty-eight (48) from Accountancy, Business and Management three (3). A sample size calculator with the help of the Raosoft application was used to obtain the sample, and a total of one hundred twelve (112) were obtained. The sample included students from different ABM sections, and a stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across various age groups, genders, parents' occupations, and educational backgrounds.

2.3 Research Instrument

A standardized modified questionnaire adapted and extracted from the work of Alas et al. (2023) was used. The questionnaire comprised three parts: the first section focused on profiling respondents, covering demographic factors such as age, sex, parents' work, and highest educational background. The second section evaluated students' entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, including indicators like developing a business plan, implementing a small business, financial literacy, and society's sustainable impact. Lastly, the questionnaire assessed students' entrepreneurial competencies, including subscales such as opportunity recognition and evaluation, risk management and decision-making, entrepreneurial leadership and team collaboration, Innovation and creative problem-solving, and ethical decision-making and social responsibility. A thorough validation procedure was executed to ascertain the instrument's validity and reliability. The questionnaire was

validated in person by a panel of specialists comprising PhD holders in entrepreneurship and education and education program supervisors. The specialists meticulously evaluated the questionnaire's content, organization, and pertinence to the study objectives. After expert validation, a pilot test was administered to a chosen cohort of responders exhibiting traits analogous to the target population. The instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in an overall reliability coefficient of 0.89, signifying strong internal consistency. The subscales assessing entrepreneurial skills and competencies yielded values between 0.85 and 0.91, validating that the questionnaire accurately measured the targeted constructs.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Additionally, the researcher disseminated the questionnaires to Accountancy, Business, and Management students. After completing the questionnaires, they were meticulously reviewed, categorized, enumerated, and arranged.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The researcher employed quantitative approaches to emphasize ethical concepts like informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, and compassion. Comprehensive approval from the Research Ethics Committee was obtained to guarantee informed consent, which will furnish extensive information regarding the study's objectives, advantages, and potential hazards. Initial meetings will be scheduled with both respondents and designated schools prior to their engagement in the research. Ensuring the study's credibility involves protecting respondents' privacy using pseudonyms and preserving their identity. Respectful treatment and the assurance of participants' cooperation were essential values. Respondents were notified from the beginning of their ability to withdraw from the study without any obligation. Compliance with the authorization for conducting the study and ethical standards in the composition and distribution of the final report was rigorously maintained throughout the research process. The study's conclusions were regarded as being of the highest seriousness. The integration of concepts from other studies and pertinent literature will boost reliability. Furthermore, the researcher guaranteed the transferability of the study's findings to relevant contexts. The outcomes were advantageous for future applications in analogous circumstances, demographics, and occurrences, acting as a significant resource for decision-making.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the results in the students' entrepreneurial skills and knowledge levels. Most students were proficient in implementing small business (mean score: 3.312) and (standard deviation: 0.694). While students excel in developing a business plan (mean score: 3.17) and (standard deviation: 0.724). Similarly, they show dedication to financial literacy and planning (mean score: 3.361) and (standard deviation: 0.689). Regarding sustainability and societal impact, students are committed (mean score: 3.361) and (standard deviation: 0.736). It indicates that the students have developed a strong ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks. They can confidently carry out activities such as crafting business strategies, conducting market research, and executing marketing campaigns.

Table 1. *Level of students' entrepreneurial skills and knowledge*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Implementing Small Business	3.31	0.69	Proficient
Developing Business Plan	3.17	0.72	Proficient
Financial Literacy and Planning	3.36	0.68	Proficient
Sustainability and Societal Impact	3.18	0.73	Proficient
Overall		2.84	Proficient

Moreover, students possess a deep understanding of the concepts and theories that underpin entrepreneurship. This includes knowledge of market analysis, financial forecasting, business ethics, and strategic management. Shane and Venkataraman (2018) state that by equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, entrepreneurial education prepares individuals to become agents of Innovation, progress, and social impact.

Table 2 shows the significant difference between the students' entrepreneurial skill levels when grouped according to profile. Based on the table, all indicate that there was no significant difference between sex ($U = -9.2557$, $P =$

0.045), age ($H = 16.6741$, $P = 0.224$), parents' work ($H = 120.684$, $P = 0.201$), and parents' highest educational attainment ($H = 12.221$, $P = 0.226$) to students' entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, since the computed probability of the respondent profile exceeds the margin of error 0.05, this implies that the hypothesis was not rejected. This means there was no significance between the students' entrepreneurial skills levels when grouped according to profile.

Table 2. *Difference in entrepreneurial skills when grouped according to profile*

Profile	U-Value	H-Value	P-Value	Interpretation	Decision on H_0
Sex	-9.25		0.045	Not Significant	Do not reject
Age		16.6	0.224	Not Significant	Do not reject
Parents' Work		120	0.201	Not Significant	Do not Reject
Parents' Highest Educational Attainment		12.2	0.226	Not Significant	Do not Reject

Marlino (2007) supported the present findings by revealing that gender has long been a topic of discussion regarding entrepreneurial skills and abilities. This means that gender alone does not determine one's entrepreneurial skills; research has indicated that societal expectations, access to resources, and support systems may impact the development and manifestation of entrepreneurial skills in individuals. The influence of gender stereotypes and biases in the business world can shape how individuals are perceived and the opportunities available. Additionally, Bauman and Lucy (2019) posited that entrepreneurial skills can be developed at any age, and the potential for entrepreneurship is not exclusively linked to a particular age group. Studies in entrepreneurship education often focus on how skills can be nurtured through various stages of life, and while certain age groups may have different experiences or resources available to them, the capacity to develop entrepreneurial skills is not inherently age-dependent. Education, experience, and personal drive often influence entrepreneurial skills rather than age alone.

Moreover, the result of the findings regarding the levels of students' entrepreneurial skills, when grouped according to parents' highest educational attainment, contradicts what Zou (2023) affirmed that the parents' highest educational attainment can significantly impact the development of students' entrepreneurial skills. Parents' educational background can influence the aspirations, management style, recruitment strategies, and overall performance of students as entrepreneurs. Research has shown that parents' educational attainment can significantly influence their children's academic and career achievements. This signifies that when parents have higher levels of education, they tend to have better career opportunities, higher income levels, and a greater understanding of the skills needed for success in the modern economy.

Table 3 shows the result in the level of students' entrepreneurial competencies. Students acknowledge their awareness of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and evaluation with mean scores of 3.256 ($SD=0.699$). It emphasizes fostering an entrepreneurial mindset through experiential learning and mentorship. Regarding risk management and decision-making, students show moderate confidence, with mean scores of 3.12 ($SD=0.643$). Students generally believe in their leadership and teamwork skills, with a mean score of 3.14 ($SD=0.745$). However, they exhibit strength in innovative thinking with a mean score of 3.25 ($SD=0.626$).

Table 3. *Level of students' entrepreneurial competencies*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
1. Opportunity Recognition and Evaluation	3.25	0.69	Agree
2. Risk Management and Decision Making	3.12	0.64	Agree
3. Entrepreneurial Leadership and Team Collaboration	3.14	0.74	Agree
4. Innovation and Creative Problem-solving	3.29	0.62	Agree
5. Ethical Decision Making and Social Responsibility	3.25	0.69	Agree
Overall		3.40	Agree

Moreover, students prioritize ethical decision-making and social responsibility, with a mean score of 3.25 ($SD=0.692$). It indicates that students have developed these competencies to a level where they can confidently apply them in real-world entrepreneurial settings. They are prepared to take on the challenges of entrepreneurship, from ideating and launching a new venture to sustaining and scaling it effectively. As cited by Liu (2021), the role entrepreneurial competencies can play in fostering an environment conducive to knowledge sharing among student entrepreneurs. It suggests it can create opportunities for tacit knowledge transfer and collaboration with entities to build an inclusive, supportive entrepreneurial culture.

Table 4 presents the significant differences in students' entrepreneurial competencies based on their profiles. The results indicate a significant difference in entrepreneurial competencies when grouped by sex ($U = 6.33292$, $P = 0.001$). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that students' entrepreneurial competency levels vary between males and females. This suggests that gender plays a role in shaping students' entrepreneurial competencies.

Table 4. *Difference in entrepreneurial competencies when grouped according to profile*

Profile	U-Value	H-Value	P-Value	Interpretation	Decision on H_0
Sex	6.33		0.001	Significant*	Rejected
Age		7.00	0.101	Not Significant	Do not reject
Parents' Work		4.12	0.219	Not Significant	Do not Reject
Parents' Highest Educational Attainment		26.0	0.094	Not Significant	Do not Reject

Mushipe (2013) posited that entrepreneurship has been recognized as a vital aspect of economic growth and development. The study addresses the concept of entrepreneurship education and the influence of gender on entrepreneurship in a longitudinal survey. The study found that male students displayed a higher level of entrepreneurship interest than their female counterparts. One possible reason for this difference could be the societal expectations and gender norms that influence career choices and perceptions of entrepreneurship. To further explore this gender-based difference in entrepreneurial competencies, the study also examined the potential impact of the business ideas proposed by male and female students. The results showed that the business ideas proposed by male students required a higher capital outlay, posed more risk, and had a more significant potential for economic impact in terms of employment creation and contribution to the gross domestic product compared to the business ideas proposed by female students.

On the other hand, there is no significant difference between age ($H = 7.0014$, $P = 0.101$), parents' work ($H = 4.1230$, $P = 0.219$), and parents' highest educational attainment ($H = 26.098$, $P = 0.094$) to students' entrepreneurial competencies. This means that the decision of the hypothesis was accepted; therefore, there is no significant difference in the level of students' entrepreneurial competencies when grouped according to age, parents' work, and parents' highest educational attainment. Smith and Barrett (2016) found that age was not a determining factor in developing entrepreneurial skills among students. Similarly, Jones and Brown (2020) concluded that there was no significant difference in the entrepreneurial competencies of students based on age. These recent findings support the notion that students exhibit similar entrepreneurial competencies regardless of age. Thus, age does not play a substantial role in developing entrepreneurial skills among students.

Similarly, Hassi (2016) suggests that parents' occupations have little impact on the level of students' entrepreneurial competencies. While we measured three sets of skills - non-cognitive entrepreneurial skills, cognitive entrepreneurial skills, and intentions to become an entrepreneur - there was no statistically significant difference in these competencies based on parents' occupation. The results indicate that other factors, such as educational background or parental behaviors, may influence students' entrepreneurial competencies more. The lack of significant difference in students' entrepreneurial competencies based on parents' occupation suggests that factors other than parental work play a more influential role in developing students' entrepreneurial competencies.

Moreover, as cited by Montes-Martínez & Ramírez-Montoya (2020), it is important to consider that entrepreneurial competencies are not solely defined by parental educational attainment. While parental education can influence a student's mindset and aspirations, it is not the only factor determining one's entrepreneurial competencies. There are numerous examples of successful entrepreneurs who have achieved their goals despite coming from families with lower levels of educational attainment.

4.0 Conclusion

Possessing entrepreneurial skills can help them overcome any challenges they encounter and achieve success. Regardless of age or gender, anyone can thrive in entrepreneurship with the proper support and drive. The study points out that students demonstrate proficiency in continuous learning, practical small business skills, and risk management. However, students also acknowledge the need for enhancement in networking, presenting business

plans, financial literacy, sustainability frameworks, opportunity recognition, decision-making, collaborative roles, creative problem-solving, and ethical decision-making. An intervention program ignites the entrepreneurial spirit within students and equips them with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-changing landscape by providing support, resources, and mentorship.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors confirm the equal contribution in each part of this work. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of this work.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

The author affirms no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researcher sincerely thanks Dr. Ligaya G. Novida, Dean of the Graduate School of Southern Capital Colleges, Oroquieta City, for her insightful suggestions. Special appreciation to Dr. Denmark S. Macalisang for his guidance. I also give gratitude to panel members Dr. Jocelyn C. Udal, Dr. Catherine G. Malon, and Dr. Michelle S. Calimpong. Thanks to Accountancy, Business, and Management students of Misamis Occidental National High School for their contributions. The researcher's family and friends are acknowledged for their support, and gratitude is offered to God for strength and grace throughout the research.

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Exploring the Structure and Level of Senior High School Students' Scientific Higher-order Thinking Skills in Science Education

Chrissie Kyell M. Trinidad*, Antonia Gueyndoline B. Despojo
Foundation University, Dumaguete City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: chrissiekyell.trinidad@foundationu.com

Date received: January 15, 2025

Date revised: March 2, 2025

Date accepted: March 27, 2025

Originality: 94%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 6%

Recommended citation:

Trinidad, C.K., & Despojo, A.G. (2025). Exploring the structure and level of senior high school students' scientific higher-order thinking skills in Science education. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 357-365. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.027>

Abstract. This study aimed to determine the level of Scientific Higher Order Thinking Skills (S-HOTS) of the Grade 11 students in selected schools of Zamboanguita Districts 1 and 2, Negros Oriental. The researcher utilized a descriptive-correlational survey and employed systematic random sampling. The respondents of the study were the 148 senior high school students from the two public high schools in Zamboanguita, Negros Oriental. The researcher used a validated survey questionnaire and employed percent, weighted mean, mean, and Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient in treating the data. Findings showed that students exhibit high levels of S-HOTS across multiple dimensions, including critical thinking, creative thinking, metacognition, science self-efficacy, and scientific reasoning. The data also unveiled that students' overall Earth and Life Science and Physical Science performance is categorized as 'satisfactory'. Moreover, the study found that the students' metacognition and science self-efficacy are significantly correlated to their academic performance. However, no significant relationships were observed between academic performance and the following variables: critical thinking, creative thinking, and scientific reasoning. Educators might focus on improving students' abilities to integrate and reorganize information creatively, encouraging more practice in activities like problem-based learning, project work, or tasks that require reimagining concepts in new ways.

Keywords: Critical thinking; Metacognition; Science self-efficacy; Scientific reasoning; Scientific Higher-Order Thinking Skills (S-HOTS).

1.0 Introduction

The current era of technological advancements, known as "Industrial Revolution 4.0," has profoundly influenced the field of education. It led to a shift in acquiring knowledge and information from rote learning to engaging in higher-order thinking. The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has transformed education to prepare students for the changing job market and industry needs. Moreover, these developments necessitate that learners cultivate a strong sense of self to handle the challenges of the twenty-first century. As Arifiyyati et al. (2022) noted, students must develop a sense of intellectual accountability to themselves and their communities. Education and training are vital connections between societal deficiencies and the progress communities aspire to achieve, as highlighted by Kareem (2022). A survey by the American Management Association (2019) further emphasizes this shift in educational priorities, revealing that 75% of employers believe fostering critical thinking, communication,

creativity, and real-world problem-solving skills should take precedence in college curricula. Additionally, 93% of these employers consider these skills more important than traditional academic competencies.

The Philippine educational system aims to achieve quality education; despite numerous efforts, results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that Filipino students continue to rank among the least proficient in math, reading, and science. The average PISA 2022 results in these subjects showed a slight improvement compared to 2018 (Acido & Caballes, 2024). Compared to the OECD average of 76%, only over 23% of Filipino students attained Level 2 or higher in science. Furthermore, almost no Filipino students attained the highest performance levels in science, specifically Levels 5 or 6, while the OECD average is 7% (PISA, 2022). Muhibbuddin (2023) suggests that one way to address this issue is to innovate science teaching by strengthening students' critical thinking skills. Additionally, it is essential to cultivate the ability to think critically, develop creativity, construct knowledge, solve problems, and master the subject matter during the learning process to promote scientific literacy (Arifiyyati et al., 2022).

Numerous studies emphasize inference, concluding, deduction, induction, and analysis skills to assess higher-order thinking skills (Rashel & Kinya, 2020). Scientific higher-order thinking skills (S-HOTS) have long been a research focus, particularly in science education, with studies emphasizing their crucial role in the learning process. However, much of the current research has overlooked a comprehensive exploration of S-HOTS and has not sufficiently defined its distinctive characteristics (Sun et al., 2022). Therefore, this study aims to determine the level of Scientific higher-order thinking (S-HOT) skills of grade 11 students. Understanding and measuring these skills will help educators, especially in the Philippine setting, to select appropriate teaching strategies to enhance students' scientific literacy. Teaching science innovatively will foster students' critical and creative thinking, knowledge construction, problem-solving skills, and mastery of the subject matter.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive-correlational research design, which is a flexible method for depicting the characteristics of a population or phenomenon and examining the relationships between variables (Miksza et al., 2023). This design was suitable for the study as it described the current state of students' higher-order thinking skills in science education and explored the various factors that influence these skills.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was conducted in the two public high schools of Zamboanguita, Negros Oriental. The study included grade 11 students of Santiago Delmo Memorial High School of District 1 and Jose Marie Locsin Memorial High School of District 2. The primary sources of income for the people living in Zamboanguita are agriculture and fisheries. Both schools receive limited learning resources from the Department of Education (DepEd), such as books, self-learning modules, science and mathematics equipment packages, and DepEd Computerization Program packages. Each classroom has a smart or non-smart television, funded by the School Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) fund and other stakeholders.

2.3 Research Participants

The research respondents of this study were the grade 11 students of Jose Marie Locsin Memorial High School of Zamboanguita District 2 and Santiago Delmo Memorial High School of Zamboanguita District 1 during the school year 2023-2024. Of the 283 total population, only 148 were the representatives, comprising 64 females and 84 males. Every second on the list was a respondent, and these students were selected using systematic random sampling.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher used a questionnaire and the class academic performance of the grade 11 students in Earth and Life Science and Physical Science during the school year 2023-2024. Earth and Life Science and Physical Science are core subjects in senior high school, particularly in grade 11. The student's performance in Earth and Life Science and Physical Science was correlated with their level of S-HOTS. The level of S-HOT is divided into five areas: critical thinking, creative thinking, metacognition, science self-efficacy, and scientific reasoning. The indicators in the survey questionnaire used to evaluate critical thinking skills were adapted from the research instrument of Kobylarek et al. (2022), and the indicators used in assessing Metacognition were taken from the

study of Ajaja and Agboro-Eravwoke (2017). In addition, the indicators from the study of Lehmkuhl et al. (2021) and Sun, Xie, and Lavonen (2022) were also used in evaluating students' scientific reasoning skills. Furthermore, indicators used to measure science self-efficacy were from Van Zyl et al. (2022).

The researcher composed a letter to the cited authors requesting authorization to utilize their research instruments in this study. The entire questionnaire was shown to three experts in science education for content validity and to verify if the items corresponded with the study's specific questions. The recommendations from the experts were taken into account during the enhancement of the questionnaire. An item reliability test was carried out through a dry run. Thirty students not included as respondents in the study were selected during the dry run. The reliability of the items was assessed through Cronbach's alpha test. Its theoretical range is from 0 to 1 and measures how positively each variable in the scale relates to all other variables. Although 0.70 is considered satisfactory, larger alpha values are preferred. This study established a threshold of 0.70 as the minimum acceptable level for reliability, consistent with common standards in educational research. Additionally, items with alpha values below 0.70 were reviewed and subsequently revised or removed to further enhance the instrument's reliability. The results of these adjustments are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Reliability test result*

S-HOTS	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
Analysis	0.724
Evaluation	0.704
Synthesis	0.720
Creative thinking	0.701
Metacognition	0.740
Science Self-Efficacy	0.764
Scientific Reasoning	0.700

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Following the design hearing, the researcher incorporated all the panel members' corrections, suggestions, and other comments for improvement. With approval from the dean of Foundation University Graduate School, a request letter to float the questionnaire to the respondents was forwarded to the Superintendent of the Schools Division in Negros Oriental through the Public Schools District Supervisors of Zamboanguita districts 1 and 2. The approved letters were given to the school principals and students' advisers for the final floating questionnaire schedule. The researcher discussed the significance and objectives of the study with the students during the distribution of the questionnaires. Also, the researcher read aloud each item to them. As soon as the students had completed answering all the items in the survey questionnaire, the researcher personally retrieved them. The researcher collected the students' Earth and Life Science and Physical Science grades from their advisers and the students themselves. The researcher tallied the data gathered using MS Excel, followed by analysis and interpretation carried out by the statistician.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher was exceptionally cautious in managing the data given by the students, guaranteeing that the confidentiality of the information was preserved strictly to respect the dignity and privacy of the learners. During this research, the researcher adhered to all required protocols set by the Ethics Committee of Foundation University to guarantee that the research topic is meaningful, clearly valid, and ethically appropriate. Furthermore, the researchers obtained informed consent from all study respondents via a disclosure statement before its execution. The first part of the questionnaire includes the disclosure statement, which was read aloud by the researcher to the respondents. The study highlighted the respondents' anonymity, confidentiality, and self-determination rights.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Scientific Higher-Order Thinking Skills (S-HOTS)

In terms of Critical Thinking

The findings (see Table 2) indicate that students scored highly in the analysis, evaluation, and synthesis sub-skills, as reflected in their respective weighted means of 3.42, 3.77, and 3.35. The overall rating of 3.51, with a confidence interval of 3.39 to 3.63, spans the boundary between moderate to high critical thinking. Table 1 presents the data

on the level of students' S-HOTS in terms of critical thinking. In this study, the critical thinking skills factors measured are analysis, evaluation, and synthesis skills.

Table 2. *Level of students' S-HOTS in terms of critical thinking (n=147)*

Components of Critical Thinking		$\bar{x}$	VD	LoCT	CI
Analysis					
1.	I am drawn to exploring more profound interpretations of reality.	3.55	A	H	3.44 – 3.67
2.	I can pick out the most important parts of a science lesson.	3.47	A	H	3.37 – 3.58
3.	I like researching for a relationship between the information the science lesson contains and other topics I have read.	3.45	A	H	3.33 – 3.56
4.	I enjoy finding connections between phenomena that appear unrelated.	3.43	A	H	3.31 – 3.55
5.	I can break down a scientific problem into smaller parts and determine the most effective solution.	3.18	MA	M	3.05 – 3.31
Composite		3.42	A	H	3.30 – 3.53
Evaluation					
1.	I try to check if the scientific information that interests me is accurate.	3.91	A	H	3.80 – 4.02
2.	I double-check important scientific information, even if it seems true.	3.85	A	H	3.73 – 3.97
3.	I look at different sources when I am checking scientific information.	3.84	A	H	3.73 – 3.96
4.	During a science class discussion, I focus on explaining my thoughts clearly and trying to understand the other person's viewpoint.	3.74	A	H	3.61 – 3.86
5.	I can find the most helpful scientific information to solve problems.	3.53	A	H	3.40 – 3.65
Composite		3.77	A	H	3.65 – 3.89
Synthesis					
1.	I like discussing new meanings in texts that I already know.	3.59	A	H	3.46 – 3.72
2.	I like combining scientific ideas from different sources.	3.44	A	H	3.31 – 3.57
3.	I form my understanding by merging various bits of scientific information.	3.41	A	H	3.29 – 3.52
4.	I can create logical/sound inferences from all scientific information.	3.17	MA	M	3.06 – 3.28
5.	I can see the structure of the text, and I could change it.	3.14	MA	M	3.03 – 3.25
Composite		3.35	MA	M	3.23 – 3.47
Overall		3.51	A	H	3.39 – 3.63
Legend: Scale		Verbal Description (VD)		Level of Critical Thinking (LoCT)	
4.21 – 5.00		Strongly Agree (SA)		Very High (VH)	
3.41 – 4.20		Agree (A)		High (H)	
2.61 – 3.40		Moderately Agree (MA)		Moderate (M)	
1.81 – 2.60		Disagree (D)		Low (L)	
1.00 – 1.80		Strongly Disagree (SD)		Very Low (VL)	

The result suggests that students are proficient in analyzing information, identifying patterns, and understanding the components of a problem. In addition, it also depicts that they can effectively break down complex situations into manageable parts, which is essential for problem-solving and decision-making. According to Fitriani et al. (2020), students must acquire critical thinking skills to be capable of problem-solving, analysis, and decision-making. All students should be able to think critically because it is a valuable intellectual skill. Furthermore, Jayanti (2020) stated that analysis is a higher-order thinking skill in which students attempt to break down a given piece of information into its components and identify the relationships between them. Moreover, Muhibbuddin (2023) suggested that science teachers must innovate how science is taught to strengthen students' scientific critical thinking skills. The results indicate that students are powerful at evaluating information. They can assess data or arguments' credibility, accuracy, and relevance in a given problem. This skill is crucial in scientific reasoning, ethical decision-making, and forming sound judgments. In the words of (Sunarti et al., 2021), an option for problem-solving is to evaluate claims, opinions, or arguments for better understanding. Darmaji et al. (2022) also stated that in problem-solving or decision-making, a person with critical thinking abilities can evaluate a statement by looking at logical and rational relevant issues.

As emphasized in the study of Arifiyyati et al. (2022), teachers are essential in helping students think critically, be creative, build knowledge, solve problems, and become experts in the topic to promote scientific literacy. Jayanti (2020) posited that as part of the higher-order thinking skill of creating, students organize how to create a design to finish a task. All students should be able to integrate different knowledge components to provide a convincing explanation of concepts and ideas, particularly on Earth and Life Science and Physical Science. Although students also performed well in synthesis (composite mean of 3.35), the findings suggest a slightly weaker ability to generate new ideas or reconfigure existing information in novel ways. Specifically, the “moderate” ability to create logical inferences and restructure texts may indicate that while they can understand and process information well,

they might struggle with higher-order tasks like creating innovative solutions or writing well-organized scientific answers. Additionally, the lack of emphasis on developing students' critical thinking skills contributes to their "moderate" level of synthesis skills. Students lack exposure to opportunities to synthesize their ideas, engage in classroom activities that foster these skills, and are often exposed to assessment tests that focus on rote memorization and understanding. The "moderate" level of synthesis suggests a need for targeted instructional strategies. Educators might focus on improving students' abilities to integrate and reorganize information creatively, encouraging more practice in activities like problem-based learning, project work, or tasks that require reimagining concepts in new ways. Moreover, engaging students in collaborative learning allows them to discuss and synthesize information. Students must be exposed to assessments focusing on synthesis skills and application, and teachers must provide immediate feedback to students to continuously develop these skills.

The result of the study aligns with the finding of Farillon (2021), which revealed that the students taking up HUMSS, HE, and ICT had "developed" levels of critical thinking abilities, while those taking up SMAW had "moderately developed" levels. As Himmatussolihah et al. (2020) stressed, critical thinking can produce strong thinkers and problem-solvers. People with strong critical thinking abilities can complete projects with fewer errors than those with weaker critical thinking abilities. The results manifest that the respondents are critical thinkers and consider all rational choices in decision-making, particularly in Earth and Life and Physical Science subjects. While students have strong critical thinking skills, particularly in evaluation, more emphasis could be placed on improving their creative thinking and inference skills to ensure they can excel in traditional and innovative tasks.

In terms of Creative Thinking

Table 3 shows the data on the level of S-HOTS of the students in terms of creative thinking. Overall, the students have "high" creative thinking skills, as evident in the composite mean of 3.67, with a confidence interval of 3.56 to 3.77. This interval falls entirely within the high classification of creative thinking skills. Specifically, the students have a "high" level of curiosity about how things work ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22), participate in science experiments to learn new things ($\bar{x}$ = 4.06), and enjoy adding artistic touches to their science homework or projects ($\bar{x}$ = 3.54). Madyani et al. (2020) stated that creative thinking is one of the 4Cs students need to possess.

Table 3. Level of students' S-HOTS in terms of creative thinking ($n=148$)

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	VD	LoCT	CI
1. I am a curious about how things work.	4.22	A	H	4.12 – 4.31
2. I like to participate in science experiments to learn new things.	4.06	A	H	3.94 – 4.18
3. I enjoy adding artistic touches to my science homework or projects.	3.54	A	H	3.43 – 3.65
4. I can understand and interpret scientific problems.	3.31	MA	M	3.21 – 3.41
5. I can see multiple ways to solve a scientific problem.	3.21	MA	M	3.11 – 3.31
Composite	3.67	A	H	3.56 – 3.77

The study's findings contrast with those of Sugiharto et al. (2020), who revealed that urban and rural senior high school students manifest low creative thinking skills. The research findings imply that students possess creative thinking skills and can develop or construct solutions to problems, specifically in Earth, Life, and Physical Science. Furthermore, Kareem (2022) also discovered that creativity is a key technique for solving problems when there are no simple solutions and the standard or popular solutions are ineffective. Consequently, Anggraeni and Sole (2019) stressed that creative thinking skills are the ability to use one's thought process to generate fresh, reasonable, and constructive ideas that incorporate one's instincts. The research findings imply that students possess creative thinking skills to develop or construct solutions to problems, specifically in Earth and Life and Physical Science. It can be observed from the data that students have a "moderate" level in understanding and interpreting scientific problems and seeing multiple ways to solve a scientific problem. The results agree with the PISA 2022 results, which revealed that Filipino learners scored an average of 14 points in terms of creative thinking, which was second to the worst (PISA, 2022). The presented research findings imply that students must be given targeted educational interventions and supportive environments, specifically in Earth and Life and Physical Science subjects, which can significantly enhance their creative thinking abilities.

In terms of Metacognition

Table 4 reveals the data on the level of students' S-HOTS in terms of metacognition. The results disclosed that the respondents have "high" metacognition skills, as manifested in the value of the composite mean of 3.55, with a

confidence interval of 3.44 to 3.67. This interval exclusively falls under the high level of metacognition. It is evident in the table that the students have a “high” level of metacognitive skills wherein they try to relate what they learn in science with real-world experience ($\bar{x} = 3.78$), adjust their level of concentration depending on the learning situation ($\bar{x} = 3.65$), can sense when they are about to face a learning challenge in their science class ($\bar{x} = 3.59$), and change their approach if they are not progressing as expected in a learning task related to science ($\bar{x} = 3.45$).

Table 4. Level of students' S-HOTS in terms of metacognition (n=148)

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	VD	LoM	CI
1. I try to relate my science learning with real-world experiences.	3.78	A	H	3.66 – 3.91
2. I adjust my level of concentration depending on the learning situation.	3.65	A	H	3.54 – 3.76
3. I can sense when I am about to face a learning challenge in a science class.	3.59	A	H	3.48 – 3.71
4. I change my approach if I am not progressing as expected in a science-related learning task.	3.45	A	H	3.34 – 3.56
5. I am confident in understanding even the most complicated topics in a science course.	3.29	MA	M	3.17 – 3.41
Composite	3.55	A	H	3.44 – 3.67

Notably, the respondents have a “moderate” level of confidence in their ability to understand the most complicated topics in a science course. The finding suggests that the students are mindful and continuously monitor their progress in Earth, Life, and Physical Science subjects. In addition, they can understand and control their learning and relate the topics and concepts they have learned in science to their day-to-day lives. However, the students have not yet fully developed their confidence in their ability to understand the most difficult science topics. The result corroborates the findings of Hindun et al. (2020), which reported that most students' metacognitive awareness was “satisfactory.” According to Monika and Sambyal (2023), metacognition is an essential skill to develop in students because it can help them become more critical thinkers, especially about how they learn and how to use their prior experiences and knowledge (schemata) appropriately to increase their capacity for learning across cognitive strategies. Mohammadi et al. (2022) also stressed that metacognition supports learners in being more self-aware of their performance while gaining the necessary skills and helping them become more independent learners.

In terms of Self-Efficacy

Table 5 depicts the data on students' S-HOTS regarding science self-efficacy. Generally, the respondents have “high” science self-efficacy skills, as manifested in the composite mean of 3.64 with a confidence interval of 3.52 to 3.76. This interval is fully contained within the high classification of science self-efficacy. It is further exhibited in the table that the students have a “high” level of belief in themselves that ‘if others can do it, so can they’ ($\bar{x} = 3.99$), belief that with enough effort, they can succeed in the exams ($\bar{x} = 3.80$), stay calm during exams because they trust their knowledge to solve problems in science ($\bar{x} = 3.48$), confident in their ability to stay focused in their goals ($\bar{x} = 3.64$), and can manage to solve complex science problems if they try hard enough ($\bar{x} = 3.45$).

Table 5. Level of students' S-HOTS in terms of science self-efficacy (n=148)

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	VD	LoSSE	CI
1. I believe in the saying “If others can do it, so can I” when studying science.	3.99	A	H	3.86 – 4.12
2. I believe I can succeed in science exams with enough effort throughout the semester.	3.80	A	H	3.69 – 3.92
3. I know I will stay calm during exams because I trust my knowledge to solve problems in science.	3.48	A	H	3.36 – 3.60
4. I am confident in my ability to stay focused and achieve my goals in my science studies.	3.47	A	H	3.35 – 3.60
5. I can solve complex science problems if I try hard enough.	3.45	A	H	3.32 – 3.57
Composite	3.64	A	H	3.52 – 3.76

The result implies that the students feel confident in their ability to succeed in science-related tasks, which could help them perform well in academics and behave positively in challenging learning environments. Defiño et al. (2022) claimed that students with high self-efficacy are confident in completing complex tasks and adhering to the requirements while demonstrating positive behavior.

In terms of Scientific Reasoning

Table 6 reflects the data on the level of students' S-HOTS in terms of scientific reasoning. It divulges that the students have “high” scientific reasoning skills, as presented in the composite mean of 3.49, with a confidence interval of 3.38 to 3.61. This interval suggests an overlap between the classifications of moderate to high levels of metacognition. The table further unveils a “high” level of student's consideration of scientific information from

various sources before making a decision ($\bar{x} = 3.64$), carrying out investigations to test their ideas ($\bar{x} = 3.59$), using their scientific knowledge and investigative skills to solve real-life problems ($\bar{x} = 3.51$), and recognizing the authenticity of the scientific information they obtain from the internet ($\bar{x} = 3.37$).

Table 6. Level of students' S-HOTS in terms of scientific reasoning (n=148)

Indicators	$\bar{x}$	VD	LoSR	CI
1. I consider scientific information from various sources before making a decision.	3.64	A	H	3.54 – 3.75
2. I carry out investigations to test my ideas.	3.59	A	H	3.49 – 3.70
3. I use my scientific knowledge and investigative skills to solve real-life problems.	3.51	A	H	3.38 – 3.63
4. I can recognize the authenticity of the scientific information I obtain online.	3.37	A	H	3.25 – 3.49
5. I can explain natural events using my scientific knowledge.	3.34	MA	M	3.23 – 3.46
Composite	3.49	A	H	3.38 – 3.61

A "high" level of scientific reasoning among students indicates that they possess a strong capacity to approach scientific problems, hypothesize, analyze data, and draw conclusions in a structured and logical manner. This skill is foundational for success in science-related fields and essential for navigating complex issues in modern society. Zimmerman, as cited by Klemm et al. (2020), stated that children who engage in scientific thinking are said to be using the methods or concepts of scientific investigation to reasoning or problem-solving situations. On the other hand, it is notable in the presented data that the respondents have a "moderate" ability to explain natural events using their scientific knowledge. The result unveils that while students are proficient in thinking through scientific problems, they may struggle with applying their theoretical understanding to real-world phenomena. This moderate ability to connect knowledge with practical explanation suggests a gap between knowing scientific facts and effectively communicating or contextualizing them in everyday experiences.

3.2 Performance of the Students in Earth and Life Science and Physical Science Subjects

Table 7 shows the students' performance in Earth and Life Science and Physical Science subjects. In Earth and Life Science. The findings show that 11.49% of students achieved an outstanding rating, 28.38% attained a very satisfactory rating, 43.92% received a satisfactory rating, and 16.21% earned a fairly satisfactory rating. Similarly, in Physical Science, 10.14% of students achieved an outstanding rating, 26.35% attained a very satisfactory rating, 48.65% received a satisfactory rating, and 14.86% earned a fairly satisfactory rating. Additionally, the students' performance in Earth and Life Science has the highest spread in its data points ($SD = 4.44$), while their performance in Physical Science is slightly less spread ($SD = 4.32$). This performance distribution indicates that most students – nearly half in both subjects – fall within the "satisfactory" category, with fewer students achieving "outstanding" ratings. Moreover, the learners showed a "satisfactory" performance, reflected in its overall mean rating of 83.68%. Overall, the data indicates that students' performance in Earth and Life Science and Physical Science is "Satisfactory," which means that they have acquired essential knowledge and skills and can apply the S-HOTS in the said subjects (DepEd Order No. 73, s. 2012).

Table 7. Performance of students (n=148)

Rating	Verbal Description	Earth and Life Science		Physical Science		Overall	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
90%-100%	Outstanding (O)	17	11.49	15	10.14	17	11.49
85% - 89%	Very Satisfactory (VS)	42	28.38	39	26.35	45	30.40
80% - 84%	Satisfactory (S)	65	43.92	72	48.65	67	45.27
75% - 79%	Fairly Satisfactory (FS)	24	16.21	22	14.86	19	12.84
Mean		83.57 (S)		83.78 (S)		83.68 (S)	

This result, however, contradicts the findings of Suminguit and Despojo (2023), which revealed that students' performance in Earth and Life Science is on the "very satisfactory" level. Moreover, Despojo (2024) reported that the students' performance in Earth and Life and Physical Science subjects is generally on the "outstanding" level. The performance data suggest that students meet basic competency standards but may not consistently excel in applying S-HOTS in scientific contexts, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. This may reflect the challenges in mastering the more abstract and complex concepts in Earth and Life Science (which often require understanding geological processes, ecosystems, and biological systems) and Physical Science (which deals with physics, chemistry, and their applications).

3.3 Relationship Between Students' S-HOTS and their Performance in Science Subjects

Table 8 presents the data determining the relationship between the S-HOTS of the students and their performance in Science subjects. It shows a significant relationship between the student's metacognition and performance in Science subjects ($p = 0.029$). The results mean that students who monitor their learning tend to acquire better academic performance. This implies that metacognitive abilities enable students to become independent learners aware of their progress, adjust to different learning situations, and overcome various learning challenges, specifically in Earth and Life Science and Physical Science. The finding agrees with the statement of Khairinaa et al. (2023) that metacognitive awareness and critical thinking abilities impact knowledge-learning outcomes in scientific learning. This has also been agreed by Pucillo and Perez (2023) when they confirmed that metacognitive and self-regulated learning strategies can accurately predict academic performance.

Table 8. Relationship between S-HOTS and performance in science subjects ($n=148$)

Variables Correlated to Performance	r_s	p-value	Decision	Remark
Critical Thinking	0.091	0.273	Accept H_{01}	Not significant
Creative Thinking	0.136	0.099	Accept H_{01}	Not significant
Metacognition	0.180	0.029	Reject H_{01}	Significant
Science Self-Efficacy	0.324	<.000	Reject H_{01}	Significant
Scientific Reasoning	0.097	0.244	Accept H_{01}	Not significant

Spearman Rank-Order Correlation at 5% Level of Significance

The result further reveals a significant relationship between students' Science self-efficacy and their performance in Science subjects ($p < .001$). This signifies that the higher the students' science self-efficacy, the better their performance in science subjects. This infers that the students have high confidence levels and can perform scientific tasks successfully during their Earth and Life Science and Physical Science classes. The result corresponds with the statement of Hayat et al. (2020) that academic self-efficacy has a considerable effect on students' academic performance, learning, and motivation. Furthermore, Defiño et al. (2022) noted that students with high academic self-efficacy typically perform well academically. Meanwhile, the following variables have no significant relationship with students' performance: critical thinking, creative thinking, and scientific reasoning. All their p-values are more significant than the significance level (0.05). This connotes that whether students have high or low levels of the aforementioned areas of S-HOTS, their performance remains constant.

This finding is consistent with Shirazi and Heidari (2019), who discovered in their study that there is no significant relationship between students' performance and critical thinking skills. This suggests that the degree to which academic achievement and critical thinking are related may differ based on the specific skills and conditions measured. The results negate the findings of Cyril (2023), Akpur (2020), Hamzah et al. (2022), Fitriani et al. (2020), and Musa (2020), who claimed that there is a significant relationship between students' higher-order thinking skills and their performance. Furthermore, Akpur (2023) noted that the different results of the studies show how complicated and multidimensional higher-order thinking skills are and how hard it is to show the different factors that make them relate to each other. This implies that scientific higher-order thinking skills do not necessarily predict students' academic achievement in science education due to the complexity of the relationships among the variables.

4.0 Conclusion

Exploring the structure and level of Scientific Higher-Order Thinking Skills (S-HOTS) is vital in understanding how students engage with complex scientific concepts, particularly in subjects like Earth and Life Science and Physical Science. S-HOTS, which includes critical thinking, creative thinking, metacognition, science self-efficacy, and scientific reasoning, is important in developing students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize scientific information. These skills enable students to approach scientific problems with a more profound understanding and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. Educators might focus on improving students' abilities to integrate and reorganize information creatively, encouraging more practice in activities like problem-based learning, project work, or tasks that require reimagining concepts in new ways. Students must be given targeted educational interventions and supportive environments, specifically in Earth and Life and Physical Science subjects, which can significantly enhance their higher-order thinking abilities. The result unveils that while students might be proficient in thinking through scientific problems, they may struggle with applying their theoretical understanding to real-world phenomena. This moderate ability to connect knowledge with practical explanation suggests a gap between knowing scientific facts and effectively communicating or contextualizing

them in everyday experiences. This reflects the challenges students face in mastering the more abstract and complex concepts in Earth and Life Science and Physical Science.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors confirm their equal contribution to every part of this research. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of this paper.

6.0 Funding

This research did not receive funding from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

This study has no conflict of interest of any sort.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors extend their deepest and sincerest gratitude to all those who, in one way or another, have contributed their time and effort to the success of this study.

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Carative Factors and Patient-Perceived Customer Service Quality

Marvin Candido¹, Marissa S. Quezon^{*2}

¹Bacolod Adventist Medical Center, Bacolod City, Philippines

²Carlos Hilado Memorial State University, Bacolod City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: marissa.quezon@chmsu.edu.ph

Date received: January 31, 2025

Date revised: March 3, 2025

Date accepted: March 27, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Candido, M., & Quezon, M. (2025). Carative factors and patient-perceived customer service quality. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 366-376. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.049>

Abstract. The research aimed to assess the quality of customer service a healthcare institution provided, as experienced by patients, focusing on service quality, patient satisfaction, and behavioral intention. It further explored the joy experienced by patients about the seven elements of carative factors: humanism, helping/trust, expression of feelings, teaching, and learning, supportive/protective/corrective environment, assistance with human needs, and existential/phenomenological/spiritual forces. The participants were patients admitted to a healthcare institution and discharged between March and May 2023. A sample size of 318 was determined using Slovin's formula. The study employed a descriptive-correlational design, using mean ratings, t-tests, and one-way ANOVA. The results revealed significant differences in the level of customer service, particularly concerning sex. Additionally, there was a significant relationship between the quality of customer service extended to patients and the joy they experienced. In conclusion, the healthcare institution delivered high customer service, resulting in significant patient satisfaction and joy related to staff care. Key factors contributing to this joy included humanistic care, provider support, expression of feelings, teaching, a supportive environment, and assistance with human needs. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the healthcare institution continue training staff to enhance their customer service skills, emphasizing the importance of carative behaviors. Consistent monitoring of patient satisfaction levels is essential to pinpoint improvement areas and initiate timely and practical actions. The hospital needs to allocate resources to create a supportive, patient-centered environment and to implement gender-sensitive initiatives to address the disparity in customer service perceptions between male and female patients.

Keywords: Behavioral intention; Carative behaviors; Patient satisfaction.

1.0 Introduction

Providing exceptional quality service in healthcare organizations presents unique challenges, given their services' critical and life-saving nature (Quigley et al., 2021). While clinical outcomes have traditionally been the primary focus in healthcare, there has been a shift towards prioritizing patient experience and satisfaction. Considering this shift, a healthcare institution in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, aims to become the premier healthcare center in the province. This study, conducted at a healthcare facility, is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, understanding patient perspectives on the hospital's services provides valuable feedback on the quality of care and the overall patient experience (Chen et al., 2021); Manzoor et al., 2019). This premise allows the healthcare facility to identify areas for improvement, leading to better service delivery that aligns with patient needs and expectations (Elliot et al., 2015; Olorunfemi et al., 2024). Secondly, such healthcare facility places significant emphasis on the healing ministry of Christ (Christa et al., 2024). The hospital can cultivate a patient-centered approach by aligning services

with its core values, prioritizing clinical care, and compassionate service. This study contributes valuable insights to the healthcare institution by demonstrating the impact of these principles on patient experiences.

The knowledge gap lies in the lack of specific research focusing on patient experience in selected healthcare institutions in Negros Occidental (Ferreira et al., 2023). Although there have been studies on patient satisfaction and overall service quality in healthcare, limited research has delved into the unique aspects of such healthcare organizations' service delivery (Qawasmeh, 2021). Furthermore, no comprehensive study has been conducted at a healthcare facility to assess its clients' perceptions and needs based on carative theories. This study addresses a significant knowledge gap by providing evidence-based insights into the factors that influence patient experience in the specific location of the study. Through the analysis and interpretation of the results, key areas for improvement were identified, along with recommended strategies to enhance overall care quality and customer service (Christa et al., 2024). Furthermore, the study contributed to the existing literature on healthcare services and serves as a valuable resource for other healthcare institutions aiming to improve their patient-centered approaches (Christa et al., 2024). On a grander scale, conducting this research on an undisclosed healthcare facility yields valuable data to improve patient experience and contribute to the body of knowledge on healthcare service quality. Failing to conduct this study could mean missing opportunities for the hospital to address areas of improvement, potentially leading to decreased patient satisfaction and retention. Additionally, the healthcare facility may not fully realize its vision of becoming the premier healthcare institution in Negros Province without a thorough understanding of its clients' perceptions and needs.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The research design in this study is descriptive-correlational. This study aimed to explore two primary constructs: quality and carative factors experienced by patients. The descriptive component of this design allowed the researcher to describe the extent of customer service quality and the level of joy experienced by patients in a healthcare institution. The data on these variables were collected in natural settings without intervening or introducing treatments. The correlational aspect of this design enabled the researcher to examine the relationship between the extent of customer service quality and the extent of joy experienced by patients. Analyzing data determined if there was a significant association between these two variables. As the study aimed to explore patient perceptions and needs based on carative theories, a descriptive-correlational design provided a holistic understanding of these factors without manipulating them. This allowed the researcher to capture patients' real-world experiences and identify potential areas of improvement in hospitals.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in one of the private tertiary hospitals in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines. Established on December 8, 1966, it has a 170-bed capacity recognized by the Department of Health. The hospital aims to be the premier healthcare center in Negros Province and is committed to extending the healing ministry of Christ to all.

2.3 Research Participants

The study participants were at least eighteen-year-old patients, while others were 60 years old and above admitted to a healthcare facility and released between March and May 2023. Moreover, 38 patients who were 60 years old and above were admitted during this period. The hospital's billing department's daily discharge data, which showed that 1,840 patients were released overall during this time, served as the basis for the participant list. The study used Slovin's method to determine a sample size of 318 participants, achieving a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The selection of the participants was done through the following means. After the issuance of discharge orders, the participants were visited in their rooms and were asked if they were willing to participate in the survey. Once the answer was affirmative, they were handed the questionnaire. Another strategy was to leave copies of the survey at the nursing station, which the patients' watchers frequented. Only those willing to participate answered the questionnaire. Patients at the billing station were also approached while their statements were processed. A few were also visited at home, where prior consent had been given before the visit happened.

2.4 Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire was composed of three parts. Part one was the profile of the patients, which captured their age, sex, civil status, and average family monthly income. Part two determined the extent of quality customer service in a healthcare institution as perceived by patients in terms of service quality, patient satisfaction, and behavioral intention. The third part determined the extent of joy experienced by patients in terms of the following elements of curative factors of Jean Watson, namely: humanism/faith-hope/sensitivity, helping/trust, expression of feelings, teaching, and learning, supportive/protective/corrective environment, human needs assistance, and existential/phenomenological/spiritual forces. Panel members validated the instrument, and the mean score was 4.28. The criteria set by Good and Scates were used to validate the instrument. The reliability test used Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of a set of scales or test items used in the study. A pre-test survey was conducted on 30 participants who were admitted patients in a healthcare institution and were not included in the actual study. The resulting Cronbach's alpha was 0.9967, indicating an extremely high internal consistency reliability level for a set of items or scales measured. It suggested that the items were very closely related. Generally, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.9 was considered excellent, while values between 0.8 and 0.9 were considered good. In this case, a value of 0.9967 suggested that the items were highly intercorrelated, implying that the scale's reliability was assured.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

After establishing the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher sent a letter to the president of the healthcare institution to request the conduct of the study. The list of participants was generated from the list of discharges from billing. The researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study and gave instructions on how to complete the questionnaire objectively and honestly. The assessment of the participants served as the basis for determining the quality of customer services of an undisclosed medical center as perceived by patients and the extent of joy they experienced in terms of the seven elements of curative factors of Jean Watson. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the data. Those who were 60 years old and older received special consideration. Some answered the questionnaire while they were still in the hospital, while others were visited at home with prior consent forms to ensure they were comfortable and secure. They were also requested to suggest the timing of the visit, as their rest was a top priority. A family member, usually an adult child, was present during the data collection. If the researcher noticed any discomfort from the senior participants, the researcher took a short break. Data collection resumed when the senior participants felt ready to continue.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards throughout the process, undergoing a review by the Ethics Review Committee before data collection. All recommendations were followed, and informed consent was obtained from participants who were of legal age and could withdraw at any time. Consent forms were signed by those who chose to participate, and participants aged 60 and older were asked if they could complete the questionnaire immediately or if the researcher should return later. It was clarified that the study was for academic purposes only, with findings shared through journals and presentations. Participants' data were kept confidential, and no identifiable markers were included in the instrument. After publication, questionnaires and responses would be disposed of securely.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Socio-economic Profile of the Participants

Table 1 provides the profile characteristics of the participants. It can be surmised that most of them (36.6%) were in the age group of 18-31, followed by 32-45 (34.9%), 46-59 (17.6%), 60-73 (10.1%), and 74-87 (.9%). The data highlighted that most of the patients admitted to the hospital where the study was conducted were relatively younger, with a significant proportion between 18 and 45. In terms of sex distribution, the participants consisted of 52.2% female and 47.8% male. The sex distribution showed a relatively balanced representation, indicating that both males and females sought medical services at the hospital of study. Moreover, among the participants, 50.1% were married, 40.6% were single, 6.3% were widowed, and 2.9% were separated. In terms of average monthly income, the distribution showed that 45.5% had an average monthly income between 14.1k and 23k, followed by 40.3% between 23.1k and 32k, 9.2% between 5k and 14k, and 4.9% between 32.1k and 41k. The data indicated that many patients admitted to the hospital had income within the range of 14.1k to 32k per month.

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-31	127	36.6
	32-45	121	34.9
	46-59	61	17.6
	60-73	35	10.1
Sex	Female	181	52.2
	Male	166	47.8
	Married	174	50.1
Civil Status	Single	141	40.6
	Widowed	22	6.30
	Separated	10	2.90
Average Monthly Income	5k to 14k	32	9.20
	14.1k to 23k	158	45.5
	23.1k to 32k	140	40.3
	32.1k to 41k	17	4.90

3.2 Extent of Customer Service

In terms of Service Quality

Table 2 shows hospital service quality across various criteria, with an overall mean score of 4.34, indicating high patient satisfaction. The hospitals excelled in prompt discharge (4.22) and emergency response (4.27). Staff politeness during admission scored 4.29, while responsiveness to patient requests scored 4.34. The presence of knowledgeable staff scored 4.51, and the environment's cleanliness (4.34) and visual appeal (4.29) were also rated positively. The ability of nurses to explain post-discharge precautions scored 4.30, reflecting the importance of patient education. Additionally, a score of 4.34 suggested that hospitals took necessary measures to prevent infections. The data portrayed a positive image and emphasized promptness, competence, cleanliness, and patient-centered care. Supporting findings from a study indicated that service quality and excellence positively influenced patient satisfaction (Novitasari, D., 2022). However, research by Fergusson (2006) emphasized the need for healthcare providers to align services with patient expectations to enhance satisfaction, as patients expressed overall happiness with healthcare facilities, which fostered better relationships and loyalty.

Table 2. *The extent of services rendered in terms of service quality*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 The hospital gives prompt discharge to their patients.	4.22	High
2 The hospital handled emergencies well.	4.27	High
3 The employees handling admission in hospitals should be polite.	4.29	High
4 Materials associated with services will be visually appealing in hospitals.	4.29	High
5 When patients have problems, excellent hospitals will show a sincere interest in solving them.	4.29	High
6 The hospital gives prompt service to customers.	4.30	High
7 The nurse explains precautions to be taken by patients after discharge.	4.30	High
8 The hospital has a well-functioning ambulance service.	4.32	High
9 The hospital takes precautions to prevent hospital-acquired infection in the patients.	4.34	High
10 The hospital has a clean washroom and rooms/wards without foul smell.	4.34	High
11 The hospital is always willing to respond to the patient's request.	4.34	High
12 The hospital provides quality service at a reasonable cost.	4.35	High
13 Hospital employees have a sense of responsibility.	4.40	High
14 The hospital has knowledgeable and experienced doctors.	4.45	High
15 The hospital has knowledgeable and experienced nurses.	4.45	High
16 The hospital has knowledgeable and experienced staff members.	4.51	High
Overall mean	4.34	High

In terms of Patient Satisfaction

Table 3 summarizes patient satisfaction metrics at a hospital, with an overall mean score of 4.29 indicating high satisfaction levels. The highest individual score, 4.38, reflected patient satisfaction with doctors, followed by nurses at 4.34 and the hospital's responsiveness to suggestions at 4.26. High ratings for staff availability (4.30) emphasized attentiveness in patient care. Satisfaction with physical facilities, like labs, scored between 4.24 and 4.28, demonstrating appreciation for personnel and facility quality. A score of 4.26 highlighted the hospital's openness to feedback, while a score of 4.35 showed strong patient loyalty.

The hospital excelled in communication, facility quality, and staff attentiveness, indicating a well-functioning healthcare environment. The findings aligned with the existing research of Pouragha and Zarei (2016), which suggested that scores above 4.0 reflected high patient satisfaction. High patient satisfaction had significant implications, including an increased likelihood of return visits and recommendations, leading to a more stable patient base and improving staff morale and motivation.

Table 3. *The extent of services rendered in terms of patient satisfaction*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 Indoor services are satisfactory.	4.24	High
2 The hospital's medical and non-medical staff are sensitive to patient concerns.	4.25	High
3 The hospital welcomes your suggestion.	4.26	High
4 Up-to-date healthcare facilities are well maintained.	4.26	High
5 Overall, the facilities are excellent.	4.27	High
6 The technical facilities, like the blood bank, lab, etc., are good.	4.28	High
7 The nurses are available throughout their duties.	4.30	High
8 My expectations are fully met regarding nurses.	4.34	High
9 I will always visit this hospital for my other treatments.	4.35	High
10 My expectations are fully met regarding doctors.	4.38	High
Overall mean	4.29	High

In terms of Behavioral Intention

Table 4 presents service quality results among healthcare personnel, focusing on nurses, doctors, and technical support staff. Mean scores ranged from 4.26 to 4.39, indicating a generally positive perception of service quality, with an overall mean of 4.30. Nurses received high ratings for honesty and attentiveness, scoring 4.35 in overall attitude, which suggested that patients feel valued in their interactions. Technical support staff scored 4.26 for being friendly and helpful, contributing positively to patient care. Doctors outperformed nurses slightly, with a mean of 4.39 for their accommodating behavior, which fostered trust in doctor-patient relationships. The consistent agreement across all items indicated that patients feel positively about the quality of care, with a slightly higher mean of 4.28 for the availability of supportive staff, which was crucial for overall satisfaction.

Table 4. *The extent of services rendered in terms of behavioral intention*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 Nurses are honest in the dispense of their function.	4.26	High
2 Nurses are always ready to listen to what you have to say.	4.26	High
3 Technical support staff are friendly and helpful.	4.26	High
4 Supportive staff are available when needed.	4.28	High
5 Doctors are sincere when dealing with their patients.	4.32	High
6 Overall, the attitude and behavior of nurses are accommodating.	4.35	High
7 Overall, the attitude and behavior of doctors are accommodating.	4.39	High
Overall mean	4.30	High

These findings suggested a well-functioning healthcare environment where patients felt respected and cared for, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal skills. Recent studies showed that perceptions of service quality among healthcare personnel were positive; emotional support and care from nurses were valued. The research highlighted that the quality of interactions significantly influenced patient satisfaction and future recommendations. High scores indicated a positive reputation for the healthcare institution, which could help attract and retain patients and enhance its overall brand image.

3.3 Patients' Joy in Carative Factors

In terms of Humanism

Table 5 presents feedback on service quality in a healthcare environment, with mean scores ranging from 4.18 to 4.31, indicating high overall satisfaction. Key strengths include kindness, respect, and individualized treatment, with scores between 4.27 and 4.31, suggesting these are best practices. The evaluation highlighted the staff's understanding of patients' feelings and indicated a strong empathetic approach. Additionally, staff provided encouragement and reassurance, boosting confidence and emotional support. In Individualized care, staff treated patients as unique individuals, inquired about their preferences, enhanced service quality, and promoted a sense of value. Professionalism, illustrated by staff knowledge and calm demeanor, fosters trust and comfort.

Table 5. *The extent of joy in terms of humanism*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 They praise my efforts.	4.18	High
2 They are my feelings and moods.	4.21	High
3 They encourage me to believe in myself.	4.22	High
4 They ask me how I like things done.	4.22	High
5 They try to see things from my point of view.	4.23	High
6 They understand me.	4.23	High
7 They know when I have "had enough" and act accordingly.	4.23	High
8 They reassure me.	4.24	High
9 They make me feel like someone is there if I need them.	4.25	High
10 They know what they are doing.	4.27	High
11 They point out positive things about me and my condition.	4.27	High
12 They maintain a calm demeanor.	4.27	High
13 They are kind and considerate.	4.28	High
14 The staff treat me as an individual.	4.30	High
15 They treat me with respect.	4.31	High
Overall mean	4.25	High

This evaluation underscored the effectiveness of the current service model, emphasizing empathy, professionalism, and individualized care as vital for customer satisfaction. Supporting research, such as Vaeza et al. (2020), highlighted the importance of individuality and sensitivity in care. Rejnö et al. (2020) suggested focusing on human dignity, which enhanced person-centered care. Kitson et al. (2012) found that humanistic care encouraged positive emotions and stronger bonds between patients and caregivers, leading to greater trust and satisfaction.

In terms of helping/trust

Table 6 outlines metrics reflecting the quality-of-care patients experience in a hospital setting, with mean scores ranging from 3.82 to 4.26 and an overall mean of 4.12, indicating generally high satisfaction. Most scores exceeded 4.0, highlighting intense contentment in various care aspects. Notable high scores included staff giving full attention (4.22), listening (4.26), and accepting patients' feelings without judgment (4.23), demonstrating an empathetic approach. Effective communication is shown through personalizing interactions, such as asking how patients prefer to be addressed (4.00) and introducing themselves (4.24). Staff checking in on patients (4.24) and their responsiveness (4.16) further emphasized trust-building through availability. Reliability, indicated by the score of 4.11 for doing what they say, is also vital for establishing trust.

Table 6. *The extent of joy in terms of helping/trust*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 They visit me if I move to another hospital unit.	3.82	High
2 They asked me what I wanted to be called.	4.00	High
3 They talked to me about my life outside the hospital.	4.01	High
4 They touch me when I need it for comfort.	4.04	High
5 They do what they say they will do.	4.11	High
6 They answer quickly when I call them.	4.16	High
7 They give me their full attention when with me.	4.22	High
8 They accept my feelings without judging them.	4.23	High
9 They come into my room to check on me.	4.24	High
10 They introduce themselves to me.	4.24	High
11 They listen to me when I talk.	4.26	High
Overall mean	4.12	High

The data revealed a positive perspective on patient care, emphasizing open communication, emotional support, and reliability. These strengths contributed significantly to patient perceptions of high-quality service, which can be enhanced through continuous improvement in these areas. These findings align with previous research showing that perceived support from healthcare professionals positively impacts patient well-being and satisfaction (Li et al., 2023). Trust and support in the patient-provider relationship were crucial for satisfaction and outcomes. Carpenter et al. (2018) noted that feeling supported leads to reduced anxiety and better recovery outcomes. Ultimately, these results suggested that healthcare providers effectively foster trust and support, essential for promoting positive patient outcomes, treatment adherence, and overall satisfaction, leading to improved communication and health outcomes.

In terms of Expression of Feelings

Presented in Table 7 are feelings related to the quality of service in a therapeutic context, with an overall mean score of 4.16, indicating a positive experience. Scores ranged from 4.11 to 4.20, reflecting consistent perceptions of high-quality service. Key statements like "They help me understand my feelings" (4.16) and "They encourage me to talk about how I feel" (4.20) highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence. The phrase "They do not give up on me when I am difficult" (4.16) underscored the commitment to support, which is essential for building trust. Providers' professional responses during challenging interactions further reinforced this commitment. Overall, the data suggested that high-quality service was characterized by empathy and understanding, crucial for positive outcomes.

Table 7. *The extent of joy in terms of expression of feelings*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 They do not become upset when I am angry.	4.11	High
2 They help me understand my feelings.	4.16	High
3 They do not give up on me when I am challenged.	4.16	High
4 They encourage me to talk about how I feel.	4.20	High
Overall mean	4.16	High

This analysis indicated that effective service required emotional connection and resilience from providers. It emphasized training in emotional support techniques to manage complex emotional situations. Creating an environment where patients feel safe to express their emotions fosters trust and collaboration, leading to better communication and improved health outcomes. This finding aligned with a growing body of research emphasizing emotional expression's importance in healthcare settings. Studies showed that patients who felt comfortable expressing their emotions reported higher satisfaction levels, improved adherence to treatment plans, and better overall well-being (Brown & Wilson, 2018). Additionally, studies on patient-centered communication emphasized the importance of acknowledging and validating patient emotions as part of effective healthcare delivery (Allen-Duck et al., 2017).

In terms of Teaching and Learning

Data presented in Table 8 talked about patient experiences regarding healthcare teaching and learning aspects, with an overall mean score of 4.22, indicating a strong positive perception of the service quality. All item scores exceeded 4, reflecting patient satisfaction. The highest score, 4.24, highlighted the importance of providers asking questions to ensure understanding, while scores of 4.21 and 4.27 showed appreciation for help planning and setting realistic health goals. Scores of 4.23 for fostering a supportive environment encouraged patients to ask questions, which is crucial for informed decision-making. Understanding patient needs (4.22) was vital for tailored education. The consistent phrasing "I experienced high-quality service most of the time" emphasized a reliable positive experience that enhanced trust between patients and providers. While scores were generally high, addressing outliers could improve patient satisfaction. The survey indicated that intense patient experiences in education and engagement are essential for effective healthcare delivery.

Table 8. *The extent of joy in terms of teaching and learning*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 They helped me plan my discharge from the hospital.	4.16	High
2 They help me plan ways to meet those goals.	4.21	High
3 They taught me about my illness.	4.22	High
4 They ask me what I want to know about my health or illness.	4.22	High
5 They encourage me to ask questions about my illness and treatment.	4.23	High
6 They answer my questions.	4.23	High
7 They help me set realistic goals for my health.	4.23	High
8 They ask me questions to be sure I understand.	4.24	High
Overall mean	4.22	High

Research supported the significance of patient education in enhancing satisfaction and reducing anxiety (Hibbard & Mahoney, 2004). Tucker et al. (2007) emphasized that clear, personalized teaching improves understanding and adherence to treatment, while Pratt et al. (2020) highlight that involving patients in their learning fosters a trusting relationship with healthcare providers. These results suggested that investing in patient education and a learning-centered environment could significantly enhance satisfaction and health outcomes. Healthcare providers should

prioritize educational initiatives and interactive strategies to empower patients and create more effective care experiences.

In terms of Supportive/Protective/Corrective Environment

Presented in Table 9 was the quality of care in a supportive, protective, and corrective environment, with an overall mean score of 4.23, indicating high service quality. Most individual statements scored above 4.0, reflecting positive patient experiences. Comfort-related statements, such as offering position changes and blankets, received scores between 4.22 and 4.30, emphasizing a focus on comfort. High scores for explaining safety precautions (4.29) and discussing daily expectations (4.14) indicated effective communication. The encouragement of independence (4.26) and consideration of spiritual needs (4.39) highlighted the commitment to holistic care. Professionalism was reflected in the gentleness of care (4.36) and maintaining a neat environment (4.33). A score of 4.32 for cheerfulness suggested that staff demeanor enhanced the overall experience.

Table 9. *The extent of joy in terms of supportive/protective/corrective environment*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 They tell me what to expect during the day.	4.14	High
2 They understand when I need to be alone.	4.18	High
3 They offer things (position changes, blankets, back rub, lighting, etc.) to make me more comfortable.	4.22	High
4 They encourage me to do what I can for myself.	4.26	High
5 They explained safety precautions to my family and me.	4.29	High
6 They respect my modesty (for example, keeping me covered).	4.29	High
7 They check with me before leaving the room to be sure I have everything I need within reach.	4.30	High
8 They are cheerful.	4.32	High
9 They leave my room neat after working with me.	4.33	High
10 They give me pain medication when I need it.	4.33	High
11 They are gentle to me.	4.36	High
12 They consider my spiritual needs.	4.39	High
Overall mean	4.23	High

While scores were high, areas for improvement through training or resource allocation were identified. Overall, the data underscored care quality related to comfort, communication, independence, emotional support, and professionalism. Continuous evaluation could help maintain these standards. Supporting research emphasized the importance of a supportive environment for patient well-being. Studies by Sui et al. (2023) and Wolf (2021) linked supportive care to better outcomes, while Magwood et al. (2019) highlighted trust's role in healing. These findings indicated that creating a supportive and protective environment is vital for patient satisfaction. Personalized care and open communication could foster a more positive patient experience.

In terms of Human Needs Assistance

Table 10 presented perceptions of service quality at a healthcare facility, with mean ratings between 4.24 and 4.34, indicating general positivity and an overall mean of 4.30. The first two statements (4.24 and 4.26) emphasized empowering patients in their care. Family involvement and communication (4.29 and 4.31) also contributed to emotional support. High ratings for attentiveness and knowledge (3: 4.26, 7: 4.31, 9: 4.24) reflected confidence in healthcare professionals, while timely treatment and medication administration (4.33) highlighted safety and effectiveness.

Table 10. *The extent of joy in terms of human needs assistance*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 They help me feel like I have some control.	4.24	High
2 They help me with my care until I can do it for myself.	4.26	High
3 They know when it is necessary to call the doctor.	4.26	High
4 They let my family visit as much as possible	4.29	High
5 They know how to administer shots, administer IVs, etc.	4.30	High
6 They keep my family informed of my progress.	4.31	High
7 They check my condition very closely.	4.31	High
8 They give my treatments and medications on time.	4.33	High
9 They know how to handle equipment (for example, monitors).	4.34	High
Overall mean	4.30	High

Overall, respondents reported high-quality service, indicating strong satisfaction. The data underscored the significance of patient autonomy, effective communication, and timely interventions. Research by Manzoor et al. (2019) supported these findings, showing that addressing patients' needs led to better outcomes and satisfaction. These results indicated that healthcare providers effectively met patients' needs, positively impacting satisfaction and health outcomes, and suggested areas for further improvement in service delivery.

In terms of Existential/Phenomenological/Spiritual Forces

Table 11 summarizes the qualitative assessment of existential, phenomenological, and spiritual factors related to personal experiences and the perceived quality of service. The overall mean rating of 4.22 indicated that respondents generally had positive experiences, reflecting satisfaction with the existential and spiritual aspects of the service. "They seem to know how I feel" (Mean= 4.19) suggested that service providers demonstrated empathy, validating respondents' emotions. The phrase "They help me see that my past experiences are important" (Mean=4.20) highlighted the acknowledgment of personal history, enhancing engagement with the service. The highest score, "They help me feel good about myself" (Mean=4.28), indicated effectiveness in fostering positive self-regard, showing that the service addressed immediate needs and empowered participants.

Table 11. *The extent of joy in terms of existential/phenomenological/spiritual forces*

Indicators	Mean	Description
1 They seem to know how I feel.	4.19	High
2 They help me see that my past experiences are important.	4.20	High
3 They help me feel good about myself.	4.28	High
Overall mean	4.22	High

Overall, the data indicated a strong correlation between service quality and personal insights, suggesting that the service was relational and supportive, impacting emotional well-being. Respondents felt that the service fostered emotional connection and validation, which is crucial for personal growth. Research by Rego et al. (2020) found that addressing spiritual and existential concerns leads to higher patient satisfaction and inner peace. Similarly, Montori and Elwyn (2017) noted that understanding a patient's worldview improves holistic care outcomes, especially in chronic or end-of-life situations. Nguyen et al. (2020) emphasized that integrating spiritual needs fosters connection, empowerment, and dignity, improving coping and well-being. These results imply that healthcare systems should incorporate spiritual care into routine services, addressing physical and psychological needs and spiritual concerns. This could involve chaplaincy services or creating reflective spaces, fostering a compassionate environment that enhances patient well-being and satisfaction.

3.4 Relationship Between Quality of Customer Service and Extent of Patient's Joy in Carative Factors

Table 12 addressed the question, "Was there a significant relationship between the quality of customer service provided by healthcare institutions and the joy experienced by patients?" The correlation coefficient of 0.625 indicated a moderate positive relationship between quality customer service and patient joy in carative factors. The p-value of 0.000 confirmed this correlation as statistically significant. The study's results underscored the importance of quality customer service in enhancing patient satisfaction and joy at a faith-based hospital. Supporting studies in the Philippines found similar trends: Santos and Rivera (2017) reported that higher customer service quality correlated with greater patient satisfaction. Reyes and Cruz (2018) discovered that quality service fostered trust in healthcare providers, leading to better outcomes.

Table 12. *Relationship quality of customer service and extent of joy*

		Quality Customer Service	Patient's Joy in Carative Factors
Quality Customer Service	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.803
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000**
	N	348	348
Patient's Joy in Carative Factors	Pearson Correlation	.803	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000**	.
	N	348	348

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Additionally, Christa et al. (2024) noted that high-quality customer service made patients feel valued and enhanced their joy. Rane, Achari, and Choudhary (2023) found that personalized attention and empathetic communication increased satisfaction. Torres and Cruz (2018) highlighted that spiritual support alongside quality customer service positively influenced patients' emotional well-being. Goldman (2018) reported that compassionate care from providers significantly enhanced patient joy, while Ferreira et al. (2023) noted that respectful treatment correlated with higher satisfaction. Al-Hawary et al. (2023) showed that involving patients in decision-making boosted satisfaction, and Morales and Christa et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of clear information about treatment plans. Clavel (2020) stressed the role of efficient complaint handling in promoting joy, while NEJM Catalyst (2017) found that personalized care plans heightened patient satisfaction. Lim and Martinez (2021) demonstrated that continuity of care fostered strong patient-provider relationships, contributing to overall joy. Overall, these studies collectively supported the finding of a positive relationship between quality customer service and patient joy in faith-based institutions in the Philippines, emphasizing the need for effective communication, personalized care, and empathetic practices to enhance patient experiences.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, patients reported a high level of service quality, as indicated by favorable mean scores across different aspects of service delivery. The patients underscore a positive perception of services, particularly in areas like human needs assistance and a supportive environment, which received the highest scores. These findings reflect a commitment to quality and patient satisfaction, fostering trust and emotional connections. The study emphasizes the vital role of exceptional customer service in enhancing patient satisfaction and emotional well-being during care. By prioritizing quality interactions and patient-centered approaches, healthcare institutions can significantly improve individual outcomes and create a more compassionate healthcare environment. Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other healthcare settings to validate findings. Investigate factors contributing to gender disparities in service perceptions and explore other variables affecting patient satisfaction to enhance understanding of patient experiences.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors reviewed and approved the final work.

6.0 Funding

This study received no funding from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The thesis titled "Quality of Customer Service and the Carative Factors as Experienced by Patients," conducted within a healthcare institution has provided significant insights into the essential role of exceptional customer service. This accomplishment is a testament to the invaluable support I received from numerous individuals.

The researcher is grateful for the adviser's generous sharing of expertise and unwavering guidance and mentorship, which have significantly shaped this work. The institution's Administrative Council also deserves special recognition for their collaboration, as do the participants for their patience in completing my survey; their contributions formed the foundation of this research.

Heartfelt appreciation is extended to the panel of evaluators for their insightful critiques and suggestions, which refined my understanding and enhanced the quality of my research. Their expertise has proven invaluable.

Deepest gratitude goes to the family whose unwavering support was indispensable throughout this endeavor. Finally, profound thanks to God Almighty is offered for His constant guidance, grace, and provision, which have played a key role in my success.

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Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Pre-service Science Teachers Towards Blended Learning Modalities in Selected State Colleges in Mindanao, Philippines

Louella S. Degamon^{*1}, Rodrigo S. Montajes Jr.²

¹Surigao del Norte State University, Surigao City, Philippines

²Chung Hwa Middle School, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

*Corresponding Author Email: ldegamon@ssct.edu.ph

Date received: February 16, 2025

Date revised: March 4, 2025

Date accepted: March 28, 2025

Originality: 92%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 8%

Recommended citation:

Degamon, L., & Montajes, R. (2025). Knowledge, attitudes, and practices of pre-service Science teachers towards blended learning modalities in selected state colleges in Mindanao, Philippines. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 377-389. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.096>

Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted human life and created educational innovation opportunities. One of the educational innovations is the implementation of blended learning modalities to ensure continuity of education. This study aimed to assess pre-service science teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices toward blended learning modalities in two selected state colleges in Mindanao. A modified and adapted questionnaire was administered to a sample of 138 participants. Most of the participants were within the age bracket of 18-24 (91%), predominantly female (72%), with a medium level of technological capacity (65%), and primarily preferred a mixed-method approach (59%) to blended learning. Quantitative results revealed that most participants were knowledgeable ($X=4.12$, $SD=0.57$), had a positive attitude ($X=3.54$, $SD=0.68$), and practiced ($X=3.62$, $SD=0.58$) blended learning modalities. At a $p<0.05$ level of significance, only the learning modality ($p<0.02$) showed a significant difference in the participants' attitudes, while technological capacity ($p<0.05$) showed a significant difference in their practices. Qualitative analysis revealed ten (10) essential themes from participants' experiences and insights regarding blended learning modalities (BLM): (1) Unstable internet connectivity in online classes; (2) Technology-related difficulties in online learning; (3) Time-management as a factor in blended learning; (4) Blended learning promotes independent learning; (5) Blended learning as the most effective modality; (6) Continuity of BLM in post-pandemic education; (7) Adequate learning resources in BLM; (8) Provision of clear instructions in BLM; (9) Teaching-learning strategies utilized are doable; and (10) Learning materials available online for further learning. Further qualitative research is recommended to explore the relevant constructs of this study in greater depth. The findings may serve as a baseline for curriculum assessment in higher education programs. Implementing blended learning may be a sustainable approach to delivering quality education in the 'new normal.'

Keywords: Blended learning; Face-to-face learning; Online learning; Technological capacity.

1.0 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic placed the global education system in a precarious position. Despite its devastating impact, it created opportunities for educational innovation. More than a billion learners worldwide experienced disruptions due to school closures aimed at preventing virus transmission (Holme, 2020). As a result, traditional classroom learning transitioned to blended learning modalities, requiring teachers worldwide to develop

strategies to support students' learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). This shift led to the evolution of e-learning models, transforming how instructional content is delivered, learning activities are conducted, and how social networks facilitate communication (Assaf & Nehmeh, 2021). In response, UNESCO (2020) advocated for distance learning, promoting open educational resources and digital platforms to help schools and educators maintain continuity in education. This transition presents an opportunity to explore teachers' digital tools and instructional methodologies, providing deeper insights into the effectiveness of blended learning in virtual education.

The Commission on Higher Education of the Philippines released Memorandum Order Number 4, Series of 2020, outlining the implementing rules and regulations for flexible learning. The primary objective is to provide learners with the most adaptable method of acquiring knowledge regarding content, access, assessments, and the utilization of digital and non-digital resources (CHED, 2020). According to Gemin and Pape (2016), online learning is a teacher-led education approach that leverages the Internet to create an organized learning environment. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, technological skills and internet access have become significant challenges (Doucet et al., 2020). This has led to the development of new learning environments, such as the blended learning modality (BLM), which must be examined in comparison to traditional, conventional education methods.

Many schools have implemented various instructional technologies to adapt to the evolving educational landscape to enhance the teaching-learning process. Tools such as Moodle, Google Classroom, Virtual Labs, and Simulators have been widely used. Students must adjust to these changes and develop proficiency in using these programs to engage and contribute in class fully. According to Chua et al. (2021), while technology integration has prepared students for an increasingly digitized education system, there remains a need for a skill-based curriculum that emphasizes hands-on learning and practical application. Additionally, educational institutions are becoming overwhelmed by the rapid adoption of new learning modalities.

Online learning can be delivered in either synchronous (real-time) or asynchronous (self-paced) formats, each with different implications for access to materials, compatibility with students' schedules and learning preferences, and consistency of content (Panigrahi et al., 2018). Many instructors also adopt a blended approach, integrating in-person and online learning elements. In general, blended learning also referred to as the blended learning modality (BLM) in this study, is an instructional technique that combines traditional face-to-face teaching with structured online learning activities. It has been widely utilized in higher education for various purposes (Smith, 2019; Shorey et al., 2018). Consequently, this study aims to explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of pre-service science teachers from two selected state colleges in Mindanao to assess the effectiveness of BLM. By examining their level of understanding, perceptions, and actual application of BLM, the study seeks to determine how well this instructional approach supports their learning experiences.

Given this context, Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Specifically, the study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of pre-service science teachers from selected state colleges regarding blended learning modalities. It also examined differences in knowledge, attitudes, and practices based on various profile variables. Moreover, the researchers explored students' personal learning experiences using synchronous, asynchronous, and blended learning. The participants shared their insights on BLM. The researchers hoped that the findings of this study would contribute to future evaluations of pedagogical approaches, particularly in planning online classes, developing engaging online activities, and enhancing the delivery of online instructional content.

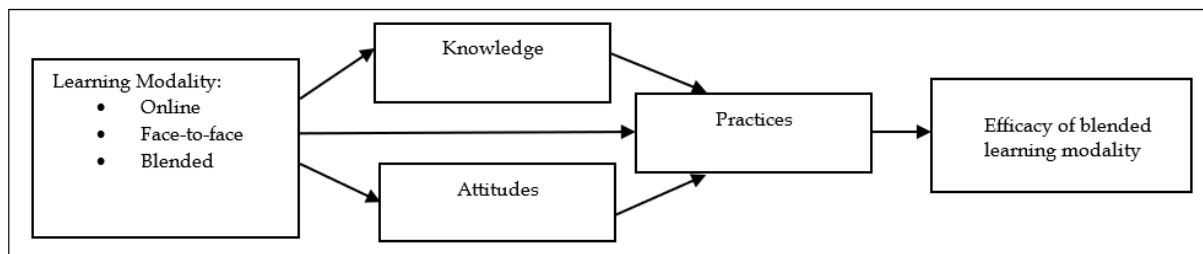


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study using the KAP-O Model adopted and modified from Wan et al. (2016)

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analyses. A quantitative research design was employed to collect numerical data on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to BLM. Meanwhile, a qualitative research design explored participants' learning experiences and insights regarding implementing BLM.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted in two selected state colleges in Mindanao. State College A is located in the southeastern part of Mindanao, within one of the provinces of the Davao region. It was founded in July 2010 and is considered the Philippines' youngest state-funded higher education institution. State College B is in the northeastern part of Mindanao, under the Caraga region. Both colleges offer a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in General Science program.

2.3 Research Participants

138 pre-service science teachers from two state colleges participated in the study. The sample size was determined using the Rao Soft online sample size calculator. Proportional sampling was employed to ensure a representative distribution of participants across different year levels in each state college.

2.4 Research Instrument

Quantitative data were collected using a survey questionnaire adapted from Abuhashesh et al. (2020) and administered via Google Forms, an online-based platform. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions divided into three sections: knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to BLM. The knowledge section focused on participants' insights and perceptions regarding blended learning software and the learning platforms' operability. The attitude section examined participants' feelings and behaviors toward BLM. The practices section explored their experiences and strategies in utilizing BLM and their competency in and access to BLM materials. Interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted for qualitative data collection. The FGD session included seven questions and lasted approximately one hour, concluding with participants' final thoughts on BLM.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The presidents of the two-state colleges were permitted to conduct the study. Following approval, quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire administered via Google Forms. Prior to distribution, the validity and reliability of the research instrument were assessed through expert reviews and pilot testing to ensure content and construct validity. Additionally, a reliability test was conducted, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.73, indicating a high level of consistency and reliability of the research instrument. A focus group discussion (FGD) was scheduled with randomly selected participants based on their availability. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the participants' demographic profiles, while frequency and mean were employed to present the extent of their knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) toward the BLM. A normality test was conducted before data analysis, confirming that analysis of variance (ANOVA) was an appropriate statistical tool to determine significant differences in participants' KAP toward BLM when grouped according to their profile variables. The Colaizzi analysis method was applied for qualitative data, allowing key themes to emerge based on participants' responses during the FGD session.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to proper ethical guidelines for conducting research. Participants were required to complete an informed consent form before participating in the survey, focus group discussion (FGD), and interviews. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were assured of confidentiality. Personal information was strictly protected and used solely for research purposes, with no identifiable details disclosed.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Participants' Profile

The demographic profile of the participants is presented in Figure 2. 138 pre-service science teachers participated in the study, with the majority (91% or 125 participants) aged 18–24 years and predominantly female (72% or 100

participants). First-year students comprised 28% of the total participants, while the remaining year levels had a relatively equal distribution. More than half (51%) of the participants were from State College A, with the sample size proportionally representing the total number of science majors across all year levels. Regarding technological capacity, 65% (90 participants) had access to a smartphone or laptop with an internet connection. Additionally, the BLM, a combination of online and face-to-face instruction, was the most preferred learning method, chosen by 59% of the participants.

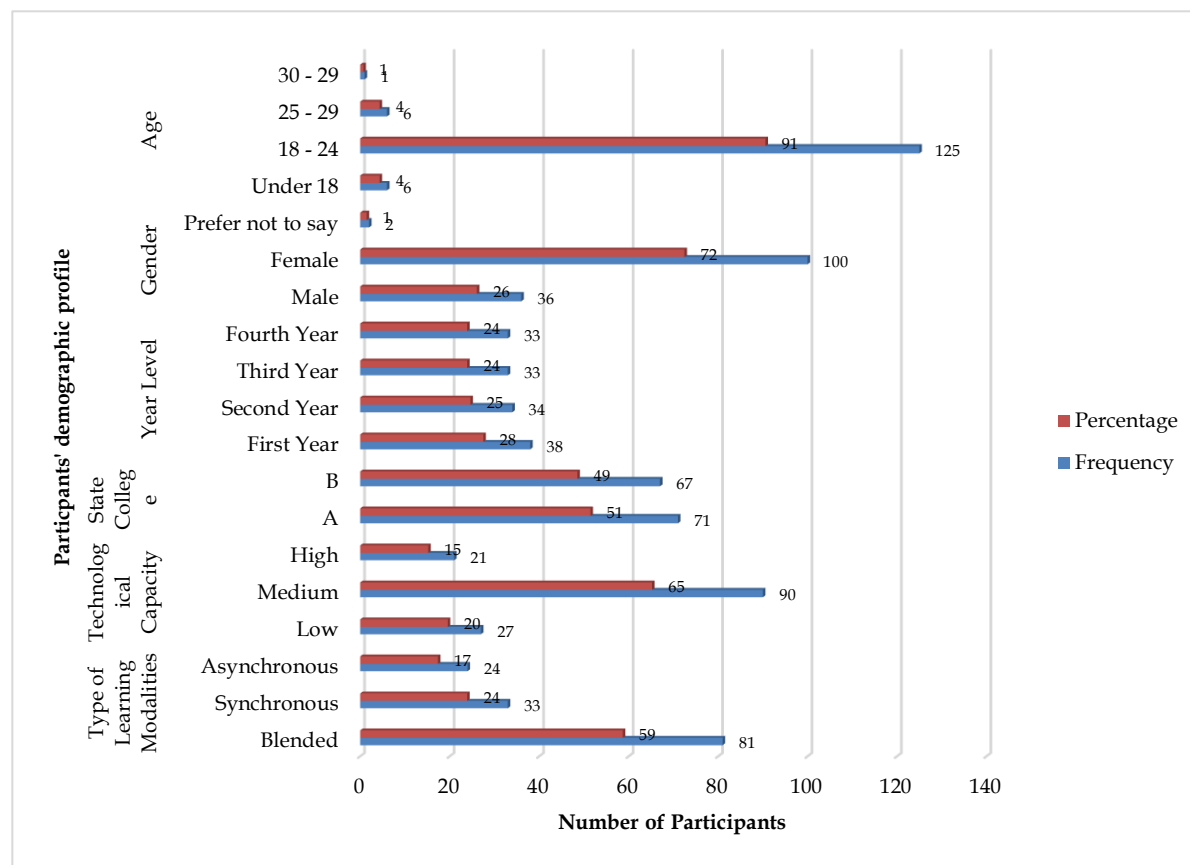


Figure 2. Frequency and percentage of the demographic profiles of the participants of the study

3.2 Knowledge of Pre-service Science Teachers Towards BLM

As shown in Table 1, all indicators under the knowledge category assess participants' technological proficiency in navigating online and face-to-face platforms in a blended learning environment. Indicator 7, "*I know how to troubleshoot when technical problems arise,*" received the lowest mean score of 3.39, indicating uncertainty among participants. In contrast, Indicator 3, "*I know how to download and save files for study,*" had the highest mean score of 4.56, signifying a high level of knowledge. The overall mean score for the knowledge category was 4.12, which is verbally interpreted as knowledgeable. The results in Table 1 highlight participants' ICT skills, including downloading files and troubleshooting technical issues that are essential for navigating online applications and overcoming the challenges of blended learning. Similarly, Baticulon et al. (2021) identified technological barriers to blended learning, such as difficulties with online platforms and a lack of technical proficiency among medical students.

Amid global economic uncertainties, the World Bank (2020) reported that many students struggle to access online learning, particularly those in areas with limited internet connectivity and other socioeconomic disadvantages. Carillo and Flores (2020) further emphasized that restricted access to technology and the internet remains a significant challenge exacerbated by lockdowns and the shift to blended learning. These disparities have not only disrupted traditional teaching and learning processes but have also deepened digital inequality, as access to

technology and levels of digital literacy continue to be shaped by social, economic, and cultural factors (Beaunoyer, Dupéré, & Guitton, 2020). This issue was echoed by Participant 6, who shared during the interview: "Most of the time, we encounter signal issues when conducting self-directed learning or researching for additional knowledge related to our courses. This often becomes a hindrance, as it delays our course review activities."

Table 1. Knowledge of pre-service science teachers towards blended learning modalities

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Our college/department has a good online infrastructure for BLM.	3.94	0.80	Knowledgeable
2. I know how to use our learning management system/platforms for BLM.	4.03	0.76	Knowledgeable
3. I know how to access files/apps used for BLM.	4.56	0.78	Highly Knowledgeable
4. I know how to upload assignments in different formats through BLM.	4.47	0.96	Knowledgeable
5. Our college allows the use of other BLM platforms for study.	4.37	0.66	Knowledgeable
6. I am well-versed in using the internet and fully aware of its functions.	4.07	0.84	Knowledgeable
7. I know how to troubleshoot when technical problems arise in BLM.	3.39	0.92	Undecided
Overall Result	4.12	0.57	Knowledgeable

However, despite technological challenges, Chua et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of students developing excellent technological proficiency, as it significantly influences their knowledge, attitudes, and practices in utilizing lectures, programs, and software essential for blended learning. As education continues integrating digital tools, students adept at navigating learning management systems, troubleshooting technical issues, and effectively using online resources are more likely to engage in and benefit from blended learning. Moreover, enhancing technical skills, promoting digital literacy, and improving access to the internet and necessary technological tools are crucial factors in supporting students' academic success. Digital literacy goes beyond basic computer skills. It encompasses critically evaluating online information, effectively communicating in virtual environments, and adapting to emerging technologies. Without these skills, students may struggle to fully participate in online discussions, complete digital assignments, or access essential educational materials.

As shown in Table 2, all knowledge indicators assess participants' internet-based capabilities and functions. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in participants' knowledge of BLM across demographic attributes at a 0.05 significance level. This indicates that age, gender, year level, state college affiliation, technological capacity, and preferred learning modality did not significantly influence their knowledge of BLM.

Table 2. Difference in the knowledge of pre-service Science teachers towards BLM when grouped according to their profile variables

Profile variable	Category	Mean	F - Test statistic	p-value
Age	30 - 39	4.71	0.76 (3,134)	0.52
	25 - 29	3.95		
	18 - 24	4.11		
	Under 18	4.31		
Gender	I prefer not to say	4.36	0.78 (2, 135)	0.46
	Female	4.08		
	Male	4.20		
Year Level	Fourth Year	4.09	0.46 (3, 134)	0.71
	Third Year	4.22		
	Second Year	4.10		
	First Year	4.07		
State College	B	4.07	0.73 (1, 136)	0.39
	A	4.16		
Technological Capacity	High	4.05	0.96 (2, 135)	0.39
	Medium	4.17		
	Low	4.01		
Type of Learning Modalities	Asynchronous	4.10	0.67 (2,135)	0.51
	Synchronous	4.08		
	Blended	4.22		

* p-value is less than 0.05 significance level

These findings align with Zhan et al. (2015), who reported that gender does not influence students' learning achievement in computer-assisted collaborative learning. Similarly, Fleming et al. (2017) found that age does not significantly impact students' academic goals or satisfaction with e-learning. Ali (2020) emphasized that the effectiveness of ICT-integrated learning depends on various factors, including teacher preparedness, student confidence, accessibility, and motivation. Additionally, Sindiani et al. (2020) highlighted that the abrupt transition to blended learning, inadequate preparation, and technological challenges led to negative experiences for teachers

and students. This further reinforced the perception that virtual learning is of lower quality than traditional face-to-face instruction.

3.3 Attitude of Pre-service Science Teachers Towards BLM

Among the seven attitude indicators, Indicator 6, *"I am willing to comply with changes in teaching methods based on technology,"* received the highest mean score of 3.91, indicating a positive attitude. In contrast, Indicator 3, *"I prefer online learning techniques over conventional learning methods,"* had the lowest mean score of 3.33, reflecting uncertainty among participants. Participants demonstrated a generally positive attitude towards BLM, with an average mean score of 3.54. These findings highlight students' perceptions and experiences, which may influence their preferences for online learning resources and their adaptability to technology-driven educational approaches. Table 3 highlights pre-service science teachers' preference for BLM over traditional methods and their openness to adapting to technology-based teaching approaches. This finding aligns with Ali (2020), who stated that modern students are highly dependent on mobile technology and expect technology-integrated learning that allows them to study from the convenience of their homes.

Table 3. Attitudes of pre-service science teachers toward blended learning modalities

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I like using BLM.	3.51	0.81	Positive
2. I like learning in a home-type environment.	3.43	1.01	Undecided
3. I prefer BLM to conventional learning methods.	3.33	0.93	Undecided
4. I like having online tasks for academic purposes.	3.50	0.93	Positive
5. I enjoy using BLM lectures.	3.41	0.92	Undecided
6. I am willing to comply with changes in teaching methods based on technology.	3.91	0.79	Positive
7. I like the interface of the platform our college uses for BLM.	3.69	0.84	Positive
Overall Result	3.54	0.68	Positive

This finding encourages academic institutions to strengthen their ICT infrastructure and student support services to create a more engaging and meaningful blended learning experience. However, students' attitudes and commitment play a crucial role in determining their level of engagement and perceived quality of blended learning (Muir et al., 2019). Carillo and Flores (2020) further emphasized that focused students who are well-prepared, self-motivated, adequately supported, and receive relevant feedback tend to learn more effectively in blended learning environments.

When students were interviewed about their perspectives on BLM, a common theme emerged: many perceived it as the most effective approach to learning. Participant 3 shared, *"Based on my experience, BLM is the most beneficial since it allows us to complete assigned tasks at our own pace. Additionally, scheduled synchronous online classes allow our teacher to explain difficult concepts."* Similarly, Participant 9 agreed, stating, *"BLM is very convenient. This modality enhances my ability to adapt to different learning environments."* These insights align with the study's findings, suggesting that students gradually adapt to the new normal and recognize the advantages of blended learning in enhancing their academic experience.

Among the profile variables considered, the learning modality ($p = 0.02$) significantly impacted pre-service science teachers' attitudes toward distance learning at the 0.05 significance level. This suggests that students' attitudes toward blended learning are influenced by the specific medium used in the teaching-learning process. For instance, students more accustomed to face-to-face instruction may struggle to adapt to online components, leading to a more cautious or uncertain attitude toward blended learning. Conversely, those comfortable with digital tools and online platforms may perceive this modality more positively. These findings highlight the importance of aligning instructional strategies with students' preferred learning environments to ensure engagement and effectiveness in blended learning settings.

The results in Table 4 highlight the rapid transition to blended learning to achieve educational goals and the increased importance of integrating technology into education. This digital transformation aligns with the evolving expectations of students deeply immersed in technology. ICT literacy has become a fundamental skill, shaping instructional methodologies and learning environments and how students engage with learning.

Table 4. *Difference in the attitude of pre-service Science teachers towards BLM when grouped according to their profile variables*

Profile variable	Category	Mean	F – Test statistic	p-value
Age	30 – 39	2.71	1.13 (3, 134)	0.34
	25 - 29	3.22		
	18 - 24	3.57		
	Under 18	3.70		
Gender	I prefer not to say	4.29	1.21 (2, 135)	0.30
	Female	3.53		
	Male	3.71		
Year Level	Fourth Year	3.64	0.36 (3, 134)	0.78
	Third Year	3.53		
	Second Year	3.47		
	First Year	3.53		
State College	B	3.58	0.53 (1, 136)	0.53
	A	3.65		
Technological Capacity	High	3.48	0.21 (2, 135)	0.81
	Medium	3.53		
	Low	3.61		
Type of Learning Modalities	Asynchronous	3.52	0.08 (2,135)	0.02*
	Synchronous	3.55		
	Blended	3.53		

* *p-value is less than 0.05 significance level*

Ejdys (2021) found that students' attitudes toward e-learning play a crucial role in their willingness to adopt such platforms. Factors such as perceived usefulness and computer self-efficacy significantly influence their acceptance and engagement with e-learning technologies (Agudo-Peregrina et al., 2014; Ejdys, 2020). Moreover, ICT-integrated lessons create dynamic and interactive learning experiences, encouraging self-directed learning and fostering greater student autonomy (Ali, 2020). These findings emphasize the need for academic institutions to enhance digital literacy and provide robust technological support to maximize the benefits of blended learning.

The participants of this study also highlighted that the current learning modality has encouraged them to become more resourceful. They emphasized that the availability of learning materials has played a crucial role in helping them meet academic requirements. Participant 8 shared, *"Based on my experience, our teachers have utilized various methodologies to enhance our learning. The learning resources provided are sufficient for implementing blended learning modalities effectively, and I am satisfied with the support we have received."*

In this study, a key challenge observed in utilizing blended learning modalities is their impact on students' learning experiences, influencing their attitudes toward online education. Research highlights the advantages and limitations of blended learning, with students' perspectives varying based on their engagement and perception of these learning approaches. Asynchronous learning environments are often self-paced, student-driven, and independent of time and location constraints (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Xie et al., 2018). While these settings offer flexibility, they require students to develop strong self-regulation skills, motivation, and discipline to meet learning objectives (Harnett, 2015). Additionally, students must possess adequate digital literacy to effectively complete academic tasks and learning activities (Kim et al., 2019).

In contrast, synchronous learning environments enable real-time interaction, providing immediate feedback, fostering natural communication, enhancing student engagement, and personalizing the learning experience (Blau et al., 2017). However, they may not be as immersive or dynamic as traditional face-to-face learning. Fabriz et al. (2021) argue that synchronous learning can increase cognitive load, create communicative ambiguity, and reduce student participation due to the pressures of real-time engagement. Understanding these complexities is essential for optimizing blended learning strategies to balance flexibility, engagement, and practical knowledge acquisition.

Moorehouse and Wong (2021) found that teachers integrated both asynchronous and synchronous digital technologies and instructional strategies to enhance student learning, assess progress, and maintain communication with students and parents remotely. Their study suggests that a blended approach, combining asynchronous and synchronous learning, is the most effective way to support online student learning. Similarly, this study's participants preferred a mixed learning modality, emphasizing its flexibility and effectiveness. Participant 7 noted that this approach allowed for independent learning, while Participant 8 agreed, stating, *"BLM*

is effective for me. I can learn on my own, and at the same time, teachers are available whenever we need their guidance. We can consult them about our difficulties during synchronous classes." This reinforces that a balanced combination of self-paced learning and real-time interaction enhances the learning experience.

3.4 Practices of Pre-service Science Teachers Towards BLM

In terms of practice, pre-service science teachers recorded the lowest mean score ($X = 3.30$) on Indicator 11, "*I do not have trouble accessing learning materials*," which was interpreted as neutral. In contrast, Indicator 9, "*I make sure to understand a topic before moving on to another topic*," received the highest mean score of 3.91, categorized as "practiced." Overall, seven out of the eleven indicators were rated as "practiced," while the remaining four were classified as "neutral" or "uncertain." These findings highlight students' engagement and competencies in blended learning, particularly their study habits and adaptability within the BLM framework.

The results in Table 5 highlight pre-service science teachers' uncertainty regarding their BLM practices, particularly in areas such as accessing learning materials online, collaborating with classmates, completing assignments, and the conduciveness of their learning environment. This neutrality does not necessarily indicate disinterest but suggests inconsistent engagement in these practices—sufficient to sustain online learning but potentially leading to suboptimal learning outcomes. These challenges reflect broader issues of digital inequality, influenced by disparities in access to technology and variations in digital literacy, which are deeply rooted in social, economic, and cultural contexts (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Carillo & Flores, 2020). Despite these technological challenges, the findings reveal the pre-service science teachers' enthusiasm, persistence, and commitment to mastering topics before progressing to new ones. This underscores their determination and passion for learning, even within a blended learning framework.

Table 5. Practices of pre-service science teachers towards blended learning modalities

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I have a conducive learning environment.	3.46	0.79	Undecided
2. I manage my time well when engaging with my lessons.	3.54	0.86	Practiced
3. I can use all learning materials provided online, such as class discussions or recordings.	3.84	0.83	Practiced
4. I only use online learning for passing requirements.	3.48	0.98	Undecided
5. I attend all my classes on time.	3.90	0.92	Practiced
6. I can use additional learning materials (e.g., Virtual Labs).	3.77	0.86	Practiced
7. I participate actively during online class discussions.	3.62	0.79	Practiced
8. I ask my professors questions (message privately or during online class discussions).	3.68	0.90	Practiced
9. I make sure to understand a topic first before moving to another topic.	3.91	0.77	Practiced
10. I actively study with my classmates online.	3.36	0.93	Undecided
11. I do not have trouble accessing learning materials.	3.30	1.02	Undecided
Overall Result	3.62	0.58	Practiced

Furthermore, Table 6 reveals that pre-service science teachers' BLM practices differ significantly based on technological capacity ($p = 0.05$). This suggests that access to and proficiency with digital tools play a vital role in shaping their engagement and effectiveness in remote learning environments. Students with stronger technological skills are more likely to navigate online platforms efficiently, utilize digital resources effectively, and participate actively in virtual discussions. In contrast, those with limited access to technology or lower digital literacy may struggle to adapt to blended learning, potentially impacting their academic performance. These findings emphasize the need to equip pre-service teachers with essential technological skills and resources to successfully integrate digital tools into their learning and future teaching practices.

Table 6 highlights technological capacity as a significant challenge in blended learning. Limited access to reliable internet, digital devices, and technological infrastructure can hinder effective learning, especially for students from underprivileged backgrounds. Carillo and Flores (2020) emphasized that contextual limitations, such as unstable internet connections, lack of appropriate learning devices, and minimal technical support, can diminish students' motivation and engagement, ultimately affecting their academic performance. Similarly, Beaunoyer et al. (2020) posited that these digital constraints continue to impact the quality of blended learning experiences, further widening the educational gap between students with sufficient technological access and those without.

Table 6. Differences in the practices of pre-service Science teachers towards BLM when grouped according to their profile variables				
Profile Variable	Category	Mean	F – Test statistic	p-value
Age	30 – 39	3.91	1.31 (3, 134)	0.27
	25 – 29	3.18		
	18 – 24	3.64		
	Under 18	3.70		
Gender	I prefer not to say	3.68	0.53 (2, 135)	0.59
	Female	3.59		
	Male	3.71		
Year Level	Fourth Year	3.72	1.39 (3, 134)	0.25
	Third Year	3.69		
	Second Year	3.64		
	First Year	3.47		
State College	B	3.59	0.43 (1, 136)	0.51
	A	3.65		
Technological Capacity	High	3.43	1.13 (2, 135)	0.05*
	Medium	3.67		
	Low	3.62		
Type of Learning Modalities	Asynchronous	3.45	1.42 (2,135)	0.25
	Synchronous	3.64		
	Blended	3.69		

* *p-value is less than 0.05 significance level*

Further, addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that ensures all students have equal opportunities to succeed in a blended learning environment. There is a pressing need for a broader support network to promote equity and inclusivity in blended education. Higher education institutions may implement policies that give students access to digital tools, such as loaner laptops, subsidized internet plans, and technical assistance. Government agencies can play a crucial role by investing in digital infrastructure, expanding broadband coverage, and offering financial aid programs for students facing technological difficulties. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations and private sector stakeholders can also help bridge the digital divide by providing training programs that enhance students' digital literacy skills. By fostering a multi-sectoral effort, blended learning can become a more inclusive and effective educational approach for all students, regardless of technological capacity.

3.5 Experiences and Insights of Pre-service Science Teachers in BLM

The study participants were also asked specific questions about their experiences and insights regarding implementing the blended learning modality. Their responses provided valuable perspectives on this learning approach's effectiveness, challenges, and overall impact. Through a thorough qualitative analysis of their feedback, ten (10) essential themes emerged, as summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Essential themes on the experiences and insights of pre-service Science teachers in BLM	
	Essential Themes
Pre-service Science Teachers' Experiences in BLM	<i>Unstable internet connectivity in online classes</i>
	<i>Technology-related difficulties in online learning</i>
	<i>Time management as a factor in blended learning</i>
	<i>Blended learning promotes independent learning</i>
	<i>Blended learning is the most effective modality</i>
	<i>Continuity of BLM in post-pandemic education</i>
	<i>Adequate learning resources in BLM</i>
	<i>Provision of clear instructions in BLM</i>
	<i>The teaching-learning strategies utilized are doable</i>
	<i>Learning materials available online for further learning</i>

Pre-service Science Teachers' Experiences in BLM

Unstable Internet Connectivity in Online Classes

Most participants emphasized the challenge of unstable internet connectivity when attending online classes. They sometimes wanted to participate actively, but internet-related issues prevented them. This also made accessing the online materials needed for their coursework difficult. As shared by P3, "*The bad thing is that technology-related*

too. Although I was willing to be very attentive in class, the signal does not cooperate, and there's difficulty sometimes in accessing online materials."

Technology-related Difficulties in Online Learning

During the interview, the participants shared their experiences with asynchronous activities, highlighting technology-related challenges. Many struggled to download and submit exercises or assignments due to poor internet connectivity. P6 expressed a similar concern: "Most of the time, we encounter signal issues when we conduct our self-learning process when we do research for more ideas or knowledge related to our courses. And it becomes a hindrance sometimes because it delays our course review activities."

Time Management as a Factor in Online Learning

The current learning setup presents significant challenges for students. While some activities are completed asynchronously, students must effectively manage their time to maintain the quality of their work and meet academic deadlines. Several participants emphasized that time management is crucial, especially when learning from home, as they also have household responsibilities to fulfill. P8 also agreed that time management is a significant challenge, explaining, "Time management in home-based learning is hard. Making asynchronous learning tiring. In my experience, I have to be a daughter and a student simultaneously."

Blended Learning Promotes Independent Learning

Participants who experienced both synchronous and asynchronous learning identified several advantages. Asynchronous learning, in particular, allowed them to manage their time effectively and provided opportunities to research complex concepts for better comprehension. As shared by P4, "I used to make things easy and simple as the learning is mixed. The learning is also enough to sustain my understanding of the topic."

As discussed above, participants shared their experiences with the learning modalities implemented by their schools. While the transition has not been easy, they continue to adapt and strive to keep up with their studies. Jacintos et al. (2021) highlighted that maintaining their attention is one of the main challenges students face in physical and online lectures. Some instructors incorporate real-life scenarios relevant to the course to create engaging synchronous online lectures. In contrast, others use entertaining content to help students feel more comfortable and capable of learning.

Pre-service Science Teachers' Insights on BLM

Blended Learning is the Most Effective Modality

For most participants, the blended learning modality is the most effective approach. Combining online and in-person activities allows students to maintain a balanced learning process. Online classes, in particular, allow teachers to explain complex concepts that students may struggle to learn independently. As P3 shared, "Based on my own experience, the blended learning modality is most effective because the student can have a time or a choice when or where we will answer the activities. Moreover, of course, there is a scheduled online class to help students understand a specific subject better, especially the specialized subject that needs guidance and ideas from the instructors."

Continuity of BLM in Post-Pandemic Education

The blended learning modality has become increasingly prominent since the pandemic. The students in this study believe that BLM should continue as part of the educational system due to its various benefits. Additionally, they find the asynchronous learning mode particularly effective, especially for accessing assignments online. As P9 stated, "It is convenient for students who can access their assignment or task via online. This is equally essential to teachers as they can easily access lesson materials online."

Adequate Learning Resources in BLM

There are numerous resources available to support the learning process. With the implementation of the blended learning modality, students can browse various online references to assist them in completing their assigned tasks. Most participants shared the same perspective, stating that blended learning provides adequate learning resources. Additionally, using learning applications and other digital tools plays a significant role in supporting BLM. Regarding resource availability, P8 explained, "Learning resources were adequate in implementing the blended

learning modalities. Based on my experience at the institution where I study. Professors always have many ways to nourish students learning. I am satisfied with how I have been treated. This only means resources were sufficient."

Provision of Clear Instructions in BLM

Participants also observed that clear instructions were provided for completing their synchronous, asynchronous, and face-to-face tasks. With proper guidance, they were able to meet the requirements effectively. P8 shared their experience regarding their instructor's clarity in giving instructions: *"Instructions given through the modalities were clear because if not, I may not be able to comply with all the tasks after all."*

Teaching-learning Strategies Utilized Are Doable

Teaching-learning strategies play a crucial role in effectively conveying knowledge from teachers to students. Participants shared that their teachers were supportive and provided encouragement, especially when completing tasks. Many students were motivated to participate because most tasks were manageable. As P7 stated, *"It is doable on my part as teaching-learning strategies such as discussions, quizzes, and oral recitation are prevalent strategies and is doable for any students to participate. Furthermore, topic reports are also doable."*

Learning Materials Available Online for Further Learning

Online learning materials are highly beneficial for students in understanding complex concepts. A wide range of resources can be accessed online, supporting independent learning. P6 shared the experience, stating, *"Learning materials are accessible, and it helps me gain more knowledge in my courses. They provide easy access for reviewing discussions as those learning materials can be shared through phones. Moreover, it is more convenient because those software-based learning resources can be stored on our phones or laptops, making it less necessary to print hard copies."*

Based on the participants' responses, most found the BLM beneficial. It provides flexibility and promotes independent learning. However, internet connectivity occasionally hinders learning, affecting students' ability to engage fully with online resources and activities. Despite these challenges, BLM remains a promising and inclusive approach to higher education, integrating technology to enhance the teaching-learning experience. The continued implementation of BLM requires educators' adequate support and guidance to help students navigate digital learning environments effectively. Teachers play a crucial role in structuring lessons, providing clear instructions, and offering assistance to ensure students maximize the benefits of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Additionally, students emphasized that improved communication between instructors and learners significantly eased their transition into this new mode of education. Clear expectations, timely feedback, and accessible learning materials made the shift to blended learning more manageable and effective. As higher education institutions increasingly adopt BLM, it is essential to address existing challenges by enhancing digital infrastructure, providing technological support, and fostering digital literacy among students and educators. With the right support systems, BLM can serve as a sustainable and equitable learning approach that prepares students for the demands of an evolving educational landscape (Colfer et al., 2021).

4.0 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the overall mean of all knowledge indicators suggests that participants can be characterized as knowledgeable. This indicates that, despite the challenges encountered in BLM, students could still utilize technology effectively. Their ability to adapt may be attributed to the necessity of adjusting to new learning environments, which, in turn, fosters digital literacy and helps them navigate the evolving educational landscape. Furthermore, none of the participants' demographic attributes significantly influenced their knowledge of BLM at the 0.05 significance level. Age, gender, year level, state college, technological capacity, and type of distance learning modality did not create substantial differences in their understanding or familiarity with blended learning. This means that regardless of background or personal circumstances, students could develop technological proficiency and engage with the blended learning framework effectively.

In terms of attitudes, pre-service science students demonstrated a positive outlook BLM, indicating their ability to quickly adapt to the new learning system. This indicates that pre-service science students generally prefer online learning over traditional methods. At the 0.05 level of significance, the type of blended learning modality had a significant impact on pre-service science teachers' attitudes toward distance learning. This suggests that their attitudes toward blended learning vary depending on the specific medium used in the teaching-learning process.

The pre-service science students' practices indicate that they make a conscious effort to thoroughly understand each subject before progressing to the next, demonstrating their effectiveness in the blended learning environment. Their BLM practices varied significantly based on their technological capacity. This suggests that access to and proficiency with technological tools play a crucial role in shaping students' distance learning experiences and engagement.

The qualitative findings provided valuable insights from pre-service science education students, highlighting their experiences and perspectives on BLM. The emerging themes revealed that most of their challenges stemmed from technological and internet connectivity issues. However, these difficulties did not prevent them from making efforts to adapt to the evolving educational landscape. They expressed that BLM is effective in promoting learning independence and enabling them to manage their time efficiently. The researchers recommend addressing the key findings, particularly the indicators where pre-service science teachers expressed indecisiveness. To gain deeper insights into these areas, further qualitative research is suggested to explore the underlying factors more comprehensively. Additionally, the findings of this study can serve as a valuable basis for curriculum assessment in higher education programs, guiding the effective implementation of BLM. In the post-pandemic era, where AI-driven technologies are becoming more prevalent in education, these insights can help refine instructional strategies and contribute to the delivery of high-quality, technology-integrated learning experiences.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

This paper is a product of collaborative efforts by the authors. LSD conceptualized the study, designed, and implemented the methodology for quantitative data collection, and analyzed and discussed the quantitative findings. RSM developed the abstract and introduction, analyzed and discussed the qualitative data, and formulated the conclusion. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

6.0 Funding

This research was conducted independently without financial assistance from any funding agency or institution.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors sincerely thank the pre-service science teachers from the College of Education of the two selected state colleges for their valuable participation in this study. Their insights and experiences provided essential perspectives that enriched the research findings. The authors also appreciate the support of the school administrations in facilitating the surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, which were crucial in gathering comprehensive data. They also express their heartfelt appreciation to their families for their kind understanding, unwavering support, patience, and motivation. Their continuous encouragement played a significant role in successfully completing this research.

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Exploring the Process-Based Approach in Academic Writing: English Teachers' Implementation and Perceived Impact

Ma. Lovely Gabuay-Vega

Graduate School, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Sta. Mesa Manila, Philippines
Division of Cavite City, Cavite National High School, Cavite City, Cavite, Philippines

Author Email: malovely.gabuay@deped.gov.ph

Date received: January 5, 2025

Date revised: March 4, 2025

Date accepted: March 28, 2025

Originality: 98%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 2%

Recommended citation:

Gabuay-Vega, M.L. (2025). Exploring the process-based approach in academic writing: English teachers' implementation and perceived impact. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 390-401.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.012>

Abstract. This study examines the impact of the process-based approach on students' academic writing by exploring how teachers implement this method across different writing stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Many teachers apply this approach implicitly, and their instructional strategies in each phase influence student progress. The study also investigates teachers' challenges in integrating this model into their writing instruction. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, the research explores the lived experiences of five English teachers from private and public senior high schools in Cavite City. Findings reveal that teachers employ various pedagogical strategies, including idea generation, creative exploration, collaboration, structuring, and revision. However, they encounter challenges such as time constraints, curriculum limitations, student motivation issues, lack of resources, and assessment expectations. Despite these challenges, the process-based approach significantly improves students' writing skills in organization, creativity, language use, critical thinking, and self-reflection. The study recommends adopting this approach more explicitly in writing instruction, encouraging students to actively engage in all writing stages to enhance their writing competency.

Keywords: Process-Based Approach; Academic writing; English teaching; Lived Experiences.

1.0 Introduction

Academic writing is a crucial skill for students, yet many struggle with various aspects, including grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and organization. According to Aldabbus and Almansouri (2022), limited practice, low English proficiency, and restricted resource access often worsen these difficulties. Filali (2019) also noted that students face challenges maintaining an academic tone, conducting thorough research, and avoiding informal language such as idioms and clichés. In addition to individual difficulties, external factors such as inadequate instruction and ineffective teaching methods further hinder students' academic writing development. Gupta et al. (2022) emphasized that many students, particularly those learning English as an additional language (EAL), do not receive specialized academic writing instruction. This affects their progress and increases the workload of faculty members who must guide them through multiple revisions. Similarly, Budjalemba and Listyani (2020) identified motivation and confidence as key internal factors influencing students' writing proficiency. Filipino learners, in particular, struggle with vocabulary, organization, and grammar due to insufficient practice and low English proficiency (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022).

To address these challenges, researchers have explored the benefits of the process-based approach in improving students' writing skills. Studies by Guo et al. (2021), Magulod (2018), and Kurniasih et al. (2020) suggest that this approach enhances writing proficiency, reduces anxiety, and fosters self-reliance. Smith (2022) describes academic writing as a means of sharing knowledge within the academic community, yet teachers continue to face difficulties in teaching this essential skill. While existing research (Tabuena, 2020; Macalino, 2023; Sarmiento & Cruz, 2021; Guo et al., 2021; Magulod, 2018; Kurniasih et al., 2020) highlights the advantages of the process-based approach for students, few studies examine how teachers adapt their instructional strategies at different stages of the writing process. Additionally, there is limited research on educators' specific challenges in implementing this approach and its perceived impact on students' academic writing. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how teachers modify their pedagogical strategies during each phase of the writing process, identifying the challenges they encounter, and analyzing the effects of the process-based approach on students' academic writing skills. Understanding these factors will provide valuable insights into improving academic writing instruction and supporting educators and learners.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used the descriptive phenomenological research design that focuses on understanding and describing the essence of the lived experiences of individuals regarding a specific phenomenon. This qualitative approach is grounded in the phenomenology philosophy, which seeks to explore how people perceive and make sense of their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, the qualitative research design allows for in-depth and further probing and questioning of participants based on their responses, and from the participants' answers, the researcher also tried to understand their motivation and feelings that may be interpreted together with the responses the teacher participants provided. This design is appropriate since the researcher sought to explore the lived experience of teachers while implementing the process-based approach in handling academic writing.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in District 1, Province of Cavite, Cavite City, Philippines. This study's research area included five both public and private senior high schools in District 1, Division of Cavite City. Each school has an average of five (5) to twenty (20) English teachers and one (1) department head. Cavite City is located in the coastal area of Cavite Province in the Philippines, fronting Manila Bay. It is approximately 35 kilometers southwest of Manila and occupies a small peninsula shaped like a hand stretched out into Manila Bay¹². The city has a land area of 10.89 square kilometers.

2.3 Research Participants

There were five (5) participants in this research. They are teachers from private and public senior high schools operating in the division of Cavite City. These teachers handle academic writing subjects in various strands at the Senior High School level. Initially, the researcher used these selection criteria identifying the target participants: (a) the participant had to be teaching subjects practical research, (b) the participant had to be a teacher for five years, and (c) the participants are using a Process-Based Approach (PBA) in teaching writing based from the results of the preliminary survey, the five (5) participants were chosen from those who answered the guided questions in the provided pre-survey. These criteria were used to identify the participants using snowball sampling. The researcher opted to use this sampling method, considering the uniqueness of the characteristics of the target participants. The researcher used a data saturation technique such that no more interviews were conducted when there was no new information gathered from the interviews.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study used a semi-structured interview to collect data from the selected participants. The interview questions were developed and approved by professionals in the writing and English language fields. They assessed and approved the questions based on how well they addressed the study's stated problem. The researcher crafted interview questions, and the questionnaire was validated by the researcher's thesis adviser, a master teacher in English for Senior High School – a master's degree graduate who handles academic writing courses. The facilitated interview is composed of 8 open-ended questions, guided by the statement of the problem and the result of the survey administered to the participants, served as interview questions for the participants. Moreover, an audio recording was made during the interview facilitation, with consent from the interviewee, and the researcher

transcribed the recordings. Responses in Filipino were translated into English, and participants were asked to confirm if their answers were accurately translated.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

The informants were interviewed on-site after receiving an ethical permit from the PUP University Research Ethics Center to conduct the study. With consent from the interviewee, an audio recording was made during the interview facilitation, and the researcher transcribed the recordings. Responses in Filipino were translated into English, and participants were asked to confirm if their answers were accurately translated. The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines. The researcher secured ethical approval from the UREC at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Additionally, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the secondary school principal of the senior high school where the research took place. Before completing consent forms, participants attended an orientation where the researcher thoroughly explained their rights. The researcher ensured that the participants received and signed the consent forms after their rights regarding participation in the study were clearly explained. In order to guarantee participant anonymity in all recordings, the researcher carefully examined and complied with Republic Act 10173, also referred to as the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Philippine Congress, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher implemented safety measures to guarantee that participants did not experience bodily or psychological injury or violations during the study. A relaxed and comfortable environment was created and maintained to ensure the participants' safety.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Pedagogical Strategies in Each Phase of the Writing Process

Pre-writing Phase

Table 1 outlines various pedagogical strategies that English teachers use during the pre-writing phase of the writing process. For instance, Deductive Teaching involves students reading an example, identifying the writing strategy from it, and then applying it to their work, as illustrated by the extract: "*Students all read an example, deduct the strategy of writing from the given example.*" Collaborative Groupings refers to students working together to create their texts, exemplified by the extract: "*create their work by collaborative groupings.*" Following these phases, reflection teaching through consultations and feedback aids in self-revisions.

Table 1. Pedagogical Strategies English Teachers Employ in the Pre-writing Phase

Participant	Sample Significant Statements	Initial Code
A	(1) <i>There are various pedagogical strategies employed in the stages of writing; some of it are deductive teaching wherein students all read an example, deduct the strategy of writing from the given example,</i>	(1) Deductive Teaching
	(2) <i>then create their work in collaborative groups. Afterward, reflection teaching is transformed into consultations and feedback. Self-revisions will then follow.</i>	(2) Collaborative Groupings
B	(1) <i>For Prewriting: I explicitly teach my students the planning and goal-setting strategies during prewriting.</i>	(1) Explicit Instructions
	(2) <i>I encourage them to brainstorm, research, and organize ideas.</i>	(2) Brainstorming and Research
	(3) <i>I ask them to use visual tools like mind maps, concept maps, or storyboards to help them organize their thoughts and plan their writing.</i>	(3) Use of Visual Tools
	(4) <i>I also engage my students in collaborative discussions to generate ideas and refine their topics.</i>	(4) Collaborative Discussions
C	(1) <i>During the pre-writing, I employ brainstorming strategies</i>	(1) Brainstorming
	(2) <i>and group collaboration. This is necessary since one person cannot think of all the ideas possible for good research. Having more than one brain thinking of a good research idea would also lessen the stress this step might bring students.</i>	(2) Group Collaboration
D	(1) <i>During the research, I implemented constructivism and social constructivism as pedagogical approaches. I chose constructivism because I believe that students need to conduct their reading and learn about the topic they chose so that they may be able to contribute something to their research.</i>	(1) Constructivism
	(2) <i>Social constructivism, on the other hand, allows the students to collaborate with their group mates to improve their papers. My role as their adviser in this case is to advise them on the mistakes that they have made when writing their papers.</i>	(2) Collaborative Group Work
E	(1) <i>Firstly, pre-writing, which includes brainstorming</i>	(1) Brainstorming
	(2) <i>and outlining are important strategies for generating and aligning the ideas needed to create an informative draft.</i>	(2) Outlining

Drafting Phase

Table 2 exhibits the *pedagogical strategies English teachers employ in the drafting phase of the writing process*. For instance, Deductive Teaching is employed by having students read an example, deduce the writing strategy from it, and then apply it to their work, as illustrated by: "Students all read an example deduct the strategy of writing from the given example." Following this, Collaborative Groupings are utilized, where students work together to create their texts, highlighted by: "create their work by collaborative groupings." Reflective Teaching comes next, involving consultations and feedback to help students reflect on their drafts, as noted in: "Reflection teaching into consultations and feedback." Finally, self-revisions are emphasized, with students revising their work based on feedback and reflections, supported by the following: "Self-revisions will then follow." These strategies collectively enhance the drafting process by integrating examples, collaboration, reflection, and revision.

Table 2. Pedagogical Strategies English Teachers Employ in the Drafting Phase

Participant	Sample Significant Statements	Initial Code
A	(1) There are various pedagogical strategies employed in the stages of writing; some of them are deductive teaching, wherein students all read an example and deduct the strategy of writing from the given example	(1) Deductive Teaching
	(2) then create their work in collaborative groups.	(2) Collaborative Groupings
	(3) Afterward, reflection teaching will be incorporated into consultations and feedback.	(3) Reflective Teaching
	(4) Self-revisions will then follow.	(4) Self-Revisions
B	(1) For Drafting: I provide templates or sentence starters to guide them as they write their initial drafts.	(1) Use of Templates/Sentence Starters
	(2) This helps them focus on content without getting overwhelmed by structure.	(2) Focus on Content Over Structure
	(3) I again encourage them to share their drafts with peers for feedback. Peer review promotes revision and helps students see their work differently.	(3) Peer Review
C	(1) In teaching research writing, I used activities with a goal-oriented approach.	(1) Goal-Oriented Approach
	(2) At the start of the semester, the students will be introduced to a timeline wherein the different parts of the research papers will be targeted and accomplished every week. This will make the task more straightforward since the paper is compiled into activities. The students do not even notice that they are done already.	(2) Timeline/Chunking Activities
D	(1) The pedagogical approaches I implemented during the research are constructivism and social constructivism. Constructivism is based on the idea that students need to conduct their own reading and learning of the topic they chose so that they may be able to contribute something to their research.	(1) Constructivism
	(2) Social constructivism, on the other hand, allows students to collaborate with their group mates to improve their papers.	(2) Social Constructivism
	(3) My role as their adviser is to advise them on the mistakes they made when writing their paper.	(3) Adviser Role in Providing Feedback
E	(1) Then drafting, in here free writing	(1) Free Writing
	(2) and chunking are effective strategies to help learners flow ideas without worrying about grammar rules."	(2) Chunking

Revising Phase

Table 3 shows the pedagogical strategies employed in the revising phase of the writing process. The strategies for the revising phase align well with the findings from the RRL. The combined findings from Matrix 3 and the RRL suggest that integrating diverse pedagogical strategies in the writing revision process can significantly enhance educational practices and interventions. Emphasizing Reflective Teaching and Self-Revision promotes critical self-assessment and iterative improvement, while Feedback Evaluation and Mini-Lessons ensure targeted instruction and clarity. Collaborative approaches like Group Feedback leverage peer insights, and strategies like Multiple Drafts and Self-Analysis foster deeper engagement and self-regulation. These practices align with research demonstrating the efficacy of reflective and collaborative methods, indicating that a multifaceted approach to writing instruction can effectively develop students' writing skills, critical thinking, and self-evaluation capabilities.

Editing Phase

Table 4 shows the pedagogical strategies employed in the editing phase of the writing process. Incorporating practices such as iterative feedback, peer editing, and group-based consultations supports the development of critical writing skills and fosters a deeper understanding of the writing process. These methods improve writing quality and encourage self-regulation and collaborative problem-solving among students. Educational interventions should, therefore, emphasize a balanced approach that includes reflective practices, peer collaboration, and structured revision techniques to effectively build students' writing proficiency and autonomy.

Table 3. Pedagogical Strategies English Teachers Employ in the Revising Phase

Participant	Sample Significant Statements	Initial Code
A	(1) Afterward, reflection teaching will be incorporated into consultations and feedback. (2) Self-revisions will then follow.	(1) Reflective Teaching (2) Self-Revision
B	(1) During Revision: I teach students how to evaluate their work provided with constructive feedback and encourage them to revise based on feedback received. (2) During revision, common issues (e.g., clarity, coherence, organization) are addressed through targeted mini-lessons. (3) I even discuss sentence structure, transitions, and varied sentence beginnings to enhance their writing quality.	(1) Feedback Evaluation (2) Mini-Lesson (3) Clarity Enhancement
C	(1) I also employ feedback and consultation; however, it is not done individually but in groups, since they accomplish this in groups when they write their research papers.	(1) Group Feedback
D	(1) By engaging in multiple drafts and revisions, students (2) learn to analyze their writing, identify areas for improvement, and make thoughtful decisions about structure, organization, and content. This process strengthens their writing abilities and enhances their ability to evaluate and revise their work, a crucial academic and professional skill.	(1) Multiple Drafts (2) Self-Analysis and Evaluation
E	(1) Lastly, revising and editing, the use of a revision checklist and the (2) Peer editing can make the article ready to publish and may avoid many errors.	(1) Revision Checklist (2) Peer Editing

Table 4. Pedagogical Strategies English Teachers Employ in the Editing Phase

Participant	Sample Significant Statements	Initial Code
A	(1) Afterward, reflection teaching will be incorporated into consultations and feedback. (2) Self-revisions will then follow.	(1) Consultations and feedback (2) Self-revisions
B	(1) I pair students for peer editing sessions in the Editing phase, emphasizing attention to detail. (2) Finalizing and Publishing: I teach students how to refine their writing by focusing on word choice, transitions, and overall coherence.	(1) Peer editing sessions (2) Refining Word Choice, Transitions, and Coherence
C	(1) I also employ feedback and consultation (2) However, it is not done individually but rather in groups (3) when they write their research paper, they accomplish this through groups	(1) Feedbacking and consultation (2) Group-based feedback (3) Group research paper writing
D	(1) Social constructivism, on the other hand, allows students to collaborate with their group mates to improve their papers.	(1) Collaboration with group mates

3.2 Pedagogical Strategies Employed by English Teachers

Table 5 presents a summary of themes generated based on identified initial codes culled from participants' responses regarding the pedagogical strategies employed in each phase of the writing process.

Table 5. Summary of Themes for the Pedagogical Strategies Employed

Phase	Theme	Meaning	Sample Significant Statement
PRE-WRITING	Peer Interaction and Collective Effort	This theme involves students working in groups to collaborate on their writing tasks. The focus is on utilizing group discussions and collective brainstorming to generate and refine ideas before individual writing begins. This approach encourages shared learning and feedback among peers to enhance the quality of their work.	Then, they create their work through collaborative groupings. Afterward, reflection teaching is transformed into consultations and feedback, followed by self-revisions. I also engage my students in collaborative discussions to generate ideas and refine their topics.
	Structured Guidance and Instruction	This theme pertains to the teacher providing explicit strategies and instructions at various stages of the writing process. It involves using structured methods, such as deductive teaching, where students learn by analyzing examples and applying the derived strategies to their writing. This structured approach helps students plan, set goals, and execute their writing tasks effectively.	Various pedagogical strategies are employed in the stages of writing. Some are deductive teaching, wherein students read an example and deduce the writing strategy from the given example. For Prewriting, I explicitly teach my students the strategies for planning and goal-setting during prewriting.
	Idea Generation and Exploration	This theme focuses on techniques to help students generate and explore ideas during the prewriting phase. It includes activities such as brainstorming and research to help students develop and organize their thoughts before beginning the actual writing process. The goal is to facilitate the creation of well-thought-out content by expanding on initial ideas.	I encourage them to brainstorm, do research, and organize ideas. During the pre-writing, I employ brainstorming strategies.

DRAFTING	Visual Aids and Organizational Tools	This theme involves using visual tools and organizational aids to help students organize their thoughts and plan their writing. Techniques such as mind maps, concept maps, and storyboards organize ideas visually, making it easier for students to structure their writing effectively.	<i>I ask them to use visual tools like mind maps, concept maps, or storyboards to help them organize their thoughts and plan their writing.</i>
	Constructivist Approach and Structural Planning	This theme emphasizes using constructivist principles, including social constructivism, to guide students' research and writing processes. It involves students actively engaging in learning and applying their knowledge to contribute meaningfully to their work. Structural planning, such as outlining, organizing, and aligning ideas, ensures that the research and writing process is systematic and coherent.	<i>The pedagogical approaches I implemented during the research are constructivism and social constructivism. I chose constructivism because I believe that students need to conduct their reading and learning of the topic they chose so that they may be able to contribute something to their research.</i> <i>Outlining is an important strategy for generating and aligning ideas to create an informative draft. Then, they create their work through collaborative groupings.</i>
	Collaborative and Social Learning	This theme emphasizes the value of group interactions and peer feedback in writing. It involves students working together, sharing drafts, and providing mutual feedback to enhance their writing skills. The collaborative approach helps students gain diverse perspectives and improves their ability to revise and refine their work based on peer insights. For instance, students are encouraged to engage in peer review sessions to promote revision and view their work from different angles.	<i>I again encourage them to share their drafts with peers for feedback. Peer review promotes revision and helps students see their work differently.</i>
	Reflective and Self-Regulated Learning	This theme focuses on the importance of personal reflection and self-regulation in improving writing. It involves students reflecting on feedback received and engaging in self-revision to enhance their drafts independently. The process encourages students to critically assess their work and make necessary adjustments based on reflective practices and feedback, promoting greater ownership and development of their writing skills.	<i>Afterwards, reflection teaching into consultations and feedback.</i> <i>Self-revisions will then follow.</i>
	Structured Guidance and Scaffolding	This theme refers to providing organized support and resources to guide students through the writing process. It includes offering templates, sentence starters, and other structured tools to help students begin and develop their drafts. By breaking down the writing task into manageable parts and providing clear guidance, educators help students build their writing skills systematically and effectively.	<i>For Drafting: I provide templates or sentence starters to guide them as they write their initial drafts.</i> <i>Various pedagogical strategies are employed in the stages of writing; some of them are deductive teaching, wherein students read an example and deduce the writing strategy from the given example.</i>
	Process-Oriented and Chunking	This theme involves breaking down the writing task into smaller, manageable segments to facilitate easier completion. Introducing a timeline and focusing on different parts of the research paper each week makes the process more structured and less overwhelming. This approach helps students accomplish their writing tasks in stages, allowing them to manage their workload and gradually complete their papers through incremental activities.	<i>At the start of the semester, the students will be introduced to a timeline wherein, every week, the different parts of the research papers will be targeted and accomplished. This makes the task more straightforward since the paper is compiled in chunks of activities. The students do not even notice that they are done already.</i>
	Reflective Practice and Independent Revision	This theme emphasizes the role of personal reflection and independent effort in the revision process. It involves students reviewing their work and revising based on self-reflection and consultation feedback. This approach encourages students to critically assess and refine their drafts autonomously, promoting more profound engagement with their writing and enhancing their overall revision skills.	<i>Then drafting, in here free writing. Afterwards, reflection teaching into consultations and feedback.</i> <i>Self-revisions will then follow.</i>
REVISING	Feedback-Driven Instruction and Collaborative Learning	This theme highlights feedback and group-based interactions in the revision phase. It involves teaching students how to assess and improve their work using constructive feedback while engaging in group-based consultations. By integrating feedback-driven instruction with collaborative learning, students benefit	<i>During Revision: I teach students how to evaluate their work provided with constructive feedback and I encourage them to revise based on feedback received.</i>

EDITING		from diverse perspectives and collective problem-solving, which supports more effective revisions and enhances their writing skills.	
	Iterative Drafting and Critical Evaluation	This theme focuses on the iterative process of drafting and revising, where students produce multiple drafts and critically evaluate their work. Through repeated revisions, students learn to identify areas for improvement, refine their writing, and make informed decisions about structure and content. This ongoing process helps students develop their ability to critically assess and enhance their writing, which is essential for academic and professional success.	<i>I also employ feedback and consultation; however, it is not done individually but in groups, since they accomplish this in groups when writing their research papers. By engaging in multiple drafts and revisions, students</i>
	Structured Peer and Self-Revision	This theme uses structured tools and collaborative methods to guide the revision process. It includes employing revision checklists and peer editing to review and refine drafts systematically. By combining individual checklists with peer feedback, students can address potential errors and improve the quality of their writing, resulting in a more polished and error-free final product.	<i>Students learn to analyze their writing, identify areas for improvement, and make thoughtful decisions about structure, organization, and content. This process strengthens their writing abilities and enhances their ability to evaluate and revise their work, a crucial academic and professional skill. Lastly, revising and editing, using a revision checklist and the</i>
	Feedback and Consultation	This theme involves engaging students in reflective practices and providing targeted advice to improve their writing. It highlights consultations and feedback sessions where instructors guide students through iterative revisions. For instance, "Afterwards, reflection teaching into consultations and feedback" exemplifies how feedback enhances students' work through a reflective and consultative process.	<i>help of peer editing, can make the article ready to publish and may avoid many errors. Afterwards, reflection teaching into consultations and feedback.</i>
	Peer Collaboration and Editing	This theme refers to students working together to review and improve each other's work. It emphasizes collaborative learning and peer support during the editing phase. As indicated in the extract, "In the Editing phase: I pair students for peer editing sessions, emphasizing attention to detail," students collaborate in groups to provide detailed feedback and refine their drafts, improving their writing quality.	<i>I also employ feedback and consultation. In the Editing phase, I pair students for peer editing sessions, emphasizing attention to detail.</i>
	Self-Revision and Refinement Techniques	This theme focuses on individual efforts to revise and enhance one's writing. It involves using self-revisions and specific techniques to refine drafts, including attention to word choice, transitions, and overall coherence. The extract, "Self-revisions will follow. Finalizing and Publishing: I teach students how to refine their writing by paying attention to word choice, transitions, and overall coherence," underscores the importance of personal revision efforts combined with strategic refinement methods to achieve a polished final draft.	<i>When they write their research paper, they accomplish this through groups Self-revisions will then follow. Finalizing and Publishing: I teach students how to refine their writing by focusing on word choice, transitions, and overall coherence.</i>

3.3 Challenges Encountered

Table 6 shows initially coded or labeled qualitative data from the interview transcripts of the five (5) participants. The codes/labels in the third column of the table have been assigned numbers corresponding to the relevant responses of the participants in the second column of the table.

The initial codes/labels generate four main themes. These central themes include **time management and curriculum integration, student engagement and motivation, resource availability and teacher support, and assessment and evaluation challenges** (see Table 7).

Table 6. Challenges Encountered by English Teachers in Integrating the Process-Based Approach into their Writing Instruction

Participant	Sample Significant Statements	Initial Code
A	(1) <i>One of the biggest challenges is time constraints.</i>	(1) Time constraints
	(2) <i>The process-based approach requires multiple drafts and stages of feedback, which is challenging to manage within the limited time we have for each class.</i>	(2) Balancing curriculum
	(3) <i>It is hard to balance this with covering all the necessary curriculum content."</i>	
B	(1) <i>"Differing student engagement and motivation degrees are another problem.</i>	(1) Student engagement
	(2) <i>Some students refuse to go through several iterations and recognize their worth.</i>	(2) motivation
	(3) <i>It is difficult to keep them engaged when they frequently become irate or lose interest."</i>	
C	(1) <i>Resources and assistance are also lacking.</i>	(1) Insufficient resources
	(2) <i>We require additional training and resources to apply the process-based approach successfully. In the absence of sufficient backing,</i>	(2) Training and assistance required
	(3) <i>Keeping track of every student's writing progress and giving them insightful critique can be somewhat demanding."</i>	
D	(1) <i>"Parental expectations can be a challenge too.</i>	(1) Parental expectations
	(2) <i>Many parents expect immediate results and do not always understand the value of the process.</i>	(2) Focus on final product
	(3) <i>They may see multiple drafts as unnecessary and pressure us to focus more on final products than the process itself."</i>	
E	(1) <i>"Assessing students' progress through the process-based approach is complex.</i>	(1) Assessment challenges
	(2) <i>Traditional grading methods do not always align well with this approach, making evaluating students fairly and consistently tricky.</i>	(2) Need for better evaluation tools
	(3) <i>We need better assessment tools that reflect the process-oriented nature of writing."</i>	

Table 7. Summary of Themes on Challenges Encountered

Theme	Meaning	Sample Significant Statement
Time Management and Curriculum Integration	This theme addresses English teachers' significant challenge in managing time effectively while integrating the process-based approach into their writing instruction. The process-based approach requires multiple drafts, stages of feedback, and iterative revisions, which are difficult to accommodate within the limited class time. Teachers struggle to balance the demands of the curriculum with the need to provide thorough, process-oriented writing instruction.	<i>One of the biggest challenges is time constraints.</i> <i>The process-based approach requires multiple drafts and stages of feedback, which is challenging to manage within the limited time we have for each class.</i>
Student Engagement and Motivation	This theme focuses on maintaining high student engagement and motivation levels throughout the writing process. Teachers encounter varying degrees of student interest and enthusiasm for going through several iterations of their work. Some students resist the iterative nature of the process-based approach and fail to recognize its benefits.	<i>"Differing degrees of student engagement and motivation are another problem.</i> <i>Some students refuse to go through several iterations and recognize their worth.</i>
Resource Availability and Teacher Support	This theme highlights the challenge related to the lack of sufficient resources and support for teachers. Implementing the process-based approach effectively requires additional training, materials, and institutional backing, which are often inadequate. Teachers need more resources and professional development to apply this approach successfully.	<i>Resources and assistance are also lacking.</i> <i>In order to apply the process-based approach successfully, we require additional training and resources. In the absence of sufficient backing</i>
Assessment and Evaluation Challenges	This theme addresses teachers' difficulties with assessment and evaluation when using the process-based approach. Parents may view multiple drafts as unnecessary, preferring a focus on the final product. Additionally, traditional grading methods often do not align well with the process-based approach, making it challenging to evaluate students' progress and efforts fairly and consistently.	<i>They may consider multiple drafts unnecessary and pressure us to focus more on the final products than the process itself.</i> <i>Traditional grading methods do not always align well with this approach, making evaluating students fairly and consistently tricky.</i>

Time management and curriculum integration are significant challenges faced by English teachers who want to implement the process-based approach in their writing education. Within the constraints of the structured curriculum, teachers sometimes struggle to fit in the several drafts and iterations of feedback needed for this technique. Due to this constraint, businesses must choose between promoting a thorough writing process and offering the required content. The implication is that without adequate time allotment and curriculum flexibility, the full benefits of process-based writing instruction might not manifest. This issue highlights how crucial it is that educational institutions consider adjusting their schedules or allocating additional time for writing instruction. The challenges grade nine students have applying writing techniques in EFL classes were examined by Kenta (2019). The study used questionnaires, field notes, and interviews with English teachers and students in grade nine as part of a descriptive research design. The results showed that writing skill activities were inadequate and out of step with successful ways of teaching skills. The study made suggestions to address these problems and improve writing training in light of these findings.

Student engagement and motivation surface as important issues in integrating the process-based approach. Teachers find that pupils are not always engaged, and some are unwilling to write and revise their work more than once. Their varying motivation levels influence students' inclination to commit to the writing process. Given this issue, educators should use techniques like adding engaging exercises, giving insightful feedback, and highlighting the long-term advantages of iterative writing to increase student motivation and engagement. Learning outcomes can be enhanced when this issue is successfully resolved, and students' ownership of their writing can grow. Liaghat and Biria (2018) investigated the efficacy of mentor text modeling in teaching English writing to Iranian learners instead of more conventional process- and product-based methods. Sixty students participated in the study, split into three groups, each using a different teaching strategy. Before and after teaching, the study evaluated changes in the fluency and accuracy of the students' writing across a range of cognitively challenging activities. The outcomes showed that although mentor text modeling was less successful than the process-based method, it enhanced fluency more than the product-based approach. However, regarding accuracy, mentor text modeling outperformed the process-based method at every task complexity level and was just as effective as the product-based approach.

According to the insights provided by three key informants in the field, the themes of time management and curriculum integration, student engagement and motivation, resource availability and teacher support, and assessment and evaluation challenges are crucial for effectively implementing the process-based approach to writing. The experts confirmed that limited class time poses a significant barrier to incorporating multiple drafts and feedback stages, making it difficult for educators to balance the depth of writing instruction with curriculum demands. They also noted that varying levels of student motivation affect their engagement with the iterative writing process and emphasized the need for innovative strategies to foster greater involvement. Furthermore, the informants agreed that inadequate resources and insufficient professional development impede teachers' ability to support process-based writing effectively. Finally, they highlighted the misalignment between traditional assessment methods and the iterative nature of process-based writing, advocating for more nuanced evaluation practices to better reflect students' developmental progress.

3.4 Perceived Impact of the Process-Based Approach on Students' Academic Writing

Table 8 displays originally classified or labeled qualitative data from the interview transcripts of the 5 participants, created using a qualitative data analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Table 9 exhibits five main themes generated from the initial codes/labels. These central themes include enhanced writing abilities, development of self-awareness and strategic planning in writing, critical thinking development, and boosting motivation and confidence. The theme of **Enhanced Writing Abilities** encompasses the initial challenges and subsequent improvements in students' writing skills through consistent practice and exposure to the process-based approach. This theme highlights students' observable progress over time in mastering writing techniques. For instance, one participant noted, *"At first, I can say it is a bit challenging for Grade 11 students, but with proper exposure, they will be used to it."* This indicates that while the approach may initially be complex, students adapt and improve with continued practice. Furthermore, *"Grade 12 students show greater progress in using the pedagogical approach,"* reflecting the significant advancements students make as they become more familiar with the process. Ultimately, this approach *"may improve the learners' writing skills,"* demonstrating its effectiveness in enhancing students' writing abilities over time.

Table 8. Perceived Impact of the Process-Based Approach on Students' Academic Writing

Participant	Sample Significant Statement	Initial Code
A	(1) <i>At first, I can say it is challenging for Grade 11 students, but with proper exposure, they will be used to it.</i>	(1) Initial challenge for Grade 11 students
	(2) <i>Grade 12 students significantly progress using the pedagogical approach.</i>	(2) Progress observed in Grade 12 students
B	(1) <i>it may enhance students' writing abilities;</i>	(1) Enhanced Writing Abilities
	(2) <i>it may foster the development of abilities like self-awareness and strategic planning in writing;</i>	(2) Development of Self-awareness and Strategic Planning in Writing
	(3) <i>... it may boost students' motivation and confidence by lowering writing anxiety and enhancing their writing communication styles.</i>	(3) Boosted Motivation and Confidence
C	(1) <i>Using a process-based approach to writing when teaching senior high school students allowed me to gauge their interest more, which is the most complex challenge in teaching research.</i>	(1) Student Engagement and Interest
	(2) <i>having staged activities helped me gauge their interest in writing and having constant feedback,</i>	(2) Challenges in Sustained Focus
	(3) <i>Students nowadays have a hard time focusing on a task for an extended period,</i>	(3) Feedback, Support, and Motivation
	(4) <i>support and motivation developed positive results for me.</i>	
D	(1) <i>development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.</i>	(1) Critical Thinking Development
	(2) <i>By engaging in multiple drafts and revisions, students learn to analyze their writing,</i>	(2) Self-Analysis through Drafts and Revisions
	(3) <i>identify areas for improvement,</i>	(3) Identification of Areas for Improvement
	(4) <i>make thoughtful decisions about structure, organization, and content.</i>	(4) Thoughtful Decision-Making
	(5) <i>This process strengthens their writing abilities and enhances their ability to evaluate and revise their work, a crucial academic and professional skill.</i>	(5) Enhanced Evaluation and Revision Skills
E	(1) <i>it may improve the writing skills of the learners,</i>	(1) Improvement in Writing Skills
	(2) <i>it may develop skills such as self-awareness and strategic planning in writing,</i>	(2) Development of Self-awareness and Strategic Planning in Writing
	(3) <i>and lastly, it may increase confidence and motivation because</i>	(3) Increase in Confidence and Motivation
	(4) <i>it may reduce writing anxiety and</i>	(4) Reduction of Writing Anxiety
	(5) <i>may improve the writing communication styles of the learners.</i>	(5) Improvement in Writing Communication Styles

Table 9. Summary of Themes on Perceived Impact of the Process-Based Approach on Students' Academic Writing

Theme	Meaning	Sample Significant Statement
Enhanced Writing Abilities	This theme encompasses the initial challenges and subsequent improvements in students' writing skills through consistent practice and exposure to the process-based approach. It highlights the observable progress students make over time in mastering writing techniques.	<i>At first, it is a bit challenging for Grade 11 students, but with proper exposure, they will be used to it. Grade 12 students significantly progress using the pedagogical approach, which may improve their writing skills.</i>
Development of Self-awareness and Strategic Planning in Writing	This theme reflects the growth of students' abilities to be introspective and deliberate in their writing process. It includes the development of self-awareness about their writing strengths and weaknesses, as well as the ability to strategically plan and organize their writing tasks to reduce anxiety and enhance overall writing quality.	<i>it may foster the development of abilities like self-awareness and strategic planning in writing, reducing writing anxiety.</i>
Critical Thinking Development	This theme involves enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the iterative process of drafting and revising. It emphasizes the importance of self-analysis, identifying areas for improvement, and making thoughtful decisions to improve the overall quality of writing.	<i>Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By engaging in multiple drafts and revisions, students learn to analyze their writing and identify areas for improvement.</i>
Boosted Motivation and Confidence	This theme highlights the increase in students' motivation and confidence in their writing abilities. It recognizes the role of the process-based approach in reducing writing anxiety, fostering interest, and providing support and motivation, leading to positive outcomes in students' writing performance.	<i>It may boost students' motivation and confidence by lowering writing anxiety and enhancing their writing communication styles. Having a process-based approach to writing when teaching senior high school students allowed me to gauge their interest more, which is the hardest challenge in teaching research; support and motivation developed positive results for me.</i>

The theme of enhanced writing abilities, as seen in the research conducted by Arevalo and Napil (2023), is consistent with findings that emphasize the difficulties that students initially faced and the progress they made in their writing abilities due to the process-based approach. This method fosters measurable growth by exposing the writer to various writing strategies and providing constant practice. According to the study, Model 5 was useful in explaining tertiary students' writing skills. It highlights the strong relationships that exist between improved writing abilities and the acquisition of grammatical, communicative, and self-regulated learning strategies. This supports the notion that various approaches are essential for efficiently enhancing students' writing abilities and reflects their adaptive development through ongoing practice and methodological exposure.

The theme **Development of Self-awareness and Strategic Planning in Writing** reflects the growth of students' abilities to be introspective and deliberate in their writing process. This theme emphasizes the importance of students becoming aware of their writing strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to strategically plan and organize their writing tasks to reduce anxiety and improve the quality of their work. By fostering these abilities, students can approach writing with greater confidence and clarity, ultimately enhancing their writing performance. One participant noted, *"It may foster the development of abilities like self-awareness and strategic planning in writing; it may reduce writing anxiety."* This illustrates how the process-based approach helps students refine their writing skills and supports their emotional and cognitive development in the writing process.

The theme of **Critical Thinking Development** involves enhancing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the iterative process of drafting and revising their work. This theme emphasizes the importance of self-analysis, where students learn to examine their writing critically. As one participant noted, the process encourages the *"development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills."* By engaging in multiple drafts and revisions, students *"learn to analyze their writing"* and *"identify areas for improvement."* This reflective practice improves the quality of their writing and fosters essential academic and professional skills, allowing students to make thoughtful decisions about structure, organization, and content.

The theme of **Boosted Motivation and Confidence** underscores how a process-based approach to writing enhances students' drive and self-assurance in their writing capabilities. As highlighted by the sample extract, *"... it may boost students' motivation and confidence by lowering writing anxiety and enhancing their writing communication styles."* This approach reduces anxiety associated with writing tasks and improves students' ability to convey their ideas effectively. Additionally, the process-based method supports educators in better understanding and engaging students, particularly in challenging subjects like research, where maintaining student interest is crucial for positive learning outcomes.

4.0 Conclusion

This study explored the pedagogical strategies employed by English teachers in the different phases of the writing process, the challenges they encountered in implementing the Process-Based Approach (PBA), and its perceived impact on students' academic writing. The findings highlight diverse instructional strategies, emphasizing collaboration, structured guidance, scaffolding, reflective practice, and iterative drafting, aligning with process-oriented writing instruction. These strategies reinforce the importance of social learning, self-regulation, and continuous feedback in fostering students' writing development.

Despite the effectiveness of the PBA, English teachers faced several challenges, particularly in balancing time constraints and curriculum requirements, maintaining student engagement and motivation, securing adequate resources and institutional support, and navigating assessment complexities. These obstacles underscore the need for more targeted professional development, institutional backing, and flexible curriculum frameworks that accommodate process-based writing instruction. Nevertheless, the integration of the PBA demonstrated a positive impact on students' academic writing. The approach enhanced students' writing abilities and fostered self-awareness, strategic planning, and critical thinking. Moreover, it contributed to increased motivation and confidence, reinforcing its effectiveness in promoting long-term writing proficiency. Overall, this study underscores the value of a structured, collaborative, and reflective approach to writing instruction. Addressing the identified challenges could further enhance the implementation of the PBA, ensuring its continued effectiveness in developing students' academic writing skills. Future research may explore ways to optimize time

management, increase teacher support, and refine assessment methods to better integrate PBA into diverse educational contexts.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors indicate equal contribution to each section. The authors reviewed and approved the final work.

6.0 Funding

This work received no specific grant from any funding agency

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researcher is filled with immense gratitude for the love and support shown by those who were by her throughout this academic endeavor. She is thankful to the Almighty God for his constant love, guidance, and blessings. She is also grateful to her family, friends, colleagues, mentors, and everyone who has supported and believed her. This achievement would not have been possible without all of them, to everyone who, in one way or another, helped the researcher complete her master's degree.

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Graduate's Personal and Professional Impact Assessment: A Degree Program Sustainability Criteria

Bretel B. Dolipas^{*1}, Maria Azucena B. Lubrica², Serano L. Oryan³, Freda Kate D. Samuel⁴,
Precious M. Valentin⁵, Joel V. Lubrica⁶, Julie A. Buasen⁷, Phil S. Ocampo⁸

^{1,6}Physics Department, Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines

^{2,4,5}Statistics Department, Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines

^{3,7,8}Mathematics Department, Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines

*Corresponding Author email: b.dolipas@bsu.edu.ph

Date received: February 6, 2025

Date revised: March 4, 2025

Date accepted: March 29, 2025

Originality: 92%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 8%

Recommended citation:

Dolipas, B., Lubrica, M.A., Oryan, S., Samuel, F.K., Valentin, P., Lubrica, J., Buasen, J., Ocampo, P. (2025). Graduate's personal and professional impact assessment: A degree program sustainability criteria.

Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 3(4), 402-409. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.066>

Abstract. A degree program's sustainability could be based on the impact of a completed degree on a graduate's personal and professional development. The study aimed to determine the sustainability of the Master of Arts in Applied Statistics MAAS Program of Benguet State University regarding how the degree responds to the graduates' personal and professional developmental needs. The areas considered were knowledge-based development, skills development, attitude change, and task performance. All thirty-two-degree program graduates from 2001 to 2019 were the respondents of the study and a questionnaire was the main instrument used to gather data needed. Results showed that the extent of acquisition and utilization along the graduates' knowledge development, skills development, attitude change, and task performance ranged from much acquired or utilized to very much acquired or used, with improved quality of output as the topmost competency acquired and utilized while "improved communication skills" as the least. The extent of contribution along the graduates' knowledge development, skills development, attitude change, and task performance were considered many contributions, with improved quality of output as the topmost competency while improved communication skills as the lowest. The MAAS graduates considered earning the degree beneficial to their personal and professional development hence an important basis for the program's sustainability. Teaching methods and strategies should be focused on giving more opportunities for MAAS students to express themselves orally and in writing.

Keywords: Sustainability; Graduate tracer; Development; Graduate competency.

1.0 Introduction

Graduate employability is a key measure of the effectiveness of higher education programs. In today's competitive job market, universities must ensure that graduates possess technical knowledge and the skills and attributes necessary for career success. Employability is defined as a combination of skills, knowledge, and personal qualities that increase an individual's likelihood of securing and excelling in a profession (Moreland, 2006). Tracer studies have become an essential tool for educational institutions to assess the relevance of academic programs and their impact on graduates.

Tracer studies evaluate graduates' employment outcomes, career trajectories, and the relevance of their education to their professions. In the Philippines, universities conduct these studies to improve curricula, enhance student

support services, and align programs with labor market demands. Previous studies have explored graduate employability in various fields, including teacher education (Aquino et al., 2015; Gines, 2014), engineering (Dotong et al., 2016), and nursing (Sanchez & Diamante, 2017). However, most of these studies have focused on undergraduate programs, leaving a gap in research on graduate-level programs, particularly in applied statistics.

The Master of Arts in Applied Statistics (MAAS) program at Benguet State University-La Trinidad Campus has been offered for over two decades. Despite its long history, no formal tracer study has been conducted to assess the program's impact on its graduates' personal and professional development. Evaluating how the program has influenced graduates' knowledge acquisition, skills development, and career progression is crucial for maintaining high academic standards and ensuring program sustainability.

This study aims to assess how much the MAAS program has contributed to graduates' competencies in knowledge-based development, skills enhancement, attitude change, and task performance. The findings will provide valuable insights for curriculum development and accreditation processes by identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Furthermore, the results will serve as a basis for refining program offerings, ultimately benefiting future MAAS students by enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of their education.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized the descriptive quantitative comparative research design. A descriptive quantitative design was used since the study measured the level of acquisition, utilization, and contribution of the MA Applied Statistics Program of the Mathematics-Physics-Statistics Department to the graduates' personal and professional developmental needs, particularly, along the areas of knowledge-based development, skills development, attitude change, and tasks performance. The comparison was likewise done on the level of acquisition, utilization, and contribution of the MA Applied Statistics Program of the Mathematics-Physics-Statistics Department to the graduates' personal and professional developmental needs, particularly, along the areas of knowledge-based development, skills development, attitude change, and tasks performance compared to the average level.

2.2 Research Participants

The respondents in the study were graduates of the course Masters of Arts in Applied Statistics at Benguet State University. Total enumeration was done, and all thirty-two (32) graduates, from the first MAAS graduate of 2001 to the 2019 graduates, were respondents to the study. Of the 32 graduates (excluding one deceased graduate, there were 16 male and 16 female MAAS graduates. Table 1 shows that MAAS graduates come in trickles from their first one and only graduated in 2001 to the more recent year in 2018 and 2019, when five graduates each year were recorded. The number of graduates in the recorded fifteen years ranged from 1 to 5 MAAS graduates.

Table 1. *Distribution of MAAS Graduates According to their Graduation Year*

Graduation Year	Number of Graduates	Graduation Year	Number of Graduates
2001	1	2012	2
2002	2	2014	2
2003	1	2015	2
2004	1	2016	2
2005	2	2017	2
2006	2	2018	5
2009	2	2019	5
2011	1		

The distribution of MAAS graduates according to some employment details is presented in Table 2. For the kind of current employment, twenty-six out of the thirty-two graduates (81%) are working in public or government institutions, five graduates (16%) are employed in private institutions and only one graduate (3%) is self-employed. Based on job classifications, nineteen graduates (59%) are in the academe as Statistics teachers, seven graduates or 22% are in statistics-related assignments, four graduates work as non-teaching personnel in government agencies, and two graduates (6%) are in business. Of the thirty-two graduates, thirty-one or 97% are employed full-time while only one (3%) worked part-time.

Table 2. *Distribution of MAAS Graduates According to Employment Details*

Variables	Frequency (Percentage)
Kind of Current Employment	
Public/Government	26 (81%)
Private	5 (16%)
Self-employed	1 (3%)
Job Classification	
Academe (teaching Stats)	19 (59%)
Statistics-related	7 (22%)
Government (non-teaching)	4 (13%)
Business	1 (6%)
Employment Type	
Full time	31 (97%)
Part-timer	1 (3%)
Number of Years Employed	
31 – 35	2 (6%)
26 – 30	0 (0%)
21 – 25	4 (13%)
16 – 20	4 (13%)
11 – 55	4 (13%)
6 – 10	7 (22%)
1 – 5	11 (34%)

For the number of years employed, most of the graduates, eleven of them (32%) have been employed for one to five years, while only two graduates (6%) have been employed for 31 to 35 years. Using the raw data, the average years of employment is 11.7 years with a standard deviation of 8.9 years. This indicates a high variability, with a seventy-six percent (76%) coefficient of variability. The years employed range from one year to thirty-three years, with a median of 8.5 years and four years as the most common number of years. The distribution of the graduates' number of years employed is negatively skewed, which indicates that most of them have been working for a few numbers of years. This is understandable since most of those new in the workforce need a master's degree to obtain a permanent position or be promoted, primarily if they work in government/public academic institutions.

2.3 Research Instrument

A pre-tested questionnaire was used as the main instrument to obtain the data needed. Validity and reliability tests were conducted before the questionnaire was floated. The instrument consisted of four parts. The first part consisted of the profiles and some employment details of the graduates; the second part consisted of the graduates' extent of acquisition, utilization, and contribution of competencies provided by the program; and the third part consisted of the graduates' extent of benefits acquired from completing the degree.

2.4 Data Analysis

The frequency and percent were used to describe the respondents' profiles, such as the graduates' employment profiles and the year they graduated from the degree program. The weighted mean was used to measure the extent of acquisition, contribution, and utilization of various competencies in the graduates' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and task performance. The t-test for a single mean was used to compare the extent of acquisition, contribution, and utilization of various competencies in the graduates' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and task performance from the average level. All tests were measured at a 0.05 level of significance.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The researchers followed ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all research respondents, and permission was solicited from the university heads before the study was conducted.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Acquisition, Contribution, and Utilization of Various Competencies

Tables 3, 4, and 5 present the extent to which the graduates acquired, contributed to and utilized various competencies in their knowledge, skills, attitude, and task performance that could be attributed to completing and earning their MAAS degree. As seen in Table 3, the extent of acquisition along the graduates' knowledge development ranged from much acquired with an average of 4.34 to very much acquired with an average of 4.50. All five items under Knowledge had high positive significant differences from moderate acquisition, which established that the graduates' extent of acquisition along knowledge development is from much acquired to very

much acquired. Notably, the graduates had acquired enhanced knowledge about the relevance and importance of the course to their respective works. They acquired a more remarkable ability to acquire more knowledge on the subjects offered than before taking the course. However, concerned curriculum planners may look into the item on enhanced understanding of the concept application since this obtained the lowest average rating of 4.34. This, though, still indicated much-acquired competency by MAAS graduates.

Table 3. *The extent of acquisition of competency in the graduates' knowledge, skills, attitude, and task performance*

Competency	Mean	Interpretation	Sig.
A. Knowledge			
Enhanced knowledge about the relevance and importance of the course to their respective works	4.50	Very Much Acquired	8.93 **
Greater ability to acquire more knowledge on the subjects being offered than before taking the course	4.50	Very Much Acquired	11.91**
Enhanced knowledge of facts and principles	4.41	Much Acquired	9.09 **
Enhanced understanding of the application of concepts	4.34	Much Acquired	9.19 **
Improved learning efficiency	4.44	Much Acquired	9.27 **
B. Skills			
Improved problem-solving skills	4.56	Very Much Acquired	12.35**
Improved research skills	4.56	Very Much Acquired	10.52**
Been more able to accommodate variations and adaptations when performing tasks	4.47	Much Acquired	10.91**
Improved information technology skills	4.34	Much Acquired	10.20**
Been more able to introduce innovations and adaptations when undertaking tasks	4.31	Much Acquired	7.97 **
Improved communication skills	4.13	Much Acquired	6.76 **
C. Attitude			
Greater confidence to perform tasks	4.59	Very Much Acquired	13.55**
Greater confidence and motivation to maintain high-performance standards	4.47	Much Acquired	14.65**
Greater motivation to undertake tasks	4.44	Much Acquired	9.68 **
Enhanced team spirit	4.31	Much Acquired	7.97 *
D. Task Performance			
Improved quality of output	4.63	Very Much Acquired	16.61**
Increased quantity of output	4.47	Much Acquired	10.35**
Greater ability to share knowledge with colleagues	4.44	Much Acquired	11.36**
Greater ability to contribute to the team's efforts	4.41	Much Acquired	10.52**

As to the extent of acquisition along the skills developed, the extent ranged from much acquired with an average rating of 4.13, to very much acquired with an average of 4.56. All the six items under Skills had high positive significant differences from moderate acquisition, which established that the graduates' extent of acquisition along skills development is from much acquired to very much acquired. It is noteworthy that graduates have very much acquired problem-solving skills and improved research skills in the MAAS Program. However, the graduates only acquired a lot of communication skills.

As to the extent of acquisition along attitude change, the extent ranged from much acquired with an average of 4.31 to very much acquired with an average of 4.56. All four items under Attitude had high positive significant differences from moderate acquisition, which established that the graduates' extent of acquisition along attitude change is from much acquired to very much acquired. It is noteworthy that the graduates have very much acquired greater confidence to perform tasks in the MAAS Program, with an average rating of 4.59. However, the graduates acquired a lot of enhanced team spirit with an average of 4.31, since most often the MAAS students do their tasks individually and independently.

As to the extent of acquisition along task performance, the extent ranged from much acquired with an average of 4.41 to very much acquired with an average of 4.63. All four items under tasks had high positive significant differences from moderate acquisition, which established that the graduates' extent of acquisition along task performance is from much acquired to very much acquired. It is noteworthy that the graduates have very much acquired an improved quality of output in the MAAS Program, with an average rating of 4.63. However, graduates only acquired much of "the great amount of the ability to contribute to teams' efforts" with an average of 4.41. MAAS students usually have independent assignments and less chance to interact since they only meet with their classmates during their Saturday classes. De La Cruz (2022) study likewise showed a high graduate assessment of the graduate program completed in the tertiary. Gopez (2024) and Lubrica (2019) further confirmed that skills such as dependability, teamwork, and critical thinking were developed in their degree program.

Table 4 shows that the extent of contribution along the graduates' knowledge development ranged from an average of 4.09 to 4.28, indicating much contribution of the five items under Knowledge. All five items under Knowledge had high positive significant differences from moderate contribution, which established that the graduates considered the MAAS Program much contribution to knowledge development. It is noteworthy that the graduates considered the MAAS Program had contributed much to enhanced knowledge about the relevance and importance of the course to their respective works, with an average of 4.28, the highest average in this area. However, the lowest average is 4.09, on the MAAS Program's contribution to the graduates' ability to acquire more knowledge on the subjects offered than before taking the course though this was still considered as giving much contribution.

Table 4. *The extent of contribution to competency in the graduates' knowledge, skills, attitude, and task performance*

Competency	Mean	Interpretation	Sig.
A. Knowledge			
Enhanced knowledge about the relevance and importance of the course to their respective works	4.28	Much Contributed	7.84 **
Improved learning efficiency	4.22	Much Contributed	7.07 **
Enhanced knowledge of the application of concepts	4.22	Much Contributed	7.61 **
Enhanced knowledge of facts and principles	4.19	Much Contributed	7.22 **
Greater ability to acquire more knowledge on the subjects being offered than before taking the course	4.09	Much Contributed	6.93 **
B. Skills			
Improved problem-solving skills	4.44	Much Contributed	10.16**
Improved research skills	4.44	Much Contributed	9.27 **
Been more able to accommodate variations and adaptations when performing tasks	4.16	Much Contributed	7.73 **
Improved information technology skills	4.09	Much Contributed	8.98 **
Been more able to introduce innovations and adaptations when undertaking tasks	4.00	Much Contributed	6.43 **
Improved communication skills	3.94	Much Contributed	5.40 **
C. Attitude			
Greater confidence to perform tasks	4.38	Much Contributed	11.79**
Greater motivation to undertake tasks	4.31	Much Contributed	8.29 **
Greater confidence and motivation to maintain high-performance standards	4.31	Much Contributed	10.72**
Enhanced team spirit	4.16	Much Contributed	7.11 *
D. Task Performance			
Improved quality of output	4.47	Much Contributed	13.37**
Increased quantity of output	4.28	Much Contributed	9.39**
Greater ability to contribute to team's efforts	4.28	Much Contributed	8.92 **
Greater ability to share knowledge with colleagues	4.28	Much Contributed	8.92 **

As to the extent of contribution along the skills developed, the average ranged from 3.94 to 4.44 which indicated that the MAAS Program had contributed much to the graduates' skills development. All the six items under Skills had high positive significant differences from moderate contribution, which established that the graduates' extent of contribution along skills development is much. It is noteworthy that the graduates considered the MAAS Program had much contributed to their improved problem-solving skills and research skills with an average rating of 4.44. However, the graduates rated lowest the extent of contribution of the MAAS Program to improved communication skills with an average of 3.94, though the extent of contribution of the MAAS Program was still much.

As to the extent of contribution along attitude change, the extent ranged from an average of 4.16 to 4.38 which indicated that the MAAS Program had contributed much to the graduates' attitude change. All four items under attitude have high positive significant differences from moderate contribution, which established that graduates had many contributions along attitude change. It is noteworthy that the MAAS Program contributed much to the graduates' confidence to perform tasks in the MAAS Program, with an average rating of 4.38. However, the average of 4.16 for enhanced team spirit was the lowest, though the contribution of the MAAS Program to this item was still much.

As to the extent of contribution along task performance, the average ranged from 4.28 to 4.47 which indicated that the MAAS Program had contributed much to the graduates' task performance. All four items under tasks had high positive significant differences from moderate acquisition, which established that the graduates' extent of contribution along tasks performance is much. It is noteworthy to mention that the graduates rated highest in terms of average rating the statement on improved quality of output in the MAAS Program, with an average

rating of 4.47. The result of the study is similar to De La Cruz (2022) and Gomez and Eniego (2024), showing that the degree program completed greatly contributed to their professional and personal growth.

As seen in Table 5, the extent of utilization along the graduates' knowledge development ranged from much utilized, with an average of 4.25, to very much utilized, with an average of 4.50. All five items under Knowledge had high positive significant differences from moderate utilization, which established that the graduates' extent of utilization along knowledge development varied from much to very much utilized. It is noteworthy to mention that the graduates rated highest in the average rating item enhanced knowledge about the relevance and importance of the course to their respective works which was 4.50.

Table 5. *The extent of utilization of competency in the graduates' knowledge, skills, attitude, and task performance*

Competency	Mean	Interpretation	Sig.
A. Knowledge			
Enhanced knowledge about the relevance and importance of the course to their respective works	4.50	Very Much Utilized	9.64 **
Improved learning efficiency	4.41	Much Utilized	9.09 **
Enhanced knowledge of the application of concepts	4.38	Much Utilized	8.58 **
Enhanced understanding of facts and principles	4.31	Much Utilized	8.29 **
Greater ability to acquire more knowledge on the subjects being offered than before taking the course	4.25	Much Utilized	9.28 **
B. Skills			
Improved research skills	4.41	Much Utilized	8.13 **
Enhanced problem-solving skills	4.34	Much Utilized	8.78 **
Been more able to accommodate variations and adaptations when performing tasks	4.28	Much Utilized	8.92 **
Been more able to introduce innovations and adaptations when undertaking tasks	4.19	Much Utilized	7.50 **
Improved information technology skills	4.16	Much Utilized	8.10 **
Improved communication skills	4.09	Much Utilized	7.23 **
C. Attitude			
Greater confidence to perform tasks	4.47	Much Utilized	9.87 **
Greater motivation to undertake tasks	4.41	Much Utilized	8.73 **
Greater confidence and motivation to maintain high performance standards	4.34	Much Utilized	8.43 **
Enhanced team spirit	4.19	Much Utilized	6.73 **
D. Task Performance			
Improved quality of output	4.56	Very Much Utilized	12.35**
Greater ability to share knowledge with colleagues	4.47	Much Utilized	10.91**
Increased quantity of output	4.38	Much Utilized	8.93 **
Greater ability to contribute to team's efforts	4.31	Much Utilized	8.64 **

As to the extent of utilization in skills developed, the average ranged from 4.09 to 4.41 which indicated that the MAAS graduates utilized much of the skills developed in the MAAS Program. All the six items under Skills had high positive significant differences from moderate contribution, which established that the graduates' extent utilization along skills development is much. It is noteworthy to mention that the graduates considered improved research skills as much utilized.

As to the extent of utilization along attitude change, the extent ranged from an average of 4.19 to an average of 4.47 which indicated that the graduates utilized much of the items under attitude change. All four items under Attitude had high positive significant differences from moderate contribution, which established that the graduates' extent of utilization along attitude change is much. It is noteworthy that the graduates' greater confidence to perform tasks was the attitude change much utilized with an average of 4.47.

As to the extent of utilization along task performance, the extent ranged from much to very much utilized, with averages of 4.31 and 4.56, respectively. All four items under tasks had high positive significant differences from moderate utilization, which established that the graduates' extent of utilization along tasks performance is from much to very much utilized.

3.2 The Extent of Benefit Gained from Completing the Course

Table 6 shows that MAAS graduates considered earning the degree beneficial, with average ratings ranging from 3.71 to 4.44. All four items identified as benefits were significantly higher than moderate, establishing that the MAAS graduates considered the benefits they gained from earning the degree were much. Improved self-esteem garnered the highest average rating, which was followed closely by more opportunities for expert services. Completing the degree also, was much beneficial in the graduate's promotion to a higher position and change of

their employment status. This is supported by Sito, et al. (2008) where sixty-seven percent of the respondents were employed after passing the Licensure Examination and almost twenty-five percent were immediately hired after graduation.

Table 6. *Graduates' extent of benefits gained from completing the degree*

Benefits	Average	Descriptive Equiv.	t-value (sig.)
Improved self-esteem	4.44	Much Beneficial	8.58 **
More opportunities for expert services	4.41	Much Beneficial	7.86 **
Promotion to higher position	4.19	Much Beneficial	5.84 **
Change of employment status	3.71	Much Beneficial	2.58 *

4.0 Conclusions

Based on the findings, this study concludes that MAAS graduates acquired, contributed, and utilized their knowledge, skills, attitude, and task performance at high levels, ranging from “much” to “very much.” Among the competencies assessed, improved output quality was the most acquired, contributory, and utilized, while communication skills ranked the lowest. Despite this, graduates recognized the significant benefits of earning their degree, particularly in enhancing self-esteem, expanding opportunities for expert services, achieving promotions, and changing employment status. These findings highlight the need to strengthen communication skills among MAAS students to ensure a more well-rounded competency development. Given the degree's impact on career advancement, educational institutions should provide more structured opportunities for students to practice oral and written communication. Future research may explore targeted strategies for improving communication skills and other competencies essential for professional success.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The following are the specific contribution of each author:

Bretel B. Dolipas	conception, design, analysis, draft write-up, or revision of the manuscript
Maria Azucena B. Lubrica	conception, design, analysis, write-up, or revision of the manuscript
Serano L. Oryan	conception, write-up of the manuscript
Freda Kate D. Samuel	design, analysis, write-up of the manuscript
Precious M. Valentin	design, analysis, write-up of the manuscript
Joel V. Lubrica	conception, editing of the manuscript
Julie A. Buasen	analysis, write-up, or revision of the manuscript
Phil S. Ocampo	Write-up, or revision of the manuscript

6.0 Funding

There is no funding agency for the research.

7.0 Conflicts of Interest

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

8.0 Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to acknowledge Benguet State University and the Higher Education Regional Research Council (HERRC) for all support provided during the research. Likewise, they acknowledge the MAAS professors, personnel who aided in the accomplishment of the research, and the alumni who willingly participated in the study.

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Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices in Financial Literacy among Business Administration Students in Urban College in the Philippines

Mark Jay M. Espiritu

Our Lady of Fatima University, Quezon City, Philippines

Author Email: markjay.espiritu@gmail.com

Date received: February 5, 2025

Date revised: March 5, 2025

Date accepted: March 29, 2025

Originality: 92%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 8%

Recommended citation:

Espiritu, M.J. (2025). Knowledge, attitudes, and practices in financial literacy among Business Administration students in urban college in the Philippines. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 410-419.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.063a>

Abstract. This study examined the knowledge, attitudes, and practices in financial literacy among business administration students in urban colleges in the Philippines. Using a survey-based quantitative approach, the study assessed students' understanding of key financial concepts, including income, expenses, debt, credit, and savings. Results indicated that students generally had a positive attitude toward financial literacy. In terms of knowledge, they vary significantly when grouped according to demographic factors such as age, sex, and year level. Regarding attitude, they vary significantly when grouped according to demographic factors such as age, monthly income, and year level. Also, in terms of practice, they vary significantly when grouped according to demographic factors such as age, sex, monthly income, and year level. The study concluded that there is a strong relationship between financial knowledge, attitudes, and financial practices. The findings highlighted curriculum gaps in financial literacy education and emphasized the need for integrating practical financial management courses. It recommended strengthening financial literacy programs through collaboration between academic institutions and financial experts to provide real-world financial education and mentorship, ultimately enhancing students' financial well-being.

Keywords: Business administration; Curriculum gaps; Financial education; Financial literacy; Philippines.

1.0 Introduction

Financial literacy is becoming increasingly important, particularly for students pursuing business-related degrees, as they are expected to navigate complex financial landscapes in personal and professional settings (Rosacker, 2009). In today's economy, individuals must take greater responsibility for their financial well-being, making a solid understanding of financial principles essential. The rapid evolution of financial products and services, including digital banking, cryptocurrency, and algorithm-driven investments, has further heightened the need for financial literacy (Lusardi, 2019).

Additionally, global economic uncertainty, fluctuating interest rates, inflation, and market volatility create an environment where sound financial decision-making is crucial. To ensure long-term financial security, students entering the workforce must be prepared to manage student loans, retirement planning, and investment strategies (Kuntze et al., 2019). Furthermore, the increasing threat of cybersecurity risks, such as identity theft and financial fraud, underscores individuals' need to understand secure financial practices. Individuals may struggle with debt

management, budgeting, and asset protection without sufficient financial literacy, leading to financial instability. Poor financial decisions can have long-term consequences, affecting creditworthiness, savings, and overall economic well-being. Therefore, ensuring that students—particularly those in business-related disciplines—develop strong financial literacy skills is essential for fostering financial independence, responsible investing, and informed economic participation (Andarsari & Ningtyas, 2019).

Several studies have explored financial literacy among college students. Previous studies have shown low college students' personal finance knowledge (Cull & Whitton, 2011; Beal & Delpachitra, 2003; Chen & Volpe, 1998). In the Philippines, a report by Home Credit Philippines highlighted that many Filipinos lack financial literacy, affecting their ability to manage money and avoid risks. A 2022 global study by S&P Global Ratings ranked the Philippines among the bottom 30 of 144 countries, with only 25% of Filipino adults considered financially literate. Additionally, a 2021 survey found that only 2% of Filipinos answered all six basic financial literacy questions correctly. Home Credit Philippines Executive Director Zdenek Jankovsky emphasized the role of their sales agents in promoting financial literacy, as they directly educate customers about loans and financial management (Martinez, 2024).

Despite these insights, there is still a need to explore financial literacy among college business administration students in the context of the Philippines. This study focused on a selected college in Novaliches, Quezon City, where students may face unique financial challenges. Many struggle to make sound financial decisions, which could affect both their studies and future careers. Poor financial literacy could have serious consequences, given their potential role in the business sector. This research aimed to assess their financial knowledge, attitudes, and practices to identify areas for improvement. By addressing this gap, the study provided valuable insights for educators and industry professionals to enhance financial education and prepare students for financial success.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a correlational research methodology to examine the relationships between various characteristics associated with financial literacy among undergraduate Business Administration students in a selected college in Novaliches, Quezon City. Correlational research is an effective method for analyzing the degree of association between variables without manipulating any factors. This approach allowed for investigating financial literacy knowledge, attitudes toward financial management, and economic practices among college students, facilitating an in-depth understanding of their interrelationships. The correlational approach was instrumental in identifying potential trends and patterns within the data. Although this methodology does not establish causal relationships, it provides valuable insights into the nature of the connections between financial literacy attributes.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at a selected college in Novaliches, Quezon City, specifically within the College of Business Administration. This institution was chosen due to its academic reputation and focus on developing future business leaders. Situated in a dynamic urban setting, the college offers a conducive environment for academic inquiry, featuring state-of-the-art facilities, experienced faculty, and a curriculum designed to cultivate financial management skills. Given this context, the study aimed to provide meaningful insights into the financial preparedness of students within the College of Business Administration and to propose strategies for strengthening financial literacy programs.

2.3 Population of the Study

The study focused on assessing the financial literacy knowledge, attitudes, and practices of students enrolled in the College of Business Administration at the selected institution during the academic year 2023-2024. The total population comprised 2,313 students distributed across four academic year levels: 702 first-year students, 643 second-year students, 635 third-year students, and 333 fourth-year students. The researchers used purposive sampling to include students who are business administration majors in the Philippines.

2.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in this study was a structured survey questionnaire divided into four sections: a) Demographic Profile, which included variables such as age, sex, monthly family income, and year level; b) Financial Knowledge which assessed students' understanding of income, expenses, debt, credit, and savings, c) Financial Attitudes which examined students' perspectives and behavioral inclinations regarding financial management, and d) Financial Practices which evaluated students' actual financial behaviors concerning income, expenses, debt, credit, and savings.

Rigorous testing procedures were conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. A panel of experts specializing in finance, education, and research methodology validated the questionnaire's content. These experts evaluated the questionnaire's relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness to confirm that the items effectively captured the constructs of financial literacy knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Before data collection, a pilot study was conducted with a small sample of business students to assess the questionnaire's clarity and suitability. Feedback from pilot participants was incorporated to refine ambiguous items, enhancing the instrument's face validity.

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was 0.916, indicating a high level of reliability. Additionally, the reliability of individual constructs was analyzed as follows: Financial Knowledge (0.459), Financial Literacy (0.172), and Financial Practices (0.158). These values suggest that the instrument effectively measured financial literacy among the target population. Furthermore, test-retest reliability analyses, such as Pearson correlation coefficients, were utilized to ensure the stability of responses over time.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedures and Analysis

To maximize participation, the survey was distributed through both online and in-person methods. Online distribution facilitated convenience and accessibility, while in-person administration ensured inclusivity for students with limited digital access. Participants were provided with clear instructions and assurances of anonymity before completing the questionnaire. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were strictly adhered to throughout the research process to protect participants' rights and the integrity of the study. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. They were provided with comprehensive information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, and their voluntary participation. Participants were also assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and data protection were strictly observed. Personal information and responses were anonymized and securely stored to prevent unauthorized access. Additionally, the institution's name was kept confidential to uphold its reputation. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Review Committee of Our Lady of Fatima University, ensuring compliance with institutional and regulatory guidelines. Proper citation of sources was upheld to maintain academic integrity and avoid plagiarism. Furthermore, the research findings were made available to participants upon request to ensure transparency and accountability.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents. The highest frequency for age is 18-20, with 1131, or 48.9 percent, while the lowest is 26-30, with 320, or 13.8 percent. This indicates that the majority of the respondents' students were between 18 and 20 years old. Most of these students were in their first—and second-year levels of the program.

In addition, the highest frequency for sex is male with 1525 or 65.9 percent, while the female has a 788 frequency or 34.1 percent. The majority are males. The recent trends could influence this trend in the Financial Industry, where many roles, such as Investment banker, Asset manager, Insurance agent, Financial Planning and Advisor, Corporate Finance, and risk manager, are popular among males, which might have encouraged more males to take up business administration programs.

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents According to Profile*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-20	1131	48.9
21-25	862	37.3
26-30	320	13.8
Gender		
Male	1525	65.9
Female	788	34.1
Monthly Income		
Below PHP 10,000	601	26.0
10,001 - 20,000	1113	48.1
20,001 - 30,000	553	23.9
30,001 - 40,000	24	1.0
Above PHP 40,001	22	1.0
Year Level		
1st year	702	30.4
2nd year	643	27.8
3rd year	635	27.5
4th year	333	14.4

Furthermore, the highest monthly family income is 10,001-20,000 or 48.1 percent, while the lowest is above 40,001 with 22 or 1.0 percent. Finally, the highest frequency of year level is 1st year with 702 or 30.4 percent, while the lowest is the fourth year with 333 frequency or 14.4 percent. This implies that the first-year level is the majority of the 2,313 respondents compared to the 4th, which obtained the lowest. This implies that the survey was at the first-year level; that is, most of the respondents were students.

3.2 Self-Assessment of Knowledge of Financial Concepts

Table 2 shows that the respondents' assessment of the knowledge of the Business Administration students regarding financial concepts in terms of income got a grand mean of 2.98, which was interpreted as agree. A recent study by Carnevale et al. (2021) found that individuals with some form of higher education, such as a bachelor's or associate degree, earned much more than those without higher education. The study also found that individuals with higher education degrees had a lower unemployment rate, indicating they were more employable than those with only a high school diploma. A study by LinkedIn (2021) found that individuals with verified, specialized skills earned more than those without. The study found that individuals with specialized skills in engineering, programming, cloud computing, and data and analytics earned more than those without these skills. LinkedIn reported that individuals with cloud computing skills earned, on average, up to \$126,000 per year (John Hulse, 2021).

Also, Table 2 shows that the respondents' assessment of the knowledge of the Business Administration students regarding financial concepts in terms of expenses got a grand mean of 3.00, which was interpreted as agree. According to a report by the College Board (2020), the average cost of tuition and fees for the 2020-2021 academic year at four-year in-state public colleges was \$10,560, while four-year out-of-state public colleges charged an average of \$27,020. Private four-year institutions had an even higher average cost of tuition and fees, coming in at \$37,650 per academic year. In addition to tuition and fees, students incur other expenses such as textbooks, housing, and transportation. A report by The College Investor (2019) estimated the average cost of college for a four-year degree to be \$122,000 for in-state students and \$172,000 for out-of-state students.

Further, Table 2 shows the respondent's assessment of the knowledge of the Business Administration students. Regarding financial concepts regarding debt, it got a grand mean of 3.13, interpreted as agreement. The burden of student loan debt can have long-term effects on individuals and their financial well-being. A study by Cantor (2019) found that those with student loan debt were less likely to own a home, start a business, or save for retirement than those without debt. Furthermore, Willis (2020) claimed that the financial burden of student loan debt can limit job opportunities and career choices. It can also impact mental health and overall well-being, leading to stress, anxiety, and depression.

In addition, Table 2 shows that the respondents' assessment of the Business Administration students' knowledge of financial concepts in terms of credit got a grand mean of 3.09, interpreted as agreement. According to Lusardi and Tufano (2015), credit scores are one key aspect of credit. This three-digit number reflects an individual's

creditworthiness based on their credit history and other factors. High credit scores can help individuals access loans, credit cards, and other financial products at a lower interest rate. Late payments or high debt levels can negatively impact one's credit score, leading to higher interest rates, difficulty accessing credit, and even employment or housing opportunities. Therefore, it is vital to maintain a good credit score by paying bills on time and keeping debt levels low.

Table 2. *Assessment of the Respondents' Knowledge of Financial Concepts*

Knowledge of Income	Mean	Interpretation
I understand how to calculate my monthly income	3.03	Agree
I know the difference between gross income and net income.	3.00	Agree
I am familiar with different sources of income.	2.94	Agree
I can identify taxable and non-taxable income.	3.02	Agree
I understand the concept of passive income.	2.92	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	2.98	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Expenses		
I am aware of my monthly expenses	3.08	Agree
I understand the difference between fixed and variable expenses.	3.03	Agree
I know how to create and follow a budget.	2.94	Agree
I am knowledgeable about strategies for reducing expenses	2.78	Agree
I understand the concept of discretionary spending.	3.18	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.00	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Debt		
I understand the types of debt, such as student loans and credit card debt.	3.22	Agree
I am familiar with interest rates and how they affect debt.	3.21	Agree
I know the importance of maintaining a manageable debt-to-income ratio.	3.08	Agree
I am aware of strategies for managing and reducing debt.	3.08	Agree
I understand the consequences of defaulting on debt payments.	3.06	Agree
<i>Grand Mean</i>	3.13	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Credit		
I understand how credit scores are calculated.	3.05	Agree
I know the factors that affect credit scores.	3.12	Agree
I understand the benefits and risks of using credit cards.	3.10	Agree
I am aware of the importance of making timely payments on credit accounts.	3.08	Agree
I know how to dispute errors on my credit report.	3.11	Agree
<i>Grand Mean</i>	3.09	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Savings		
I have a savings account.	3.06	Agree
I regularly contribute to my savings account.	3.15	Agree
I understand the concept of emergency funds.	3.10	Agree
I know different savings strategies, such as automatic transfers and goal setting.	3.03	Agree
I know the benefits of long-term savings and investments.	2.97	Agree
<i>Grand Mean</i>	3.06	<i>Agree</i>

Legend: 4.00-3.50 Strongly Agree; 3.49-2.50 Agree; 2.49-1.50 Disagree; 1.49-1.00 Strongly Disagree

Finally, Table 2 shows the respondents' assessment of the knowledge of the Business Administration students in savings. Regarding financial concepts in terms of savings, the grand mean is 3.06, interpreted as agreement. Gross (2020) stated that one key aspect of saving is understanding one's financial situation, including creating a budget to track income and expenses and identifying areas where one can cut back on spending. Having an emergency fund to cover unexpected expenses and avoid going into debt is also important. Hanna (2020) also claims that choosing the correct savings account or investment vehicle is essential. This includes understanding the interest rates and fees associated with different types of accounts and considering the length of time funds will be deposited. Some accounts may offer higher interest rates but require funds to be locked up for a more extended period, while others may have lower rates but provide more flexibility.

3.3 Self-Assessment of Attitudes to Financial Concepts

Table 3 shows the respondents' assessment of their attitude toward financial literacy in terms of income. The grand mean of 3.12 is interpreted as agree. It shows the respondents' assessment of their attitude toward financial literacy regarding expense. The grand mean is 3.11, which is interpreted as agreement. Individuals with a positive attitude toward expenses are more likely to be motivated to save money. A study conducted by the American Institute of CPAs in 2018 found that firm savers had a more positive attitude toward living on a budget and being frugal, leading them to save more money over time. A negative attitude towards expenses can lead to financial stress and

poor decision-making. Individuals who view expenses as burdensome may be more likely to overspend or avoid paying bills, leading to financial stress and anxiety.

Also, Table 3 shows that the respondents' assessment of their attitude toward financial literacy regarding debt got a grand mean of 3.11, which is interpreted as agreement. Research has found that individuals with a positive attitude toward debt tend to have better financial management skills and practices. According to a study by the National Endowment for Financial Education, 2013 people who are optimistic about their ability to repay their debt are more likely to pay their bills on time and manage their debt effectively. Viewing debt as a valuable financial tool can lead to healthy financial habits. When used strategically, debt can help individuals attain financial goals such as buying a house or paying for education. A positive attitude towards debt means managing it effectively and creating a realistic plan to pay it off. This approach can help individuals avoid excessive debt and build a positive credit history.

In addition, Table 3 shows that the respondents' assessment of the attitude toward financial literacy regarding credit got a grand mean of 3.10, interpreted as agreement. Studies by Kim and DeVaney (2018) showed that people with positive attitudes toward credit tend to exhibit responsible financial behavior and are likelier to make timely payments on their credit cards and loans. This attitude can build a positive credit history, which can increase creditworthiness and help secure more favorable terms for future loans and credit. On the other hand, negative attitudes towards credit, such as viewing it as free money or an opportunity to splurge, can lead to financial hardship and poor credit behavior. People with negative attitudes toward credit may overspend, miss payments, or default on their loans and credit cards. This behavior can lead to a damaged credit history, lowering creditworthiness and limiting access to credit in the future.

Table 3. *Assessment of the Respondents' Attitudes of Financial Concepts*

Knowledge of Income	Mean	Interpretation
I believe it is important to have a stable and reliable source of income	3.09	Agree
I am confident in my ability to manage my income effectively.	3.15	Agree
I am motivated to increase my earning potential through education and career advancement.	3.18	Agree
I believe that financial success is closely linked to having a steady income.	3.04	Agree
I am open to learning new strategies for maximizing my income.	3.16	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.12	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Expenses		
I believe in the importance of budgeting and tracking expenses	3.13	Agree
I view expenses as investments in my future financial security.	3.13	Agree
I will sacrifice my spending to achieve my long-term financial goals.	3.00	Agree
I recognize the value of distinguishing between wants and needs when making purchasing decisions	3.13	Agree
I am committed to minimizing unnecessary expenses and saving money.	3.18	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.11	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Debt		
I understand that debt can be useful when used responsibly.	3.18	Agree
I am cautious about taking on debt and only do so when necessary.	3.04	Agree
I feel confident in managing and repaying my debts.	3.10	Agree
I am motivated to become debt-free and prioritize repayment in my financial planning.	3.07	Agree
I view debt as a temporary obligation that can be overcome with disciplined financial management.	3.14	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.11	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Credit		
I recognize the importance of maintaining good credit health for financial stability.	3.06	Agree
I am cautious about using credit and only do so when I can repay the debt.	3.14	Agree
I proactively monitor my credit report and address discrepancies or issues.	3.13	Agree
I believe in building a positive credit history for future financial opportunities.	3.10	Agree
I am committed to using credit responsibly and avoiding behaviors that could negatively impact my credit score	3.07	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.10	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Savings		
I value saving money for short-term and long-term financial goals.	3.06	Agree
I am motivated to build up my savings account as a safety net for unexpected expenses.	2.94	Agree
I prioritize saving a portion of my monthly income, even if it means making sacrifices in other areas.	2.78	Agree
I am optimistic about my savings investments' potential growth and returns.	3.18	Agree
I view saving money as a key component of achieving financial independence and security	3.21	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.03	<i>Agree</i>

Finally, Table 3 shows that the respondents' assessment of the attitude toward financial literacy in terms of savings got a grand mean of 3.03, interpreted as agreement. Research by Schreiber and Lefebvre (2020) showed that people with positive attitudes toward savings tended to engage in more consistent and effective savings behaviors. Positive attitudes were associated with an appreciation for saving money, taking steps to minimize spending, and prioritizing saving in their financial plan. In contrast, negative attitudes towards savings could lead to financial stress and challenges. Studies by Furnham et al. (2019) have shown that developing positive attitudes towards savings can lead to better financial planning behaviors, such as setting financial goals and regularly monitoring progress towards those goals. Individuals with positive attitudes toward saving are also more likely to be financially satisfied and secure in their future.

3.4 Self-Assessment of Practices to Financial Concepts

Table 4 shows that the respondents' assessment of the practices regarding their finances in terms of income got a grand mean of 3.00, interpreted as agreement. NerdWallet (2021) claimed that budgeting is one key practice for managing income effectively. Studies have found that individuals who create and follow a budget tend to have better control over their spending and are more likely to save money. A budget helps individuals understand their income and expenses and make informed decisions about allocating their money. Stango and Zinman (2009) stated that another important practice is saving. Studies have shown that individuals who regularly save a portion of their income have greater financial security and are better equipped to handle unexpected expenses. Saving helps individuals achieve financial goals, such as buying a home or paying for education.

Table 4. *Assessment of the Respondents' Practices of Financial Concepts*

Knowledge of Income	Mean	Interpretation
I actively seek opportunities to increase my income through part-time jobs, freelancing, or other means	3.08	Agree
I regularly track my income sources and strive to diversify my revenue streams.	3.03	Agree
I set aside a portion of my income for savings and investments before allocating funds for expenses.	2.94	Agree
I adhere to a budgeting plan to ensure my income is allocated efficiently towards different financial goals.	2.78	Agree
I seek ways to enhance my employability and earning potential through continuous learning and skill development.	3.18	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.00	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Expenses		
I maintain a detailed record of my expenses and review them regularly to identify areas for potential savings	3.22	Agree
I prioritize essential expenses such as housing, utilities, and education over discretionary spending.	3.21	Agree
I practice frugality by seeking discounts, coupons, and other cost-saving measures when purchasing.	3.08	Agree
I avoid impulse buying and carefully consider the value and necessity of each expenditure	3.08	Agree
I adhere to a budget and adjust my spending habits accordingly to stay within my financial means	3.06	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.13	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Debt		
I make timely payments towards my debts to avoid accruing interest and late fees.	3.15	Agree
To minimize overall interest costs, I prioritize paying off high-interest debts first.	3.10	Agree
I refrain from taking on new debts unless necessary and have a repayment plan for existing debts.	3.03	Agree
I communicate openly with creditors to negotiate favorable terms or repayment arrangements when facing financial challenges.	2.97	Agree
I actively seek strategies to accelerate debt repayment, such as increasing income or reducing expenses.	3.09	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.07	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Credit		
I regularly monitor my credit report to ensure accuracy and detect any signs of identity theft or fraud.	3.15	Agree
I maintain a healthy credit utilization ratio by keeping my credit card balances low relative to my credit limits.	3.18	Agree
I refrain from maxing out credit cards and strive to pay off balances in full each month to avoid interest charges.	3.04	Agree
I avoid opening unnecessary lines of credit and only apply for credit when needed and manageable.	3.16	Agree
I prioritize building a positive credit history by making timely payments and demonstrating responsible credit behavior	3.13	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.13	<i>Agree</i>
Knowledge of Savings		
I automate my savings by setting up recurring transfers from my checking account to a designated savings account.	3.13	Agree
I establish specific savings goals and allocate a portion of my income toward achieving them.	3.00	Agree
I diversify my savings portfolio by investing in different asset classes like stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.	3.13	Agree
I maintain an emergency fund equivalent to at least three to six months' living expenses to cover unexpected financial setbacks.	3.18	Agree
I review and adjust my savings strategy regularly to adapt to changing financial circumstances and goals	3.08	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.10	<i>Agree</i>

Table 4 shows that the respondents' assessment of the practices when it comes to their finances in terms of expense got a grand mean of 3.13, interpreted as agreement. One key practice is tracking expenses. Studies have shown that tracking expenses, either manually or using software, can help individuals and businesses understand their spending patterns, identify areas where they may be overspending, and make informed decisions about where to cut back (Fidelity Investments, 2019). This allows individuals and businesses to better manage their cash flow and allocate resources more efficiently. This means the practices of the students in income seems to be very vital. Another important practice is prioritizing expenses. This involves differentiating between essential expenses, such as rent or mortgage payments, utilities, and groceries, and non-essential expenses, such as dining out or luxury purchases. Prioritizing expenses ensures that individuals and businesses meet their basic needs before allocating resources to discretionary spending (Investopedia, 2021).

Table 4 shows that the respondents' assessment of the practices regarding their finances in terms of debt got a grand mean of 3.07, interpreted as agreement. According to a study by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (2019), taking inventory of debts is a crucial step toward effective debt management. The study suggested that individuals create a list of all their debts, including the outstanding balances, interest rates, and minimum payment amounts. This helps determine which debts to prioritize, such as those with higher interest rates, and devise a debt repayment plan. Consolidating high-interest debt is another recommended practice. A study by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), (2020) found that consolidating debts, such as credit card balances, into a single loan with a lower interest rate can save individuals money and simplify their repayment process.

Table 4 shows that the respondents' assessment of the practices regarding their finances in terms of credit got a grand mean of 3.13, interpreted as agreement. According to a study by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (2019), regularly checking credit reports is a crucial step towards effective credit management. The study reveals that individuals should check their credit reports regularly, at least once a year, to ensure that all information is accurate and current. Any errors or inaccuracies should be disputed with the credit reporting agency. Paying bills on time is another recommended practice. A Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) study suggests that late payments can negatively impact credit scores and result in higher interest rates on credit products (CFPB, 2020). The study recommends setting up automatic bill payments to avoid missing due dates.

Table 4 shows that the respondents' assessment on the practices regarding their finances in terms of savings got a grand mean of 3.10, interpreted as agreement. Automatic savings plans have become increasingly popular over the past few years. According to a study by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc., automatic savings plans can be a powerful tool for boosting savings and achieving financial goals (CFP Board, 2020). The study recommends setting up automatic transfers from checking to savings accounts or investing in employer-sponsored retirement plans. Experts also recommended developing a budget to track monthly expenses. An article by the Balance, 2020 suggested creating a monthly budget to identify areas where money can be saved, such as reducing discretionary spending. Budgeting tools, such as apps and spreadsheets, can be helpful in monitoring and managing expenses.

3.5 Difference in Financial Literacy when the Demographic Profile

Table 5 reveals a significant difference in the respondents' knowledge of financial literacy when the demographic profile is considered in terms of age 0.013 p-value, sex 0.020, and year level with 0.000 p-value. Their p-value is less than the set significant level of 0.050. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference. While the monthly family income has a 0.092 p-value, it is greater than the set significant level of 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference. This implies that knowledge of financial literacy is closely associated with the profile of the respondents.

Table 5 also shows that there is a significant difference in the attitude of the respondents towards financial literacy when the demographic profile is considered in terms of age with 0.049 p-values, monthly family income with 0.038, and year level with 0.000 p-values. Their p-value is less than the set significant level of 0.050. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference. While the sex has a 0.359 p-value, it is greater than the set significant level of 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference. This implies that attitude, monthly family income, and year level are closely associated with financial literacy, while the sex variable does not matter.

Table 5. *Analysis of differences in financial literacy when the demographic profile is considered*

Knowledge	P-Value	Decision	Remarks
Age	0.013	Reject Ho	Significant
Sex	0.020	Reject Ho	Significant
Monthly Family Income	0.092	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Year Level	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Attitude			
Age	0.049	Reject Ho	Significant
Sex	0.359	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Monthly Family Income	0.038	Reject Ho	Significant
Year Level	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Practices			
Age	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Sex	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Monthly Family Income	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Year Level	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Legend: A p-value with less than 0.05 is Significant, while a p-value greater than 0.05 is Not Significant

Further, Table 5 shows a significant difference in the practices of the respondents towards financial literacy when the demographic profile is considered in terms of age, sex, monthly family income, and year level; their p-value is less than the set significant level of 0.050. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference. This implies that the profiles' age, sex, monthly income, and year level significantly affect financial literacy.

Finally, Table 6 shows a significant relationship among knowledge, attitude, and financial literacy practices, with an R-value of 0.697 and a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than the set significant level of 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship. This implies that knowledge, attitude, and practice correlate, suggesting a strong relationship.

Table 6. *Test of significant relationship among knowledge, attitude, and practices of financial literacy*

	P-Value	R-value	Decision	Remarks
Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice of Financial Literacy	0.000	0.697	Reject Ho	Significant

4.0 Conclusion

The study provides important insights into the financial literacy of Business Administration students, particularly their knowledge, attitudes, and practices. The findings indicate that demographic factors such as age, sex, and year level significantly influence financial knowledge and attitudes. At the same time, monthly family income has mixed effects on financial behavior and decision-making. Specifically, students from higher-income families may have greater access to financial resources and learning opportunities, fostering better financial literacy. In contrast, lower-income students might develop financial resilience through necessity-driven financial management. This highlights the need to tailor financial education strategies to students' diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

These results contribute to the growing understanding of financial literacy among college students and underscore its role in shaping responsible financial behavior. Educators and policymakers should implement targeted programs such as seminar workshops, integrative financial literacy courses, and hands-on learning experiences, including budgeting simulations and investment training to enhance financial decision-making skills. By recognizing the key factors influencing financial literacy, these initiatives can be designed to address gaps in students' financial knowledge and practices effectively.

Furthermore, this study reinforces the theoretical foundation of financial literacy research by demonstrating the interconnected nature of financial knowledge, attitudes, and practices. It highlights the importance of financial education in cultivating responsible financial behavior among students, preparing them for sound financial decision-making in adulthood. Future studies may explore the long-term effects of financial education interventions and assess the comparative effectiveness of different teaching methods in improving financial literacy across diverse student populations.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The study was conceptualized and designed by Mark Jay M. Espiritu. The research instrument was developed, validated, and administered by the author. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation were conducted under the guidance of faculty advisers. The manuscript was drafted and reviewed by the author, with inputs from academic mentors.

6.0 Funding

This research was self-funded by the author, with no external financial support. The institution provided ethical clearance and research guidance but did not contribute financially to the study.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest in conducting this study. The research was carried out independently, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the study's findings.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The author expresses gratitude to Our Lady of Fatima University for providing the academic framework and support in conducting this research. Special thanks to Dr. Ramon Narciso Daludado, Thesis Adviser, for his invaluable guidance and feedback. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Heracleo D. Lagrada, VPAA/Dean of the Graduate School, for approving the research. Lastly, sincere thanks to the students who participated in the survey, whose insights made this study possible.

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Family Climate, Life Satisfaction, and the Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy among Filipino Adolescents

Cherieville M. Sayawan*, Elmer G. De Jose

Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: sayawancherievill@gmail.com

Date received: December 16, 2024

Date revised: March 6, 2025

Date accepted: March 30, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Sayawan, C., & De Jose, E., (2025). Family climate, life satisfaction, and the mediating role of self-efficacy among Filipino adolescents. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 420-428. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0684>

Abstract. This predictive correlational study examines the family climate, life satisfaction, and the mediating role of self-efficacy among Filipino adolescents. The study delved into the respondents' perceptions of their social, physical, and emotional relationships with their parents, their subjective evaluation of life, and their belief in their abilities. Through the Family Climate Scale Questionnaire, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the General Self-Efficacy Scale, this study uncovered the family climate, life satisfaction, and self-efficacy levels among Filipino adolescents. Moreover, it explores the relationships among these variables, particularly examining the mediating role of self-efficacy. The findings indicated that Family Climate was positively correlated with Life Satisfaction ($r = .45, p < 0.001$) and Self-Efficacy ($r = .33, p < 0.001$). Similarly, Self-Efficacy showed a high positive correlation with Life Satisfaction ($r = .84, < 0.001$). The mediation analysis revealed that Self-Efficacy is a significant partial mediator between Family Climate and Life Satisfaction. This is supported by the statistical significance of all relevant paths: path a (Family Climate to Self-Efficacy, $\beta = .48, p < 0.001$), path b (Self-Efficacy to Life Satisfaction, $\beta = .39, p < 0.001$), and path c (Family Climate to Life Satisfaction after accounting for Self-Efficacy, $\beta = .54, p < 0.001$). Overall, this study concludes that family climate influences life satisfaction directly and indirectly through self-efficacy. A positive family climate boosts self-efficacy, contributing to increased life satisfaction. Nonetheless, family climate still exerts a significant direct positive effect on life satisfaction, even when considering the role of self-efficacy.

Keywords: Family climate; Filipino adolescents; Life satisfaction; Predictive correlational study; Self-efficacy.

1.0 Introduction

Family climate and life satisfaction have been the focal points of numerous studies worldwide, emphasizing the significant influence of family interactions on an individual's subjective well-being. Studies have indicated that family climate, defined by the quality of interaction between parents and children, significantly influences adolescents' life satisfaction (Bi & Wang, 2021). A favorable family climate, a good time, and fair treatment by parents significantly enhance life satisfaction (Gomez-Baya et al., 2020). Adolescents who grew up in a healthy family climate and have good relationships with their parents tend to have a greater quality of life (Li et al., 2023). Family support plays a role in determining life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of a nurturing family climate for the well-being of adolescents (Kareem et al., 2023). Positive perceptions of parenting practices, including affect and communication, impact adolescents' life satisfaction levels, as Mercader-Rubio et al. (2023) highlighted. An affectionate family environment contributes to growth and enhances the life satisfaction of adolescents (Rajapurkar, 2017). Research studies also indicate that a positive family climate can shield adolescents from social challenges and significantly influence their well-being (Park & Schepp, 2015; Brinksmas et al., 2020).

Researchers in the Philippines have also investigated the connection between adolescents' life satisfaction and the quality of their family climate. According to Botor (2019), the family plays a significant role in shaping adolescents' well-being. The family climate has a significant impact on the behavioral health needs of Filipino adolescents. Strong family cohesion that encourages communication can offer support, whereas low cohesion or disengagement may lead to risky behaviors, affecting the life satisfaction of Filipino adolescents (Javier et al., 2018). Moreover, receiving support from one's family acts as a protective factor against suicidal thoughts among adolescents, enhancing their life satisfaction through acceptance and reducing mental health risks (Reyes et al., 2015).

As defined by Jain and Desai (2020), self-efficacy has become a mediating factor in the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction. According to Nabila and Wahyuni (2022), family climate, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction are interrelated factors that significantly impact adolescents' well-being. A study by Yuan et al. (2021) found that self-efficacy mediates between family functioning and life satisfaction. Kumari (2020) also pointed out the importance of family climate in influencing self-efficacy and life satisfaction, stressing the role of self-efficacy in enhancing life satisfaction. Additionally, Liu et al. (2021) emphasized the role of mindful parenting, characterized by parents' full presence and warm, accepting, and kind attitudes during interactions with their children. The research showed that being more mindful in parenting is linked to an increase in adolescents' coping self-efficacy, enhancing their life satisfaction, underscoring how important mindful parenting is for healthy development. According to Mary and Manikandan (2015), the family environment plays a significant role in adolescents' belief in their abilities and psychological well-being. Positive interactions within families can improve adolescents' self-efficacy and life satisfaction, contributing to their overall well-being. The self-efficacy nurtured by family support can increase life satisfaction (Nagarajan & Parthasarathy, 2016). Furthermore, Ercegovic et al. (2021) revealed that family satisfaction positively influences adolescent self-efficacy and life satisfaction.

Despite existing research emphasizing the association between family climate and self-efficacy on life satisfaction, there remains a significant gap in comprehending how these aspects are interrelated, especially among Filipino teenagers. This research addresses this gap by thoroughly examining the pathways and relationships among family climate, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction. This study seeks to expand existing knowledge and provide insight into these relationships by developing a practical model. Specifically, it will delve into the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction, as well as the mediating role of self-efficacy, shedding light on how these factors contribute to the well-being of Filipino adolescents.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study is quantitative, and a predictive correlational design is utilized. Using numerical data, this research approach quantifies and predicts the relationships between variables (Hair et al., 2019). The numerical data was used to describe the level of family climate, life satisfaction, and self-efficacy among Filipino adolescents. The study also determined the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction, family climate and self-efficacy, and self-efficacy and life satisfaction among adolescents. Furthermore, it examined the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in a public secondary school in Metro Manila, accommodating both Junior and Senior High School Students. The researcher chose this school due to its accessibility and suitability for the study, as it provided a diverse range of adolescent participants aged 11 to 18.

2.3 Research Participants

The school has a total population of 1,160, and using Slovin's formula, the researcher determined a representative sample size of 298 adolescent participants. A convenience sampling technique was employed, targeting adolescent participants from Junior and Senior High School (Grades 7 to 12). This method facilitated the inclusion of participants who were readily accessible, had obtained parental consent, and completed the informed consent form, adhering to ethical guidelines since most participants were minors. Despite this approach, the researcher was able to capture a representative sample across grade levels, with participants aged 11 to 18 years.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study employed paper-and-pencil tests, with careful instructions provided to ensure accurate data collection. The Family Climate Scale (FCQ) was used to evaluate the adolescent participants' family climate level. Dr. Beena Shah developed this scale, consisting of 90 statements, of which 48 are negative and 42 are positive (Samhitha et al., 2020). The reliability coefficients of the scale range from 0.69 to 0.81, indicating a moderate to high level of consistency (Mishra, 2019). Moreover, Varma (2017) highlighted that the family climate scale has a highly satisfactory validity in determining the family climate of school-going children. This indicates that the scale is reliable for determining adolescents' family climate levels.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) measured the adolescent participants' life satisfaction level. Developed by Ed Diener and his colleagues, the SWLS is a 5-item scale to measure an individual's overall cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction. It includes items that capture present life satisfaction and positive evaluation of one's life and past life satisfaction (Kjell & Diener, 2021). According to López-Ortega et al. (2016), the analysis of SWLS showed a good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.74$). Additionally, they emphasized that the SWLS has been widely used and is a valid instrument for assessing life satisfaction in various population groups.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) was also utilized to capture the participants' level of self-efficacy. Matthias Jerusalem and Ralf Schwarzer developed this scale to measure overall levels of perceived self-efficacy and predict the capacity for resilience in the face of a wide range of life stressors (Kim et al., 2023). The GSE demonstrates internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from 0.75 to 0.91 (Zhou, 2016). Hence, this indicates that GSE is a reliable instrument. Furthermore, in the study conducted by Yudhistira et al. (2021), confirmatory analysis was used to assess the validity of the GSE. The analysis confirmed that all 10 items are valid for measuring general self-efficacy, thereby supporting the scale's reliability for assessing self-efficacy.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study used specific steps to ensure an ethical and proper data-gathering procedure. The researcher initially drafted a formal letter addressed to the Officer in Charge of the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent and the public secondary school head, seeking permission to collect data from Junior and Senior High School students. Upon receiving authorization through an official memo, the researcher distributed the parental and informed consent forms to prospective participants. Subsequently, after the participants completed these forms, the researcher began the data collection process. Data collection occurred within the respective classrooms of students across various grade levels. Paper-and-pencil tests served as the chosen mode of administration for the three research instruments: (1) General Self-efficacy Scale, (2) Family Climate Scale, and (3) Satisfaction with Life Scale, all personally distributed to respondents by the researcher.

Ensuring comprehension and precise responses, the researcher verified participants' proficiency in English, given that the questionnaires were presented in English. Furthermore, the researcher meticulously provided comprehensive instructions for completing the questionnaires prior to their commencement. Participants devoted approximately 50 minutes to 1 hour to completing the questionnaires. Upon completion, the researcher collected the questionnaires, ensuring strict confidentiality in the storage of completed materials in full adherence to research ethics.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Prior to gathering the data, the researcher acquired ethical clearance from the PUP-GS Research Ethics Committee to ensure compliance with established ethical standards in research. Moreover, the study strictly adhered to the ethical principles set forth by the American Psychological Association, particularly the principles of self-determination, anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. The researcher prepared a formal written permission for the Officer in Charge of the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent and the public secondary school head. Data collection commenced only after receiving authorization through an official memorandum. In addition, target participants received a parental consent form outlining the study's details, nature, and administration schedule. Only participants whose parents signed the parental consent form were eligible to proceed with answering the test instruments.

Participants were also given an informed consent form, ensuring a complete understanding of the study's objectives and procedures. Test administrations were conducted within the safety and comfort of their respective classrooms. The researcher ensured the absence of any potential harm to participants. Respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from answering the questionnaires at any time without questioning. Respondents were not required to indicate their names on the questionnaires to maintain anonymity. Furthermore, the researcher also ensured strict confidentiality in safeguarding the completed questionnaires.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Family Climate of the Filipino Adolescents

Table 1 presents the level of family climate among Filipino adolescents.

Table 1. *Level of Family Climate of the Filipino Adolescents*

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Family Climate	100.04	11.89	Below Average Family Climate

The results revealed a mean of 100.04 (SD = 11.89), which categorizes the family climate of the Filipino adolescents as below average. This indicates that Filipino adolescents experience a family climate that is less favorable than desired. Filipino adolescents are a demographic that is often overlooked in discussions of mental health in the Philippines (Javier et al., 2018). The below average family climate implies that adolescents face challenges in terms of the family climate dimension. These dimensions include freedom vs. restrictiveness, attention vs. negligence, dominance vs. submissiveness, acceptance vs. rejection, trust vs. distrust, indulgence vs. avoidance, warmth vs. coldness, expectation vs. hopelessness, partiality vs. fairness, and open communication vs. controlled communication (Das, 2022).

The findings of this study align with existing literature and studies, highlighting the complex social, physical, and emotional dynamics within families. Adolescents benefit from autonomy support over psychological control, as autonomy support enhances positive affect, while psychological control leads to negative affect. (Vander Kaap-Deeder et al., 2023). Effective parental communication builds trust and encourages positive behavior among adolescents, emphasizing the importance of healthy family dynamics (Subhasree & Saranya, 2024). This is also supported by the findings of Kaur (2019), which suggest that perceptions of avoidance, negligence, and cold family relations correlate with adverse outcomes in adolescents. Neglect and unfair treatment by parents can harm adolescents' mental health and self-esteem (Arisanti et al., 2024). The way adolescents perceive parental acceptance is related to their behavior and well-being (Xiao et al., 2022). Parental dominance tends to make the adolescents' conform, while being overly permissive may lessen the importance they place on personal achievements (Chandrasekaran et al., 2017).

3.2 Level of Life Satisfaction of the Filipino Adolescents

Table 2 presents the level of life satisfaction among Filipino adolescents.

Table 2. *Level of Life Satisfaction of the Filipino Adolescents*

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Life Satisfaction	18.67	5.79	Slightly Dissatisfied

Table 2 displays the level of life satisfaction among Filipino adolescents. The average score reported by adolescents is 18.67, indicating that they are slightly dissatisfied with their lives. This implies that most adolescents are not entirely content with their life experiences. This finding calls attention because according to Michalski et al. (2022), lower life satisfaction can lead to greater psychological problems over time. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize enhancing life satisfaction during adolescence to promote positive mental health outcomes. Adolescents who report a higher level of life satisfaction experience benefits such as fewer behavioral issues, improved academic performance, and positive long-term outcomes (Lyons & Jiang, 2021). Additionally, as noted by Izaguirre et al. (2021), greater life satisfaction can strengthen emotional regulation and resilience in adolescents, both of which are essential for effective coping.

3.3 Level of Self-Efficacy of the Filipino Adolescents

Table 3 presents the level of self-efficacy among Filipino adolescents.

Table 3. *Level of Self-Efficacy of the Filipino Adolescents*

Variables	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-Efficacy	21.75	5.14	Moderate Self-Efficacy

Table 3 shows an average score of 21.75, categorizing self-efficacy as moderate. This suggests that, on average, adolescents perceive themselves as moderately capable of effectively managing and accomplishing tasks in various aspects of their lives. The level of self-efficacy significantly affects how adolescents approach their schoolwork, as it influences their views on their ability to learn and handle tasks (Kong & Kong, 2024). Despite the moderate self-efficacy reported in this study, actions to improve the general self-efficacy of Filipino adolescents remain necessary. As the adolescence stage is a critical period of growth, they must build high self-efficacy and look after their physical and mental well-being to have a positive outlook on the future (Sharma, 2021). Moreover, how capable they feel influences their confidence in tasks (Balan, 2022). Developing a sense of self-efficacy is particularly important for adolescents when facing with decisions regarding their education and career paths while dealing with academic challenges and future aspirations (Marcionetti & Rossier, 2021).

3.4 Relationship between Family Climate and Life Satisfaction among Filipino Adolescents

Table 4 presents the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction among Filipino adolescents.

Table 4. *Relationship between Family Climate and Life Satisfaction*

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Family Climate and Life Satisfaction	0.45	<0.001	Reject H_0	Moderate Positive Correlation

Based on the data shown in table 4, Family Climate has a moderate positive correlation with Life Satisfaction ($r = .45$, $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with the previous study of Gomez-Baya et al. (2020), which demonstrated a direct link between positive family climate and increased life satisfaction among adolescents. Moreover, Herke et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of parent-child relationships in enhancing adolescents' life satisfaction. Adolescents raised in a positive family climate and have a good relationship with the parents, tend to exhibit a higher life satisfaction and better quality of life (Guevara et al., 2021). Furthermore, the study of Kareem et al. (2023) showed that family significantly impacts adolescents' life satisfaction levels. Collectively, these studies emphasize the important role of positive family climate in enhancing the well-being and life satisfaction of young individuals, highlighting the importance of fostering positive interactions within families.

3.5 Relationship between Family Climate and Self-Efficacy among Filipino Adolescents

Table 5 presents the relationship between family climate and self-efficacy among Filipino adolescents.

Table 5. *Relationship between Family Climate and Self-Efficacy*

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Family Climate and Self-Efficacy	0.33	<0.001	Reject H_0	Low Positive Correlation

According to the data presented in Table 5, Family Climate has a low positive correlation with self-efficacy ($r = .33$, $p < 0.001$). This result aligns with existing studies exploring the relationship between family climate and self-efficacy. In the study by Javier et al. (2018), it was discovered that adolescents tend to exhibit higher self-efficacy in families where communication is encouraged. Effective family communication plays an important role in the development of self-efficacy by influencing individuals' perceptions of their capabilities (Badie et al., 2022). The study conducted by Laka and Suryanto (2024) revealed that parental involvement can positively influence adolescents' self-efficacy. Furthermore, according to Xia et al. (2016), a positive family climate predicts self-efficacy. This can enhance adolescents' self-concept in education, values, character development, and religious and political beliefs (Noor et al., 2022).

3.6 Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Filipino Adolescents

Table 6 presents the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction among Filipino adolescents.

Table 6. *Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction*

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction	0.84	<0.001	Reject H ₀	High Positive Correlation

Table 6 shows that self-efficacy has a high positive correlation with Life Satisfaction ($r = .84$, <0.001). This result aligns with previous literature and studies that investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. In the study conducted by Moirangthem (2023), it was revealed that self-efficacy has a significant and positive relationship with life satisfaction. This can be explained by the belief of the individuals with higher level of self-efficacy that they can overcome whatever difficulties that may come along the way and achieve their goals in life (Poorbaferani et al., 2018). Adolescents who have high self-efficacy tends to put themselves in challenging situation, which may lead to successful and satisfied life (Marcionetti & Castelli, 2022). Moreover, satisfaction with life is one of the outcomes of emotional responses influenced by self-efficacy (Cikrikci & Odaci, 2016).

3.7 Mediating role of Self-Efficacy in the relationship between Family Climate and Life Satisfaction

Table 7 presents the path analysis of the relationships among family climate, life satisfaction and self-efficacy

Table 7. *Mediation Analysis*

Antecedent		M (Self-Efficacy)					Y (Life Satisfaction)			
		B	SE	P	β		B	SE	P	β
X (Family Climate)	a	0.6424	0.0682	<0.001	0.4826	c'	1.2194	0.0892	<0.001	0.5426
M (Self-Efficacy)		-	-	-	-	b	0.6513	0.067	<0.001	0.3868
		$R^2 = 0.2329$				$R^2 = 0.6467$				
		$F(1,292)=88.6455$, $p<0.001$				$F(2,291)=266.2949$, $p<0.001$				

The table shows the analysis shows that Family Climate significantly predicts Self-Efficacy, with an unstandardized regression coefficient (B) of 0.6424. The standard error (SE) of this estimate is 0.0682, and the relationship is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). The standardized coefficient (β) is 0.4826, suggesting a moderate to strong effect. The model explains 23.29% of the variance in Self-Efficacy ($R^2 = 0.2329$), and the overall model fit is significant, as indicated by $F(1,292) = 88.6455$, $p < 0.001$. Family climate also significantly affects Life Satisfaction, with an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 1.2194. This estimate's standard error (SE) is 0.0892, and the p-value is less than 0.001, indicating strong statistical significance. The standardized coefficient (β) is 0.5426, suggesting a strong effect. Moreover, Self-Efficacy significantly predicts Life Satisfaction with an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.6513. The standard error (SE) for this path is 0.0670, and the p-value is less than 0.001, highlighting the significance of this relationship. The standardized coefficient (β) is 0.3868, indicating a moderate effect. The model fit statistics indicate that Family Climate explains approximately 23.29% of the variance in Self-Efficacy ($R^2 = 0.2329$) and that the overall model is significant ($F(1,292) = 88.6455$, $p < 0.001$). When predicting Life Satisfaction, Family Climate, and Self-Efficacy together explain about 64.67% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.6467$), with the model being statistically significant ($F(2,291) = 266.2949$, $p < 0.001$). The analysis demonstrates that Family Climate significantly enhances Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Filipino adolescents. Furthermore, Self-Efficacy partially mediates the relationship between Family Climate and Life Satisfaction, highlighting the importance of these factors in promoting adolescents' well-being.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was computed using AMOS to test the fitness of the mediation model. As part of the SEM, factor loadings for each item were assessed, and Items with low factor loadings (<0.50) were removed. The remaining items demonstrated strong associations with their intended factors, which enhanced the model's overall fit. The model-fit measures were used to assess the model's overall goodness of fit and ensure that all values were within their respective standard acceptance levels. The three-factor model (Family Climate, Self-Efficacy, and Life Satisfaction) yielded a good fit. The result of the SEM shows that the model had good fit statistics, including $X^2/df = 2.432$, RMSEA = 0.070, SRMR = 0.0507, GFI = 0.953, and CFI = 0.915. The recommended values

are provided in the bracket based on the guidelines of Cornell University Statistical Consulting Unit (n.d.) (RMSEA<0.08, SRMR<0.08, GFI≥ 0.95, CFI≥0.90). All item's standardized factor loading was above 0.50, and AVE is also above 0.50; hence, it is an indication of good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019).

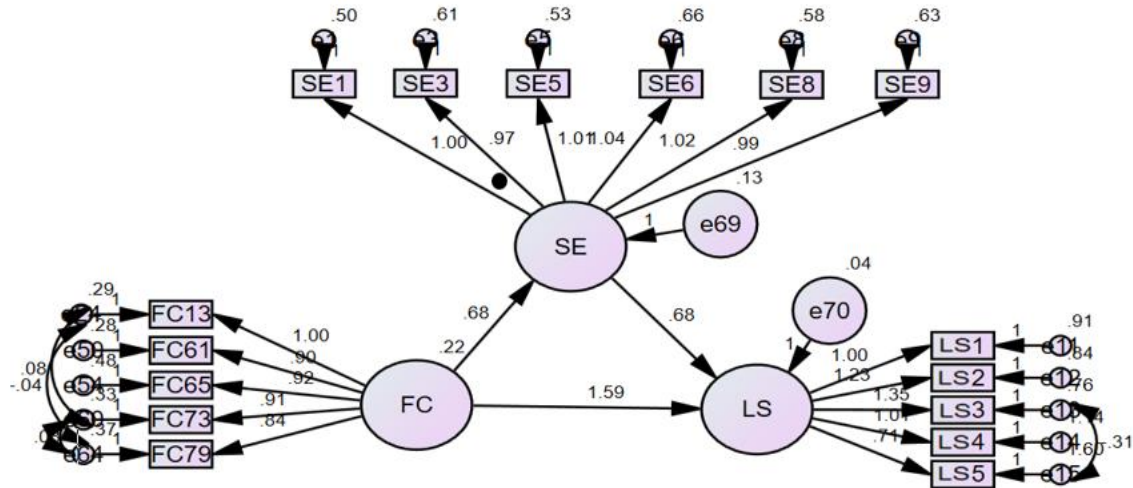


Figure 1. Mediation Model

The diagram represents the mediation model examining the role of self-efficacy in the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction. In this model, the variable Family Climate (FC) is indicated by five observable variables: FC13, FC61, FC65, FC73, and FC79, with corresponding factor loadings ranging from .84 to 1.00. The Self-Efficacy (SE) is indicated by six observable variables: SE1, SE3, SE5, SE6, SE8 and SE9, with factor loadings ranging from .97 to 1.04. Lastly, the Life Satisfaction (LS) is measured by five observed variables: LS1, LS2, LS3, LS4, and LS5, with factor loadings ranging from .71 to 1.35. Examining the structural path from Family Climate to Self-Efficacy, it has a path coefficient of .68, suggesting that family climate has a positive relationship with self-efficacy. The path from Self-Efficacy to Life Satisfaction has a path coefficient of .68 indicating that self-efficacy has also a positive relationship with life satisfaction. The direct path from Family Climate to Life Satisfaction, has a path coefficient of 1.59. This indicates that family climate significantly contributes to life satisfaction independently of self-efficacy. Overall, the model demonstrates that family climate influences life satisfaction both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy. This partial mediation effect highlights that a positive family climate enhances self-efficacy, which in turn leads to greater life satisfaction. Despite taking self-efficacy into consideration, the overall influence of family climate on life satisfaction remains significant. Consequently, the conclusion is to reject the H0 since the data suggests that self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the data gathered in this study, Filipino adolescents generally perceive their family climate as below average, which may contribute to their slightly dissatisfied outlook on life satisfaction. This indicates that a significant proportion of the adolescent participants do not perceive their lives as entirely satisfactory. Despite this, Filipino adolescents generally report a moderate level of self-efficacy, reflecting a reasonable confidence in their ability to manage tasks and achieve goals. The study further reveals that family climate significantly influences life satisfaction and self-efficacy among adolescents. Positive family interactions are crucial in enhancing adolescents' satisfaction with life and their belief in their abilities. Conversely, negative family interactions can have detrimental effects on these outcomes. Moreover, self-efficacy significantly influences life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of adolescents' belief in their abilities in shaping their subjective

evaluation of life. Furthermore, self-efficacy is a significant partial mediator in the relationship between family climate and life satisfaction among Filipino adolescents. This suggests that while family climate directly influences life satisfaction, the effect is also partially channeled through adolescents' self-efficacy.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Cherieville M. Sayawan– wrote the manuscript, collected and analyzed the data, handled the revisions.
Dr. Elmer G. De Jose– provided technical support, assisted in interpreting the data, and reviewed the manuscript.

6.0 Funding

This study did not receive funding from any specific grant or agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The author extends sincere gratitude to the junior and senior high school students who participated in this study and generously allotted their time to answer the test questionnaires, as well as to their parents for providing the necessary consent, enabling the research process.

Special appreciation is extended to the educational institution's staff and administrators for their invaluable support and cooperation, which facilitated a smooth and efficient data gathering process.

The author also acknowledges the esteemed panelists for their insightful feedback and mentorship, which have been crucial in enhancing the quality of this study.

Lastly, the author is very thankful to the family for their unwavering support and encouragement, which was a source of inspiration and constant motivation throughout this research journey.

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Assessing the Readiness of Mathematics Teachers, Students, and Parents for Modular Distance Learning

Friendian L. Estoconing^{*1}, Cherry Mae E. Maca², Maribel B. Abuyabor³

¹Campanun-an Provincial Community High School, Negros Oriental, Philippines

²Mayaposi Community High School, Negros Oriental, Philippines

³Benedicto P. Tirambulo Memorial National High School, Negros Oriental, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: friendian.estoconing@deped.gov.ph

Date received: January 29, 2025

Date revised: March 6, 2025

Date accepted: March 30, 2025

Originality: 93%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 10%

Recommended citation:

Estoconing, F., Maca, C.M., & Abuyabor, M. (2021). Assessing the readiness of Mathematics teachers, students, and parents for modular distance learning. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 429-441.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.046>

Abstract. This study investigated the level of readiness of mathematics teachers, students, and parents in modular distance education. A total of 10 teachers, 428 students, and 428 parents participated in the study. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the findings revealed that teachers and parents exhibited the lowest levels of attitude toward modular distance education. Additionally, a significant relationship was found between students' age and their ability to learn independently, indicating that older students tend to be more self-sufficient than younger ones. Teachers demonstrated readiness in monitoring students' outputs, providing feedback, and offering tutorials based on students' performance. Students were prepared regarding time management, commitment, independent learning, and attitude toward modular distance education. Parents showed readiness to manage their time and support their children's educational needs. Overall, among the three groups, teachers had the highest level of readiness, followed by students and parents. Based on these findings, enhancement training should address areas with the lowest levels of readiness, aiming to improve further the preparedness of mathematics teachers, students, and parents for modular distance education.

Keywords: Distance education; Level of readiness; Modular distance.

1.0 Introduction

The Philippines implemented the K-12 curriculum in the school year 2012–2013. This curriculum was expected to introduce significant innovations in the education structure and enhance the delivery of quality education in the country (Yonson, 2017). However, an international assessment conducted in 2019 by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed that the Philippines ranked 78th in Mathematics out of 79 participating countries (San Juan, 2019). This indicates that there has been no significant improvement in the performance of Filipino students for over a decade, as shown in international assessments such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2003, where the country ranked only 34th out of 38 participating countries in high school Mathematics (Macha, Mackie, & Magaziner, 2018). The twin goals of Mathematics in the K-12 system—critical thinking and problem-solving—remain far from being achieved, as evidenced by results from PISA and TIMSS. While the Department of Education has addressed the issue of access to education, the issue of quality remains a primary concern (Alcober, 2018).

On December 31, 2019, a novel coronavirus was identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China (WHO, 2020). This virus later became a pandemic. On January 22, 2020, the Philippines recorded its first suspected case (Edrada,

Lopez, & Solante, 2020). Coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19, is a contagious illness caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, which has severely impacted many nations in various aspects, including health, economics, and education. The virus spreads primarily through respiratory droplets when an infected individual coughs or sneezes. It has claimed many lives worldwide (Dyer, 2021).

In response to the pandemic, the President of the Philippines announced that classes would not resume unless the safety of learners were assured. On July 17, 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Republic Act 11480, which grants the President the authority to adjust the opening date of the school year in the event of a state of emergency (Parrocha, 2020). The Department of Education welcomed the signing of this law. Education Secretary Leonor Briones stated that the President and legislators had consulted the Department of Education during the process (Montemayor, 2020).

The Department of Education (DepEd) decided it was time for the country to fully implement distance education (Llego, 2020). DepEd stated that preparations were ongoing for home-based learning through various modalities, including radio, television, online platforms, and printed modules, or a combination of these methods (Arcilla, 2020). DepEd conducted a survey using the Learner Enrollment and Survey Form (LESF) to determine parents' preferred distance education modality for their children. The available modalities included online learning, television, radio, modular learning, and face-to-face instruction with other modalities. Due to the challenges brought by COVID-19, the country's educational system was compelled to shift from traditional face-to-face classes to distance education for the upcoming school year.

Amidst the various challenges faced by the education sector in the past few years, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced yet another obstacle, forcing the Department of Education to shift to distance education entirely. However, assessing whether teachers, students, and parents are prepared for this new learning mode being implemented nationwide is crucial. Numerous researchers have conducted studies on the readiness of teachers, students, and schools for distance education (Alea et al., 2020; Dziuban et al., 2018; Fedina et al., 2017; Geng et al., 2019; Movkebayeva et al., 2018; Oliver & Carson, 2016, 2018; Tang & Chaw, 2017). However, few studies have focused explicitly on the readiness of mathematics teachers, students, and parents—particularly at the Junior High School level—toward modular distance education. In this regard, the researcher is motivated to study the readiness of Junior High School mathematics teachers, students, and parents for distance education. A comprehensive review should be conducted to assess the extent of their preparedness for the upcoming school year under this new educational setup.

The international assessments, particularly PISA, highlighted deficiencies in Filipino students' problem-solving abilities and thinking critically—skills essential for succeeding in self-directed learning environments like MDL. Studies by Geng et al. (2019) and Tang and Chaw (2017) emphasize that students' readiness for distance education depends on their ability to manage time effectively, stay motivated, and engage independently with learning materials. However, Oliver and Carson (2016) found that students who struggled in traditional classrooms faced even more significant challenges in modular learning due to limited teacher supervision and the lack of structured support. This suggests that the readiness of students in the Philippines to transition to MDL may be hindered by existing gaps in their problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities, as highlighted by the PISA results.

For teachers, the transition to MDL has required significant adjustments in instructional delivery, assessment strategies, and student engagement methods. Alea et al. (2020) and Dziuban et al. (2018) found that teachers encountered difficulty monitoring student progress, providing timely feedback, and ensuring effective content delivery in an online or modular setting. The shift has required educators to rethink their teaching strategies, particularly in Mathematics, where direct engagement and immediate feedback are often necessary to ensure student understanding.

Parents who have become learning facilitators during this shift to MDL also play a critical role in supporting their children's learning. Fedina et al. (2017) and Movkebayeva et al. (2018) identified key factors for success in MDL, such as parental involvement, effective time management, and understanding of the learning content. The limited support provided to parents regarding training and resources for facilitating learning at home presents another challenge. Furthermore, some parents may lack the necessary skills or resources to effectively guide their children

through complex subjects like Mathematics, which could exacerbate the existing gaps in student performance highlighted by PISA.

The PISA results, therefore, provide a crucial basis for assessing the readiness of students, teachers, and parents for the shift to MDL. Given the challenges, particularly the lack of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in Filipino students, it is essential to understand how these issues might impact their ability to succeed in a self-directed learning environment. Furthermore, the studies reviewed provide a basis for the current research, which aims to assess the preparedness of Junior High School Mathematics teachers, students, and parents for modular distance learning. Specifically, the study will investigate how students' ability to engage with learning materials independently, the challenges teachers face in adapting their instruction, and the role of parental support in learning can affect the effectiveness of MDL in the Philippine context. Through this research, a deeper understanding of the readiness for MDL at the Junior High School level can be gained, offering insights into addressing these challenges and improving the overall quality of education during this transition.

In conclusion, while the shift to distance education presents a significant challenge, especially in a subject as complex as Mathematics, it also provides an opportunity to assess the readiness of key stakeholders (students, teachers, and parents) and identify the support structures necessary for a successful transition. The PISA results offer a critical perspective on the current gaps in Filipino students' skills, which must be addressed to ensure that the new educational approach in the country will be practical. Therefore, this study is essential to understand the unique challenges of MDL implementation at the Junior High School level and to propose strategies for improving its effectiveness.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed a descriptive-correlational survey design. The study is descriptive as it presents and describes the profiles of teachers, students, and parents while also evaluating the extent of their readiness for modular learning. Meanwhile, it is correlational because it examines the relationship between the respondents' profiles and their readiness for modular learning.

2.2 Research Locale

The present study was conducted with Junior High School Mathematics teachers, students, and parents of Benedicto P. Tirambulo Memorial National High School. The school is located along the national highway of the Bayawan-Mabinay-Kabankalan road in Paniabonan, Mabinay, Negros Oriental. Its proximity to the Mabinay 1 District office makes it easily accessible to the surrounding communities. As a key educational institution in the area, the school plays a vital role in providing quality education to students in the region.

2.3 Research Participants

The participants of this study included Junior High School Mathematics teachers, students, and parents from Benedicto P. Tirambulo Memorial National High School (BPTMNHS) during the school year 2020-2021. The school had 10 Junior High School Mathematics teachers and 1,006 enrolled students at this level during that academic year. To ensure a fair and unbiased selection, the study employed Simple Random Sampling, giving every individual in the target population an equal chance of being chosen. A randomized approach was used to select a representative sample of students, with their parents included accordingly. Additionally, all Junior High School Mathematics teachers participated in the study. This method ensured a diverse and representative sample, enhancing the reliability and applicability of the findings to the broader school community.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study utilized a survey questionnaire as the primary method of data collection. The researcher developed the instrument to ensure that it aligned with the study's objectives. An expert review was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument. The research instrument underwent internal validation to measure its consistency, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated. The computed Cronbach's Alpha value was ≥ 0.90 , indicating excellent reliability. This suggests that the questionnaire items demonstrated high internal consistency, making the instrument a reliable tool for data collection.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Negros Oriental to conduct the study involving Junior High School Mathematics teachers, students, and parents of Benedicto P. Tirambulo Memorial National High School (BPTMNHs). Upon approval, additional permissions were obtained from the School Supervisor and the School Principal to facilitate the distribution of the survey questionnaires. Before administering the survey, the researcher ensured ethical compliance by providing assent and consent forms. Since students were minors, their parents or guardians signed a parental consent form, while students provided their assent to participate voluntarily. Mathematics teachers also signed a separate consent form confirming their willingness to participate in the study.

Once all necessary approvals were secured, the survey was administered over one week. To comply with health and safety protocols, the researcher ensured that all materials were sanitized and that a face mask and face shield were worn during distribution. The questionnaires were handed over to class advisers, responsible for distributing and collecting learning modules from parents every week. The completed survey forms were retrieved from the Principal's Office, ensuring confidentiality. After data collection, the researcher worked with a statistician to tabulate and analyze the survey results. To protect participant confidentiality, physical survey forms were securely stored in a locked cabinet, while digital records were kept in a password-protected computer. Once the research was completed, physical documents were shredded, and digital files were permanently deleted to maintain ethical data management practices.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring that respondents were well-informed about the nature and purpose of the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw without consequences. Their personal information and responses were treated with utmost confidentiality to protect their privacy. The study strictly complied with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012, through various measures. Before participation, respondents (or their parents/guardians, in the case of minors) signed consent and assent forms, ensuring they understood the study's purpose, their rights, and how their data would be used. No personal identifiers were collected to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, and responses were kept anonymous to prevent any linkage to specific individuals. Data security was also a priority, with electronic files stored in a password-protected system and physical documents kept in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only to the researcher. Access to the collected data was limited to the researcher and authorized personnel to prevent unauthorized disclosure. Finally, after the study, physical documents were shredded, and digital files were permanently deleted, ensuring ethical data disposal. These measures guaranteed full compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, protecting respondents' rights and ensuring responsible data handling.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of Teachers, Students, and Teachers

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of teachers based on age. According to the classification of Ngegba, Mansaray, and Thulla (2016), the majority of respondents (90%) fall within the 21-30 age range, categorizing them as young adults. Based on Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, individuals in this stage can think abstractly, apply deductive reasoning, and solve hypothetical problems (Cherry, 2020). This suggests that most respondents can understand the concepts and challenges of distance education. Piaget's formal operational stage further supports this finding, emphasizing that young adults (21-30) possess advanced cognitive abilities to analyze complex issues, adapt to new methodologies, and navigate digital learning environments. Their capacity for abstract reasoning allows them to grasp the theoretical aspects of remote education, while their deductive skills help them evaluate challenges and develop practical solutions. Consequently, these young adult teachers are well-equipped to assess, manage, and address the complexities of distance education, reinforcing their ability to implement effective teaching strategies in a modular learning setting.

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of teachers based on sex. The data shows that female teachers constitute the majority, representing 70% (7 out of 10 respondents), while male teachers account for 30% (3). This indicates that female teachers outnumber their male counterparts in terms of representation. Table 3 presents the demographic profile of teachers based on educational attainment. The data shows that 70% (7 out of 10 respondents) are pursuing a master's degree, having earned units but not yet completing the program.

Additionally, 10% (1 respondent) hold only a bachelor's degree, meeting the minimum qualification, while another 10% have completed a master's degree. One respondent (10%) did not indicate their educational attainment. These findings suggest that most teachers are highly motivated to further their education, continuously enhancing their knowledge and competencies for professional growth and development. Table 4 presents the demographic profile of teachers based on their years of experience in teaching Mathematics, classified according to the bracketing of Rakumako and Laugksch (2010). The data shows that 50% (5 out of 10 respondents) have 4–10 years of teaching experience, while 40% (4 respondents) have three years or less. Additionally, 10% (1 respondent) have 11–20 years of experience. These findings suggest that most teachers are not new to the profession and have gained substantial experience in teaching Mathematics.

Table 5 presents the demographic profile of teachers based on the number of training sessions attended on distance education. The data reveals that 50% (5 out of 10 respondents) have not attended any seminar or training related to distance education. Meanwhile, 20% (2 respondents) have attended training once. Additionally, 10% (1 respondent) attended training sessions four times, another five times, and another six times, respectively. These findings suggest that while some teachers have received training, a significant portion still lacks formal preparation for distance education. O'Neill (2020) emphasized the importance of professional development in improving employee performance, enhancing commitment, strengthening retention and growth, fostering continuous learning, tracking skill development, addressing weaknesses, and ultimately leading to better stakeholder outcomes. Given that half of the respondents have not received any training, there is a clear need for more professional development opportunities to equip teachers with the necessary skills and strategies for effective distance education.

Table 1. *Demographic Profile of the Teachers in terms of Age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-30	9	90.0
31-40	0	0.00
41-50	1	10.0

Table 2. *Demographic Profile of the Teachers in terms of Sex*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	3	30.0
Female	7	70.0

Table 3. *Demographic Profile of the Teachers in terms of Educational Attainment*

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bachelor's Degree	1	10.0
Master's Unit	7	70.0
Master's Degree	1	10.0
Did not indicate	1	10.0

Table 4. *Demographic Profile of the Teachers in terms of Years of Experience Teaching Mathematics*

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3 or less	4	40.0
4-10	5	50.0
11-20	1	10.0

Table 5. *Demographic Profile of the Teachers in terms of Number of Trainings Attended on Distance Education*

Number of Trainings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	5	50.0
1	2	20.0
2	0	0.00
3	0	0.00
4	1	10.0
5	1	10.0
6 or more	1	10.0

Table 6 presents the demographic profile of students based on age, categorized according to the classification of Mabossy-Mobouna and Mokemiabeka (2018). The data shows that the largest group of students falls within the 14–15 age range, comprising 160 students (37.38%). This is followed by 128 students (29.91%) aged 16–18 years and 126 students (29.44%) below 14 years old. Meanwhile, only 10 students (2.34%) are over 18. These findings indicate that most students are in their early to mid-adolescence, a stage characterized by significant cognitive, emotional, and social development. This age distribution may have important implications for their learning needs, ability to engage with modular distance learning, and overall academic performance. Understanding these developmental factors can help educators design instructional strategies that cater to students' cognitive abilities and motivational levels.

Table 7 presents the demographic profile of students based on sex. The data shows that female students accounted for 242 participants, representing 56.54% of the sample, while male students totaled 181, comprising 42.29%. The total sample size included 428 students. These findings indicate that more females than males participated in the study, which may reflect a higher female representation in the student population or greater engagement in academic activities. While the study does not explicitly examine gender differences in cognitive development, it recognizes that all respondents, regardless of sex, possess the cognitive abilities necessary for higher-order thinking and conceptual understanding. This capacity for abstract reasoning is essential for effective learning and intellectual growth, particularly in modular distance education.

Table 6. *Demographic Profile of the students in terms of Age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 14	126	29.4
14-15	160	37.4
16-18	128	30.0
Over 18	4	0.90
Did not indicate	10	2.30

Table 7. *Demographic Profile of the students in terms of Sex and Age*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	181	42.3
Female	242	56.5
Did not indicate	5	1.20

Table 8 presents the demographic profile of parents based on sex. The data shows that female parents accounted for 364 participants, representing 85.05% of the sample, while male parents totaled 49, comprising 11.49%. The total sample included 428 parents. These findings indicate that significantly more female parents participated in the study than male parents. This may suggest that mothers are more actively involved in their children's education, particularly in modular distance learning. Table 9 presents the demographic profile of parents based on age. The data indicates that most parent respondents fall within the 35–44 age range, which Medley (1980) classifies as early middle adulthood. Meanwhile, the smallest group comprises parents aged 65 and older, classified as late adulthood, with only eight respondents (1.87%). These findings suggest that most parent respondents are in their middle years, neither too young nor too old. This age distribution may affect their ability to support their children's education, particularly in modular distance learning.

Table 10 presents the demographic profile of parents based on educational attainment. The data reveals that most respondents are elementary graduates, with a frequency of 108 (25.23%). At the same time, the lowest numbers are recorded for those with a master's degree and a doctorate, each with only one respondent (0.23%). These findings suggest that most parent respondents have limited formal education, which may impact their ability to support their children's learning. According to Drew (2019), a lack of schooling can lead to poor well-being, limited communication skills, shorter life expectancy, unemployment, exploitation, and gender discrimination. In the context of modular distance learning, their educational background may present challenges in assisting their children's academic progress.

Table 8. Demographic Profile of Parents in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	49	11.5
Female	364	85.0
Did not indicate	15	3.50

Table 9. Demographic Profile of Parents in terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21 and below	6	1.40
22-34	51	11.9
35-44	193	45.1
45-64	144	33.6
65 and above	8	1.90
Did not indicate	26	6.10

Table 10. Demographic Profile of Parents in terms of Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Not able to attend Elem	8	1.87
Elem Level	106	24.77
Elementary Graduate	108	25.23
High School Level	42	9.81
High School Graduate	34	7.94
College Level	19	4.44
Bachelor's Degree	17	3.97
Master Units	4	0.93
Master's Degree	1	0.23
Doctorate Units	6	1.40
Doctorate Degree	1	0.23
Did not indicate	82	19.16

3.2 Teachers' Readiness

Table 11 shows the summary of teachers' readiness.

Table 11. Summary of Teachers' Readiness

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Controlling of Outputs	4.11	0.63	Ready
Providing of Feedback and Tutorials	4.05	0.58	Ready
Attitude	2.95	0.88	Moderately Ready
Time-management and Commitment	3.85	0.90	Ready
Composite	3.73	0.89	Ready

In terms of skills for controlling the outputs of the learners, out of the 10 items, four have a verbal description of "very ready." These leading statements indicate that teachers are highly prepared to manage learners' outputs. They are ready to inform learners and parents about the importance of submitting outputs on time, setting deadlines for submission, prioritizing the timely collection of outputs, and being considerate of learners' situations and reasons for late submissions while still implementing consequences. The remaining six indicators have weighted means described as "ready." Hence, the composite mean also falls within the same description. UNICEF has recognized the essential role of well-ordered monitoring in distance education. Monitoring, checking, and evaluating student outputs are among the challenges teachers face in the modular distance learning modality (Castroverde & Acal, 2021). The current study's findings indicate that teachers are ready to handle these challenges in modular distance education. According to Nordby et al. (as cited in Santelli et al., 2020), one motivation for students to submit their outputs on time is implementing a late policy that includes a penalty. This is one of the effective ways to control students' work. Moreover, the lowest standard deviation among all indicators is 0.47, the highest is 0.82, and the composite is 0.63. These values fall under low and very low dispersion categories, implying a close clustering of responses around the mean, as stated by Zambrano, Pertuz, Pérez, and Straccia (2019). This further suggests a high degree of homogeneity in teachers' readiness regarding their skills in controlling the outputs of the learners.

Regarding skills in providing feedback and tutorials based on students' performance, out of the 10 items, four verbally described "very ready." These key statements indicate that teachers are highly prepared to provide

feedback and tutorials based on learners' work. They are ready to understand and answer learners' queries, explain inquiries or questions regarding any or all lessons in their modules, be available at all times for learners who need a lecture or tutorial, and immediately understand and respond to parents' queries. On the other hand, the remaining indicators have weighted means described as "ready." Hence, the composite mean also falls within the same description. Black and Wiliam (as cited in Parker et al., 2017) stated that receiving feedback on one's skills and understanding is a vital component of the learning process. The results of the present study on teachers' readiness to give feedback and tutorials indicate that the respondents are ready to provide feedback on their learners' skills. Herrera (2021) identifies that one of the factors with a very high influence on teachers' level of readiness is feedback on learners' output. UNICEF has emphasized that providing feedback to students on their learning progress is important for their motivation. The results of this study show that teachers are ready to provide feedback to learners, which can inspire them to progress in their learning. Furthermore, the lowest standard deviation among all indicators is 0.42, the highest is 0.67, and the composite is 0.58. These values fall under the categories of low and very low dispersion, implying a close clustering of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano et al. (2019). This further suggests a high degree of homogeneity in teachers' readiness regarding skills in providing feedback and tutorials based on learners' work.

In terms of attitude towards modular distance education, almost all the indicators have a verbal description of "moderately ready." Teachers are moderately ready to communicate through calls, believe that modular learning is convenient, feel comfortable communicating through chats or texts, and believe that the lecture method can still be used effectively in modular distance learning. They also believe that modular learning is easy, that high-quality learning experiences can occur in modular distance education, and that communicating through journal notebooks is comfortable. Furthermore, they believe that modular learning effectively delivers quality education and that shifting from the traditional teaching method to the modular approach is straightforward. Castroverde and Acal (2021) argued that maintaining a positive outlook is one of the ways teachers handle the challenges of modular distance learning. However, the current study's findings indicate that teachers do not share this perspective on modular distance education. One indicator suggests that teachers are less ready, as they believe that modular learning cannot offer the same high-quality education as face-to-face learning.

In general, the composite mean verbally describes "moderately ready," implying that teachers have a moderate attitude towards modular learning – neither entirely positive nor negative. Additionally, the standard deviation for some indicators suggests high dispersion, while it indicates low dispersion for others. The composite standard deviation of 0.88 is categorized as low dispersion, implying a close clustering of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano et al. (2019). This further suggests a high degree of homogeneity in teachers' readiness in terms of their attitude towards modular learning.

In terms of time management and commitment, all indicators have a verbal description of "ready." This means that teachers are prepared to be responsive to students, replying to their messages through chats or texts during office hours, preferably between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. They also allocate time to communicate with parents at least four to five times per week through various means, respond to students' queries at least once a day via calls, chats, or texts, and remain committed to answering students outside office hours. Additionally, they dedicate time to staying in touch with students several times per week, managing their time efficiently, addressing parents' inquiries daily, organizing and planning their modular distance classes, and setting aside specific times for tutorials and lectures. They are also committed to prioritizing students' needs over personal concerns.

In general, the composite weighted mean has a verbal description of "ready," which further implies that teachers are prepared regarding time management and commitment. The current study's findings indicate that teachers are ready to handle this challenge. Benavides and Manalo (2021) revealed that teachers can provide individual attention to learners who require extra assistance. However, their study also found that teachers dedicate a limited number of hours per week to distance teaching, which aligns with the present study's findings regarding teachers' commitment.

On the other hand, Castroverde and Acal (2021) argued that time management and flexibility are among the strategies teachers use to cope with the challenges of modular distance education. Similar to attitude towards modular learning, the standard deviation for some indicators suggests high dispersion, while others indicate low

dispersion. The composite standard deviation of 0.90 is categorized as low dispersion, implying a close clustering of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano, Pertuz, Pérez, and Straccia (2019). This further suggests a high degree of homogeneity in teachers' time management and commitment readiness.

3.3 Students' Readiness

Table 12 shows the summary of students' readiness.

Table 12. *Summary of Students' Readiness*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Time-management and Commitment	3.77	1.01	Ready
Independent Learning	3.75	0.96	Ready
Attitude	3.46	1.07	Ready
Composite	3.66	1.02	Ready

In terms of time management and commitment, all indicators have a verbal description of "ready." This signifies that students are prepared to complete the tasks in their modules daily, manage their time well, and remain committed to being attentive and following teachers' feedback on their outputs or work. They also meet deadlines set by their teachers, allocate time to organize and plan for their modular distance classes, and make time whenever their teacher offers a tutorial or lecture on any or all of their Mathematics lessons. Additionally, students prioritize learning with their modules above all else. They actively communicate with their teachers by sending messages or texts with any queries regarding their mathematics lessons as soon as possible, maintaining contact through various means of communication, and calling their teachers whenever they need clarification on their mathematics modules.

Amir et al. (2020) found that students' time management and difficulty maintaining focus for extended periods posed internal challenges to distance learning during COVID-19. However, the current study's findings suggest that students are ready to manage their time effectively and demonstrate commitment to their studies. Parker et al. (as cited in Halpern & Tucker, 2015) state that distance learning programs offer flexibility, particularly for adult students, as they enable them to balance their jobs and family responsibilities. Furthermore, Sallehuddin, Huzaidy, and Rosli (2019) found that time management is significantly and positively correlated with students' academic performance.

Therefore, the present study's findings suggest that students are likely to perform well during modular distance education because they are ready in terms of time management and commitment. The composite weighted mean verbally describes "ready," further reinforcing that students are prepared in these aspects. Additionally, the standard deviation for some indicators suggests high dispersion, while it indicates low dispersion for others. The composite standard deviation of 1.01 is categorized as high dispersion, implying a wide spread of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano, Pertuz, Pérez, and Straccia (2019). This further suggests a lower degree of homogeneity in students' readiness concerning time management and commitment.

In terms of skills in learning independently, all indicators have a verbal description of "ready." This signifies that students are prepared to take responsibility for constructing and carrying out their learning, make decisions to meet their learning needs and learn independently. They also set goals to achieve their learning objectives, monitor their progress, and take ownership of their learning. Additionally, they understand their learning styles, evaluate their academic development, feel confident meeting their learning needs, and work effectively in small group tasks while developing their ideas.

The present study's findings indicate that students are ready to learn independently. Brewer and Hogg (2017) provided several recommendations for developing excellence in independent learning and promoting student autonomy. One of their key recommendations is to offer more structured attention to independent learning when developing educational modules and to provide continuous support. According to Churiya et al. (2020), Indonesia's readiness for distance education during the pandemic revealed that learners had limited self-regulated learning, making it difficult to manage their distance learning activities effectively.

Despite these challenges, the present study's findings suggest that students are prepared for independent learning in the modular distance education setting. The composite weighted mean verbally describes "ready," reinforcing that students are prepared for independent learning. Additionally, the standard deviation for some indicators suggests high dispersion, while it indicates low dispersion for others. The composite standard deviation of 0.96 is categorized as low dispersion, implying a close clustering of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano, Pertuz, Pérez, and Straccia (2019). This further suggests high homogeneity in students' readiness for independent learning.

Six indicators have a verbal description of "ready" in terms of attitude towards modular distance education. These leading statements indicate readiness, as students believe that modular learning is convenient and effective in delivering quality education and that the lecture method can still be used effectively in modular distance learning. Additionally, they feel comfortable communicating through journal notebooks and believe that high-quality learning experiences can occur with modular distance education. They also believe that modular learning offers the same high-quality education as face-to-face learning.

On the other hand, the remaining indicators have weighted means described as "moderately ready." This means that students feel comfortable communicating through chats or texts, believe it is easy to shift from traditional to modular learning, communicate through calls, and perceive modular learning as easy. Overall, students have a positive attitude towards modular learning.

Sahara (2014) revealed that one factor contributing to a negative attitude among students in distance education is the lack of interaction between teachers and learners or among learners. However, Isik et al. (2010) stated that students tend to feel more comfortable with distance learning than traditional face-to-face learning and that distance learning can be more effective. However, the present study's findings suggest that learners' readiness regarding their outlook toward modular distance education remains at a moderate level. These results are also supported by Oztruk et al. (2017), who explored students' opinions on the implementation of distance education and found that students' attitudes toward distance education were generally moderate.

Furthermore, the standard deviation for some indicators suggests high dispersion, while it indicates low dispersion for others. The composite standard deviation of 1.07 is categorized as low dispersion, implying a close clustering of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano et al. (2019). This further suggests a higher degree of homogeneity in students' readiness regarding their attitude towards modular learning.

3.4 Parents' Readiness

Table 13 shows the summary of parents' readiness.

Table 13. *Summary of Parents' Readiness*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Time-management and Commitment	3.91	1.01	Ready
Attitude	3.34	1.11	Moderately Ready
Composite	3.63	1.10	Ready

Regarding time management and commitment, parents are ready to be responsive to their child's needs in ways that support learning. On the other hand, the remaining indicators have weighted means with verbal descriptions of "ready." This indicates that parents are prepared to supervise or oversee their child's progress to ensure they complete their module tasks. They prioritize their child's learning needs above all else, manage their time effectively, and plan to provide support and assistance with their child's modules. Additionally, parents are ready to communicate with the teacher whenever their child needs clarification on lessons, send feedback to the teacher regarding their child's performance at home at least once a week, and set specific times to assist their child with tutorials and lectures. They are also committed to responding to teachers' feedback through chats or texts at least once a day and through calls at least once a day.

The present study's findings suggest that parents are ready to actively participate in the teaching-learning process of modular distance education for their children. Collado et al. (2021) concluded that learners whose parents take the time to assist with their learning are more likely to engage positively in their modular lessons, regardless of

internet access. Aguja et al. (2021) recognized parents' material and emotional support as key contributions to students' learning at home. The findings of this study further suggest that parents are prepared to support their children, as they can effectively manage their time and demonstrate a strong commitment.

The composite weighted mean verbally describes "ready," reinforcing that parents are prepared in terms of time management and commitment. Additionally, the standard deviation for some indicators indicates high dispersion, while it indicates low dispersion for others. The composite standard deviation of 1.01 is categorized as high dispersion, implying a broad clustering of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano et al. (2019). This further suggests a lower degree of homogeneity in parents' readiness regarding time management and commitment.

The three leading indicators have verbal descriptions of "ready" in terms of their attitude toward modular distance education. This signifies that parents are prepared, as they believe that the lecture method can still be used effectively in modular distance learning, that modular learning is effective in delivering quality education, and that modular learning can offer high-quality education similar to the face-to-face method.

On the other hand, the remaining indicators have weighted means with verbal descriptions of "moderately ready." This indicates that parents are only moderately prepared and feel somewhat comfortable communicating through calls. They believe it is relatively easy to shift from traditional teaching to modular learning and think that high-quality learning experiences can still occur with modular distance education. Additionally, they believe that modular learning is convenient, and they feel comfortable communicating through journal notebooks, chats, or texts, and they find it relatively easy.

Aguja et al. (2021) state that parents recognize the necessity of adapting to the new education system and value continuing their children's education. However, the present study's findings suggest that parents' readiness, in terms of their perspective on modular distance education, is at a moderate level. According to Siahaan et al. (2021), while most parents are willing to support their children in distance education, many struggle to comprehend the lessons.

The composite weighted mean verbally describes "moderately ready," implying that parents are only somewhat prepared regarding their attitude toward modular learning. Regarding attitude interpretation, they hold a neutral stance toward modular learning—neither positive nor negative. Additionally, the standard deviation for all indicators indicates high dispersion. The composite standard deviation of 1.11 is categorized as high dispersion, implying a broad clustering of responses around the mean, according to Zambrano et al. (2019). This further suggests a lower degree of homogeneity in parents' readiness regarding their attitude toward modular learning.

Relationship Between the Teachers' Profile and their Readiness

The ages of the teachers have a weak to moderate relationship with their readiness. Meanwhile, the sex of the teachers shows a strong association with their readiness for distance learning, and their educational attainment also has a strong association with their preparedness for distance education. This further implies that sex and educational attainment significantly impact teachers' readiness. According to the Learner Enrollment and Survey Forms, parents preferred modular learning for the school year 2020-2021 (Arcilla, 2020). Although parents' participation is perceived as one of the challenges, they still chose a learning modality best suited for their children and placed importance on continuing education. Herrera (2021) also found that the educational attainment of teachers is significantly correlated with their readiness for distance education.

The strength of the relationship between years of teaching mathematics and readiness ranges from a very weak negative relationship to a weak negative relationship. On the other hand, the number of training attended and readiness show weak to moderate negative relationships. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation yielded a strong negative coefficient for the number of training attended and the readiness of attitude towards modular learning. This signifies that the more training teachers attended, the more they became aware of the difficulties of modular distance education.

Herrera (2021) revealed that training attended about distance education is significantly correlated with teachers' level of readiness for distance learning. This supports the present study's findings, as it also revealed a significant relationship between teachers' readiness and the training they attended for distance education. However, according to Alea et al. (2020), the number of years in teaching is strongly related to teachers' readiness for distance education. This contradicts the present study's findings, which showed that the relationship between teachers' readiness and years of teaching is not significant.

3.5 Relationship Between the Students' Profile and their Readiness

Among all the variables analyzed, the p-value of age about both independent learning and attitude toward modular learning is less than the significance level of 0.05. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that age is significantly related to students' readiness in terms of independent learning and attitude toward modular learning. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation for all significantly related variables yielded positive coefficients, indicating weak relationships. This suggests that as students age, their readiness for independent learning and modular distance education also increases.

Parker et al. (as cited in Halpern & Tucker, 2015) found that adult learners prefer distance education due to its flexibility. This finding supports the current study, as it implies a significant relationship between students' age and readiness for distance learning. Since adult learners often prefer distance education, they tend to be more prepared for modular distance learning. However, some studies suggest that female learners are more inclined toward distance education (Isik et al., 2010; Sahora, 2014). This contradicts the findings of the present study, which revealed that students' sex does not have a significant relationship with their readiness for modular distance education.

3.6 Relationship Between the Parents' Profile and their Readiness

The p-values for all the variables analyzed are greater than the significance level of 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, implying that parents' age, sex, and educational attainment are not significantly related to their readiness for modular distance education. Bokayev et al. (2021) found that parents' age is positively related to their readiness for distance education. However, this finding contradicts the results of the present study, which indicate no significant relationship between parents' age and their readiness for modular distance education. Additionally, the findings of this study reveal no significant relationship between parents' readiness and their sex or educational attainment. This suggests these demographic factors do not influence parents' preparedness for modular distance education.

4.0 Conclusion

The study revealed several significant findings regarding the readiness of teachers, students, and parents in modular distance education. Teachers are mostly young adults; female teachers dominate in quantity; almost all of them are not yet Master's Degree graduates, most of them have teaching experience not exceeding 10 years, and almost all of them did not experience training in distance education. Despite this, teachers exhibited the highest level of readiness compared to students and parents. However, an interesting finding emerged: teachers with more training tended to identify more difficulties in distance education. Most students are 13 years old, and females dominate in terms of quantity. As the students' ages increase, their independent learning and attitude towards modular learning also increase. Older students tend to manifest a higher level of independence than younger students.

Meanwhile, parents are mostly middle - aged, dominantly female, and lack education. The parents' age, sex, and educational attainment do not matter towards their readiness in modular distance education. No matter what their ages are, sexes, and educational attainments, they have the same extent of readiness in modular distance education. However, they had the lowest readiness compared to teachers and students. Overall, among all respondents, teachers showed the highest level of readiness, followed by students, while parents had the lowest. The aspect of readiness with the lowest extent was the attitude toward modular learning, particularly among teachers and parents. These findings highlight the need for enhancement training for teachers and parents to improve their readiness and effectiveness in supporting modular distance education.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors specify equal involvement in each section. The authors go through and approve the final work.

6.0 Funding

This work did not receive funds from any agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest in the publication of this paper, as declared by the authors.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors extend their heartfelt gratitude to the individuals and institutions that contributed to the completion of this work.

First and foremost, we thank the Almighty God for granting us the strength, wisdom, and perseverance needed to accomplish this study.

We are also profoundly grateful to our families and loved ones for their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding throughout this journey.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the faculty, staff, and thesis committee of the Negros Oriental State University Graduate School, led by Dr. Michael P. Baldado, for their expertise, guidance, and dedication to academic excellence.

Additionally, we thank the principal, teachers, parents, and students of BPTMNHs for their valuable time and cooperation in providing the necessary data for this research.

To God be the highest honor and glory.

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Analyzing the Use of Evidence in Grade 11 Learners' Position Papers

Abigail P. Lorenzo

Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines

Author Email: abigailplorengo.lpt@gmail.com

Date received: February 11, 2025

Date revised: March 8, 2025

Date accepted: March 30, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Lorenzo, A. (2025). Analyzing the use of evidence in Grade 11 learners' position papers. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 442-451. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.081>

Abstract. The study analyzed the use of evidence-based statements by Grade 11 learners in their position papers. Employing a quantitative content analysis method, the study assessed the proficiency of 133 participants in terms of evidence use using an adapted rubric. Hemberger's (2017) classification of functional evidence-based statements was used for analysis. Findings revealed that the majority of the grade 11 learners were still Developing in terms of their evidence-use proficiency. Moreover, "Support My Own (M+)" evidence-based statements were used most frequently, while "Weaken My Own (M-)" statements were used least commonly. Lastly, there is a statistically significant difference in the use of Support My Own, Weaken Other, and Support Other evidence-based statements across proficiency levels. The study concluded that as writers' proficiency increases, they improve in incorporating and articulating evidence to support their assertions. It recommends developing instructional materials that focus on scaffolding, such as graphic organizers to help students outline their text, peer review sessions to practice providing constructive feedback, which can be applied to their evidence interpretation when writing, and writing tasks that require critical analysis, such as literature review projects. Future research should explore intervention strategies to address identified challenges.

Keywords: Interactional metadiscourse; Evidence-based statements; Argumentative writing; Grade 11 learners; Proficiency levels.

1.0 Introduction

Argumentative texts symbolize critical thinking, a core competency in the 21st century (Convertini, 2021; Giri & Paily, 2020; Marni et al., 2019; McNaughton et al., 2019; Kuhn, 2019; Hong & Talib, 2018). Ozfidan and Mitchell (2022) define argumentative writing as "a specific writing genre that highlights a position on an issue or topic and describes and supports this position with reliable pieces of evidence" (p.123). A well-developed argumentation skill is beneficial to one's academic, professional, and civic life. This genre is prominent in international standardized language tests (Lee, 2020, as cited in Shi et al., 2022; Plakansa & Gebril, 2017, as cited in Pavavijarn, 2022), which are beneficial for individuals seeking to study and work abroad. It also plays a role in producing informed citizens who are critical and considerate in evaluating information, especially in the digital world, where there is easy access to false information and increased vulnerability to the exclusiveness of perspectives (McGrew et al., 2017, as cited in McNaughton et al., 2019).

Furthermore, success in the workplace is influenced by argumentative writing skills, as professionals are expected to create project proposals and cover letters for job applications and promotions. Although research on argumentative texts has been conducted, several facets of this genre remain underexplored. Researchers have studied topics such as the types and appropriateness of the evidence used (Yilmaz-Na & Sonmez, 2023), the type

and frequency of evidence usage in a text (Zhang, 2018), and how learners use evidence in oral argumentation (Jin et al., 2019). However, there is a dearth of studies on how evidence is interpreted or talked about to produce a well-developed argument. This area of research is substantial, for scholars have found that a common challenge among argumentative text writers is dealing with conflicting credible information or evidence (Banda et al., 2019; Du & List, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to investigate how research participants respond to and write about evidence that supports and conflicts with their claims.

In the K to 12 English Curriculum Guide for Grades 1 to 10 in the Philippines, one of the listed principles of a practical language arts and multiliteracies curriculum emphasizes argumentative writing. In Senior High School, specifically in the course Reading and Writing Skills, the expected writing outputs include a type of academic text called position paper, which falls under the umbrella of argumentative writing. Currently, senior high school students in the Philippines are demonstrating significant areas of improvement in argumentative writing. Previous studies revealed that learners do not have enough schema about linguistics and writing strategies that can improve their overall writing skills (Urbano et al., 2021); their ability to support their claims with objective evidence should also be improved (Samosa, 2021); the student's ability in distinguishing biases in their texts must also be developed (Dizon, 2021). Totto and Ramos (2021) concluded that senior high school students, as ESL learners, still lack expertise in argumentative methods. These data suggest the need for explicit instruction in the argumentative writing genre in schools (Rivera, 2022; Malibiran, 2022).

This research fills a niche in previous studies by focusing on evidence-based statements, an underexplored facet in argumentative texts. The paper aims to analyze how the interpretation of evidence impacts the perceived quality and evaluative outcomes of academic writing. Additionally, further investigation is necessary, particularly in the context of ESL senior high school students in the Philippines, to gain a deeper understanding of their current argumentative writing proficiency level and the potential factors that contribute to their success in writing.

The framework of this study is based on Hemberger et al.'s (2017) categorization of the functions that evidence-based statements serve. This categorization is based on the dialogical theory of argumentation by Kuhn (2010), which posits that argument quality is grounded in two principles: acknowledging opposing views and utilizing evidence. Hemberger et al. (2017) classified evidence-based segments into two categories: functional and non-functional uses of evidence. Nonfunctional pieces of evidence are those that the writer cites in the text but do not adequately connect to any claim or argument; on the other hand, functional evidence is that which is interpreted by the writer. The study focuses on the functional evidence and the four specific functions that evidence-based statements serve: (1) support my own - a statement serving to support one's position; (2) weaken other - a statement serving to critique and thereby weaken the opposing position; (3) support other - statement serving to acknowledge the strengths of the opposing position, and (4) weaken my own - a statement serving to acknowledge weaknesses of one's position. The findings in this study can contribute to the fields of discourse analysis and applied linguistics, providing ESL educators with valuable insights into the writing development and proficiency of students in interpreting evidence. The data can serve as a basis for developing pedagogical practices in teaching writing and composition at various levels of proficiency.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed the quantitative content analysis method and a comparative research design to investigate the significant differences in respondents' levels of competence in terms of evidence use. The content analysis method is a research technique that aims to produce objective and valid analyses of texts and other meaningful data (Krippendorff, 2004, as cited in Bengtsson, 2016). This method was applied in the study, as its aim was to quantify the evidence-based statements used in the respondents' texts to analyze patterns and trends from the data. Additionally, comparative analysis is used to assess the variations between groups by identifying patterns, trends, and relationships within the data (Bryman, 2016). This design was employed in the research to determine whether the use of evidence-based statements differs significantly among beginning, developing, and accomplished writers.

2.2 Research Participants

All participants in the study were enrolled in the academic year 2022-2023, taking one of the core subjects in the senior high school curriculum, explicitly Reading and Writing Skills, with the researcher serving as their instructor. In the course, one of the requirements was to write a position paper of at least 300 words. By the time the research was conducted, the respondents had already been taught the basics of writing an argumentative text, including the presence of a claim, acknowledgment of counterarguments or counterclaims, use of evidence to support a claim, and making a connection between the claim and the evidence provided.

2.3 Research Instrument

The following instruments were used to gather the data needed for the study: the rated argumentative compositions of the Grade 11 students and the adopted rubric from the module instructional material used in the Schools Division of Mandaluyong for the position paper. Only the “Use of Examples and Evidence” criterion in the rubric was applied in the research, as the study focused on how respondents interpreted and discussed their evidence. The scoring scale of the rubric ranged from Beginning to Accomplished.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection procedure of this study had four stages:

First, the researcher asked permission from the relevant institutions and individuals to conduct the study. In this step, research ethics clearance was secured by the researcher from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines’ University Research Ethics Center; then, the researcher requested the school head’s approval to conduct the research in the school, the participants of the study were also given consent and assent forms to confirm their willingness to participate in the research.

Second, 201 senior high school students were tasked with writing two argumentative texts, also known as position papers, to be included in their writing portfolios. As part of the Reading and Writing Skills curriculum guide, discussions in writing a position paper were conducted with all the participants. Prior to the day of data collection, the students were tasked with printing three articles on the topic of Jeepney Modernization in the Philippines and three articles on the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools from the opinion column of a newspaper (either printed or online) of their choice. The essays they composed addressed the following topics: (1) Should Jeepneys be modernized? Moreover, (2) Should AI be banned from school assignments? The topics were timely and relevant issues at the time of data gathering. Respondents were also asked to write topic outlines for their position papers before the writing day. Mobile phones were not allowed during the writing process, so the evidence used by the participants was from printed articles. This was to ensure that the data collected was valid, that is, free from technological and artificial intelligence assistance. It took the students two one-and-a-half-hour sessions to complete writing their position papers.

The third stage was data selection. All the submitted argumentative essays were rated using the position paper rubric; however, only the “Use of Examples and Evidence” criterion was used to classify the papers into beginning, developing, and accomplished proficiency levels. Two other raters evaluated the essays of the students, both of whom have master’s degrees in English language teaching. The average of the three ratings was used as the final score for the evidence-use criterion. Then, the researcher extracted the functional evidence-based statements used in the compositions.

The fourth stage was the coding process. The functional evidence-based statements were identified, analyzed, and coded manually following Hemberger et al.’s (2017) coding scheme: (a) Support my own. A statement serving to support one’s position (M+) or (b) to weaken the position of others. A statement serving to critique and thereby weaken the opponent’s position (O-), (c) Support other. A statement serving to acknowledge the strengths of the opponent’s position (O+), (d) Weaken my own. A statement serving to acknowledge weaknesses of one’s position (M-) (p.9)

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The researcher declares no competing interest in the conduct of this study. The methodology for this study was approved by the Research Ethics Panel of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines - University Research

Ethics Center. Voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were fully informed of the aims of the task and that their written texts would be used solely for research purposes.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of the respondents' proficiency levels. A little more than half of the grade 11 writers fall under the Developing level of proficiency. With a percentage of 50.38, the data indicate that the majority of respondents in the study possess foundational skills in developing arguments, and their argumentative abilities can still be improved to become accomplished writers. Moreover, 49 (36.84%) of 133 respondents were rated Accomplished in the criterion of evidence interpretation. These writers were able to logically and effectively make connections between their claims and the different pieces of evidence presented. Meanwhile, only 17 out of the 133 (12.78%) participants were rated as beginning writers in terms of their evidence interpretation.

Table 1. *Profile of Respondents Based on Evidence-Use Proficiency Levels*

Proficiency Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Beginning	17	12.78
Developing	67	50.38
Accomplished	49	36.84

This distribution of proficiency levels aligns with Saricaoğlu and Ata (2022) and Samosa (2021), who, in their research, found that many students are still developing their critical thinking skills and the strategic use of evidence. This finding also aligns with a study by Compe (2017), which examined the English proficiency level of secondary students in the Philippines. The researcher concluded that, overall, Filipino ESL writers have moderate proficiency. Furthermore, Hemberger et al.'s study in 2015 stated that beginning writers often face the challenge of reasoning the connection between the claim and the evidence to form coherent and persuasive arguments, a challenge also observed in the present study's data.

Table 2 provides a frequency distribution and percentage of evidence-based statements used in position papers across three proficiency levels: Beginning, Developing, and Accomplished. The evidence-based statements are classified into four types: Support My Own (M+) are statements that support the author's position; Weaken Other (O-) are statements that weaken opposing positions; Support Other (O+) are statements that support other positions; finally, Weaken My Own (M-) are statements that weaken the author's position. The table shows that "Support My Own" (M+) is the most frequently used evidence-based statement, with the highest percentage for the Beginning proficiency level at 80.85%. It is also predominantly used among Developing and Accomplished writers, with 73.39% and 75.54%, respectively.

Table 2. *Frequency Distribution of the Evidence-Based Statements Used*

Statements	Beginning	Percent	Developing	Percent	Accomplished	Percentage
Support My Own (M+)	38	80.85	251	73.39	383	75.5
Weaken Other (O-)	7	14.89	47	13.74	56	11.0
Support Other (O+)	2	4.26	40	11.70	55	10.8
Weaken My Own (M-)	0	0.00	4	1.17	13	2.56
TOTAL	47	100	342	100	507	100

This outcome aligns with Iordanou and Constantinou's (2014) pre-intervention findings in their experimental design research on the use of evidence-based statements regarding socio-scientific issues, where they found that participants focused more on supporting their positions, indicating a firm stance on their claims. Additionally, the same results were reported by Kuhn et al. (2015), who tracked the development of middle-school students in terms of how they discuss evidence in argumentative texts over a two-year intervention. The study's findings show that the Support My Own (M+) evidence-based statement is the most prevalent in both the initial and final essays of the learners.

These similar results suggest that students are assertive in the claims they put forward and have confidence in the evidence they use to support them. However, the less frequent use of other evidence-based statements suggests that students need to acknowledge counterarguments more often.

Across proficiency levels, Beginning writers are the ones who predominantly use Support My Own (M+) statements to discuss their evidence. Table 3 shows that respondent number 13 used a total of 4 (M+) statements in both position papers and did not use any other type of evidence-based statement, relying heavily on discussing all the advantages or positive effects of one's arguments rather than handling the issue with a more nuanced approach. This finding is consistent with the work of Felton and Kuhn (2001), as cited in Hemberger et al. (2017), which documented that young adolescent writers typically concentrate on elaborating their claims without attention to the opponent's position.

Table 3. *Sample Evidence-Based Statements of Respondent 13 on the Essay Jeepney Modernization*

Evidence	Interpretation	Type of Evidence-Based Statement
One aspect of the ongoing debate surrounding jeepney modernization is the need for improved passenger safety and well-being. According to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), the outdated design of traditional jeepneys poses a significant risk to passengers in terms of physical safety and overall comfort.	These are highly evident, as traditional jeepneys often have cramped seating arrangements and lack essential safety features, such as seatbelts and proper air ventilation systems.	Support My Own (M+)
With that said, the implementation of the jeepney modernization program is beneficial as it introduces safer and more efficient jeepney models with features such as air conditioning, GPS tracking, and automated shut.	Equipping jeepneys with these facilities will help improve the overall travel experience by making commuting safer, more comfortable, and more convenient for passengers.	Support My Own (M+)
The president of Global Electric Transport (GET), Freddie Tinga, estimates that a single jeepney emits approximately 40 kilograms of carbon dioxide per day. A staggering 6,320,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide is released daily from the estimated 158,000 traditional jeepneys in the Philippines, having a substantial negative impact on the environment and air quality.	The emissions of carbon can significantly be reduced through the implementation of modernized jeepneys, thus encouraging a greener means of transportation for the public.	Support My Own (M+)
	For instance, electric Japanese have 0 emissions, which means utilizing these vehicles instead of traditional Japanese will lower air pollution and raise the level of general quality in urban areas.	Support My Own (M+)

This pattern of Beginning writers relying heavily on supporting evidence-based statements could imply that they are still developing the critical thinking skills needed to approach issues in an integrative manner, which is crucial in argumentative writing.

Table 4 presents the evidence-based statements used by respondent 103, who was marked as Accomplished and utilized the greatest number of (M+) statements among all respondents, totaling 26 (M+) statements across both position papers. It should also be noted that respondent 103 did not use any other type of evidence-based statement, suggesting that Accomplished writers also prefer to assert their arguments rather than engage in counterclaims.

This finding is supported by Du and List's (2020) study on how evidence is used in argumentative writing, wherein they concluded that students may have purposefully ignored data that are contradictory to their own, or perhaps they were reluctant or unable to settle conflicting information in the text even after becoming aware of their existence. Additionally, Hendramoko's (2023) research on improving students' argumentation skills, which found that students still require improvement in writing counterclaims and rebuttals, is also parallel to the present study's findings.

For further analysis, a comparison of how respondents 13 and 103 interpreted their evidence reveals that respondent 13, categorized as a Beginning writer, primarily provided a single-statement interpretation through simple paraphrasing or shallow elaboration of the evidence provided. Meanwhile, respondent 103, classified as an Accomplished writer, provided a more comprehensive interpretation of the evidence by not simply rephrasing the evidence but also claiming multiple probable positive and negative effects of the evidence cited.

Table 4. *Sample Evidence-Based Statements of Respondent 103 on the Essays Jeepney Modernization and Artificial Intelligence*

Evidence	Interpretation	Type of Evidence-Based Statement
As highlighted by the aforementioned Rappler journalist, Ralf Rivas, the LTRFB has announced a subsidy of 160,000 pesos, which accounts for only 5.7% of the total cost of a modern jeepney.	This significant disparity leaves traditional jeepney drivers in a precarious position, as they would be required to bridge the substantial financial gap on their own.	Support My Own (M+)
	Despite the subsidies, these drivers would still bear considerable financial burdens, posing a threat to their economic stability.	Support My Own (M+)
	It is crucial to remember that many traditional jeepney drivers come from low-income backgrounds and heavily rely on these vehicles as their primary source of income.	Support My Own (M+)
	Expecting them to shoulder such hefty financial obligations is unrealistic and may undermine their livelihoods.	Support My Own (M+)
	The cost of modern jeepneys may be too high for these drivers, making the transition incredibly challenging.	Support My Own (M+)
	Moreover, relying solely on uncertain subsidies as a solution presents additional risks that could further burden traditional drivers.	Support My Own (M+)
	By seamlessly integrating AI-driven tools and education, students gain access to invaluable resources that significantly support their academic pursuits.	Support My Own (M+)
	These tools facilitate streamlined research, writing, and problem-solving, effectively saving time while fostering critical thinking and nurturing creativity.	Support My Own (M+)
	Leveraging the power of AI, students can efficiently gather and process information, delve into complex concepts, and present their ideas coherently.	Support My Own (M+)
	Additionally, the immediate feedback provided by AI tools helps students identify areas for improvement and refine their work.	Support My Own (M+)
As doctor Roberto Galang, Dean of the John Gokongwei School of Management at Ateneo de Manila University emphasized in an interview with Rappler, students should be exposed to AI and its tools in academic settings.	This seamless integration of AI and education enhances learning outcomes, empowering students to excel in their academic pursuits and achieve exceptional results.	Support My Own (M+)

Table 5 above shows excerpts from the essay of respondent 48, classified as a Developing writer, on artificial intelligence. Facing evidence that is not supportive of his or her thesis statement (AI should not be banned from school), the writer opted to discredit the evidence by writing 5 Weaken Other (O-) statements. Although the writer provided logical points in the interpretation, pointing out historical references and positive outcomes of integrating AI in school, it could have been better if the writer acknowledged the validity and logic of the opposing data presented and provided rebuttals that are directly related to the decline of the research skills of learners if AI is not banned from school.

The frequent usage of Weaken Other evidence-based statements among Developing writers is consistent with the overall trend observed in this study, that is, low and moderately proficient writers are more disposed to focus on disputing opposing information while more developed writers (Accomplished) are more likely to use an integrative approach in writing by acknowledging opposing views. This result is supported by what Iordanou et al. (2019) found in a study centered on the examination of my-side bias of young adults in reading and writing, where they discussed that when students are faced with information that contradicts their position, they tend to perform low-level cognitive processing and simply disagree to or rebut the information. While this may imply the writers' confidence in their positions, it also emphasizes the lack of a well-rounded discussion of the topic at hand.

Table 5. Sample Evidence-Based Statements of Respondent 48 on the Essay Artificial Intelligence

Evidence	Interpretation	Type of Evidence-Based Statement
Some educators warn that if artificial intelligence spoon-feeds the information to the students, they will lack research skills (Jimenez, 2023).	However, if we look at other things, such as the use of calculators, we started with sticks, then we had writing materials and paper, and then we had abacuses before we even had calculators.	Weaken Other (O-)
	The invention of calculators and our reliance on them does not necessarily mean that people will become less skilled in math; instead, they make things much more efficient.	Weaken Other (O-)
	If we spend less time on little things, imagine how much more humanity can achieve.	Weaken Other (O-)
	Additionally, the immediate feedback provided by AI tools helps students identify areas for improvement and refine their work.	Weaken Other (O-)
	This seamless integration of AI and education enhances learning outcomes, empowering students to excel in their academic pursuits and achieve exceptional results.	Weaken Other (O-)

Table 6 presents excerpts from the position papers of respondent 112, categorized as Accomplished in levels of proficiency, who utilized the most Support Other (O+) evidence-based statements among all respondents. Analysis shows that, despite being opposed to jeepney modernization, the writer still acknowledged the potential benefits, including reduced carbon emissions and economic advantages. This shows a balanced analysis of the issue being discussed where the writer does not dismiss conflicting perspectives outright but instead incorporates them into their analysis. The increasing use of Support Other (O+) statements among Developing and Accomplished writers solidifies the trend that more proficient writers can recognize the value of looking at different perspectives, adding depth and credibility to their arguments. This aligns with the study by Du and List (2020), which emphasizes the importance of dialogic argumentation. Dialogic argumentation posits that writers should engage with opposing viewpoints to strengthen their arguments rather than merely refuting them.

Table 6. Sample Evidence-Based Statements of Respondent 112 on the Essays Artificial Intelligence and Jeepney Modernization

Evidence	Interpretation	Type of Evidence-Based Statement
One of the primary objectives of the jeepney modernization campaign is to reduce the amount of pollution generated by jeepneys. Modernized jeepneys are equipped with Euro-4 engines, which produce fewer emissions than older jeepney models (trndy.ph, 2023).	Older jeepney models produce much carbon and are frequently recognized as Clean Air Act violators.	Support Other (O+)
	Carbon emissions are expected to decrease significantly with the introduction of newer machines.	Support Other (O+)
As supported by Business Mirror (2023), one of the most significant advantages of jeepney upgrading is the potential for increased employment creation in the country.	The upgrading of jeepneys may increase the demand for skilled drivers and operators.	Support Other (O+)
	With the need for newer models, there is also a growing demand for workers and laborers in the automobile production industry.	Support Other (O+)
Teachers are concerned that students might utilize AI for cheating, as a generator, automated homework assistance, harassment of procrastination, and plagiarism (Teacher PH, 2023).	These concerns can lead to a lack of understanding of their lessons and even poor academic performance if not properly managed.	Support Other (O+)

Table 7 presents excerpts from the works of respondent number 128, an accomplished writer who utilized the most Weaken My Own (M-) evidence-based statements. The writer believes that AI should not be banned in schools, as it can enhance learning outcomes and facilitate personalized education. The evidence presented supports the writer's argument. However, the respondent chose to weaken the evidence by acknowledging loopholes such as over-dependence on AI and superficial learning. Additionally, in the student's position paper on Jeepney Modernization, the respondent argues that Jeepney modernization should not be implemented yet. In

the same case, the writer's evidence supports their main claim, but the writer also recognized the probable long-term benefits of jeepney modernization toward a safer environment. In both cases, the writer's argument could have been improved if solutions were suggested, such as how to mitigate the problems of over-reliance on AI and recommendations of feasible financial support that can aid the operators and drivers in transitioning to modernized jeepneys.

Table 7. *Sample Evidence-Based Statements of Respondent 128 on the Essays Artificial Intelligence and Jeepney Modernization*

Evidence	Interpretation	Type of Evidence-Based Statement
AI can be accessed at any time and helps students at their own pace. According to Capuno et al., mathematics is considered one of the most challenging subjects among Filipino learners.	However, overreliance on AI for assistance at all times can lead to a dependency on technology, potentially hindering students' ability to think critically and solve problems independently without technological aid.	Weaken Own (M-)
	It will be a disadvantage for students who heavily rely on AI, as they may copy what it says, and it will not provide long-term information if they do not fully grasp what they see.	Weaken Own (M-)
Also stated in the report by Ralf Rivas, the modernized jeepney is 1,766.7% more expensive than traditional jeepneys, as the latter costs only around P150,000 to P250,000.	Although the long-term benefits of modernization, such as being safer and eco-friendly, outweigh the initial challenges for traditional jeepney operators.	Weaken Own (M-)
	By keeping up with modern technology, older traditional jeepneys will not face the issue of sudden engine failures due to their age.	Weaken Own (M-)

Data analysis reveals that Accomplished writers employ the most advanced argumentative writing strategies by being critical enough to identify the flaws in their arguments. However, Weaken My Own (M-) evidence-based statement is still the least used among others, suggesting that few learners are willing to acknowledge limitations in their arguments. This aligns with Villaroel et al. (2016), who warned that actively seeking evidence that confirms one's own beliefs can lead to the misinterpretation of data and a failure to give fair acknowledgment to information that challenges those beliefs.

Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis: Comparison of the Respondents' Evidence Usage Proficiency and the Evidence-Based Statements Used

Evidence-Based Statements	Level of Proficiency	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	p-value	Decision	Remark
Support My Own	Beginning	38.65	34.604	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
	Developing	56.24				
	Accomplished	91.55				
Weaken Other	Beginning	56.06	8.106	.017	Reject Ho	Significant
	Developing	61.84				
	Accomplished	77.85				
Support Other	Beginning	47.79	12.819	.002	Reject Ho	Significant
	Developing	63.06				
	Accomplished	79.05				
Weaken My Own	Beginning	63.50	1.929	.381	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	Developing	66.42				
	Accomplished	69.01				

Note: "If the p-value is less than or equal to the level of significance (0.05), reject Ho; otherwise, failed to reject Ho."

A Kruskal-Wallis H test yielded a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant difference in the use of evidence-based statements among the proficiency levels. That is, compared to beginning and developing writers, accomplished writers have a stronger ability to support their arguments. This parallels the study by Saricaoglu and Alta (2022) on the syntactic and lexical complexity of argumentative texts across proficiency levels. The findings of their research show that proficient writers exhibit a higher level of syntactic and lexical complexity in argumentative texts across proficiency levels, which are indicators of both logical processing and linguistic ability. This relates to how advanced writers are more adept at supporting their arguments effectively than beginning and developing writers are.

For Weaken Other evidence statements, the p-value of .017 indicates a significant difference among proficiency levels. Although the differences between the development and the accomplished levels are less prominent than in the first category, there are still noticeable improvements from beginning to accomplished writers. This result aligns with the findings of Crossley et al. (2022), who investigated the qualities that influence the perceived quality of argumentative essays. They noted that higher levels of proficiency are associated with more complex argument structures and a stronger ability to employ counterarguments. Based on this finding, it is evident that accomplished writers have significantly improved their ability to weaken the strength of other evidence statements when compared to beginning writers.

In the case of Support Other statements, the proficiency levels also differ significantly with a p-value of .002; that is, as with beginning and developing stages, accomplished writers display the highest mean rank, indicating a stronger ability to support others' arguments effectively. This finding is supported by the study of Lee et al. (2021), which highlighted the importance of coherence and logical development in argumentative writing. Writers of higher proficiency tend to organize their ideas logically and form coherent arguments more effectively than those of lower proficiency, allowing them to effectively support even the pieces of evidence that oppose their claims. This type of argumentative writing characteristic produces a more balanced and credible text.

Lastly, a p-value of .381 indicates that there are no significant differences in Weaken My Own evidence-based statements across proficiency levels. This finding is consistent with the conclusion of Hemberger et al. (2017) in their research, which suggests that evidence interpretation is a consistent challenge across different educational levels. Considering that Weaken My Own evidence-based statements do not differ significantly across proficiency levels, it might be equally difficult for all proficiency levels to acknowledge the weaknesses of their arguments.

4.0 Conclusion

The study yields pertinent data on how students develop their argumentative essays through the functional use of evidence-based statements. The findings in this study indicate that as proficiency level increases, writers become more dialogical in their approach to argumentation. This means that they can integrate different perspectives by acknowledging the strengths of opposing views, adding depth and credibility to their arguments. However, across all proficiency levels, students struggle to recognize and address weaknesses in their arguments. These results have implications for the instruction of argumentative writing among ESL learners. Beginning writers need more guidance in structuring their arguments, while advanced writers would benefit from more challenging writing tasks to further develop their analytical skills. Lastly, the overall difficulty in acknowledging weaknesses in one's arguments may be alleviated through self-assessment activities.

For teachers, teaching and assessment practices that focus on evidence interpretation in argumentative writing may be developed. Specifically, instructional materials that utilize scaffolding, such as graphic organizers, can help students outline their text according to the basic structure of argumentation. Classroom activities that focus on developing learners' critical thinking skills may be conducted, such as peer review sessions, which allow writers to practice providing constructive feedback that can be applied to their evidence interpretation when writing. For accomplished writers, advanced writing tasks that require critical analysis are recommended. This may be done through assignments such as literature reviews, concept papers, and research writing. Additionally, reading and writing instructors may develop detailed rubrics that emphasize to ESL learners the importance of incorporating evidence and interpreting it in various ways. They should also adopt a more dialogic approach when teaching argumentation; that is, the expectations should shift from focusing on one's position and continually undermining others to a more nuanced approach wherein diverse perspectives are considered and reasonably acknowledged to reach the best conclusion.

For further research, intervention studies could investigate how targeted instructional strategies, such as peer review, enhance students' ability to recognize and address opposing arguments and identify weaknesses in their arguments. In addition, experimental design research could test the effectiveness of scaffolding activities, such as structured debates and graphic organizers, in enhancing learners' interpretation skills. These research recommendations can contribute to more effective pedagogical approaches in developing the argumentative writing skills of ESL learners.

5.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

6.0 Acknowledgment

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the following individuals who have contributed to the completion of this study:

First of all, God Almighty, for His greatness that gave me the strength and wisdom to complete my research;

My family and friends, for their unwavering love, understanding, and encouragement throughout my academic journey.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the participants of my study for their time and willingness to contribute to this research.

This would not have been possible without the contributions of each of these individuals and entities. Thank you all for believing in me and supporting me in achieving this milestone.

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The Procurement Process in the Barangays of the City of Manila: Examining Practices and Alternative Systems and Problems Towards a Procurement Primer

Fernando M. Yumang*, Christopher C. Mantillas

College of Political Science and Public Administration Graduate School,
Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP),
Manila, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: fmyumang@gmail.com

Date received: February 14, 2025

Date revised: March 8, 2025

Date accepted: March 30, 2025

Originality: 96%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 4%

Recommended citation:

Yumang, F., & Mantillas, C. (2025). The procurement process in the barangays of the City of Manila: Examining practices and alternative systems and problems towards a procurement primer. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 452-464. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.092>

Abstract. Since Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184) was enacted in 2003 by the Philippine Government, National Government Agencies have been guided by their customized procurement manual and Local Government Units by their local government procurement manual. Barangays faced significant challenges navigating the intricate mandatory procurement process, mainly because they lacked access to a clear and simplified procurement guide. This gap hindered their ability to manage resources and make informed decisions effectively. This study aims to determine the awareness, compliance, practices, and challenges in the organization and operation of the procurement process in selected barangays of the City of Manila, with the ultimate goal of finalizing findings that can serve as the basis for an action plan. The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches through surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, and observations. Twelve barangays were selected from Manila's six districts based on population and national tax allotments, with 120 barangay officials serving as respondents. The researchers statistically analyzed the data using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Likert scaling based on the respondents' answers to enhance understanding. The study reveals that respondents are partially aware of and moderately comply with RA 9184 and its guidelines. The respondent's education, years of service, experience, and training in government procurement significantly influence the barangay procurement organization and operations. Key challenges include lack of knowledge, insufficient training, low budgets, lengthy processes, and external influences. In response to these challenges, the researcher has developed the 4-ACES Action Plan and a Barangay Procurement Primer designed to enhance procurement knowledge and practices in barangays. 4-ACES stands for: Attend training and seminars, Create a special committee, Enact an ordinance, and Spread the procurement policy. These proposed changes offer the potential for significant improvements in barangay procurement processes, leading to more efficient operations and better compliance with RA 9184 and its guidelines.

Keywords: Procurement process; Public bidding; Local government unit.

1.0 Introduction

Public Procurement is vital in delivering public services, promoting good governance, and fostering sustainable economic growth. Governments globally spend approximately US\$9.5 trillion annually on procurement, which

constitutes around 12–20% of a country's Gross Domestic Product. In the Philippines, government spending on capital outlays and maintenance expenses accounts for approximately 60% of the total budget, totaling \$43 billion (Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS), 2021). Imagine how 42,011 barangays in the Philippines allocate their budget to purchase goods and services, fund infrastructure projects, and engage consulting services to implement programs, projects, and activities, ultimately delivering quality public services. Since 1901, government procurement of supplies, materials, and equipment in the Philippines has been conducted through public bidding. Infrastructure Projects and Consulting Services were previously regulated separately until 2001, when all procurement rules were unified under Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), also known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act of 2003."

RA 9184 is landmark legislation consolidating all procurement laws and policies in the country, applying to various government entities, including National Government Agencies (NGAs), Government Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), Government Financial Institutions (GFIs), State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), and Local Government Units (LGUs), including barangays, to promote good governance and combat corruption in the procurement process (Republic Act No. 9184, 2003). RA 9184 became effective in 2003, with its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) – A taking effect later that year. To further systematize procurement procedures and ensure transparency, the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) issued Resolution No. 013 (2006), which approved the Generic Procurement Manual (GPM) as a standard guide for all government entities, including local government units (LGUs), in conducting their procurement activities.

Due to the GPM's broad applicability, numerous LGUs requested a specialized procurement manual tailored to their needs. In response, the GPPB Technical Support Office (GPPB-TSO) sought assistance from the Asian Development Bank to develop a manual for local government units (LGUs). The resulting Procurement Manual for Local Government Units (PMLGU) (2007) incorporates relevant provisions from the Local Government Code, budget and finance guidelines, and RA 9184 and its IRR to ensure LGUs' compliance with procurement regulations (GPPB Resolution No. 30, 2007). LGUs, being closest to the people, are well-positioned to address local needs and priorities. By leveraging procurement processes, LGUs, including barangays, can acquire Goods and Services, Infrastructure Projects, and Consulting Services to effectively implement sustainable development programs and initiatives within their jurisdictions, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals as catalysts for positive change (Bilsky et al., 2021).

The PMLGU (GPPB, 2007), Section 1, provides: "This Manual shall apply to all procurement activities of provincial, city, and municipal governments, regardless of class or category." *A separate manual shall be developed, particularly for the barangays, to address the peculiarities of their organization and operations.* The PMLGU, designed for LGUs and patterned after the GPM, only applies to Provinces, Cities, and Municipalities. It received support from the Asian Development Bank and World Bank in 2008. However, the PMLGU was not updated to reflect the changes introduced by the 2009 Revised IRR of RA 9184, resulting in potential ambiguity in interpretation. The GPPB issued Resolution No. 10 (2014), approving the 2014 Local Government Procurement Manual (LGPM) to address this issue. This updated version incorporates all changes made by the 2009 Revised IRR and relevant GPPB resolutions, guidelines, and circulars issued between 2009 and 2013 (GPPB, 2014). This ensures consistency and clarity in the procurement processes for LGUs.

However, the LGPM (2014), section 1, provides: "This Manual shall apply to all procurement activities of all Local Government Units, i.e., provinces, cities, municipalities, regardless of class or category." Despite a promise in the PMLGU (2007) to create a separate procurement manual for barangays, no such manual has been issued. The LGPM (2014) did not include barangays, and the GPPB has not released any Barangay Procurement Manual (BPM) or Barangay Procurement Primer (BPP). The Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184 mandates its application to all government entities, including all LGUs.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the GPPB have not issued the promised separate procurement manual for barangays for over two decades. Being unaware of the peculiarities in the organization and operations of the barangays, yet aware of the intricacies and complexities of government procurement, they seem to have chosen to abandon the BPM when they released the LGPM (2014). The lack of a specific BPM or BPP

for barangays will continue to cause inconsistencies, intolerance, and confusion in the Barangays. It will seed an infectious system of graft and corruption in the basic political unit of our system of government.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed RA 12009, the "New Government Procurement Act of 2024," on July 20, 2024, superseding RA 9184 (DBM, 2025). However, despite this new law, the government has yet to release a BPM or BPP to guide barangay procurement processes. While public procurement is essential for stimulating economic activity (Magakwe, 2022), the procurement processes in barangays differ significantly from those in higher government entities, particularly in terms of the qualifications of procurement personnel (GPPB Resolution No. 01, 2004). However, the complexity of public bidding and contract management necessitates a simplified guide for barangays to ensure compliance with procurement laws, promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance (TAGG).

Moreover, despite the local autonomy granted to barangays under the Philippine Constitution (1987, Article X, Section 2), they lack a tailored framework, such as customized procurement manuals, like those found in other government entities. This highlights the need for a BPM or BPP to support effective, efficient, economical, and ethical procurement practices. Furthermore, the qualifications for members of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) differ across various government levels. While higher entities require officials with specific procurement education, skills, training, and expertise, barangays often rely on elected officials with minimal qualifications, raising concerns about their preparedness to manage complex procurement responsibilities (GPPB, 2024, section 11.2). This research aims to fill the gap in understanding barangay procurement organization, operations, and challenges by analyzing current practices and proposing an action plan for a simplified procurement primer. The researcher, with experience in procurement and barangay governance, believes that this study is essential for enhancing procurement practices, promoting transparency and accountability, and ensuring good governance at the grassroots level.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The quantitative and qualitative research designs were employed in this study to ensure validity and reliability, ultimately achieving the final research objective. Aside from the quantifiable data obtained by the researcher through survey questionnaires, he complemented the quantitative data with focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews, and observations of documents, including the 2024 Annual Procurement Plan (APP) and the Barangay Full Disclosure Policy Board (BFDPB), for compliance purposes. In this context, the researcher employed this method, which he found to be suitable for analyzing the observance by barangay officials of the procurement processes provided under RA 9184, the 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. The researchers used the study's findings as the basis for an action plan to develop the Barangay Procurement Primer, aiming to effectively implement the government procurement process in the barangays.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the Barangays as Procuring Entities (PEs) of the six districts of the City of Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines.

2.3 Research Participants

The total number of barangays in the City of Manila is 897. The study selected twelve barangays in Manila, with two barangays per district – one with the highest population and National Tax Allotment (NTA) from 2022 to 2025 (DBM, 2021; DBM, 2022; DBM, 2023; DBM, 2024) and one with the lowest, based on the 2020 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (PSA, 2024) Census. Using the purposive sampling method, the study focused on elective and appointive barangay officials who play key roles in local governance and administration, namely the Punong Barangays (PBs) who served as Head of the Procuring Entity (HoPE); Sangguniang Barangay Members or Barangay Councilors (BC) who served as BAC Chairman and Members; Barangay Secretaries (BS) who served as BAC Secretariat; and Barangay Treasurers (BTs) who served as Technical Working Group (TWG) and/or End – User Unit. These officials, a total of 120, were the study's respondents.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher used a survey questionnaire as the primary instrument in conducting his research. The instrument was validated by different procurement, administration, and statistics experts, after which the research adviser approved it. The researcher formulated a matrix to determine which items pertained to specific questions and procurement processes. The instrument was subdivided into four parts, which included the following: Part I requested the demographic profile of the respondents; Part II determined the level of awareness of the respondents based on the different provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and GPM; Part III asked for respondents level of compliance on the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM; Part IV identified the practices and alternative systems, and challenges encountered by the respondents that affect their compliance with RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and the GPM; Part IV – A determined the observance of practices and alternative systems in the implementation of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and the GPM; Part IV – B determined the observance of challenges in the implementation of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and the GPM.

The researchers designed the instruments as a GPPB Certified Public Procurement Specialist (CPPS). On September 27, 2024, these instruments, comprising both quantitative and qualitative components in the form of questionnaires, FGD Questions, and Final Interview Questions, were meticulously examined, tested, and validated as reliable by Mr. Ronnie L. Guiterrez, a CPPS and an Accredited Lecturer/Speaker of the GPPB, and current Chief of Procurement and Head of BAC Secretariat of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU). The research instrument was translated from English to Filipino to address the difficulties reported by most respondents during the pilot testing with Barangay Dumlog of Toledo City Cebu, focusing on the complex technical terms of the law and procurement procedures. An FGD with BAC Members and support staff, as well as an interview with their Punong Barangay, were subsequently conducted to validate the translation.

On October 3, 2024, Mr. Neil Lester A. Gimeno, a GPPB CPPS and Administrative Officer IV, as well as a current PSA Region X BAC member, thoroughly re-examined, re-tested, and re-validated the research instruments. This process, which included quantitative and qualitative components in English and Filipino questionnaires, FGD Guide Questions, and Final Interview Questions, further confirmed the instrument's reliability. The instrument was then pretested with Barangay Santa Teresita, District 1, Quezon City, providing additional assurance of its quality.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study used specific steps to gather data. After carefully revalidating the instrument, the researcher asked permission from the PB or Chairpersons of the respondent barangays. A formal letter of request to conduct research was addressed to the different PBs, and a copy was furnished to the Office of the Mayor of the City of Manila and the Office of the Secretary of the DILG. After permission was granted, the researcher distributed copies of the English and Tagalog questionnaires, along with pencils and erasers, for convenience. An FGD with Barangay BAC Members and BAC Support staff, as well as a one-on-one interview with the PB, was scheduled for later.

Considering the difficulty in organizing the complete attendance of the participants of the FGD and the availability of the PBs because of their busy, rotational, and demanding schedules; declaration of class and office suspensions; existence of natural disasters and calamities; and Barangay Assemblies, the researcher limit the participants of the FGD to the following Barangay officials: 1. The BS representing the BAC Secretariat; 2. The BT represents the End-User Unit and the TWG financial expert; and 3. The Kagawad Chairperson of the Committee on Appropriation or any Kagawad or any BC representing the BAC of the Barangay. It was emphasized that respondents should answer all questions truthfully without reservation, and the names provided by the Barangay officials will be optional and treated as confidential, subject to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) and in respect for their right against self-incrimination, as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Finally, the researcher requested a copy of the barangays' 2024 APP as part of the study and asked permission to take a snapshot of their BFDPB to confirm compliance with TAGG (GPPB, 2021). Such requested procurement documents are voluntary and not compulsory for the respondent barangays. Moreover, knowledge of the

respondent barangays' preparation of the APP will validate their capability in procurement planning and strategy, a vital part of the barangay procurement process.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensures that the standards of ethics in the conduct of research are well-incorporated. The research study adhered to ethical guidelines and was evaluated by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines Research Ethics Committee (PUP – UREC), which met the requirements set by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). It was approved on November 8, 2024, with UREC Code UREC-2024-1697.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile

Tables 1 to 3 present the demographic profiles of respondent barangay officials, including their education, years of service, and experience in government procurement. The results of the demographic profile of the respondents below help us understand the importance of the knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a BAC Chairman, BAC Members, and BAC support staff. Concerning educational attainment, most respondents are college graduates or have at least a college level education, followed by 38.3% of High School graduates, 11.7% of those who have finished Vocational courses, and one who is an elementary graduate. A combination of all the respondents who did not attend college shows that the majority, or 50.8%, did not enter tertiary education.

Table 1. *Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to educational attainment*

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Elementary	1	0.80
High School	46	38.3
Vocational	14	11.7
College	59	49.2

In an FGD conducted by the researcher with respondents validated through interviews with their PBs, the majority of respondents emphasized that knowledge, training, and seminars should be given the utmost priority in appointing members of the BAC, the BAC Support staff, and the TWG, followed by skills and experience in government procurement. For the respondents, educational attainment is not a factor to be considered because it is given, under the Local Government Code or RA 7160 (1991), that the qualifications of elected Barangay Official are the following: 1) Citizens of the Philippines, 2) At least 18 years of age on election day, 3) Qualified voters in the barangay they propose to be elected, (4) Residents in the barangay for at least 1 year immediately preceding the day of the election, and (5) Able to read and write Filipino or any other local language or dialect (Republic Act 7160, 1991, section 39).

Regarding years of service in the barangay government, most respondents have been elected as PB or BC or appointed as BS or BT and have served their barangays for 1–3 years. They are followed by 25.8% of those who served for 4–6 years, 10.8% for 7–9 years, 3.3% for 10–12 years, and 1.7% for 13 years or more.

Table 2. *Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to years of service*

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 3 Years	70	58.3
4 – 6 Years	31	25.8
7 – 9 Years	13	10.8
10 -12 Years	4	3.30
13 – Up Years	2	1.70

Demographic Profile: Experience in Government Procurement

When it comes to years of experience in government procurement, the majority of the respondents have no experience, followed by 14.2% who have 1 – 3 years of experience, 10.8% who have 10 years and more experience, 10% who have 7 – 9 years experience, and 5.8% who have 4 – 6 years of procurement experience. An in-depth analysis of the qualifications of the BAC Chairman and BAC Members under RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and GPM for NGAs, SUCs, GOCCs, GFIs, and LGUs, shows that the BAC Chairman should be at least the third-ranking permanent Plantilla official and BAC members should be at least a fifth ranking permanent Plantilla

official, one representing the legal, and the other the technical or financial field (Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, 2024, section 11.2).

Table 3. *Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to years of experience in the government procurement process*

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Experience	71	59.2
1 – 3 Years	17	14.2
4 – 6 Years	7	5.80
7 – 9 Years	12	10.0
10 -Up Years	13	10.8

This only shows that appointment in the BAC and BAC Support Staff requires high educational attainment, skills, experience, training, employment status, security of tenure, and salary grade level, which are absent in elective Barangay Officials. Making RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM applicable to all PEs, regardless of class, without considering the nature of the organization of barangays is adding insult to injury. Moreover, respondent Barangays are composed of limited personnel with a limited budget and operating in small office spaces, some under bridges and overpasses, unlike NGAs, SUCs, GOCCs, GFIs, and LGUs that have different departments, divisions, and offices headed by qualified appointive officials that can tackle and implement different duties, functions, and operations including the complexities and accountabilities of government procurement.

3.2 Awareness of the Procurement Process based on RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Findings revealed that all the respondents, with a grand mean of 2.49, are partially aware of the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM (see Table 4). Based on the six indicators of the level of awareness used by the researcher, the highest level of awareness attained by the respondents is moderate awareness of the PhilGEPS, ranked at number 1, followed by moderate awareness of the Procurement Organization at number 2, moderate awareness on the Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process at number 3, partial awareness on Procurement Planning at number 4, partial awareness on Public Bidding Process at number 5, and partial awareness on the Alternative Methods of Procurement (AMP) ranked at number 6.

Table 4. *Level of awareness of the provisions of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, and GPM*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process	2.53	MA
Procurement Organization.	2.60	MA
Procurement Planning	2.46	PA
Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)	2.64	MA
Public Bidding Processes	2.40	PA
Alternative Methods of Procurement (AMP)	2.34	PA
Grand Mean	2.49	PA

Legend:	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation	Symbol
	3.51-4.0	Fully Aware	FA
	2.51-3.50	Moderately Aware	MA
	1.51-2.50	Partially Aware	PA
	1.0-1.50	Not Aware	NA

Ranking at number 1, respondents' highest level of awareness is on the PhilGEPS because it is a mandatory requirement under RA 9184 and other DBM, COA, and DILG-issued circulars for procurement of commonly used supplies and posting purposes (GPPB, 2021). On the other hand, ranked at number 6, respondents' lowest level of awareness is about the Alternative Methods of Procurement. In the FGD and interviews conducted by the researcher, most respondents emphasized that they are newly elected and newly appointed officials who lack experience and have not attended training or seminars on government procurement. For the respondents, transparency is the most important principle of government procurement because of the importance of informing their constituents on how they spend public funds during their administration, which explains their high level of awareness of the PhilGEPS, which requires the posting of important procurement documents in the PhilGEPS website, website of the Barangay, if any, and on conspicuous places located within the premises of the Barangay (GPPB Circular 1, 2021).

Moreover, in the same FGD and interview, the researcher found that among all the available types of public bidding and all the AMPs available for barangays, Shopping is the most widely used method due to the familiarity, practice, and tradition that barangay officials have adopted from their predecessors. For the respondents, Shopping is easy, convenient, and flexible and is well-suited for barangay services. Furthermore, according to respondents, public bidding and the AMPs involve a complex process that requires adequate knowledge and attention. They neglect these processes, considering the other functions, duties, and responsibilities they render to their constituents. Thus, they explain why they have the lowest awareness of the AMPs and are only partially aware of the public bidding processes. Finally, according to Table 2, most respondents are newly elected barangay officials, and the nature of their official service in the barangays is based on the election results. Newly elected barangay officials have no choice but to serve as BAC Chairman and members even without the proper procurement training, skills, and experience. This results in partial awareness of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. Hence, this lack of knowledge and awareness affects the entire barangay procurement operation and processes.

3.3 Compliance with the Provisions of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Regarding the six indicators of compliance, respondents' overall compliance is moderate, and none fully complied with the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM (see Table 5). Respondents' highest level of compliance is moderate in Procurement Planning, ranked first; Procurement Organization, second; Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process, third; PhilGEPS, fourth; and Public Bidding Processes, fifth. Respondents' lowest level of compliance is partial compliance in the AMPs, ranked at number 6.

Table 5. *Level of compliance with the provisions of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR of RA 9184, and GPM*

Indicators		Mean	Interpretation
Principles and Objectives of the Philippine Government Procurement Process		2.76	MC
Procurement Organization.		2.77	MC
Procurement Planning		2.80	MC
Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS)		2.74	MC
Public Bidding Processes		2.54	MC
Alternative Methods of Procurement (AMP)		2.35	PC
Grand Mean		2.66	MC
Legend:	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation	Symbol
	3.51-4.0	Fully Complied	FC
	2.51-3.50	Moderately Complied	MC
	1.51-2.50	Partially Complied	PC
	1.0-1.50	Not Complied	NC

Table 5 shows that respondents moderately complied with the provisions of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. Confronted with the respondents' partial awareness but moderate compliance with the procurement law and its guidelines, the researcher tried to validate the outcome of this quantitative data with the qualitative data gathered through FGD and interviews with the respondents. In the FGD and Interview conducted by the researcher, the respondents were asked: "Among the three types of Public Bidding, namely Goods and Services, Infrastructure Projects, and Consulting Services, what is/are the most regularly practiced in your barangay?" All respondents replied that public bidding of goods and services is their barangay's most important bidding type because they require goods, supplies, and materials to deliver public service and perform their duties to their constituents. According to the respondents, they seldom require public bidding on infrastructure projects because these projects are usually provided to them by their district representatives. Additionally, they do not need public bidding for consulting services due to their limited budget and the necessity of consulting services in their barangays. A supermajority of the respondents admitted that they do not usually conduct public bidding processes in their barangay because they entrust the entire bidding process to their "special contractors," who are responsible for ensuring compliance with technical specifications, budget allocation, bidding requirements, and bidding documents, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the procurement law and the COA.

Moreover, in the same FGD, the respondents were asked: What is/are the best Alternative Methods of Procurement that you habitually implement in your barangay? All the respondents answered "canvass" or "canvassing," popularly known as "shopping" under RA 9184 because it involves price shopping or looking for a cheaper amount. Since respondents were only familiar with the procurement process of shopping, they

disregarded other procurement methods, such as Limited Source Bidding, Direct Contracting, Repeat Order, and the fourteen types of Negotiated Procurement. Hence, they are partially aware and partially compliant with the AMP, confirmed by quantitative and qualitative research data. Furthermore, another question asked in the FGD is: “How do you rate your barangay’s experience in Procurement using PhilGEPS?” Explain.” Most respondents gave PhilGEPS a grade of satisfactory to very satisfactory. However, when asked to explain, all respondents admitted that they do not use PhilGEPS because they lack the training to procure electronically. They gave the grade of satisfactory to very satisfactory to PhilGEPS because of the convenience and easy access in posting the necessary documents required for TAGG purposes (GPPB, 2021).

Finally, Barangays are taking compliance with the procurement law and its guidelines for granted. Using qualitative research data, the researcher exposed the truth behind the implementation of public bidding and other alternative procurement methods in the barangays. Due to a lack of proper procurement training, insufficient funds, political influences, and leniency on the part of procurement oversight agencies to monitor, report, and sanction violators of the procurement process, barangays deliberately neglect the importance of public procurement in delivering quality public service.

Table 6. *Level of observance of practices and alternative systems in the implementation of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM*

Indicators		Mean	Interpretation
1.	The barangay uses modern commercial techniques, such as e-procurement and framework agreements, to maximize value for money.	2.33	PO
2.	The Officials consider each item's relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits to procure.	2.40	PO
3.	The barangay develops a comprehensive policy manual that defines authority, responsibility, and guidelines for the organization and procurement.	2.59	MO
4.	Before issuing the solicitation, the barangay establishes the criteria by which the resulting bids or proposals will be evaluated.	2.70	MO
5.	The Barangay adopted a code of ethics and required its personnel to uphold the code and seek commitment to it by all those with whom they engage.	2.70	MO
6.	The Barangay accurately defines, represents, and fully expresses the requirements and description of their need in the specification requirement for procurement.	2.63	MO
7.	The barangay uses spend analysis as a procurement strategy to leverage buying power, reduce costs, and provide better management and oversight of suppliers.	2.66	MO
8.	The Barangay uses a cost-benefit analysis to decide whether to lease or purchase an item or service.	2.64	MO
9.	The Barangay takes the lead in outsourcing activities by identifying services that could best be fulfilled through a competitive, fair, and transparent outsourcing process	2.57	MO
10.	The Barangay understands and implements a policy on Green Public Procurement.	2.60	MO
11.	The Barangay conducts strategic procurement planning for Projects, Programs, and Activities in the Barangay	2.71	MO
12.	The barangay practices sustainable procurement by considering sustainability's social, economic, and environmental aspects in procuring goods and services.	2.72	MO
13.	The barangay identifies and implements technology that aids the procurement process and supports the organization's overall strategy.	2.74	MO
14.	Barangay Procurement is transparent in its practices, processes, policies, and relationships with all stakeholders and protects confidential information.	2.52	MO
15.	Barangay procurement identifies risk factors associated with each procurement, analyzes the probability of the risk occurring, and considers potential impacts.	2.73	MO
16.	Barangay adopts Supplier Relationship Management to maximize relationship value and minimize risk management for its procurement.	2.58	MO
17.	The Barangay uses videoconferencing, webcasting, and similar technology to conduct its procurement activities.	2.36	PO
18.	The Barangay adopts and implements the procurement policy on Electronic Submission and Receipt of Bids.	2.45	PO
19.	The Barangay allows submission of Alternative Documentary Requirements like expired Business or Mayors Permit with Official Receipt of renewal of application only during a state of calamity or public emergency	2.57	MO
20.	The Barangay complies with the Electronic Submission of Procurement Reports such as APPs and Procurement Monitoring Reports (PMRs).	2.58	MO
Grand Mean		2.52	MO
Legend:			
	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation	Symbol
	3.51-4.0	Fully Observed	FO
	2.51-3.5	Moderately Observed	MO
	1.51-2.50	Partially Observed	PO
	1.0-1.50	Not Observed	NO

3.4 Observance of Practices and Alternative Systems in the Implementation of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Findings regarding the observance of practices and alternative systems in the implementation of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM revealed that respondents moderately observed them with an overall weighted mean of 2.52 (see Table 6). Observance of practices and alternative systems in the procurement process helps maximize value for money and ensures the quality of the goods, services, projects, and consultants. Overall assessment reveals that respondents moderately observed the Practices and Alternative Systems implementing RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. The advent of digital technology has sparked curiosity in all aspects of society, including governance, also known as e-governance. To make the process convenient and accessible, respondent barangays identify and implement technology that aids their procurement process and supports their organization's overall strategy. However, constrained by their limited budget, skills, and knowledge, the respondents cannot take advantage of modern commercial techniques, such as e-procurement, early procurement activities (EPA) (GPPB Resolution No. 6, 2019), and framework agreements (FA) (GPPB Resolution No. 27, 2019) to allow them to maximize value for money.

3.5 Observance of Challenges in Implementing RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM

Findings regarding respondents' level of observance of challenges in implementing RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM revealed that respondents partially observed challenges with an overall weighted mean of 2.45 (see Table 7). In the FGD conducted with the twelve barangays, respondents provided the following problems, issues, concerns, and challenges in the order of priority: (1) No Knowledge, lack of training and seminars in Government Procurement cited by 91.6% of the respondents; (2) No Experience/ Newly Elected or Newly Appointed Barangay Official (58.3%); (3) Low Budget /Insufficient Budget to conduct Public Bidding (50%); (4) Long process or long timeframe or period to procure using Public Bidding (33.3%); (5) Threshold or limit in canvas or shopping is too low, Inflation or increase in the prices of commodities, supplies and materials, and Contractor/Politicians influence (all at 25%); and (6) Disagreement between Council Members in adopting the project (8.3%).

Moreover, in a one-on-one interview with the twelve PBs, the data gathered validated that the main problem, issue, concern, and challenge of barangays in the implementation of RA 9184, the 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM is the lack of knowledge and training in government procurement. According to the PBs, the reasons for this problem are as follows: (a) Lack of funds or budget for training and seminars, (b) Lack of organizers offering government procurement training and seminars, (c) Absence of Training and seminars offering purely Barangay Procurement Process, and (d) Absence of free or discounted Barangay Procurement training and seminars.

Based on the findings derived from the quantifiable data gathered, supported by FGD, interviews, observations, and GPPB resolution on TAGG (GPPB, 2021) in government procurement, the 4-ACES Action Plan was developed by the researcher to facilitate the creation and adoption of a proposed Procurement Primer for improving the government procurement process in barangays. The 4-ACES refers to the 4-Step Action Plan, and the acronym **A-C-E-S** stands for:

Step 1: **A** – Attend: To understand procurement laws and processes, individuals involved in procurement, including the Punong Barangay, Barangay Secretary, End-User Unit, and Barangay Council members, should participate in training sessions organized by the GPPB.

Step 2: **C** – Create: A Special Committee should be established to discuss and finalize the Proposed BPP contents. This committee should comprise members who have undergone relevant training and have experience in barangay procurements, to streamline the procurement process.

Step 3: **E**—Enact: A barangay ordinance should be passed to formally adopt the Proposed Procurement Primer and make it the official guide for barangay procurement.

Step 4: **S**—Spread: The adopted BPP must be disseminated to all barangay officials, employees, suppliers, and contractors through publications and postings in prominent locations, including the barangay website and social

media, to comply with local legislation and inform the community about the procurement process. An action plan was designed to serve as the basis for a proposed procurement primer.

Finally, the researcher also recommends the following: (a) the COA, DBM, DILG, and LGUs should conduct intensive procurement training for Barangay officials; (b) the GPPB should increase the Barangay thresholds for shopping to address inflation; (c) the Congress should amend the qualifications of Barangay Procurement Officials; (d) the GPPB, COA, DILG, and Ombudsman should intensify procurement monitoring and reporting; and (e) the Barangays should promote income-generating projects to fund their expenses for training and seminars on government procurement.

Table 7. *Level of observance of challenges in the implementation of RA 9184, Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and GPM*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Public Bidding is the default or regular mode of procurement.	2.95	MO
2. Use Brand Names in writing the technical specifications for procuring Goods.	2.44	PO
3. Implements programs, projects, and activities not found in the Annual Procurement Plan.	2.42	PO
4. Splitting of contracts that exceed procedural purchase limits to avoid competitive bidding or to circumvent the limits of approving or procurement authority.	2.22	PO
5. Prepares tailored fit specifications or engages in Tailor fitting in writing the technical specifications of the goods it wants to procure.	2.33	PO
6. Use a BAC Resolution approved by the Punong Barangay before conducting Shopping, Direct Contracting, Limited Source Bidding, Repeat Order, and Negotiated Procurement.	2.57	MO
7. BAC members, BAC Secretariat, Technical Working Group, and End-User Unit are not related within the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity with the bidder who joined the procurement process.	2.59	MO
8. Prohibits the scheme or arrangement between two or more bidders to establish bid prices at artificial levels.	2.68	MO
9. Prohibits the improper and unlawful enrichment of BAC Personnel by misusing their official function as Procurement Officials.	2.71	MO
10. Prohibits Coercive Acts by suppliers, contractors, consultants, and prospective bidders against Barangay Procurement personnel.	2.74	MO
11. Prohibits misrepresentation or concealment of facts to influence the procurement process.	2.73	MO
12. Opens any sealed bid and all documents required to be sealed or divulge their contents before the appointed time for the public opening of Bids or other documents.	2.58	MO
13. Delays, without justifiable cause, the screening for eligibility, opening of bids, evaluation, and post evaluation of bids, and awarding of contracts beyond the prescribed periods of action.	2.67	MO
14. Prohibits Undue influence or undue pressure on any member of the BAC or any officer or employee of the Barangay to take a particular action that favors or tends to favor a particular bidder	2.61	MO
15. Punong Barangay abuses its power to reject all bids using the reservation clause with manifest preference for any bidder closely related to him.	2.23	PO
16. Prohibits two or more persons/entities agreeing and submitting bids as bona fide bidders with pre-arranged lowest bid.	2.46	PO
17. Prohibits a bidder from maliciously submitting different bids through two or more persons, corporations, partnerships, or other business entities where he/she has an interest in simulating competition.	2.54	MO
18. Prohibits two or more persons/entities agreeing to refrain from submitting a bid or withdrawing from bidding to secure an undue advantage to any remaining bidders.	2.54	MO
19. Prohibits a bidder, by himself or in connivance with another, employing other acts or schemes that suppress competition that is disadvantageous to the public.	2.49	PO
20. Allows submission of eligibility requirements containing false information or falsified documents.	2.18	PO
21. Allows a bidder to use the name of another or allow another to use his name in the bid.	2.09	PO
22. Allows a bidder to withdraw his bid after post-qualification.	2.08	PO
23. Allows a bidder to refuse the acceptance of an award without justifiable cause.	2.19	PO
24. Accepts gifts or any form of monetary considerations from suppliers, contractors, and consultants during holidays or special days (birthdays, weddings, Baptism)	2.00	PO
25. No Contact Rule or No communication Rule with bidders from bid evaluation until a decision to award the contract was made by the BAC.	2.21	PO
26. Perform Procurement duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence, skills, and priority above all other functions and duties.	2.53	MO
Grand Mean	2.45	PO
Legend:	Rating Scale	Verbal Interpretation
	3.51-4.0	Fully Observed
	2.51-3.50	Moderately Observed
	1.51-2.50	Partially Observed
	1.0-1.50	Not Observed
		Symbol
		FO
		MO
		PO
		NO

4.0 Conclusion

The demographic profile of respondent barangay officials, including their educational attainment, years of service, government procurement experience, and government procurement training, affects the barangays' procurement organization and operations. The functions and duties of BAC Chairpersons, members, and support staff require specific knowledge, skills, experience, and qualifications to handle complex and intricate procurement tasks, which necessitate a high sense of responsibility and accountability standards.

Respondents are not technically and intellectually proficient in RA 9184, the Updated 2016 IRR, and the GPM. Overall, the assessment reveals that they are partially aware of the procurement process. The result shows that respondents are partially aware of procurement methods like public bidding and AMP because they do not conduct public bidding for consulting services and rarely on infrastructure projects. The only AMP or regular procurement method they utilize is Shopping or canvassing.

In addition, the overall assessment also reveals that respondents moderately complied with RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. Respondents partially complied with the AMPs because, out of the five AMPs, Shopping is the most frequently exploited procurement method in the barangays. In the FGD and Interview conducted by the researcher, respondents admitted that they do not generally conduct public bidding and leave the entire process to their "special contractors." Public bidding of Goods and Services is necessary for the respondents. However, public bidding for infrastructure projects is entrusted to their district representatives, and public bidding for consulting services is ineffective in barangays, considering their limited budget.

The structure and nature of the barangay government in terms of continuity of service and political influence affect their awareness and compliance with the procurement law and its guidelines. Barangay BAC Chairmen and members are elective officials serving three years unless reelected for another term. BAC support staff are appointed officials who serve for a term of three years, unless reappointed. The effort and expenses of barangays in training and developing their BAC Chairmen, members, and support staff will be wasted unless the same officials are reelected or reappointed for another term.

Moreover, unlike NGAs, GOCCs, GFIs, SUCs, and LGUs, where BAC Chairmen, members, and support staff are all appointive officials, barangays are limited to those chosen by their constituents via election. Since RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR and GPM are mandatory to all procuring government entities regardless of class, barangays do not have sufficient and qualified workforce to handle public bidding nor to fill up vacancies in cases of death, resignation, etc. of BAC officials and staff. Barangays are so small that their personnel is limited, unlike other government-procuring entities that can be divided into offices, departments, divisions, and sections.

Additionally, the problems, issues, concerns, and challenges encountered by the respondents that affect their compliance with RA 9184, the Updated 2016 IRR, and the GPM include the following: No knowledge, lack of training and seminars in government procurement; No experience/Newly elected or newly appointed Barangay Official; Low budget/Insufficient budget to conduct public bidding; Long process or long timeframe or period to procure using public bidding; Threshold or limit in canvas or shopping is too low, Inflation or increase in the prices of commodities, supplies and materials, and Contractor/Politicians influence; and disagreement between Council members in adopting the project.

Furthermore, respondents moderately observed the Practices and Alternative Systems in implementing RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. While respondents demonstrate moderate adherence to RA 9184, 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM, their use of technology in procurement is hindered by budget, skills, and knowledge limitations. Despite embracing digital tools to improve accessibility and convenience, they often lack the resources to fully utilize advanced techniques, such as e-procurement and framework agreements, for optimal value.

Finally, the proposed action plan should focus on a direct, legal, and step-by-step process to assist in developing and adopting a proposed procurement primer that effectively implements the government procurement process

in the barangays. LGUs have their LGPM, which applies only to provinces, cities, and municipalities. In contrast, NGAs, GOCCs, and GFIs have Customized Procurement Manuals, and SUCs have University Procurement Manuals to adapt and comply with the comprehensive and complex nature of RA 9184, the Updated 2016 Revised IRR, and the GPM. The adoption and implementation of a BPP will address the Barangay's issues, including its demographic profile, partial awareness, moderate compliance, and moderate observance of “practices and alternative systems,” as well as other issues, concerns, problems, and challenges encountered during the implementation of the procurement law and its guidelines.

The peculiarities of the organization and operations of barangays were exposed in this study to give insight into the mandatory applicability of the procurement law and its guidelines at the barangay level. This research empowers barangay officials and employees to proactively address potential problems, identify key issues, and implement best practices and solutions based on the research findings. The research emphasizes the importance of adhering to procurement laws in preventing delays in implementing programs, projects, and activities, ensuring transparency, promoting fair competition, and holding barangay officials accountable. These are key factors in creating a Barangay Procurement Primer.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Fernando M. Yumang: Conception or design of the work, Data collection, Data analysis and interpretation, Manuscript drafting, Critical manuscript revision, and Final approval of the version to be published.

Christopher C. Mantillas: Critical feedback on the study design.

6.0 Funding

This research received no external funding.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The author expresses deep gratitude to the following who extended their love, support, and assistance for the realization of this study:

The Almighty God, for teaching the researcher to be patient, humble, diligent, and understanding to accomplish and complete this crucial research in good governance.

Mrs. Precious Joyce C. Yumang, his loving wife, for being an inspiration by showing her love, support, and understanding; this researcher owes everything to her for the great sacrifice she endured to allow the researcher to finish this research.

Scarlet Nicole C. Yumang, Oscar Cloud Vincent C. Yumang, and Jet Blaze C. Yumang, his loving children, for being the source of his strength and determination to overcome the pressure and difficulty of this research.

The researcher's father and sister, Oscar Delos Reyes Yumang and Ma. Jericka M. Yumang, for their continuous support and motivation.

The parents-in-law of the researcher, Nicolas L. Cribes Jr. and Eden B. Cribes; sister-in-law of the researcher, Trisha Mae B. Cribes-Cachero and her husband, Philip A. Cachero; and Pia Mikhail C. Cachero, the niece of the researcher; for their moral support, constant encouragement, and source of inspiration to finish this research.

The Punong Barangays, Kagawads, Treasurers, and Secretaries of Barangay Dumlog of Toledo City Cebu, Barangay Santa Teresita of Quezon City, and Barangays 8, 20, 183, 240, 275, 321, 544, 586, 628, 649, 652, 865 of the City of Manila, for their honesty, hospitality, and political will as respondents of this research.

Christopher C. Mantillas, Ph.D., his adviser, for his expertise in research and indefatigable efforts in editing and reviewing this paper that made this research possible.

Dr. Roslyn M. Arnigo, Dr. Florenda S. Frivaldo, and Ms. Estafanie R. Cortez, Ph.D., his evaluators and members of the Panel on Oral Examination, for their unselfish and brilliant suggestions and recommendations that enhanced this research study.

Assoc. Prof. Norie L. Maniego, his statistician, for her knowledge, expertise, and patience in teaching this researcher statistical matters relevant to this study

Mr. Ronnie L. Guterrez, an accredited Lecturer Speaker of the Government Procurement and Policy Board (GPPB) and Chief of Procurement of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU), for his unquestionable knowledge and expertise in procurement, his selfless assistance in examining testing, and validating the research instruments and making it reliable will never be forgotten.

Mr. Neil Lester A. Gimeno, a Certified Public Procurement Specialist of the GPPB and BAC Member of the Philippine Statistics Authority Region X, for his expertise in re-examining, re-testing, and re-validating the research instruments, making them more reliable.

Dr. Antonio A. Aurelio for his insights, mastery, and experience in local governance, which guided this research.

Ms. Zenaida R. Yumang, the aunt of the researcher, for her prayers and moral support to spiritually guide the researcher against pressures and depression.

Finally, Mr. Efen L. Estrabela, a researcher's friend, asked for work opportunities by continuously inviting the researcher for lectures and speaking engagements, which financially supported this research.

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Teachers' Work and Family Life: Impacts and the Need for Balance

Joshua Jay O. Eden

College of Education, University of Caloocan City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Author Email: joshuajayeden@gmail.com

Date received: February 19, 2025

Date revised: March 13, 2025

Date accepted: March 30, 2025

Originality: 98%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 2%

Recommended citation:

Eden, J. J. (2025). Teachers' work and family life: Impacts and the need for balance. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 465-474. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.102>

Abstract. This study investigates the impact of teacher-related work factors on their work-life balance, aiming to provide insights for more targeted policies and interventions that enhance well-being and job satisfaction. Specifically, it aims to determine how various work demands impact teachers' family lives, identify key challenges, and propose strategies for achieving balance. Using stratified random sampling, 150 teacher-respondents from four schools participated in a structured survey. Data were analyzed using frequency distributions, weighted means, and Pearson correlations. Results show that teacher-related tasks have a moderate impact on family life, with workload, professional development, community involvement, and special assignments contributing to role conflict and stress. Despite DepEd policies regulating workloads, the respondents still face work-life imbalance, highlighting the need for stronger institutional support and policy improvements. Moreover, this revealed that excessive workloads, extended work hours, urgent report deadlines, financial burdens, special assignments, and professional development demands are key challenges disrupting teachers' work-life balance, exacerbating role conflict, stress, and family disengagement, underscoring the need for flexible policies and institutional support. To cope with these concerns, teachers strategize the conduct of effective planning, time management, setting work-life boundaries, seeking family and institutional support, and maintaining a positive outlook to reduce stress, enhance personal time, and maintain work-life balance, emphasizing the importance of flexible policies and organizational support. Overall, this study concludes that while teachers face moderate challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities, they demonstrate resilience through adaptive strategies, underscoring the need for structured support systems and long-term initiatives to promote work-family balance and enhance well-being, job satisfaction, and educational outcomes.

Keywords: Flexible learning; Teacher well-being; Work-family balance; Work-life integration.

1.0 Introduction

Work-life balance has become a significant concern in today's fast-paced work environments, where employees struggle to manage their professional and personal responsibilities. Maintaining a healthy balance is crucial for reducing stress and preventing burnout, particularly for teachers who must balance academic duties with family obligations. While this issue has long existed, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified teachers' challenges, particularly in public schools. With the shift to flexible learning and increased workloads, teachers must navigate multiple responsibilities, making it more challenging to maintain a work-life balance.

The concept and idea of work-life balance is broadly defined as an individual's ability to manage and maintain equilibrium between professional and personal responsibilities, ensuring well-being and minimizing inter-role conflict (Adisa et al., 2022; Irawanto et al., 2021; Jayasingam et al., 2021). While all definitions emphasize the need

for balance between work and life, different studies highlight specific aspects. Some focus on the ability to manage multiple roles across work, family, and personal responsibilities (Selim & Kee, 2022), while others emphasize maintaining clear boundaries, particularly in remote work settings (Weerarathna et al., 2022). Additionally, Vyas (2022) contextualizes work-life balance within evolving work arrangements in the post-pandemic labor market. Collectively, these perspectives highlight work-life balance as a dynamic concept influenced by work environments, personal obligations, and broader labor market trends.

Existing studies on work-life balance (WLB) have consistently shown that heavy workloads and strict deadlines contribute to stress and burnout among employees, including teachers. In the quest for exploration of various dimensions, several research gaps were revealed. One major gap involves the evolving impact of remote work on work-life balance (WLB), with Adisa et al. (2022) highlighting how mandatory work-from-home arrangements during the COVID-19 lockdown reduced perceived flexibility, thereby challenging previous assumptions about the benefits of remote work. Similarly, Weerarathna et al. (2022) address the lack of research on the long-term effects of remote work in specific professions, such as software engineering. Furthermore, cultural and sector-specific contexts also present gaps in WLB research. Irawanto et al. (2021) examine how work stress and WLB mediate job satisfaction in a collectivist society, an area often overlooked in individualistic-oriented studies. Meanwhile, Selim and Kee (2022) apply Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Conservation of Resources (COR) theories to study WLB among Egyptian academicians in a demographic and geographic context with limited prior research.

Beyond remote work, broader labor market transformations due to COVID-19 also shape research gaps. Vyas (2022) distinguishes between the experiences of blue-collar and white-collar workers, emphasizing hybrid work models and digital transformation as key factors influencing Work-Life Balance (WLB). Additionally, Jayasingam et al. (2021) challenge the traditional understanding of "life" in work-life balance (WLB) research, arguing that non-work activities should extend beyond family responsibilities to encompass personal interests, social activities, and self-development. Specifically, this study examines the relationship between teachers' work demands and family responsibilities to inform the development of an effective work-family balance program. By identifying key factors that contribute to work-family conflict, this research aims to provide insights that can inform policies and interventions aimed at enhancing teachers' well-being and job performance. In response, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced policies such as DepEd Order 14, series of 2020, to promote teachers' mental health and provide alternative work arrangements. However, despite these initiatives, many teachers continue to struggle with work-family balance.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study aimed to determine the perceived effects of teachers' work on their family life, serving as the basis for a proposed work-family balance program. Given its objectives, this study employed a quantitative-descriptive research design. According to Bhandari (2021), quantitative research involves collecting and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to broader populations. Furthermore, De Belen (2016) explains that descriptive research seeks to systematically describe an object, phenomenon, or variable, including its status, condition, or experience. Unlike experimental research, descriptive studies focus on estimation rather than hypothesis testing, primarily aiming to characterize phenomena.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the Pobcaran District within the Division of Caloocan City, encompassing four schools: Caloocan High School, Caloocan City Science High School, Maria Clara High School, and Tandang Sora Integrated School. This locale was selected due to its diverse educational institutions and the relevance of its teacher population to the study's objectives. The inclusion of various schools allowed for a more comprehensive assessment of the perceived effects of teachers' work on their family life across different educational settings.

2.3 Research Participants

The study included 150 teacher-respondents, comprising Teachers I, II, III, and Master Teachers. Specifically, 98 respondents (65.33%) were from Caloocan High School, 27 respondents (18.00%) from Maria Clara High School, 13 respondents (8.67%) from Caloocan City Science High School, and 12 respondents (8.00%) from Tandang Sora

Integrated School. These respondents were selected based on their direct experiences in balancing professional responsibilities and family life, making them the most appropriate participants for this study.

2.4 Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire was developed to assess the perceived effects of teachers' work on their family life. To ensure validity, it was anchored on key DepEd memoranda and policies (DepEd 291, s. 2008; DepEd 35, s. 2016; DepEd 1, s. 2020; DepEd 50, s. 2020; DepEd 30, s. 2021; Magna Carta for Public School Teachers; Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers; DepEd 14; s. 2020) for content relevance. The questionnaire was structured into four sections: demographic information, work-related responsibilities and their impact on family life (measured using a four-point Likert scale), challenges in managing work-family balance, and strategies employed by teachers (both in checklist format for efficiency). Five experts in teaching, counseling, and educational leadership validated the instrument, evaluating its content, structure, clarity, and statistical applicability to ensure its accuracy and relevance in capturing work-life balance dynamics. For reliability, a pilot test involving 30 volunteer teacher-respondents was conducted, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.95, indicating excellent internal consistency. This result confirmed the questionnaire's stability and accuracy, ensuring consistent and reliable data collection for further analysis.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The survey questionnaire was administered electronically via Google Forms. The department heads assisted in distributing the survey link to respondents through email or messaging applications. The data collection period lasted two weeks, during which monitoring was conducted to ensure the required responses were obtained. After completion, the collected data were systematically analyzed and interpreted.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical research guidelines and principles, ensuring the confidentiality, privacy, and voluntary participation of all respondents. Informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to data collection, emphasizing their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. The collected data were securely stored and used solely for research purposes, ensuring the integrity and anonymity of the respondents throughout the study.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Teacher-Respondents

Table 1 presents the teacher respondents' age distribution, with the 20-25 age group having the highest representation at 39.33% (59 respondents), followed by the 31-35 age group at 14.67% (22 respondents). The 46-50 and 26-30 groups had similar responses at 11.33% (17) and 10.67% (16), respectively. Other age groups included 36-40 with 8.67% (13), 56-60 with 6.67% (10), 41-45 with 4.67% (7), and 51-55 with 4.00% (6). These results highlight the diverse participation across age groups. Table 2 shows the gender distribution of teacher-respondents, with 116 females (77.33%) and 34 males (22.67%). A total of 150 teacher respondents participated in the study. Table 3 presents the civil status of the teacher-respondents. The majority were single, at 62.67% (94 respondents), followed by those who were married, at 34.67% (52 respondents). The least represented groups were separated/annulled and widowed, each with 1.33% (2 respondents).

Table 4 presents the profile of the teacher-respondents based on the number of dependents. The majority, 68.67% (103 respondents), have one to two dependents, followed by 22.67% (34) with three to four. Meanwhile, 5.33% (8) have five to six dependents, and 3.33% (5) have seven or more. Table 5 presents the profile of the teacher-respondents based on family income, which includes the total monthly earnings of all working family members. The majority, 46.00% (69 respondents), earn between ₱30,001 and ₱90,000, followed by 41.33% (62) who earn ₱30,001 and above. Meanwhile, 6.67% (10) earn ₱90,001 and above, and 6.00% (9) earn ₱60,001 to ₱90,000. Table 6 presents the profile of the teacher-respondents based on their position or rank. The majority, 68% (102 respondents), hold the position of Teacher I, followed by 14% (21) as Teacher III, 10% (15) as Master Teacher, and 8% (12) as Teacher II. Table 7 presents the profile of the teacher-respondents based on their years of service. Half of the respondents, 50.00% (75), have taught for five years or less, followed by 21.33% (32) with six to ten years of experience. Meanwhile, 16.00% (24) have taught for 11-15 years, 5.33% (8) for 26-30 years, 4.00% (6) for 31 years and above, 2.00% (3) for 21-25 years, and 1.33% (2) for 16-20 years.

Table 1. *Profile of the teacher-respondents based on age*

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 25	59	39.33
26 – 30	16	10.67
31 – 35	22	14.67
36 – 40	13	8.67
41 – 45	7	4.67
46 – 50	17	11.33
51 – 55	6	4.00
56 – 60	10	6.67

Table 2. *Profile of the teacher-respondents based on gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	116	77.33
Male	34	22.67

Table 3. *Profile of the teacher-respondents based on civil status*

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	94	62.67
Married	52	34.67
Separated/ Annulled	2	1.33
Widowed	2	1.33

Table 4. *Profile of the teacher-respondents based on no. of dependents*

Number of Dependents	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 2	103	68.67
3 – 4	34	22.67
5 – 6	8	5.33
7 and more	5	3.33

Table 5. *Profile of the teacher-respondents based on family income*

Family Income	Frequency	Percentage
30,000 and below	62	41.33
30,001 – 60,000	69	46.00
60,001 – 90,000	9	6.00
90,001 and above	10	6.67

Table 6. *Profile of the teacher-respondents based on rank*

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher I	102	68.0
Teacher II	12	8.00
Teacher III	21	14.0
Master Teacher	15	10.0

Table 7. *Profile of the teacher-respondents based on years in service*

Years in Service	Frequency	Percentage
5 years and below	75	50.00
6 – 10 years	32	21.33
11 – 15 years	24	16.00
16 – 20 years	2	1.33
21 – 25 years	3	2.00
26 – 30 years	8	5.33
31 years and above	6	4.00

3.2 Extent of the Teacher-Related Work Affecting Family Life

Table 8 highlights the teacher-related tasks impacting family life in terms of scope of work. Beyond classroom teaching, teachers manage various responsibilities, with the top five moderately rated tasks including attending meetings, performing administrative duties, supporting at-risk students, mentoring, and preparing teaching materials, with weighted means ranging from 2.69 to 3.17. The overall weighted mean of 3.20 indicates a moderate impact on family life. DepEd Orders 291 (2008) and 35 (2016) outline additional responsibilities, including lesson planning, assessments, and Learning Action Cells (LACs), for professional development. Specifically, DepEd Order 17 (2022) adds to teachers' workload with the preparation for expanded face-to-face classes, further increasing their time and resource commitments. Additionally, several studies conducted by Irawanto et al. (2021) and Adisa et al. (2022) found that the increasing workload and responsibilities of teachers, particularly with remote and hybrid learning models, blur the boundaries between work and home life, leading to heightened stress and difficulty in maintaining family relationships. Work intensification and employer monitoring further contribute to role conflict, making it more challenging for teachers to balance their professional and family obligations (Adisa et al., 2022).

Table 8. *Scope of work*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Number of Teaching Loads	3.27	Moderate
2. Number of Teaching Preparations	2.69	Moderate
3. Utilization and implementation of various teaching modalities (modular, online, or blended) including the number of students	3.29	Moderate
4. Attending the school-related meeting/s such as Learning Action Cell (LAC), department meetings, and the likes	3.17	Moderate
5. Preparation of lesson plans, instructional materials (PowerPoint presentation), evaluation tools (learning activity sheets, summative tests)	3.39	Moderate
6. Checking and recording students' work, such as activities, examinations, and performance tasks	3.54	High
7. Submission of necessary documents, forms, reports, and data concerning both the teachers and students	3.51	High
8. Performing assigned tasks in the activities such as module printing, distribution, and retrieval and preparation for limited face-to-face expansion	3.07	Moderate
9. Preparation and implementation of various programs and interventions for learners at risk of dropping out of school	3.05	Moderate
10. Counselling, mentoring, and coaching students, including home visits	2.97	Moderate
Overall Result	3.20	Moderate

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 High (H); 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate (M); 1.50 – 2.49 Low (L); and 1.00-1.49 Very Low (VL)

Table 9 examines the impact of teacher-related activities on family life, considering both personal and professional development. While these activities demand time, resources, and effort, they can yield positive outcomes when managed effectively. Professional development enhances job-related skills, while personal development focuses on well-being and self-awareness.

Table 9. *Personal and professional development*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Joining webinars and seminars within the school, division, and regional	3.07	Moderate
2. Joining other professional development trainings such as TESDA, capacity building, technology empowerment, and the likes	2.85	Moderate
3. Attending diploma courses and degree programs (master's, doctorate), including the submission of activities, tasks, and reports	3.00	Moderate
4. Acting as key facilitators, a technical working group (TWG), resource speaker, etc., in various seminars and webinars	2.77	Moderate
5. Reading reference materials and watching informative videos to further my knowledge in lessons	3.01	Moderate
6. Exercising and/or visiting fitness centers such as gym and/or doing a home workout	2.29	Low
7. Visiting wellness centers such as spas for massage and salons for cosmetics application, haircuts, and other related things	2.20	Low
8. Attending church services and spending time in prayer, devotion, and/or meditation	2.49	Low
9. Connecting with friends and family to improve mindset and manage emotions to cope with various challenges.	2.79	Moderate
10. Doing self-care activities that benefit physical and mental health, such as participating in sports leagues and doing recreational activities	2.63	Moderate
Overall Result	2.71	Moderate

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 High (H); 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate (M); 1.50 – 2.49 Low (L); and 1.00-1.49 Very Low (VL)

The table shows seven activities moderately affect teachers' family lives, while three have a low impact. The top three moderately rated activities include attending webinars and seminars (3.07), reading reference materials and watching informative videos (3.01), and enrolling in diploma or degree programs (3.00). Other activities, such as

professional training, emotional support from family, and serving as facilitators or speakers, also had moderate ratings (2.85–2.63). Meanwhile, attending church, exercising, and visiting wellness centers had a lower impact (2.49–2.20). Overall, the impact of personal and professional development on family life is moderate, with a general weighted mean of 2.71. The same concern was revealed by Selim and Kee (2020), who noted that even continuous professional development, while essential for career growth, adds additional demands on teachers' time and energy, often encroaching on family responsibilities. The emotional demands associated with career advancement create additional stress, underscoring the need for institutional support to help educators balance personal growth with family responsibilities. DepEd Orders 50 (2020) and 01 (2020) emphasize structured professional growth, while DepEd Order 30 (2021) ensures funding support for teachers' continuous education and development.

Table 10 examines the impact of teacher-related work on family life in terms of community involvement. While community participation enables teachers to contribute to civic responsibility and school programs, their engagement is often mandated by the school rather than voluntary. The highest-rated moderate activity is coordinating school-related events with LGUs, such as Brigada-Eskwela, disaster drills, and module distribution, with a weighted mean of 2.77. Other activities, including environmental projects, fundraising, clerical church duties, and participation in local government, received low ratings (2.41–2.47). These findings suggest that teachers prioritize lesson preparation and instructional tasks over community activities. The overall weighted mean of 2.51 indicates a moderate impact on family life. Furthermore, teachers' engagement in community-based programs and extracurricular activities increases workload and limits the time available for family interactions (Vyas, 2022). While community involvement is important, excessive commitments contribute to fatigue and emotional exhaustion, making it challenging for teachers to prioritize personal and family needs (Weerarathna et al., 2022). DepEd Orders 24 (2008) and 320 (2008) institutionalize Brigada-Eskwela and disaster drills, reinforcing teachers' role in school preparedness. Whereas the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Section 27) and the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers establish teachers' rights and limitations regarding their involvement in politics and religion, emphasizing their role in nation-building.

Table 10. *Involvement in community activities*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Coordinating school-related activities with LGU (barangay) such as brigada-eskwela, fire and earthquake drills, module distribution, module printing and sorting, and the likes	2.77	Moderate
2. Joining fundraising activities within the community	2.46	Low
3. Participating in environmental projects, tree planting, sports leagues/clinics, and recreational tasks	2.47	Low
4. Attending clerical church and religious activities	2.42	Low
5. Participating in local government affairs, such as the state of the barangay address, relief operations, environmental activities, outreach programs, and feeding programs, among others.	2.41	Low
Overall Result	2.51	Moderate

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 High (H); 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate (M); 1.50 – 2.49 Low (L); and 1.00–1.49 Very Low (VL)

Table 11 examines the impact of special assignments on teachers' family lives. The most prominent special assignment is serving as a coordinator or adviser in various roles, such as club adviser, grade level-in-charge, or guidance teacher, with a weighted mean of 3.11, indicating a moderate impact. Other moderately rated tasks include participating in curriculum-related advisory roles (2.86), coordinating special programs such as Brigada-Eskwela and PTA (2.77), and handling non-teaching roles, such as election duties or librarian tasks (2.73). The least concerning assignment is performing managerial tasks related to canteen management, YECS, and SSG, with a lower impact rating of 2.49. DepEd Memorandum 291 (2008) mandates a maximum of six hours of daily classroom instruction but allows additional academic activities outside the school premises. The same memorandum states that all advisory and special assignments should be considered part of one teaching load. However, teachers often take on additional responsibilities due to shortages of both teaching and administrative staff, which, if not managed effectively, may impact teaching outcomes. Special assignments, such as administrative duties, mentorship roles, and additional responsibilities, significantly increase role overload and disrupt work-life balance (Jayasingam et al., 2021). Teachers often struggle to establish clear boundaries between work and home responsibilities, leading to work-life balance issues, particularly when policies fail to address their holistic well-being (Jayasingam et al., 2021).

Table 11. *Performance of special assignment*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Performing special program coordinatorship such as Brigada-Eskwela, Gender, and Development (GAD), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (DRRMC), Youth Entrepreneurship and Cooperativism in Schools (YECS), canteen manager, and the likes	2.77	Moderate
2. Performing coordinatorship such as club adviser, cluster coordinator, grade level-in-charge, building-in-charge, prefect of student discipline, guidance teacher, teacher-registrar, campus integrity crusader, section adviser, and the likes	3.11	Moderate
3. Participating in school curriculum-related advisership such as school selection committee, programs and trainings, planning, and the likes	2.86	Moderate
4. Having assigned non-teaching-related activities in school such as election workers (DESO, chairman, poll clerk, third member, support staff), librarian, clinician, sports committee, and the likes	2.73	Moderate
5. Performing managerial tasks and advisorship concerning canteen management, Youth Entrepreneurship and Cooperativism in Schools (YECS), Supreme Student Government (SSG), and the likes	2.49	Low
Overall Result	2.79	Moderate

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 High (H); 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate (M); 1.50 – 2.49 Low (L); and 1.00-1.49 Very Low (VL)

3.3 Relationship Between the Profile and the Extent of Teacher-related Work Affecting Family Life

Table 12 examines the relationship between the respondents' profiles and the extent of teacher-related work that affects their family life in terms of the scope of work. The results indicate that gender correlates perfectly with a computed r of 1.000. Meanwhile, age (0.029), civil status (0.148), and the number of dependents (0.122) show negligible correlation. Family income ($r = 0.587$) and position/rank ($r = 0.458$) demonstrate a moderate relationship, while years in service ($r = 0.304$) indicate a low or slight correlation. These findings suggest that while some demographic factors have minimal impact, financial stability and professional rank play a more significant role in balancing work and family responsibilities.

Table 12. *Analysis of the relationship between the profile and extent of teacher-related work affecting the teachers' family life in terms of scope of work*

Variables Correlated	Pearson r	Interpretation
1. Age	0.029	negligible correlation
2. Gender	1.000	perfect correlation
3. Civil Status	0.148	negligible correlation
4. Number of Dependents	0.122	negligible correlation
5. Family Income	0.587	moderate relationship
6. Position/Rank	0.458	moderate relationship
7. Years in Service	0.304	low/slight correlation

Legend: 0.00 – 0.20 negligible correlation; 0.21 – 0.40 low or slight correlation; 0.41 – 0.70 moderate relationship; 0.71 – 0.99 very high relationship; 1.00 perfect correlation

Table 13 examines the relationship between respondents' profiles and the extent to which teacher-related work affects their family life, particularly in terms of personal and professional development. The results show that gender correlates perfectly ($r = 1.000$). Age ($r = 0.498$), civil status ($r = 0.545$), number of dependents ($r = 0.672$), and years in service ($r = 0.587$) demonstrate a moderate correlation. Meanwhile, family income (0.249) shows a low to slight correlation, while position or rank (0.762) exhibits a very high correlation. These findings suggest that higher professional standing has a significant influence on personal and professional development, while financial factors play a lesser role.

Table 13. *Analysis of the relationship between the profile and extent of teacher-related work affecting the teachers' family life in terms of personal and professional development*

Variables Correlated	Pearson r	Interpretation
1. Age	0.498	moderate relationship
2. Gender	1.000	perfect correlation
3. Civil Status	0.545	moderate relationship
4. Number of Dependents	0.672	moderate relationship
5. Family Income	0.249	low/slight correlation
6. Position/Rank	0.762	very high correlation
7. Years in Service	0.507	moderate relationship

Legend: 0.00 – 0.20 negligible correlation; 0.21 – 0.40 low or slight correlation; 0.41 – 0.70 moderate relationship; 0.71 – 0.99 very high relationship; 1.00 perfect correlation

Table 14 examines the relationship between respondents' profiles and the extent of teacher-related work that affects their family life, specifically in terms of involvement in community activities. The results indicate that there

is a perfect correlation ($r = 1.000$) between gender and the variable. Age (0.992), civil status (0.863), number of dependents (0.966), position or rank (0.911), and years in service (0.954) all exhibit a very high correlation. Meanwhile, family income (0.534) demonstrates a moderate correlation. These findings suggest that demographic and professional factors have a strong influence on teachers' participation in community activities, while financial status has a lesser but still notable impact.

Table 14. Analysis of the relationship between the profile and extent of teacher-related work affecting the teachers' family life in terms of involvement in community activities

Variables Correlated	Pearson r	Interpretation
1. Age	0.992	very high correlation
2. Gender	1.000	perfect correlation
3. Civil Status	0.863	very high correlation
4. Number of Dependents	0.966	very high correlation
5. Family Income	0.534	moderate relationship
6. Position/Rank	0.991	very high correlation
7. Years in Service	0.954	very high correlation

Legend: 0.00 – 0.20 negligible correlation; 0.21 – 0.40 low or slight correlation; 0.41 – 0.70 moderate relationship; 0.71 – 0.99 very high relationship; 1.00 perfect correlation

Table 15 examines the relationship between respondents' profiles and the extent to which teacher-related work affects their family life, specifically in terms of performing special assignments. The results indicate that gender correlates perfectly ($r = 1.000$). Age (0.128), civil status (0.139), and number of dependents (0.109) show negligible correlation, while family income (0.557) and position/rank (0.419) exhibit a moderate relationship. The years in service (0.342) indicate a low or slight correlation. These findings suggest that financial stability and professional standing have a more significant impact on the effect of special assignments, while demographic factors have a minimal effect.

Table 15. Analysis of the relationship between the profile and extent of teacher-related work affecting the teachers' family lives in terms of the performance of the special assignment

Variables Correlated	Pearson r	Interpretation
1. Age	0.128	negligible correlation
2. Gender	1.000	perfect correlation
3. Civil Status	0.139	negligible correlation
4. Number of Dependents	0.109	negligible correlation
5. Family Income	0.557	moderate relationship
6. Position/Rank	0.419	moderate relationship
7. Years in Service	0.342	low/slight correlation

Legend: 0.00 – 0.20 negligible correlation; 0.21 – 0.40 low or slight correlation; 0.41 – 0.70 moderate relationship; 0.71 – 0.99 very high relationship; 1.00 perfect correlation

3.4 Problems Encountered Regarding Work-Family Life Balance

Table 16 presents the key challenges teachers face in balancing work and family life. The most significant concerns include excessive workloads, extended working hours beyond regular schedules, the need to submit urgent reports, and the requirement to use personal funds for teaching materials. While non-teaching tasks and extra school activities add to the burden, they are less pressing than workload and time management challenges. Several studies have also revealed that increasing workloads, the blurring of boundaries between professional and personal responsibilities, and heightened job demands significantly impact work-family balance, making it increasingly difficult for individuals to manage their time and well-being effectively. Remote and hybrid work models have intensified work stress, making it challenging for teachers to separate their work from home life, which leads to role conflicts and emotional exhaustion (Irawanto et al., 2021; Adisa et al., 2022).

Additionally, special assignments, administrative duties, and community involvement further strain their time, exacerbating fatigue and reducing family engagement (Jayasingam et al., 2021; Weeraratna et al., 2022). Professional development, though essential for career growth, adds to the emotional and cognitive burden of teachers, requiring them to balance continuous learning with family responsibilities (Selim & Kee, 2022). Moreover, institutional policies often fail to address the diverse needs of educators, focusing primarily on family-related responsibilities while neglecting individuals without dependents, which can lead to work-life balance issues and dissatisfaction (Vyas, 2022). Consequently, teachers struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance, emphasizing the need for flexible work arrangements and organizational support systems to mitigate stress and promote well-being.

Table 16. *Problems encountered in work and family life balance*

Identified Problems	f	Rank
1. Having more than the expected/required number of teaching loads	111	6
2. Having more than the expected/required number of teaching preparations	89	12
3. Having more than the expected/required number of class size or students per section	95	9.5
4. Having too many tasks and responsibilities at work interferes with the quality of time with my family	127	1
5. Working for more than 8 hours a day, during weekends and even on holidays because of the reports I need to accomplish, which are to be submitted as soon as possible	126	2
6. Doing school-related tasks such as lesson plans, instructional materials (PowerPoint presentation), and evaluation tools (learning activity sheets, summative tests), which coincides with my responsibility at home	108	7
7. Too many activities, examinations, and performance tasks to check and record	103	8
8. Submitting the necessary documents, forms, reports, and data which are due immediately	115	5
9. Receiving messages through messenger and texts coming from my students, parents, colleagues, even after working hours	117	3
10. Attending various webinars, seminars, and other professional development training such as TESDA, capacity building, technology empowerment, etc., and diploma courses and degree programs (master's, doctorate) during weekends and holidays	95	9.5
11. Having been assigned as key facilitators, technical working group (TWG), resource speakers, etc., in various seminars and webinars most of the time	74	14
12. Designated as a special program coordinator in Brigada-Eskuwela, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (DRRMC), Youth Entrepreneurship and Cooperativism in Schools (YECS), and the likes, which requires me to attend beyond my school official time	72	15
13. Assigned to non-teaching-related activities in school such as guidance teacher, registrar, librarian, clinician, sports committee, and election workers (DESO, chairman, poll clerk, third member, support staff)	81	13
14. Performing tasks and activities that are not explicitly included in my scope of work, attending school-related activities not within such as various ancillary responsibilities	92	11
15. Spending my money to finance my teaching devices such as laptop/computer, headphones, including instructional materials, and internet/load	116	4

3.5 Strategies Employed to Balance Work and Family Life

Table 17 presents the strategies teachers use to balance work and family life. Common strategies include effective planning and scheduling, supporting family members, maintaining a positive outlook, setting boundaries for work-related communication, and ensuring regular family interaction. Various studies have reflected on how teachers adopt various strategies to manage their work-life balance, including setting clear boundaries between work and personal life, prioritizing self-care and mental well-being, and leveraging support from supervisors and institutions (Selim & Kee, 2022; Weerathna et al., 2022). Additionally, flexible scheduling, time management techniques, and task delegation help reduce work-related stress and enhance personal time (Vyas, 2022). The role of organizational policies is also critical, as more inclusive and adaptable frameworks help educators balance career growth with family responsibilities (Jayasingam et al., 2021).

Table 17. *Strategies employed to achieve work and family life balance*

Identified Strategies	f	Rank
1. Conduct planning, scheduling time-framing, and routine activities to accomplish various tasks and assignments.	137	1
2. Inform and involve family members and colleagues in time-management activities to spend time effectively and efficiently simultaneously.	118	7
3. Set a time when can and cannot be contacted by students, parents, and colleagues.	127	4.5
4. Do not answer calls and messages after a specific time (working hours), on weekends, or on holidays.	86	12
5. Demonstrate professionalism and produce quality work towards colleagues and profession.	120	6
6. Assist my colleagues in accomplishing tasks and show volunteerism towards work.	84	14
7. Keep oneself updated professionally by attending various seminars/webinars and engaging in graduate studies.	110	9
8. Upgrade one's ability and look for other skills that benefit me.	103	11
9. Visit fitness and wellness centers regularly and have a travel vacation with family whenever possible.	84	14
10. Do recreations, hobbies, and leisure activities of one's interest that would develop oneself.	109	10
11. Conduct regular checkups with various doctors (family medicine, dentist, etc.) to assess one's health.	84	14
12. List and track financial savings, expenses, and salary to ensure I only purchase what is more important.	113	8
13. Maintain positive relations and constant attention/communication with family members.	127	4.5
14. Be optimistic and demonstrate a positive outlook concerning work and family.	129	3
15. Support family members' moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial aspects.	131	2

4.0 Conclusion

This study examined the perceived impact of teachers' work on their family life, laying the groundwork for a proposed work-family balance program. The findings revealed that while teachers face moderate challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities, they demonstrate resilience by adopting strategies to manage their workload. The study found that demographic factors, including age, marital status, and teaching experience, influence work-family balance to varying degrees. Community involvement exhibited the highest correlation with these factors, while personal and professional development was moderately affected. Despite the additional responsibilities of special assignments, teachers remained committed to career growth and institutional contributions. Teachers' challenges highlight the need for structured support systems to enhance their well-being. Future research can investigate the long-term effects of work-family balance initiatives and evaluate their effectiveness in various educational settings. By addressing these challenges, institutions can better support teachers, ultimately improving job satisfaction and overall educational outcomes.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Joshua Jay O. Eden – editing, writing, supervising, BA – data analysis, encoding, etc.

6.0 Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researcher humbly expresses deep gratitude to the Almighty for His guidance, wisdom, and strength, without which this study would not have been possible. Heartfelt appreciation is also extended to the researcher's wife, Mrs. Ma. Carol Anne T. Eden, and their beloved furbabies – White, Tinny, Chu, Pogi, and Cheese – for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journey.

The researcher is also grateful to his family, colleagues and friends for their motivation and encouragement.

Special appreciation is extended to:

All teacher-respondents for their time and effort in providing essential data.

Thesis validators for their valuable input in refining the research instrument.

The panel chairman and members for their insightful evaluation and constructive feedback.

Dr. Ramona A. Prado, the researcher's advisor, for her expertise, guidance, and unwavering support.

Dr. Melchor S. Julianes, Dean of the Graduate School, for his encouragement and leadership.

Dr. Marilyn T. De Jesus, University President, for inspiring graduate students to persevere in their academic endeavors.

Hon. Along Dale Gonzalo Malapitan, City Mayor, for his commitment to providing free tertiary education for Caloocan residents, making academic pursuits more accessible.

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Development and Evaluation of Blue Ternate Flower (BTFEpP) and Bougainvillea Bract (BBEpP) as Novel Localized pH Paper Indicator

Cherry May Rodriguez, Joefaith Endam, Daneth Joyce Gumahad, Andray Pollente,
Phil Christian Fernandez, Dharell Cervantes, Christopher Bernard S. Benong*, Jesson B. Belen
Foundation University, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: christopherbernard.benong@foundationu.com

Date received: February 13, 2025

Date revised: March 6, 2025

Date accepted: March 31, 2025

Originality: 94%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 6%

Recommended citation:

Rodriguez, C.M., Endam, J., Gumahad, D.J., Pollente, A., Fernandez, P.C., Cervantes, D., Benong, C.B., Belen, J. (2025). Development and evaluation of Blue Ternate Flower (BTFEpP) and Bougainvillea Bract (BBEpP) as novel localized pH paper indicator. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 475-482.
<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.086>

Abstract. The increasing integration of technology into education requires innovative solutions, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Most low- and middle-income regions have several schools facing challenges brought on by inadequate resources for science education, which in turn lead to students' poor performance in the subject. To address this, educators in the Philippines have begun developing low-cost, locally sourced teaching materials. This study explores the development of localized pH paper (LpP) using the extracts obtained from blue ternate flowers (BTFEpP) and bougainvillea bract (BBEpP). By conducting controlled experiments, the research evaluates the sensitivity and effectiveness of these LpPs as compared to commercial pH paper. The findings suggest that locally developed pH papers can provide a cost-effective, environmentally friendly alternative for educational purposes, offering a viable solution for enhancing science learning in under-resourced schools. Furthermore, the FTIR analysis confirmed the presence of hydroxyl groups, aromatic compounds, and esters—key functional groups responsible for their pH-indicating properties. However, further studies are needed to conduct a structural analysis of these bioactive compounds using techniques such as nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy and mass spectrometry. Given these promising outcomes, further research is recommended to assess the shelf life and long-term stability of these localized pH papers under various storage conditions.

Keywords: Acid-base indicator; Blue ternate; Bougainville; Localized pH paper; Natural indicator.

1.0 Introduction

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement, the education landscape must adapt accordingly. The 2019 report by the International Society for Technology in Education emphasized the need for a transformation in educational practices, stating that technology should be integrated into curriculum design to foster active and engaged learning among students. However, a lack of teaching and learning resources, along with inadequate facilities, can hinder students' learning experiences (Fia et al., 2022). This issue is particularly prevalent in many secondary schools, especially in low- and middle-income countries, where modern science laboratory equipment is often inaccessible (Opara, 2024). More than 60% of schools in these regions have limited resources for practical science education, which contributes to poor student performance (McEwan & Barlow, 2020).

This global issue is also evident in the Philippines. Due to a severe shortage of science teaching tools, Filipino teachers are turning to alternative sources, such as open-source educational resources and affordable science kits (Estipular & Roleda, 2018; Parochelin, 2023). According to Gonzales et al. (2022), these resources have the potential to bridge existing gaps. Research from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) also revealed that even schools with limited budgets can improve the quality of science education when they employ pedagogically sound methods and utilize locally developed innovative materials (Balbon, 2020; Darman et al., 2024). These efforts exemplify educational practices tailored to local conditions, focusing on research related to low-cost science kits and modular teaching aids made from localized materials. This approach enhances student interest, engagement, and understanding (Reyes, 2019; Gerald-Goins et al., 2021; Benong et al., 2024)). Additionally, using locally sourced natural indicators from plants and flowers (Mitarlis et al., 2019) in acid-base activities can significantly support both teachers and students.

Several studies have been conducted on various natural indicators extracted from different plants that can be used as acid-base indicators. These include aqueous hibiscus flower (Peralta et al., 2019), red cabbage (Pakolpakçıl et al., 2018), and purple sweet potato (Farida et al., 2024; Benong et al., 2024), as well as Bougainvillea (Bougainvillea sp.) (Pakolpakçıl et al., 2018) and butterfly pea, locally known as blue ternate (Koshy et al., 2022). Additionally, research has been conducted to examine the viability of natural extracts, such as those from red cabbage, turmeric rose, and beetroot (Jabeen et al., 2022), as well as butterfly pea (Syahirah et al., 2018), as potential pH indicators. However, there have been no studies on the development and comparison of bougainvillea flower extract (BFE) with blue ternate flower extract (BTFE) as potential localized pH papers (LpP). Therefore, this study was conducted to determine whether BFE and BTFE have the potential to serve as LpP. Moreover, this study also provided a locally sourced, cost-efficient, and sustainable LpP that offers an economic advantage over commercialized synthetic pH papers, enabling teachers and students to use it without budgetary constraints.

Furthermore, it was found that the color of Bougainvillea bracts is attributed to the varied contents and proportions of betacyanins and betaxanthins (Zhang et al., 2024). Additionally, anthocyanins are also present in both blue ternate (Syahirah et al., 2018) and Bougainvillea (Kenari & Razavi, 2022). Therefore, this study evaluates the presence of organic compounds in Bougainvillea Flower Extract (BFE) and Blue Ternate Flower Extract (BTFE) used in the LpP, utilizing Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) analysis. This evaluation was crucial because the functional groups (hydroxyl, aromatic, and ester groups) directly influence the color-changing properties that are central to the pH-indicating performance of the localized pH paper (Benong et al., 2024). By analyzing the molecular composition of these extracts, the study established a clear correlation between their chemical properties and their effectiveness as eco-friendly alternatives to commercial synthetic pH papers.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed an experimental design, utilizing BFE and BTFE to develop BFEpP and BTFEpP. Their changes were compared using standard pH levels from 1 to 14, with commercial pH paper serving as the control. This study facilitates a thorough evaluation of the BFEpP and BTFEpP's responsiveness to different pH levels, aiming to develop a viable, locally sourced alternative for pH testing. Moreover, the extracts were also analyzed for the potential presence of anthocyanin using FTIR Spectroscopy (PerkinElmer Spectrum IR).

Extraction of BTFE and BBE

The blue ternate flowers and bougainvillea bract were authenticated by three experts in the field of biology and were freshly washed and extracted with a slightly modified method from Wiyantoko and Astuti (2020). Using 90% alcohol with a 100:1 weight-to-volume ratio (100 grams to 1 mL). The flowers were then pounded using a mortar and pestle to facilitate the extraction process.

Construction of BTFEpP and BBEpP

The same extracted samples were used to create the BTFEpP and BBEpP by soaking prepared bond paper strips and then drying them in a preheated drying oven at 100 °C.

2.2 Research Analysis Procedure

The constructed BTfEpP and BBepP were tested for pH evaluation by immersing the prepared BTfEpP and BBepP strips (14 strips per LpP were prepared for 14 pH levels) in different pH standards for 1 minute. In contrast, five drops of pH standards were added to the different test tubes containing 2.00 mL of prepared BfE and BfE (14 test tubes per flower extract were prepared). Consecutively, 14 strips of control were also immersed on the 14 pH standards. Moreover, the flower extracts used in constructing the LpPs were also analyzed for the potential presence of anthocyanin using FTIR Spectroscopy (PerkinElmer Spectrum IR)(Benong et al., 2024).

2.3 Ethical Considerations

The study ensured that the blue ternate flowers and bougainvillea bract were harvested sustainably without damaging the ecosystem or endangering the species. Proper disposal of any plant waste after the experiment was also observed to minimize environmental impact. The chemicals used in the test were stored and disposed of in accordance with local regulations and guidelines. Above all, the research did not involve any animals, ensuring that animal welfare concerns are not a factor.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Evaluation of Color Changes in the BTfEpP and BBepP in Standard pH

The BTfEpP and BBepP were subjected to pH evaluation using pH standards to determine the exact pH when color change occurs. They were also compared to the commercialized pH paper BTfE and BBfE. The color of BTfEpP significantly changed when it was dipped in the pH 3-14 standard, while BBepP changed its color significantly when dipped in the pH 13 and 14 standards. Color changes also occurred at pH levels 13 (from light green to yellow-green) and 14 (from light green to a yellowish hue).

Table 1. Standard solution with pH range of 1-14 and the different color changes of different indicators

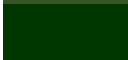
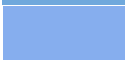
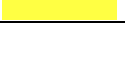
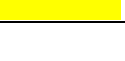
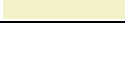
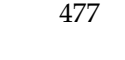
Samples pH	Commercialized pH Paper	BBepP	BBfE	BTfEpP	BTfE
					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

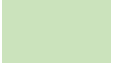
Table 1 presents an analysis of the pH paper derived from Blue Ternate flower extract (BTfEpP), which has demonstrated its effectiveness as a potent natural pH indicator across a range of 1 to 14. The crude extract of Blue Ternate, rich in anthocyanins, exhibits specific color changes comparable to those of commercial pH papers, confirming its reliability as a substitute. Previous studies, such as those by Gonzales et al. (2022) and Jabeen et al. (2022), have indicated that plant-based pH indicators can perform similarly to their synthetic counterparts. BTfEpP is an appropriate choice for an economical and environmentally friendly pH indicator, particularly useful in resource-constrained settings (Peralta et al., 2019; Pakolpakçıl & Çakır, 2018). Additionally, bougainvillea bract extract (BBEpP) has been found to function effectively as an acid-base indicator in the titration of strong acids and strong bases. Wang et al. (2024) identified genes associated with bract coloration, providing a valuable theoretical foundation for future gene cloning, genetic engineering, and breeding efforts aimed at enhancing Bougainvillea color diversity. The color variance observed in Bougainvillea bracts arises from variations in the content and proportions of betacyanins (which contribute to the purple color) and betaxanthins, resulting in a richer and more complex color, according to Zhang et al. (2024). Overall, this series of smooth color transitions through the pH spectrum makes Blue Ternate extract pH paper a valid and practical choice for many applications.

3.2 Evaluation of Color Changes in the BTfEpP and BBEpP mixed with Different Household Chemicals

Table 2 demonstrates the effectiveness of Blue Ternate Flower Extract pH Paper (BTfEpP) and Bougainvillea Bract Extract pH Paper (BBEpP) in detecting pH changes in household samples, such as cola and bleach, which exhibited significant differences.

Table 2. Different color changes of different indicators after being dipped or mixed with 1mL of different household samples

Sr No.	Sample	Commercialized pH paper	BTfLE	BTfLEpP	BBE	BBEpP
						
1	Starch					
2	Chocolate Drink					
3	Coffee					
4	Cologne					
5	Cola					
6	Bleach					
7	Energy Drink					
8	Shampoo					
9	Sugar					
10	Salt					
11	Milk Powder					

12	Flour					
13	Toothpaste					
14	Detergent Powder					
15	Acetone Solution					
16	Tea					
17	Calamansi					
18	Antacid					
19	Vitamin C					
20	Soy Sauce					
21	Fabric Conditioner					
22	Mouth Wash					
23	Vinegar					
24	Alcohol					
25	Liquid Detergent					
26	Lemon					
27	Muriatic Acid					
28	Multipurpose Cleaner					
29	Lime and lemon soda					
30	Pineapple Juice					

Both localized pH papers demonstrated distinct and reliable color changes across various samples, performing comparably to commercialized pH paper. BTFEpP exhibited consistent, sharp transitions in acidic substances, such as cola, and basic substances, like bleach, while BBEPp displayed a broader range of color responses due to its anthocyanin and betacyanin content. These findings establish BTFEpP and BBEPp as cost-effective, sustainable, and practical alternatives for educational and everyday pH testing needs. The growing demand for dependable and cost-effective pH testing methods, particularly in educational and everyday settings, has driven the investigation of alternative solutions (Sanchez et al., 2021).

3.3 Presence of Bioactive Compounds from the Blue Ternate Flower and Bougainvillea Bract Extract

The FTIR analysis showed that the blue ternate flower extract exhibited five distinct spectral peaks within the wavelength range of 1044.55 cm^{-1} to 3312.83 cm^{-1} . The bougainvillea bract extract also has five distinct peaks within 1038.96 cm^{-1} to 3271.83 cm^{-1} .

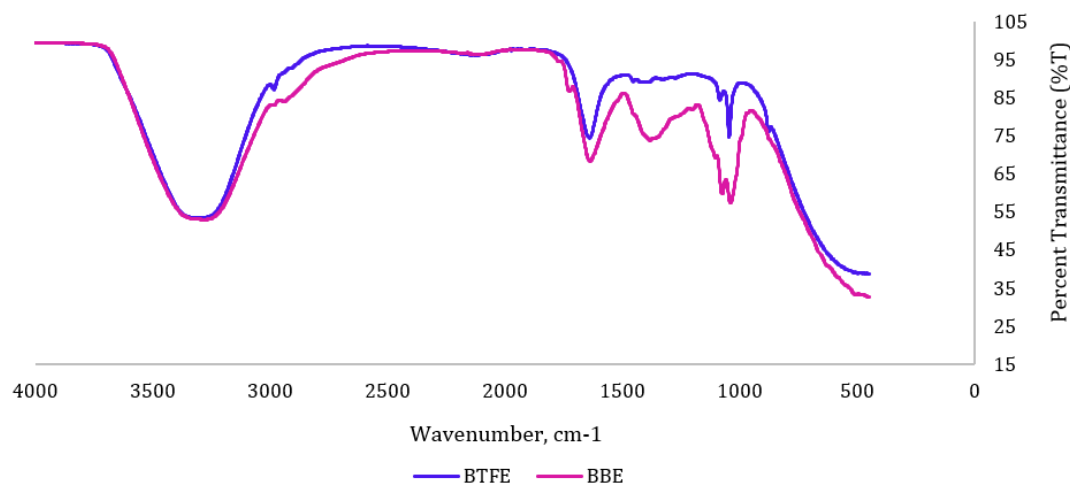


Figure 1. FT-IR transmittance results from the blue ternate flower extract and bougainvillea bract extract

The FTIR analysis of the Blue Ternate extract identified several important functional groups. A peak at 3312.83 cm^{-1} , with a transmittance of 53.49%, is attributed to hydroxyl groups (C-OH), indicating the presence of alcohols or phenols. Peaks at 1638.57 cm^{-1} and 1413.03 cm^{-1} , with transmittances of 74.44% and 89.02%, respectively, correspond to aromatic ring vibrations, suggesting a high concentration of aromatic compounds. Additionally, a peak at 1084.03 cm^{-1} (transmittance of 84.32%) is associated with ester groups (C-O), and a peak at 1044.55 cm^{-1} (transmittance of 74.75%) indicates C-O stretching vibrations. These results reveal a diverse chemical composition, characterized by prominent aromatic, hydroxyl, and ester functionalities, which may impact the extract's properties and applications. The detailed results are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Noticeable peaks produced from the FT-IR Transmittance result

Peak Number	Wave number (cm^{-1})	Percent Transmittance (%T)	Functional Group
Blue Ternate Flower Extract			
1	3312.83	53.49	Hydroxyl (C-OH)
2	1638.57	74.44	Aromatic
3	1413.03	89.02	Aromatic
4	1084.03	84.32	C-O, C=O, C-OH
5	1044.55	74.75	C-O
Bougainvillea Bract Extract			
1	3271.83	53.03	Hydroxyl (C-OH)
2	1636.03	68.26	Aromatic
3	1383.26	73.85	C-O, C-H, C-N
4	1074.74	59.80	C=O, C-OH
5	1038.96	57.53	C-O-C

The FTIR analysis of blue ternate flower extract identified various functional groups, hydroxyl, aromatic, and ester, contributing to the various applications of this extract. The absorbance at 3312.83 cm^{-1} , due to hydroxyl groups, indicates the presence of either alcohols or phenolic groups. Hydroxyl groups have been recognized as antioxidants due to their ability to donate hydrogen atoms to neutralize free radicals. It is further justified by recent research, including the study by Chen et al. (2020), which identified that hydroxyl groups of phenolic compounds demonstrate remarkable antioxidant activity, expressing their potential health value for blue ternate

extract. Peaks observed at 1638.57 cm^{-1} and 1413.03 cm^{-1} , which are attributed to the vibrations of aromatic rings, indicate a high concentration of aromatic compounds (Mathai et al., 2021). These compounds of blue ternate have been previously reported to possess antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties (Nascimento et al., 2021). This finding supports the potential use of the extract as a therapeutic agent. The peak at 1084.03 cm^{-1} is assigned to ester groups. It is worth noting that esters are commonly used in the food and cosmetic industries due to their aromatic properties and stability. Recent studies, including the study by Lu et al. (2024), emphasize the significance of esters in flavoring and fragrance. Additionally, the C-O stretching vibrations at 1044.55 cm^{-1} ultimately define a complex chemical structure that contributes to the versatility of the extract. These FTIR results were aligned with those of Turno (2021), which indicate that blue ternate flower extract contains anthocyanin. Moreover, the findings suggest potential industrial applications for blue ternate flower extract (Multisona et al., 2023).

The FTIR spectrum of the bougainvillea bract extract revealed significant functional groups, including hydroxyl, aromatic, ester, and C-O stretching vibrations. These findings are consistent with those of Sahu and Saxena (2013), who discovered the presence of phenolic compounds and flavonoids in both bougainvillea flower and bougainvillea bract extract samples through FTIR spectroscopic analysis. Aromatic peaks at 1636.03 cm^{-1} and 1383.26 cm^{-1} also align with the study by Zhang et al. (2023), which established the presence of aromatic rings in bioactive plant extracts as possessing antimicrobial activity. Moreover, according to Wu et al. (2022), the color of bougainvillea bracts is attributed to varying levels of betacyanins and betaxanthins, which both share similar functional groups. Therefore, further studies are needed to conduct a structural analysis of these bioactive compounds using techniques such as NMR (Nuclear Magnetic Resonance) and mass spectrometry.

4.0 Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the potential of BTFEpP and BBEPp as effective natural pH indicators, demonstrating comparable performance to commercially available pH papers. FTIR analysis confirmed the presence of hydroxyl groups, aromatic compounds, and esters – key functional groups responsible for their pH-indicating properties. Experimental tests further validated the reliability of BTFEpP and BBEPp, which exhibited consistent and well-defined color changes across the entire pH spectrum (1–14). These results suggest that localized pH papers (LpP) derived from natural sources, such as blue ternate flower extract and bougainvillea bract extract, can serve as viable alternatives to synthetic indicators, offering both environmental sustainability and economic benefits, particularly in resource-limited settings. Given these promising outcomes, further research is recommended to assess the shelf life and long-term stability of these localized pH papers under various storage conditions. Additionally, future studies should explore other natural extracts with potential pH-indicating properties to enhance the effectiveness and applicability of LpPs. Expanding this research could contribute to the development of sustainable, cost-effective, and eco-friendly alternatives for scientific and educational use.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

All the listed authors have equally and significantly contributed to all aspects of this study, including study conception and design, data analysis and interpretation, and manuscript drafting and editing. Mrs. Cherry May B. Rodriguez and Ms. Daneth Joyce L. Gumahad analyzed the results, developed a comprehensive methodology to synthesize and test the pH indicators, and connected their research findings with relevant literature to emphasize the significance and novelty of the study. Mr. Andray Pollente, Mr. Dharell Cervantes, Mr. Phil Christian Fernandez, and Mr. Joefaith Endam all contributed to this study by preparing samples, calibrating pH indicators, and evaluating performance under various conditions. Mr. Christopher Bernard Benong proofread the manuscript and supervised all stages of the research, providing critical guidance to ensure alignment with the study's goals. Additionally, Mr. Jesson B. Belen was involved in formulation, assessment, experimentation, and data collection. All authors read and approved the final draft of the manuscript.

6.0 Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this study.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors thank Foundation University for allowing them to conduct this research.

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Assessing the Efficiency of the Learners Information System in a Rural Philippine National High School

James Edward B. Bete*, Angelie A. Collera

College of Science and Technology Education, University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines,
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: edward.jamesbete@gmail.com

Date received: January 13, 2025

Date revised: March 7, 2025

Date accepted: March 31, 2025

Originality: 96%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 4%

Recommended citation:

Bete, J.E., & Collera, A. (2025). Assessing the efficiency of the learners information system in a rural Philippine national high school. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 483-494. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.020>

Abstract. The Learners Information System (LIS) was introduced by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines to streamline administrative processes and enhance educational governance. However, its effectiveness in rural settings remains underexplored. This study evaluates the implementation of LIS in a rural Philippine high school using the E-Government and Digital Inclusion frameworks. A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was employed, combining surveys and focus group discussions with 69 participants, including teachers, LIS coordinators, and the school principal. Findings reveal that LIS improves record-keeping and reduces administrative workload, but faces significant challenges, including inadequate IT infrastructure, technical failures, high maintenance costs, and limited inclusivity. These barriers hinder its potential to support Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and DepEd's digital transformation goals. The study recommends targeted investments in IT infrastructure, offline functionalities, stakeholder training, and accessibility features to enhance the efficiency and inclusivity of LIS. Addressing these issues is critical for ensuring equitable digital transformation in rural education.

Keywords: Digital inclusion; E-government in education; Educational governance; Learners information system; Sustainable Development Goal 4

1.0 Introduction

Integrating digital technologies in schools and institutions in the Philippines has transformed administrative efficiency (Grepon et al., 2021; Los Baños et al., 2023), particularly in managing student information. The Department of Education introduced the Learners Information System (LIS) in 2011, marking a significant development in this field. As comprehensive storage of student data, the LIS promotes more effective administrative procedures and enhances educational services (Glen Grepon, 2020). Systems that centralize and manage educational data improve institutional operations, track learners' development, and simplify administrative tasks, enabling policymakers to make well-informed decisions (Taylor et al., 2023). However, its implementation in a rural school in Cagayan de Oro, Northern Mindanao, has encountered unique challenges and technological and infrastructural limitations, which hinder the effective implementation and seamless adoption of the Learning Information System (LIS). As a result, educators face significant barriers to accessing and utilizing the system.

Aside from the technological limitations, the school serves a predominantly low-income, agrarian, and Indigenous community, with a significant number of students coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. While frameworks like (Ingrams et al., 2020), Heeks' E-Government Readiness Model (2002), (Van Dijk, 2020) Digital

Divide Framework (2020), and (Atherton et al., 2021), UNESCO's Digital Inclusion in Education (2021) provide insights into digital adoption and disparities; there is a lack of research on LIS as a digital governance tool in rural Philippine contexts. This study addresses the gap by evaluating the economic efficiency and governance impact of LIS in a rural high school, focusing on accessibility, affordability, responsiveness, transparency, and sustainability.

Using an explanatory sequential research design, the study combined quantitative surveys with focus group discussions involving teachers, LIS coordinators, and the school principal. Key findings reveal that the Learning Information System (LIS) enhances record-keeping efficiency and lowers administrative costs. However, its effectiveness is hampered by technical failures, high maintenance expenses, and limited inclusivity. The system relies on a stable internet connection, modern computer hardware, and secure cloud-based infrastructure for optimal performance. These requirements pose significant challenges in resource-constrained settings, exacerbating digital inequities and limiting LIS's ability to support Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and the Department of Education's (DepEd) digital governance initiatives. The study recommends targeted improvements to address these barriers, including IT infrastructure investments, offline capabilities, enhanced user training, and greater inclusivity. By addressing these issues, LIS can become a more effective and sustainable tool for reducing digital disparities in rural Philippine schools.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employs explanatory sequential research design, which involves two distinct phases: a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase. In the first phase, quantitative data was collected through structured surveys to evaluate the economic efficiency and governance impact of the Learners Information System (LIS) in a rural high school in the Philippines. The second phase involved qualitative data collection through focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews to explore stakeholder experiences and challenges in greater depth. This design provides a comprehensive understanding of LIS implementation, combining statistical analysis with rich contextual insights. The research is guided by E-Government and Digital Inclusion frameworks, including Heeks' E-Government Readiness Model (2002), Van Dijk's Digital Divide Framework (2020), and UNESCO's Digital Inclusion in Education (2021), which collectively frame LIS as a digital governance tool and highlight barriers to accessibility, efficiency, and sustainability in rural education settings.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in a national high school situated in rural area of Cagayan de Oro, Northern Mindanao, Philippines, deliberately not named to maintain confidentiality and protect the institution's identity. This school was explicitly selected due to its implementation of the Learners Information System (LIS) and its unique challenges. Rural schools often grapple with systemic barriers, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient access to technology, which can hinder the successful integration of digital tools in education. This context highlights the digital divide that disproportionately affects underserved areas, reinforcing the gap identified by (Selwyn, 2011), who emphasizes the transformative potential of digital systems in improving educational governance and administrative efficiency.

2.3 Research Participants

The study involved sixty-nine (69) participants from the entire school staff, comprising sixty-seven (67) teachers. One (1) of the teachers was designated as Learners Information System (LIS) coordinator, one (1) school registrar, and one (1) school principal. The participants were divided into two groups for the mixed-methods approach: Quantitative Phase: All 69 participants completed structured surveys. The sampling strategy for this phase was census sampling, as the entire school staff involved in LIS implementation was included to ensure comprehensive data collection. Inclusion criteria required participants to be active users of the LIS, either for data entry, management, or oversight. Qualitative Phase: A subset of 13 participants was selected for focus group discussions (FGDs). Ten (10) participants were chosen through simple random sampling from the teacher population. At the same time, the remaining three (3) were selected via purposive sampling to include the LIS coordinators and the school principal due to their specialized roles and insights into system operation. The inclusion criteria for the qualitative phase emphasized participants' direct involvement in LIS implementation and their ability to provide detailed, experiential insights. This participant selection ensured a multidimensional evaluation of LIS, capturing

perspectives from end-users (teachers), technical overseers (LIS coordinators), and decision-makers (principals). This diverse group of participants was strategically selected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the LIS's implementation, benefits, challenges, and areas for improvement. Each participant played a distinct yet interconnected role in the operation and utilization of the LIS, providing valuable insights into its performance and impact.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study utilized two primary research instruments. One is the Survey Questionnaire, a structured questionnaire focused on five essential dimensions: accessibility, affordability, responsiveness, transparency, and sustainability. The questionnaire primarily included closed-ended questions, rated on a five-point Likert scale to capture respondents' perspectives effectively. Second is the Focus Group Discussion (FGD): The FGD guide included open-ended questions to explore participants' experiences, challenges, and recommendations regarding LIS implementation. Before its full deployment, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with a select group of teachers to provide clarity and reliability. Furthermore, it underwent expert validation to verify its alignment with the study's goals and underlying theoretical frameworks, ensuring its suitability for the intended evaluation.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This research study collected sixty-nine (69) responses over one (1) month using Google Forms questionnaires distributed to school participants, and thirteen (13) respondents participated in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The one-month timeline included seeking approval from the division superintendent to conduct the study at the school and obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the respective teachers involved. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researchers secured an official endorsement letter from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Department of Education. This letter was then shared with the school principal to outline the data collection procedures. As a formal communication bridge between the researchers and participants, the letter helped ensure transparency and legitimacy throughout the data-gathering process.

2.6 Data Analysis

The study utilizes mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution to assess user perceptions and experiences with the LIS. Descriptive statistics provide a clear and structured approach to analyzing survey results, ensuring that findings are presented meaningfully and interpretably. The system's evaluation was conducted using a Five-point Likert Scale, which provided a structured framework for assessing the LIS's usability, affordability, and responsiveness. Respondents rated each category on a scale from 1 to 5, where one corresponded to "Strongly Agree" (indicating the system fully met the criteria) and five corresponded to "Strongly Disagree" (indicating the system failed to meet the requirements). This approach allowed for a standardized and quantifiable assessment of stakeholder perceptions. Descriptive statistical methods were then applied to analyze the data, ensuring comprehensive and reliable interpretation.

The qualitative phase of this study employed thematic analysis, following Braun, V., and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, to systematically analyze data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The process began with transcribing FGD audio recordings verbatim and familiarizing researchers with the data through repeated readings to identify recurring ideas. Initial codes were generated inductively using NVIVO 14 software, labeling meaningful text segments related to the research objectives. These codes were grouped into broader themes, capturing significant patterns in the data. Themes were reviewed and refined at two levels: first, against the coded data for consistency, and second, within the entire dataset to ensure coherence. Final themes were defined and named to reflect their essence and relevance to the research questions. The data were interpreted in the context of theoretical frameworks, such as Heeks' E-Government Readiness Model and Van Dijk's Digital Divide Framework, to situate findings within broader literature. This systematic approach ensured a thorough, transparent, objective analysis aligned with the study's goals.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Adherence to Ethical Guidelines

The study was conducted strictly by established ethical standards to uphold participant rights, ensure data integrity, and maintain research credibility. To ensure voluntary participation and informed decision-making, free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) was obtained from all participants before their involvement in the study.

Several measures were implemented to safeguard participant well-being and privacy throughout the research, reinforcing ethical considerations and respect for individual autonomy.

Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

Before participating, all participants received a clear explanation of the study's purpose, methods, potential risks, benefits, and rights. This allowed them to make a fully informed decision about whether to participate. Participation was voluntary, and participants were assured they could withdraw without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Protecting participants' privacy was a top priority. In line with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, we removed any identifying information from the data and anonymized responses during analysis and reporting. All data was stored securely in password-protected systems, with access limited to the researcher. Participants could choose whether to share their names or other personal details.

Department of Education Approval

Before data collection, the study received formal approval from the Department of Education – the School's Division Superintendent, ensuring that the research design aligned with institutional and ethical guidelines. This approval validated the research approach and confirmed adherence to the moral framework established by the Department of Education.

Non-Maleficence and Participant Protection

A key ethical principle guiding this study was avoiding physical, emotional, or psychological harm. We carefully designed the research process to minimize risks and create a safe, respectful space for participants to share their thoughts and experiences.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Accessibility Findings

Table 1 data reveals that 39.1% of respondents have access to computers provided by the school, while an equal proportion (39.1%) rely entirely on personal computers without any provision from the school. Additionally, 21.7% of respondents have access to school-provided and personal computers. This suggests that the school plays a significant role in ensuring computer access for a substantial group. However, nearly 40% of respondents depend solely on personal computers, indicating that a significant segment may face challenges if their devices are unavailable or malfunctioning. This duality underscores the need for schools to assess whether their current provision of computers is sufficient to meet the needs of all teachers, particularly those who lack personal devices. Regarding tablets or mobile devices, the data shows that 37.7% of respondents have access to devices provided by the school, while a much more significant proportion (59.4%) rely entirely on personal devices. Only 2.9% of respondents can access school-provided and personal tablets or mobile devices. This indicates that most respondents depend on their own devices, which may reflect the school's limited provision of tablets or mobile devices.

Table 1. *Accessibility Assessment Result (n=69)*

Provision of IT Resources	Computers		Tablets or Mobile Devices		Internet Access	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Provided by the school	27	39.1	26	37.7	17	24.6
Provided by the school (and have personal)	15	21.7	2	2.9	27	39.1
Personal (no provision from the school)	27	39.1	41	59.4	25	36.2

The heavy reliance on personal devices could pose challenges for individuals who cannot afford or maintain such devices, potentially creating disparities in access to digital tools. (Dridi et al., 2020) highlight similar challenges in low-resource educational settings, such as refugee camps, where unreliable internet connectivity and inadequate digital tools hinder access to management systems. Their study suggests that integrating offline functionalities and expanding school-provided digital resources in areas with poor infrastructure can help reduce educational inequalities. On internet access, 24.6% of respondents have access provided by the school, while 39.1% have

school-provided and personal internet access. However, a significant proportion (36.2%) rely entirely on personal internet access. This suggests that while the school provides internet access to a notable portion of respondents, a substantial number depend on their connectivity. For those without reliable personal internet access, this could create barriers to participation in digital activities, and the reliance on personal resources may exacerbate inequalities, as not all individuals may have the means to afford or maintain such devices and services.

3.2 Affordability Findings

Table 2 shows that participants agreed that the LIS helps reduce costs by minimizing manual paperwork, as reflected in the mean score of 2.28. This suggests that the system is perceived as an effective tool for cutting down on time-consuming and resource-intensive manual processes. However, the relatively high standard deviation of 2.10 indicates significant response variability. This variability may stem from differences in how users experience the system's efficiency or the extent to which they rely on manual processes in their specific contexts. For instance, some users may have fully transitioned to digital workflows, while others may still depend on hybrid (manual and digital) methods, leading to differing perceptions of cost savings. This finding aligns with (Haleem et al., 2022), who highlight the efficiency of digital systems in reducing operational costs through automation and eliminating traditional paper-based processes.

Table 2. *Affordability Assessment Result (n=69)*

Cost-Saving Indicators	Mean	Interpretation	sd
The LIS helps reduce costs by minimizing manual paperwork.	2.28	Agree	2.10
The LIS streamlines data management, allowing class advisers to focus more on teaching and mentoring	2.55	Agree	2.29
The LIS automates tasks like enrollment, grading, and attendance tracking, reducing administrative workload.	2.65	Neutral	2.42

The streamlining of data with a mean score of 2.55 indicates that participants agree that LIS streamlines data management, enabling class advisers to dedicate more time to teaching and mentoring. This finding highlights the system's potential to enhance productivity and shift focus from administrative tasks to core educational responsibilities. However, the high standard deviation of 2.29 again points to variability in user experiences. Some educators may find the system highly effective in simplifying data management, while others may encounter challenges or inefficiencies that limit its perceived benefits. This disparity could be influenced by factors such as user familiarity with the system, the quality of training provided, or the specific functionalities available in their implementation of the LIS.

The mean score of 2.65 for this indicator falls into the "Neutral" category, indicating that participants neither strongly agree nor disagree with the statement that the LIS effectively automates tasks like enrollment, grading, and attendance tracking. This neutral response suggests that the system's performance in automating these critical tasks may not consistently meet user expectations. The high standard deviation of 2.42 further underscores the variability in user experiences, which could be attributed to differences in the system's functionality across institutions, the complexity of tasks, or the level of customization required to meet specific needs. For example, some users may find the system highly effective for grading but less for attendance tracking, leading to mixed perceptions.

The findings suggest that the LIS is generally perceived as a valuable tool for reducing costs and streamlining data management, allowing educators to focus more on teaching and mentoring. However, the neutral response regarding task automation and the high variability in responses across all indicators highlight areas for improvement. These results indicate that while the system has potential, its effectiveness may not be uniformly experienced by all users. This could be due to differences in implementation, user training, or the specific needs of individual institutions.

3.3 Responsiveness Findings

Table 3 shows that participants strongly agreed that technical issues, such as system downtime or slow performance, significantly hinder the efficient use of the LIS, as reflected in the mean score of 1.75. This strong consensus, coupled with a relatively low standard deviation of 1.32, underscores the widespread impact of these issues on user experience. System downtime and slow performance can disrupt workflows, delay administrative tasks, and frustrate users, ultimately reducing the system's reliability and utility. These findings suggest that the LIS may require upgrades to its infrastructure, such as more robust servers or optimized software, to ensure

consistent and smooth performance. Proactive measures like regular maintenance and real-time monitoring could mitigate these technical challenges. The mean score of 1.70 for access challenges indicates that users strongly agree that limited internet connectivity and inadequate IT resources, particularly in rural or underserved areas, pose significant barriers to using the LIS. This issue received the lowest mean score among the three indicators, highlighting its critical importance. The low standard deviation of 1.29 confirms this is a widely shared concern among users. Limited internet access and insufficient IT resources can exclude specific populations from fully benefiting from the LIS, exacerbating educational inequalities. Addressing these challenges may require innovative solutions like offline functionality, portable Wi-Fi devices, or partnerships with local governments and organizations to improve digital infrastructure in underserved areas. Respondents agreed that compatibility issues with hardware or software configurations lead to operational inefficiencies within the LIS, as evidenced by the mean score of 2.25. While this issue is perceived as less severe than technical and access challenges, it remains a notable concern. The higher standard deviation of 1.88 suggests variability in user experiences, which may stem from differences in the types of hardware or software used or varying levels of technical expertise among users. For instance, some users may encounter compatibility issues when using older devices or unsupported operating systems, while others may not face these problems at all. Ensuring broader compatibility with standard configurations and providing precise system requirements could reduce these inefficiencies. In his study, (Rado, 2020) highlighted that compatibility issues are less severe but still contribute to operational inefficiencies and user frustration.

Table 3 Responsiveness Assessment Result (n=69)

Responsiveness Issues	Mean	Interpretation	sd
Technical issues such as system downtime or slow performance hinder the efficient use of the LIS.	1.75	Strongly Agree	1.32
Challenges in accessing the LIS due to limited internet connectivity or inadequate IT resources, particularly in rural or underserved areas	1.70	Strongly Agree	1.29
Compatibility issues with hardware or software configurations lead to operational inefficiencies within the LIS.	2.25	Agree	1.88

This shows that responsiveness issues are a significant barrier to the effective use of the LIS. Users strongly agree that technical issues and access challenges are critical problems, with the latter being perceived as slightly more pressing. This reveals that expanding internet connectivity and providing IT resources in underserved areas are essential to bridging the digital divide. The low standard deviations for technical and access issues indicate a high consensus among users about their severity, while the higher standard deviation for compatibility issues reflects more varied experiences. These results highlight the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges and improve the overall responsiveness of the LIS. Expanding internet connectivity, improving IT infrastructure, and integrating automation tools such as Excel-based workflows, as suggested by (Monsalve, 2024), are critical steps in bridging the digital divide and enhancing system performance.

3.4 Transparency Findings

Table 4 shows respondents agreed (Mean: 2.25) that data integrity and accuracy issues within the LIS create significant challenges for accountability and transparency. The high standard deviation (1.81) suggests that these challenges are experienced unevenly, with some users facing more severe issues than others. This variability may stem from differences in how data is managed across institutions or departments. Privacy and security concerns emerged as the most pressing challenge, with the highest mean score (2.54). Many respondents shared their hesitation to fully utilize the system due to fears about the safety of student data. The high standard deviation (2.13) indicates a wide range of opinions, reflecting differing levels of trust and exposure to security breaches. This highlights the need for stronger safeguards and transparent communication about data protection measures.

Table 4. Transparency Assessment Result (n=69)

Transparency Challenges	Mean	Interpretation	sd
Data integrity and accuracy issues within the LIS lead to challenges in ensuring accountability and transparency.	2.25	Agree	1.81
Concerns about the privacy and security of student data within the LIS lead to hesitation in fully utilizing the system.	2.54	Agree	2.13
Data quality issues such as inaccuracies, inconsistencies, or incompleteness affect the reliability of information.	1.99	Agree	1.57
Disparities in access to the LIS arise due to factors such as limited internet connectivity or inadequate IT resources.	1.83	Agree	1.42

Data quality issues, such as inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and incompleteness, were also identified as a significant concern (Mean: 1.99). These issues undermine the reliability of the information provided by the LIS. The lower standard deviation (1.57) suggests this challenge is more consistently experienced across users, though it is perceived as slightly less severe than privacy and data integrity issues. Disparities in access to the LIS, driven by factors such as limited internet connectivity or inadequate IT resources, were also acknowledged (Mean: 1.83). While this challenge received the lowest mean score, it remains a critical barrier for some users. The low standard deviation (1.42) indicates that this issue is consistently experienced, though it may not be as pronounced as other challenges.

These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of transparency challenges within the LIS. Privacy and security concerns are the most critical, followed by data integrity and accuracy issues, data quality problems, and access disparities. This mistrust can impede system adoption and limit utility, further exacerbating inefficiencies and underutilization. Providing transparent data access, particularly for parents and students, would address these concerns by fostering confidence in the system's reliability and privacy measures, supported by (Heath et al., 2015). While some challenges are more severe than others, all require attention to ensure the LIS functions as a reliable and inclusive tool for educational stakeholders.

3.5 Sustainability Findings

Table 5 indicates an average score of 1.97, which shows that most respondents agree there are significant challenges in making the LIS inclusive and accessible, especially for marginalized or remote communities. This isn't surprising, as many studies have pointed out the difficulties underserved groups face in accessing digital resources. The moderate variation in responses (SD: 1.52) suggests that some people feel these challenges more acutely than others, likely due to differences in location, resources, or personal experiences. Respondents, with an average score of 1.93, agree that the lack of consistent technical support is a significant hurdle. This is a common issue in many information systems, as users often struggle when they don't have timely help for technical problems. The variation in responses (SD: 1.53) suggests that some users might feel this more strongly, possibly because they have less technical experience or have faced more frequent issues. To address this, it's crucial to set up reliable support systems, help desks, online guides, or regular training sessions. The average score of 2.89 indicates a neutral stance on resistance to external oversight and audits. However, the high response variation (SD: 2.54) shows that opinions on this issue are pretty divided. Some people might resist oversight because they feel it's intrusive or unnecessary, while others may see it as essential for improving transparency and accountability. This divide highlights the need for open conversations about the purpose and benefits of audits. By showing how oversight can lead to better system performance and increased trust, stakeholders may become more open to these processes. Involving users in designing and implementing audits could also help reduce resistance and build a shared responsibility.

Table 5. *Sustainability Assessment Result (n=69)*

Indicators of Sustainability	Mean	Interpretation	sd
Challenges in ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all users, including those from marginalized or remote communities.	1.97	Agree	1.52
Lack of ongoing technical support or guidance makes it challenging to address technical problems or questions related to the LIS	1.93	Agree	1.53
Resistance to external oversight and audit processes hinders efforts to improve accountability and transparency.	2.89	Neutral	2.54

The data highlights several key sustainability challenges that must be addressed to ensure the LIS remains effective and inclusive in the long term. This shows that the sustainability of the Learners Information System (LIS) depends on its ability to address barriers related to inclusivity, technical support, and governance. (Aziz et. al. 2023) suggest integrating IT sustainability principles, such as infrastructure improvements, proactive maintenance, and long-term user support mechanisms, can enhance digital service reliability and efficiency. By implementing targeted strategies to improve accessibility, providing robust technical assistance, and reinforcing accountability measures, the LIS can serve as an effective and sustainable platform for educational data management.

3.6 Identified Benefits of LIS

Table 6 shows a clear picture of its impact on schools. It's clear that the system has become an essential tool, but it also has room to grow to better meet the needs of everyone involved. One of the standout benefits of the LIS is its simplicity in data management. Teachers and coordinators appreciate how it keeps student information organized and accessible. For example, one coordinator shared how the system helps verify that students are enrolling in the correct grade level, while another mentioned how it gives teachers quick access to student records. This not only saves time but also reduces errors, making processes like enrollment and recordkeeping much smoother. Another benefit is the cost savings it brings. Schools have noticed a significant reduction in paperwork, especially during busy times like enrollment. One participant mentioned how the system has reduced printing costs by generating forms and reports digitally. These savings are a game-changer for schools working with tight budgets, freeing up resources for other essential needs. The LIS has made significant progress in transparency, yet more work remains. Some school leaders highlighted how transparent data access can help parents feel more connected to their child's education. However, others pointed out a significant gap: parents and students often can't see their data or track performance. This lack of access was described as unfair and frustrating, with one participant emphasizing that adding this feature would build trust and make the system more inclusive. Generally, the LIS has proven to be a valuable tool for schools, making data management easier, cutting costs, and improving transparency in many ways. However, for the LIS to truly excel, it must tackle the issues related to parent and student access. Doing so can become an even stronger school support system, helping them work more efficiently while fostering trust and collaboration with families.

Table 6. Benefits of LIS (n=69)

Themes	Frequency of codes		Exemplar Excerpt
	Contributing (N=13)	Excerpts assigned	
Ease of Data Management	4	6	"LIS helps me gather accurate and reliable data, information, and profiles of learners needed for enrollment/admission." (SH Coordinator) "Having a centralized database reduces errors and gives teachers quick access to student records." (JH Coordinator) "As an adviser, the LIS has benefited in identifying if the learner is really in the grade level he or she is enrolling in." (FGD Participant 1)
Cost Savings on Paperwork	3	4	"Switching to LIS saves on paperwork, especially for enrollment and record-keeping processes." (FGD Participant 7) "We've reduced printing costs significantly by using the LIS to generate forms and reports." (School Head) "LIS is great for saving time and money when producing records like enrollment reports and class lists." (JH Coordinator)
Improved Transparency	4	5	"Transparent data access ensures that parents feel included in their child's academic journey." (School Head) "Adding a parent and student access feature will help in tracking performance and improving trust in the LIS." (SH Coordinator) "Parents and students can't see their own data or performance, which is unfair and not transparent." (FGD Participant 4)

3.7 Identified Challenges of LIS

Table 7 highlights both its potential and the challenges that come with it. While the system has brought many benefits, significant hurdles must be addressed to make it work effectively for everyone, especially in remote and under-resourced areas. One of the most pressing challenges is the system's limitations in remote areas. Many rural schools struggle with poor internet connectivity, making accessing the LIS in real-time complex. This delays submitting and updating data, leaving these schools behind schedule. For example, one school head shared how their location makes it nearly impossible to meet deadlines, while a focus group participant pointed out that rural schools lack the infrastructure to use the system efficiently. This creates a clear divide between urban and rural schools, with the latter often feeling left behind. Another issue is the high cost of maintaining the LIS. While the system has helped save resources in some areas, the overall maintenance costs, especially at the national level, are seen as a burden. Some school coordinators expressed frustration, noting that the continuous funding required doesn't always translate into direct benefits for their schools. This raises questions about the system's sustainability, particularly for schools with limited budgets. Economic barriers to IT access also pose a significant challenge. In many rural areas, teachers are forced to use their own devices because the IT equipment provided by schools is either inadequate or breaks down frequently. Budget constraints make it hard to replace outdated

hardware, further limiting access to the LIS. This creates a cycle of inequality, where schools in already disadvantaged areas struggle even more to keep up. System downtime and inefficiencies are another major headache for schools. Frequent technical issues, such as slow loading times and connectivity problems, disrupt operations, especially during critical periods like grading or enrollment. One school head mentioned how system downtime during grading periods throws everything off track, while another coordinator shared how delays in generating school forms cause unnecessary stress. These inefficiencies make it harder for schools to rely on the system when needed. Finally, the lack of access for parents and students is a recurring concern. Many feel it's unfair that parents and students can't see their data or track performance. One participant described this as non-transparent, while another suggested that giving parents and students access could help build trust and inclusivity. This gap in the system leaves many stakeholders feeling excluded and unheard. In general, while the LIS has the potential to be a powerful tool for schools, there are still significant challenges that need to be tackled. Improving internet connectivity and infrastructure in remote areas, addressing the high maintenance costs, providing better IT equipment, reducing system downtime, and enabling parent and student access are all critical steps. By addressing these issues, the LIS can become a more reliable, inclusive, and effective system that truly serves the needs of all schools and communities.

Table 7. Challenges of LIS (n=69)

Themes	Frequency of codes		Exemplar Excerpt
	Contributing (N=13)	Excerpts assigned	
System Limitations in Remote Areas	5	7	"Internet connectivity is a barrier in rural schools, and sometimes we can't use LIS when there's no connection." (FGD Participant 2) "Our location hinders real-time access to the LIS, delaying submissions and updates." (School Head) "Rural schools lack the infrastructure to run LIS efficiently, which leaves us behind deadlines." (FGD Participant 6)
High Maintenance Costs	2	2	"Maintaining LIS at the national level demands continuous funding, which not all schools feel the benefits of." (SH Coordinator) "While LIS saves resources, the infrastructure maintenance costs nationwide are burdensome." (School Head)
Economic Barriers to IT Access	4	5	"Teachers in rural areas often use their own devices because the IT equipment provided is inadequate or breaks easily." (FGD Participant 9) "Budget constraints make it hard to replace outdated hardware used to access the LIS." (School Head)
System Downtime and Inefficiencies	6	8	"System downtime during critical times like grading periods disrupts operations." (School Head) "We experience delays in generating school forms due to frequent loading issues with the LIS." (SH Coordinator) "Technical issues, like internet connectivity, especially during LIS submission deadlines, cause delays." (FGD Participant 2)
Lack of Parent & Student Access	3	3	"Parents and students can't see their own data or performance, which is unfair and not transparent." (FGD Participant 4) "Allowing parents and students access to the LIS can address inclusivity concerns." (SH Coordinator)

3.8 Identified Recommendation for LIS Implementation

Table 8 shows both its potential and the areas of improvement. The system has brought clear recommendations for making it more effective, inclusive, and user-friendly. These suggestions come from real experiences and challenges schools face, particularly those in under-resourced areas. The most common recommendation is to include parents and students in the LIS. Giving parents and students access to their data, like performance records, would build trust and make the system more transparent. For example, a school head mentioned that transparent data access helps parents feel more involved in their child's education. At the same time, a coordinator emphasized that this feature would improve trust in the system. This small but significant change could go a long way in fostering collaboration between schools and families. Another critical area is addressing infrastructure challenges. Rural schools, in particular, struggle with limited IT resources, such as unreliable power and inadequate equipment, which make it hard to use the LIS effectively. One school head pointed out how power outages disrupt the system, while a focus group participant highlighted how infrastructure gaps in public schools limit the LIS's potential. Investing in better infrastructure, especially in these areas, is essential to ensure that all

schools benefit equally from the system. Stakeholders also stressed the need for regular updates to keep the LIS functional and relevant. Many suggested that updates should happen annually and be communicated to all users. A coordinator noted that without consistent updates, the system risks becoming outdated, while another participant emphasized the importance of training users in advance whenever new features are introduced. Regular updates and clear communication would help schools stay on top of changes and make the most of the system. There's a strong call for offline functionality and system upgrades in connectivity issues, especially in areas with poor internet access. A school head shared that having offline capabilities would solve many of the connectivity problems they face. At the same time, a focus group participant suggested adding practical features like student attendance tracking and more straightforward grade encoding. These upgrades would make the LIS more responsive to the day-to-day needs of schools and teachers. Finally, there's a clear need for better training and capacity building.

Many users find the system difficult to navigate, especially when updating learner profiles or encoding grades. Current training sessions, like those during INSET and LAC, are often too introductory and don't cover advanced usage or troubleshooting. A coordinator highlighted the need for training focusing on these areas, while another participant pointed out that mastering the LIS requires more than just introductory sessions. Providing comprehensive and advanced training would empower users to use the system confidently and effectively. In conclusion, the recommendations for improving the LIS focus on making it more inclusive, accessible, and user-friendly. By involving parents and students, improving infrastructure, ensuring regular updates, adding offline features, and enhancing training, the LIS can become a more reliable and effective tool for all schools. These changes would address current challenges and ensure that the system meaningfully meets the needs of educators, students, and families.

Table 8. Recommendations of LIS Implementation (n=69)

Themes	Frequency of codes		Exemplar Excerpt
	Contributing (N=13)	Excerpts assigned	
Inclusion of Parents & Students in the LIS	4	5	"Adding a parent and student access feature will help in tracking performance and improving trust in the LIS." (SH Coordinator) "Transparent data access ensures that parents feel included in their child's academic journey." (School Head)
Infrastructure Challenges	3	3	"Limited IT resources in rural schools make it hard to sustain the system, especially during power outages." (School Head) "Infrastructure gaps in public schools limit the full potential of the LIS." (FGD Participant 9)
Need for Regular Updates	4	4	"LIS updates should happen annually and be communicated to all users." (FGD Participant 6) "Users must be trained in advance when new features are introduced." (SH Coordinator) "Without consistent updates, the LIS risks becoming outdated and less functional." (JH Coordinator)
Offline Functionality & System Upgrades	4	5	"Having offline capabilities for LIS would solve many of the connectivity problems we face." (School Head) "Adding features like student attendance tracking and easier grade encoding will make the LIS more responsive to our needs." (FGD Participant 9)
Training and Capacity Building	5	5	"Training provided during INSET and LAC sessions is very basic and insufficient for mastering the LIS." (FGD Participant 8) "Capacity building must focus on LIS troubleshooting and advanced usage." (JH Coordinator) "The LIS is difficult to navigate when updating learner profiles or encoding grades." (JH Coordinator)

4.0 Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the Learner's Information System (LIS) within the context of a rural national high school, shedding light on its potential to enhance educational management and uncovering significant barriers to its effective implementation. The findings reveal that the LIS has made notable strides in improving administrative efficiency, reducing operational costs, and fostering transparency in data management. These benefits align with the broader objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4),

which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all. However, the study also highlights critical challenges that hinder the system's ability to deliver on its full potential, particularly in resource-constrained rural settings. The primary obstacles identified include inadequate IT infrastructure, frequent technical failures, high maintenance costs, and limited inclusivity for key stakeholders such as parents and students. Poor internet connectivity and systemic inequities compound these challenges, disproportionately affecting rural schools and exacerbating the digital divide. The data underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these barriers and ensure that the LIS can function as a truly equitable and sustainable tool for educational governance.

To bridge these gaps, the study proposes several evidence-based recommendations:

- Investment in IT infrastructure to improve internet connectivity and provide reliable hardware, particularly in underserved areas.
- Offline functionalities should be developed to ensure uninterrupted access to the system, even in areas with limited or no internet access.
- Enhanced training programs for teachers, administrators, and LIS coordinators to improve system usability and address technical challenges.
- Including accessible features for parents and students enables them to access and track their data, promoting transparency and inclusivity.
- Regular system updates and capacity-building initiatives to ensure the LIS remains relevant, functional, and aligned with evolving educational needs.
- Future research should explore longitudinal assessments of LIS implementation in multiple rural schools to measure long-term sustainability and scalability.

These recommendations are not merely technical adjustments but are essential steps toward achieving equitable digital transformation in education. By addressing the systemic inequities that currently limit the LIS's effectiveness, policymakers and stakeholders can ensure that the system is a powerful tool for bridging educational disparities, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of contextualized implementation and sustained investment in digital tools like the LIS. While the system holds immense promise for improving educational governance, its success ultimately depends on addressing rural schools' unique challenges. By prioritizing inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability, the LIS can evolve into a transformative tool that enhances administrative efficiency and advances the broader goal of equitable education for all. This research serves as a call to action for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to collaborate in creating a more inclusive and sustainable digital future for education in the Philippines.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Conceptualization of the Study- JE Bete, A Collera
Literature Review- JE Bete, A Collera
Methods of the Study- JE Bete, A Collera
Development of Research Questionnaire- JE Bete, A Collera
Gathering of Data- JE Bete, A Collera
Data Interpretation- JE Bete, A Collera
Writing and Editing- JE Bete, A Collera
Formatting- JE Bete, A Collera

6.0 Funding

This study was conducted entirely without external financial support or sponsorship.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors affirm that there is no conflict of interest

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors acknowledge the support of the Department of Education, USTP – CDO Library for providing essential resources, access to vital materials, and a conducive research environment, which have been instrumental in completing this study. The Department of Education faculty and staff, thank you for allowing us to conduct this study and for your time, commitment, and dedication. Special thanks are extended to Gerrich Aldin C. Babanto for his insightful feedback and guidance in the statistical data of the study. Finally, we thank our peers and colleagues for their encouragement and constructive discussions that enriched the quality of this work..

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Perceived Impact on the Efficacy of Learning Modality Implemented During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Armand G. Cuñado

College of Fisheries, Bohol Island State University, Cogtong, Candijay, Bohol, Philippines

Author Email: armandcunado@gmail.com

Date received: February 9, 2025

Date revised: March 7, 2025

Date accepted: April 3, 2025

Originality: 91%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 9%

Recommended citation:

Cuñado, A. (2025). Perceived impact on the efficacy of learning modality implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 495-506. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.075>

Abstract. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bohol Island State University (BISU) adopted flexible learning models, including modular and online approaches, to maintain continuity of instruction. Institutions have mainly embraced these, but they still lack scientific evidence on the effectiveness they can generate, especially in the field of the Fisheries Program and its affiliated areas. This study fills the gap by examining the relationship between learning modality effects and student-faculty performance in the Fisheries Program at BISU-Candijay and Calape Campuses for the 2020-2021 academic year. A guided questionnaire was used to assess key constructs, including Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management Skills, and Attitude Towards Online Learning. The results indicated that the learning modalities of BISU were seen as moderately effective by instructors and students. The instructors considered Basic Communication Skills to be the best-performing construct, followed by the Ability to Work Independently, Time Management Skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Access to the Internet. Similarly, Basic Communication Skills received the most favorable rating among students, trailed by Attitude Towards Online Education, Ability to Work Independently, Access to the Internet, and Time Management Skills. Hence, the research suggests initiating intervention measures to bolster the lowest-ranked constructs, namely Access to the Internet and Time Management Skills, for the improvement of overall competence in flexible learning modalities at the Fisheries Program. This study contributes to the body of pandemic-era school policy literature and provides practical recommendations on how to foster flexible learning structures in similar settings.

Keywords: Faculty performance; Learning modality; Pandemic; Modular learning; Online learning.

1.0 Introduction

The emergence of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) brought unprecedented disruptions to the lives of people worldwide. Travel restrictions (Chinazzi et al., 2020), school closures (Viner et al., 2020), global economic stagnation (Fernandes, 2020), political disputes (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020), prejudice (Habibi et al., 2020), and misinformation and scandals (Habibi et al., 2020) are all consequences of this crisis (Enitan et al., 2020). In the Philippines, with the lockdown, community quarantine, and the implementation of the Commission on Higher Education's Advisory No. 7, suspending face-to-face classes, the education sector became one of the most affected sectors. Higher education institutions struggle with the continuity of learning and providing quality education to the 28 million learners in the country (Tria, 2020).

In response to this situation, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) created and released CHED Memorandum Order No. 04 Series of 2020 entitled "Guidelines on the Implementation of Flexible Learning", which provides clear guidelines for exploring other innovative learning modalities such as flexible learning. As

learners differ in terms of time, speed, and location, these options enable the customization of delivery modes that cater to the student's need for access to quality education. Flexible learning shall also allow students to choose the most convenient delivery mode as early as their enrollment.

At Bohol Island State University, particularly in Candijay and Calape, students have a choice between traditional module learning platforms, where they mainly rely on the module for learning, and web-facilitated learning platforms, which allow students to learn in both modules and online, such as Google Classroom, Facebook, and Edmodo. Implementing this learning system posed different risks, problems, challenges, and advantages to both faculty and students. In the study by Wiratomo and Mulyatna (2020), they found that faculties struggle to adopt the so-called "new normal" learning as circumstances force them to transition. Students, too, feel the same due to a disconnected relationship between students and faculties. However, in some studies, it has been observed that e-learning, facilitated by the web, has a positive impact on both teachers and students (Elfaki et al., 2019). Accordingly, both experience flexibility of access from different locations and ease of access to materials. It also reduces costs, saves time, and enhances students' academic performance.

Previous studies have identified the limitations and potential of flexible learning models, including connectivity issues with the internet, time management, and independent work capabilities (Smith et al., 2020; Johnson & Lee, 2021). The present study has failed to effectively identify the unique dynamics of fisheries training, where experiential learning and skill development are essential components of the training program. By incorporating these findings into the discussion, this study provides a more nuanced explanation of the influence of flexible learning modalities on students and teachers in a specialist educational environment. In the case of Bohol Island State University, this is still to be seen. This research is therefore being conducted to determine the efficacy of the learning modality implemented by BISU during the pandemic.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a modified research instrument that had undergone pilot testing. To achieve the objectives of the study, links of the questionnaires with integrated consent in Google forms were given to the faculty and students who were teaching and enrolled in the Bachelor of Science of Fisheries and its allied field for the school year 2020-2021. Documentary analysis was also employed in this study to assess the performance of both faculty and students.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted at the Bohol Island State University (BISU) Candijay and Calape Campuses. BISU-Candijay is located in Barangay Cogtong, 5.1 km away from the Poblacion of Candijay. BISU-Calape, on the other hand, is located in Barangay Calunasan, which is 3.3 km away from the Poblacion of Calape. BISU-Candijay currently has eleven programs, while BISU-Calape has ten. Both offer a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries (BSF) program. BISU-Candijay also offers programs related to the BSF, such as a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a major in Coastal Resource Management. BISU-Candijay and BISU-Calape utilized module- and web-facilitated learning platforms in this new normal.

2.3 Research Participants

The respondents of this study consisted of faculty and students from the College of Fisheries and Marine Sciences at BISU-Candijay and the College of Technology and Allied Sciences at BISU-Calape during the first semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. Specifically, the study included 20 purposively selected students and 469 purposively selected faculty members who were actively teaching or enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Fisheries (BSF) courses and its allied programs. These allied programs included a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology (BSMB) and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science (BSES) with a major in Coastal Resource Management. The selection criteria ensured that only those currently engaged in teaching or enrolled in these programs were included, providing a focused and relevant sample for evaluating the efficacy of flexible learning modalities in fisheries and related disciplines.

2.4 Research Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study had two parts. The first part focused on the respondents' profiles, while the second part focused on the constructs. The BISU Campus Faculty Candijay 17 Calape 3 Total 20 second part had five constructs: basic communication skills, access to the internet, ability to work independently, time management skills, and attitude towards online education. The questions for each construct were adapted from Takahashi et al. (2006) and Ullah et al. (2017). The questionnaire used a four-item scale. A score of four (4) was defined as strongly agree – high learning platform efficacy, (3) agree – moderate learning platform efficacy, (2) disagree – low learning platform efficacy, and one (1) strongly disagree – very low learning efficacy (Table 3). However, since questions were adopted from different sources, pilot testing of the survey questionnaire was conducted prior to the study to identify questions that did not make sense to the respondents or problems that might lead to biased answers. After pilot testing, data were analyzed for reliability tests using SPSS software. Nine questions were deleted from the original proposed questionnaire to achieve a Cronbach's alpha value of .806.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

During the study, proper protocol routing was followed, and permissions were obtained from persons of authority. A formal letter addressed to the Dean and to the Vice President of the Academic Affairs of the University of Bohol was tendered to their respective offices to inform them of the commencement of this study. After this, a request letter was forwarded to the Campus Directors of Bohol Island State University (BISU) - Candijay and Calape Campuses, as well as to the President of BISU, to secure permission to distribute and administer the questionnaire to the faculty. Approved, the researcher provided a separate Google link form to the faculty and academic advisers for the students, allowing them to access the questionnaires. The latter was requested to upload the link online (i.e., Facebook Page, Google Classroom, Edmodo). The researchers also validated the respondents' answers. After this, the researcher requested the registrar's office of both campuses access the general weighted average (GWA) of the students enrolled last semester. The researchers also collected the faculty's numerical ratings from the faculty performance evaluation form used by BISU. This study had undergone ethical consideration and proofreading before submission for publication.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Proper protocols were strictly followed during the data-gathering process to ensure that ethical guidelines and research standards were adhered to. Such a commitment to methodological rigor ensures the transparency of the study and validation of its results, thereby strengthening the credibility and reliability of the findings.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Faculty and Student Respondents

Table 1 presents the profile of the faculty respondents in BISU-Candijay and Calape. The table shows that the most significant number of faculty respondents fell within the age range of 50-59 years old, with a frequency of 6 out of 20, or a percentage of 30%. This was followed by the age range of 20-29 and 30-39 years old with a frequency of 5. This means that most faculty members of Bohol Island State University handling the Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and its allied fields were in the desirable bracket and middle-aged adulthood stage. The number of male faculty members was higher than that of female faculty members (Table 1). Males reached a count of 11, which constituted 55% of the faculty respondents. At the same time, females had 9 counts or 45 % of the population. The result was not entirely surprising, as this field of science has long been dominated by males, mainly due to the stereotype that only men go to sea in their fishing boats (Siason, 2001). Forty-five percent (9) of the faculty respondents had worked in the instruction for 1-5 years (Table 4). This was followed by the faculty who served the academe for 6-31 years. This could be because many of the faculty had already retired and were replaced by newly hired ones.

Table 2 presents the age, sex, course, year level, campus, and mode of instruction used by the students of Bohol Island State University. Sixty-seven percent of the student respondents fell in the age range of 20-24, with 315 counts (Table 2). This is because most of these students were returnees and those who had passed the Alternative Learning System (ALS), taking the opportunity to return to school before the K to 12 program implementation, which required students to complete two additional years of high school before enrolling in college. Most of the students were female, comprising 305 respondents, or 65% of the total (Table 2). This result was opposite to what

is often expected. The dominance of females in this field could be attributed to the admission and retention policies, which are strictly implemented by other programs except for BSMB and BSES. The BSF course had a higher number of students enrolled compared to the other two programs. This could be due to two factors: 1) the only course open during the K to 12 transition, and 2) the availability of scholarships from government agencies.

Table 1 *Profile of the Faculty Respondents (n=20)*

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
20-29	5	25
30-39	5	25
40-49	3	15
50-59	6	30
60-70	1	5
Sex		
Male	11	55
Female	9	45
Length of Service		
<1	1	5
1-5	9	45
6-11	2	10
12-16	2	10
17-21	2	10
22-26	2	10
27-31	2	10
32-36	1	5
37-41	1	5

The highest number of students were in the First Year or Second Year Level (Table 2). This is due to the end of the K to 12 transition, during which BISU opens more classes for each year level. Most students enrolled used learning modules as their primary mode of instruction (61%). The student's preference for learning modules may be due to the following reasons: an unstable internet connection, the freedom to think and learn, and the freedom to access the module (Leow & Neo, 2014). Some students preferred online learning (23%) and a combination of online and learning modules (12%). Those who had access online utilized Facebook Messenger and page, Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Zoom.

Table 2. *Profile of the Student Respondent (n = 469)*

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
15-19	85	18
20-24	315	67
25-29	56	12
30-34	12	3
35-40	1	0
Sex		
Male	164	35
Female	305	65
Course		
<i>BSF</i>		
First Year	70	30
Second Year	52	22
Third Year	61	26
Fourth Year	51	22
<i>BSMB</i>		
First Year	21	18
Second Year	52	44
Third Year	44	38
<i>BSES</i>		
First Year	19	16
Second Year	55	47
Third Year	44	37
Mode of Instructions Utilized		
Learning Module	109	61
Online	74	23
Both	286	12

3.2 Faculty's Perception of Learning Modality Efficacy

The data in Table 3 shows that the Basic Communication Skills had a composite mean of 3.62, which can be interpreted as "Strongly Agree" and implies that in terms of communication skills, the mode of instruction utilized by the faculty had a high learning platform efficacy. Under Basic Communication Skills, the following items, mentioned according to their rank, had a Strongly Agree rating: I understand other person's level of commitment and training to provide appropriate support. ; I do keep communication confidential when requested, I do welcome conversation concerning group goals and objectives, I do encourage feedback and questions to ensure mutual understanding, and I do communicate at critical points to ensure understanding. There were also items rated as Agree, such as I use appropriate communication vehicles and brevity, followed by I do not send mixed messages by indicating one thing verbally and another non-verbally, and I do parrot or repeat comments to ensure understanding. Successful communication elicits improvement, motivates action, fosters comprehension, and conveys a specific concept or point of view to learners (Venu & Reddy, 2016).

Table 3. Respondents' Perception on Learning Platform Efficacy (n = 489)

Constructs	Faculty			Student		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Basic Communication Skills	3.62	Agree	1	3.18	Agree	1
Access to the Internet	2.72	Agree	4	3.04	Agree	4
Ability to Work Independently	3.40	Agree	2	3.07	Agree	3
Time Management Skills	3.40	Agree	2	2.19	Agree	5
Attitude Towards Online Education	3.15	Agree	3	3.07	Agree	2

Four items in the Access to the Internet section were rated as "Agree" except for the "Disagree" rate on the "Subscription to the Internet" item (Table 3). Items rated with Agree, mentioned according to their rank, were the following: The internet access area at my house is in poor condition, Uploading or downloading a learning material in my home area is in poor condition, I find it hard to access the internet at home, and My home network does not support access to the information. Overall, in this construct, the faculty rated 2.72, which was equivalent to the "Agree" rating. This means that, in terms of internet connection, the mode of instruction utilized by the faculty had a moderate effect on learning platform efficacy. Access to the internet is crucial nowadays for ensuring inclusive and equal education and fostering opportunities for lifelong learning (Public Policy, 2017).

Two items on the Ability to Work Independently were rated by the faculty with "Agree" and one with "Strongly Agree" (Table 3). Items with an Agree rating were the following: I am self-motivated and self-disciplined, and I can work independently. An item with a "Strongly Agree" rating was, "I am self-motivated and self-disciplined." Overall, the composite mean for this construct was 3.40 (Agree), indicating moderate learning platform efficacy. The faculty in BISU, with the mode of instruction they were using, can work independently, are self-disciplined, and are motivated to work.

In terms of time management, the faculty rated the item "I can get things done on time" with "Agree," indicating moderate learning platform efficacy in this construct (Table 3). The constant check-ins conducted by the Director of Instructions, BISU System, Commission on Higher Education, accreditation agencies, and others have helped faculty members harness their time management skills.

Regarding their Attitude Towards Online Education, the faculty rated almost all items with "Agree" except for the "Strongly Agree" option on the "Slow computer and poor internet connections discouraged the use of online learning" item (Table 3). The following items had an Agree rating: It is difficult to favor online learning regularly due to the least face-to-face interaction among faculty and students; as a helpful program suggested for peers to utilize online learning for online learning materials, It is difficult to understand online learning without getting acquainted with appropriate guidance, and Using online learning makes learning enjoyable. Overall, this construct had a composite mean of 3.15, indicating moderate learning platform efficacy. The reason for this could be because most of the faculty had already tried teaching online during the pandemic and had already adopted this scheme. The findings of this study corroborate those of Lee et al. (2015), who found that the faculty's attitude toward online education shifted after training, teaching, or both. The Philippine government has been undertaking several educational initiatives, particularly in basic education, to ensure that Filipino students receive quality learning opportunities (Ampo, 2023).

The faculty received the highest rating for Basic Communication Skills, with a weighted mean of 3.62, followed by the ratings for Ability to Work Independently, Time Management Skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Access to the Internet. Similarly, the faculty received the highest rating in Basic Communication Skills. However, the weighted mean for this construct was lower compared to that of the faculty. Basic Communication Skills were followed by an Attitude Towards Online Education, the Ability to Work Independently, Access to the Internet, and Time Management Skills.

3.3 Relationship Between Faculty's Profile and Learning Modality Efficacy

Table 4 shows p -values greater than 0.05, indicating a margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no significant relationship between faculty's age and Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy. Age did not influence Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy.

Table 4. Relationship Between Faculty's Age and Learning Modality Efficacy

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Age and Basic Communication Skills	120	119	0.45	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Access to the Internet	40.0	34	0.22	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Ability to Work Independently	17.9	17	0.39	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Time Management Skills	17.9	17	0.39	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Attitude Towards Online Education	37.2	34	0.32	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Learning Platform Efficacy	16.8	17	0.46	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

The lack of a relationship between age and Basic Communication Skills was not congruent with the findings of Caruso et al. (1995), who stated that typical aging is associated with subtle changes in communication skills due to physical health, depression, and cognitive decline. However, the findings in this study could be explained by those of Yorkston et al. (2010), who state that typical aging is associated with certain language skills remaining intact, such as vocabulary, grammatical judgment, and repetition ability.

The lack of influence of faculty age on Access to the Internet could be because the Internet is now used not only for educational purposes but also actively by faculty in their daily lives for social engagement. Conversely, the study's findings showed that regardless of faculty age, they can work independently. This may indicate that the faculty of BISU, in general, has a high quality of work, high productivity, and an enjoyable work environment (Converso et al., 2010). Age and Time Management Skills and Attitude Towards Online Education insignificant results could be associated with the fact that faculty had already adapted to the new normal working environment since they had already been introduced to this scheme last year, during the onset of the pandemic.

Table 5 shows p -values greater than 0.05, indicating a margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no significant relationship between faculty's gender and Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy. This means that sex did not influence Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, or learning platform efficacy.

Table 6 shows p -values greater than 0.05, indicating a margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no significant relationship between faculty's length of service and Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management Skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy. This is because all of the faculty started using the learning platforms at the same time.

Table 5. Relationship Between Faculty's Sex and Learning Modality Efficacy

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Sex and Basic Communication Skills	4.71	7	0.69	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Access to the Internet	0.30	2	0.86	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Ability to Work Independently	0.30	1	0.58	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Time Management Skills	0.30	1	0.58	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Attitude Towards Online Education	1.30	2	0.52	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Learning Platform Efficacy	0.05	1	0.82	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

Table 6. Relationship Between Faculty's Length of Service and Learning Modality Efficacy

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Length of Service and Basic Communication Skills	115	105	0.24	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Length of Service and Access to the Internet	34.1	30	0.27	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Length of Service and Ability to Work Independently	13.0	15	0.60	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Length of Service and Time Management Skills	13.0	15	0.60	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Length of Service and Attitude Towards Online Education	36.3	30	0.20	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Length of Service and Learning Platform Efficacy	12.7	15	0.63	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

3.5 Relationship Between Student's Profile and Learning Modality Efficacy

Table 7 presents the Pearson Chi-square values and p-values, which are more significant than 0.05, indicating a margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no significant relationship between student's age and Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy. The age of the students did not influence Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Time Management skills, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy.

Table 7. Relationship Between Students' Age and Learning Modality Efficacy

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Age and Basic Communication Skills	22.90	34	0.93	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Access to the Internet	40.14	51	0.86	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Ability to Work Independently	49.01	51	0.55	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Time Management Skills	38.31	51	0.91	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Attitude Towards Online Education	33.50	51	0.97	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Age and Learning Platform Efficacy	44.79	51	0.72	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

Table 8 presents the p-values of Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy, which are greater than the 0.05 margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis of these variables was accepted. The sex of the students did not influence Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy.

Table 8. Relationship Between Students' Sex and Learning Modality Efficacy

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Sex and Basic Communication Skills	6.67	4	0.15	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Access to the Internet	4.61	6	0.60	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Ability to Work Independently	2.31	6	0.89	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Time Management Skills	473.33	8	0.05	Significant	Ho: Rejected
Sex and Attitude Towards Online Education	6.60	6	0.36	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Sex and Learning Platform Efficacy	4.00	6	0.68	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

The p -value for Time Management Skills was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference (Table 10). Hence, the null hypothesis on this variable was rejected. There was a relationship between student's sex and time management skills. Female students were more likely to complete tasks on time compared to male students. These findings align with those of Misra and McKean (2000) and Chanpisut (2018), who found that females tend to have more effective time management skills than males. This may be because brain connections are more streamlined in females at an earlier age, which makes them more mature in certain cognitive and emotional areas (Chanpisut, 2018). Another reason may be that females spend more time on their studies, while many males spend more time on sports and leisure activities, such as playing sports, socializing with friends, and engaging in online gaming. Males could hardly prioritize the most important things they were required to do due to these distractions.

Table 9 presents the p -values of Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy that are greater than the 0.05 margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis of these variables was accepted. The course of the students did not influence Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy.

Table 9. Relationship Between Students' Course and Learning Modality Efficacy

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Course and Basic Communication Skills	0.35	2	0.84	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Course and Access to the Internet	0.95	3	0.81	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Course and Ability to Work Independently	0.39	3	0.94	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Course and Time Management Skills	470.00	4	0.05	Significant	Ho: Rejected
Course and Attitude Towards Online Education	0.28	3	0.97	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Course and Learning Platform Efficacy	0.16	3	0.98	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

The p -value of Time Management Skills was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference (Table 11). Hence, the null hypothesis on this variable was rejected. There was a relationship between the student's course and time management skills. Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Fisheries completed tasks on time, compared to the other two courses. This may be due to the large number of scholars enrolled in the BSF program and its admission policy.

Table 10 presents the p -values of Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy that are greater than the 0.05 margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis of these constructs was accepted. The year level of the students did not influence these constructs because all students used the same learning platform simultaneously during the onset of the pandemic.

Table 10. *Relationship Between Students' Year Level and Learning Modality Efficacy*

Variables	X ²	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Year Level and Basic Communication Skills	6.54	8	0.59	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Year Level and Access to the Internet	8.18	12	0.77	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Year Level and Ability to Work Independently	8.68	12	0.73	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Year Level and Time Management Skills	478.16	16	0.05	Significant	Ho: Rejected
Year Level and Attitude Towards Online Education	12.33	12	0.42	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Year Level and Learning Platform Efficacy	4.94	12	0.96	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

The *p*-value of Time Management Skills was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference. Hence, the null hypothesis on this variable was rejected. There was a relationship between student's year level and time management skills. The second-year students, followed by the third-year students, were most likely to finish their tasks on time compared to the first and fourth-year students.

Table 11 presents the *p*-values of Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy that are greater than the 0.05 margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis of these variables was accepted. The mode of instruction utilized by the students did not influence Basic Communication Skills, Access to the Internet, Ability to Work Independently, Attitude Towards Online Education, and Learning Platform Efficacy.

Table 11. *Relationship Between Students' Mode of Instruction Utilized and Learning Modality Efficacy*

Variables	X ²	df	p-value	Result	Decision
Mode of Instruction Utilized and Basic Communication Skills	6.44	6	0.38	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Mode of Instruction Utilized and Access to the Internet	8.47	9	0.49	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Mode of Instruction Utilized and Ability to Work Independently	1.47	9	1.00	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Mode of Instruction Utilized and Time Management Skills	475.01	12	0.05	Significant	Ho: Rejected
Mode of Instruction Utilized and Attitude Towards Online Education	4.76	9	0.86	Not significant	Ho: Accepted
Mode of Instruction Utilized and Learning Platform Efficacy	16.28	9	0.06	Not significant	Ho: Accepted

The *p*-value for Time Management Skill in Table 11 was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant margin of error. Hence, the null hypothesis on this variable was rejected. A relationship existed between the mode of instruction used and time management skills. Those students who used both online and learning modules finished their tasks on time, compared to those who used only the learning modules or online resources. The reasons could be the freedom of learning they experienced during their module, the interaction and connectivity with their classmates and professors online, and the infinite access to knowledge and learning resources available online. Chen and Fu (2009) found that online searching helped students improve their exam results. When students used the internet, their opportunities for other types of engagement increased (Laird & Kuh, 2004).

The results of the study align with and expand the current literature on the effectiveness of flexible learning styles during the COVID-19 pandemic. The students' and scholars' perceived moderate effectiveness of the learning modes in BISU concurs with studies emphasizing the challenges and benefits involved in shifting towards online and modular learning systems. For example, Dhawan (2020) demonstrated a study where, although flexible

learning modes ensured continuity of learning during the pandemic, their performance was highly inconsistent, depending on internet connectivity, self-effort, and institutional support. Likewise, the moderate effectiveness noted in this study is also a reflection of the variable experiences reported elsewhere, where both the positive and negative aspects of online and modular learning have been documented (Rapanta et al., 2020).

The high ratings from students and teachers for Basic Communication Skills confirm that effective and clear communication is crucial in modular and online learning environments. This finding is consistent with research by Martin and Bolliger (2018), who discovered that communication was a significant predictor of student satisfaction and engagement in online courses. The capacity of faculty members to deliver instructions and students' ability to explain their issues in clear terms probably contributed to the perceived effectiveness of this construct. This necessitates that institutions consider providing communication facilitation training tools and skills to enhance the effectiveness of flexible learning systems.

The Ability to Work Independently was also rated very highly by faculty members, a finding that resonates with the literature highlighting the importance of self-directed learning in distance learning. According to Broadbent (2017), students who excel in self-regulation tend to perform optimally in online learning environments. However, the lower student rating suggests that some may struggle with the autonomy required in flexible learning options. This variation indicates that individualized support must be provided to enable students to acquire independent learning skills, especially in vocational subjects such as fishery and marine sciences, whose practice and experiential nature are the essence of the syllabus.

Time Management Skills scored average in both cohorts, which is characteristic of the standard issue in distance and module learning. Kauffman (2015) found in his research that time management is a significant issue among online students, often resulting in procrastination and stress. The moderate score here suggests that some teachers and students adapted, while others may require additional tools or approaches to manage their time effectively. Strategies such as systematic schedules, reminders, and time management workshops can help fill the gap.

The Attitude Towards Online Education construct was differently rated, with students rating it higher than the faculty. This outcome is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Sun and Chen (2016), which found that students' attitudes towards online learning were moderated by their experience and perceived effectiveness of the modality. The lower faculty rating might be a reflection of concern regarding the capacity of online instruction to deliver complex or lab-based material, especially in fields such as fisheries and marine sciences. This highlights the importance of professional development initiatives in supporting faculty transitions to and adoption of online teaching practices.

Access to the Internet was rated lowest by both students and teachers, in line with the challenges of the world during the pandemic. UNESCO (2020) noted that a lack of decent access to the Internet is the primary hindrance to efficient online learning, particularly in rural or disadvantaged communities. Poor performance in this study highlights the digital divide that still exists in places like Bohol, where infrastructure constraints may hinder the widespread implementation of flexible learning arrangements. This issue must be addressed through concerted efforts among schools, the state, and private sectors to expand internet coverage and increase affordability.

The results of this research corroborate the two-fold character of flexible learning modes as both potential and challenge in times of pandemics. Although the moderate effectiveness of BISU's learning modalities confirms that they can help maintain education amidst crisis, differential performance across constructs is a testament to areas for improvement. The extremely high rating of Basic Communication Skills and Ability to Work Independently indicates that these are skills that can be utilized to improve the overall quality of flexible learning. The reasonably low ratings of Access to the Internet and Time Management Skills, however, indicate fundamental obstacles to ensuring equal and practical education for all parties involved.

In summary, this research adds to the body of literature on flexible learning modes by shedding light on their application in specialized areas such as marine sciences and fisheries. The results highlight the need to overcome infrastructural constraints, enhance time management support, and foster positive attitudes towards distance

learning. By overcoming these barriers, institutions such as BISU can optimize the efficiency of their flexible learning systems and better prepare for future education disruptions.

4.0 Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a sudden shift to modular and online learning, revealing the strengths and weaknesses of flexible learning modalities. The current study contributes to the body of knowledge on flexible learning by demonstrating its moderate success in technical courses, such as fisheries and marine sciences. While it was strong on essential communication and self-learning skills, weaknesses such as limited internet connectivity and inefficient time management weakened optimal achievements. To address these gaps, the university can offer internet subsidies to rural students and provide time management training to enhance learning effectiveness. These comply with UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to provide quality education towards inclusive and equitable learning. Future studies must investigate the long-term effects of flexible learning and the efficacy of customized interventions. Closing these gaps, BISU can enhance the quality of education and better prepare for the next wave of disruptions, ultimately enabling sustainable educational development.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The principal author made all the parts of this manuscript.

6.0 Funding

This research has no external funding or grant.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest in this research.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researchers extend their heartfelt gratitude to Bohol Island State University-Candijay for allowing them to conduct this study.

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Acceptability of Interactive Supplementary Material in Teaching Linear Equation in Grade 7 Mathematics

Nestor Jr. R. Ramilo^{*1}, Charlie T. Anselmo²

¹Longos National High School, Malabon City, Metro Manila, Philippines

²College of Education, Isabela State University – Cauayan City, Isabela, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: nestor.ramilojr001@deped.gov.ph

Date received: December 8, 2024

Date revised: March 10, 2025

Date accepted: April 3, 2025

Originality: 98%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 2%

Recommended citation:

Ramilo, N., & Anselmo, C. (2025). Acceptability of interactive supplementary material in teaching linear equation in Grade 7 Mathematics. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 507-519.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0664>

Abstract. The integration of gaming elements into educational settings has emerged as a promising strategy for enhancing student engagement and academic performance, particularly in mathematics. This study investigates the acceptability of interactive supplementary application designed to teach linear equations to Grade 7 students. The application, inspired by the popular game show "Deal or No Deal," provides an immersive experience where students solve mathematical problems to eliminate briefcases and uncover potential rewards. The app's compatibility with Android devices, broad accessibility, and user-friendly interface make it an adaptable and inclusive learning tool. A quantitative research method was employed, involving 17 mathematics teachers, 8 Master Teachers, and 5 Department Heads as participants. The study employed a research instrument patterned after several existing studies, incorporating criteria developed by the researcher to evaluate nine variables: objective, content, language and style, presentation, usefulness, activities, clarity, navigation, animation, and evaluation. These findings indicate that the application is generally highly acceptable across multiple criteria. Significant differences in assessment were observed based on the respondents' age and years of service, particularly for aspects such as language, presentation, and usefulness. However, educational attainment and position had a limited impact on most assessment criteria. This study provides valuable insights into the integration of technology-based, game-inspired learning tools in mathematics education, highlighting the potential of such applications to complement traditional teaching methods and engage 21st-century learners.

Keywords: Educational technology integration; Game-based learning; Interactive learning tools; Mathematics education in the Philippines.

1.0 Introduction

Mathematics education plays a crucial role in developing students' problem-solving skills and mathematical literacy, which are essential for navigating the complexities of the 21st century (Amalina & Vidákovich, 2023; Rizki & Priatna, 2019). The importance of mathematical reasoning and proof in deepening mathematical understanding has been emphasized in recent research, leading to a reexamination of the curriculum at all grade levels (Villiers, 2012). In Math 7, linear equations are a fundamental concept within the algebra strand. The curriculum for 8th-grade students, which often includes advanced 7th-grade content, typically covers the general form, solving, and application of systems of linear equations with two variables (Rusdi et al., 2020). This aligns with the broader goal of developing students' mathematical literacy, which includes competencies such as mathematical thinking, reasoning, communication, modeling, and problem-solving (Sumirattana et al., 2019; Sumirattana et al., 2017). Interestingly, research has shown that students' problem-solving skills tend to develop from grades 7 to 8, but this

progression is not always maintained in grade 9 (Amalina & Vidákovich, 2023). This highlights the importance of focusing on effective teaching methods for linear equations in Math 7 as it provides a critical foundation for future mathematical understanding. To enhance students' mathematical literacy and problem-solving skills approaches such as Realistic Mathematics Education (RME) and Virtual Realistic Mathematics Education (VRME) have shown promise in making abstract concepts more concrete and relevant to students' lives (Çakıroğlu et al., 2023; Sumirattana et al., 2017).

The teaching of linear equations faces several challenges that necessitate innovative approaches to enhance students' understanding and engagement. Traditional methods often struggle to convey the abstract nature of linear equations, resulting in difficulties in their conceptualization and application (Iqbal et al., 2020; Iqbal et al., 2022). A significant challenge is the need to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical problem-solving skills. Many students find it challenging to translate real-world scenarios into mathematical equations, highlighting the importance of developing creative teaching strategies that emphasize contextual learning (Norqvist et al., 2019; Revell & McCurry, 2012). Additionally, the diverse learning styles and backgrounds of students in modern classrooms require adaptive and personalized approaches to instruction (Uskov et al., 2018). To address these challenges, educators are exploring innovative methods such as flipped classrooms, game-based learning, and technology-enhanced instruction (Cevikbas & Kaiser, 2020; Naik, 2015). The integration of augmented reality (AR) into STEM education holds promise for delivering the practical and creative aspects of teaching linear equations (Iqbal et al., 2022). Furthermore, the emergence of artificial intelligence and large language models offers new possibilities for personalized learning experiences and curriculum development (Matzakos et al., 2023). These innovative approaches aim to foster critical thinking, promote student engagement, and enhance mathematical competency in linear equations (Hadar & Tirosh, 2019; Ward et al., 2024). According to Anselmo (2024), both educators and students recognize the value of integrating technological tools in the classroom, particularly in enhancing engagement and fostering a deeper understanding of complex subjects.

Interactive supplementary materials are gaining prominence in mathematics education because of their potential to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes. These materials, which include digital tools, gamified elements, and immersive environments, offer new ways for students to interact with mathematical concepts and develop their critical thinking skills. Research has shown that interactive learning environments can have a significantly positive impact on mathematics education. For instance, the implementation of augmented reality (AR) in mathematics education has consistently demonstrated positive outcomes (Bulut & Ferri, 2023). Similarly, the use of educational games as an interactive learning media has been found to improve students' creative thinking skills in mathematics, with one study reporting an 84.85% improvement (Kartika et al., 2019). Interactive eBooks with scaffolding features have shown promise, particularly for students with low academic achievement (Reinhold et al., 2019). Interestingly, the benefits of interactive materials extend beyond academic performance. Studies have found that these tools can increase students' motivation and interest in mathematics. For example, a mobile visual novel game for teaching definite integrals achieved high levels of immersion (82.09%) and behavioral intention to use (84.28%), indicating strong student engagement (Florensia & Suryadibrata, 2023).

The use of technology and game-based learning in mathematics education has garnered significant attention in recent years, with numerous studies exploring its effectiveness and potential benefits. Digital games have been reported to be an effective educational method for improving students' motivation and performance in mathematics learning (Byun & Joung, 2018). The implementation of game-based approaches in education has the potential to enhance student motivation and engagement in the learning process, ultimately leading to the acquisition of long-lasting practical knowledge (Videnovik et al., 2023). In a meta-analysis, Anselmo (2024) evaluated the effectiveness of learning kits and demonstrated that these tools significantly improve students' conceptual understanding and engagement. Teachers are an indispensable resource for delivering quality education. Their methods and strategies must align with the subject matter while resonating with the learners' interests, contemporary trends, and national standards. Moreover, K-12 educational policy emphasizes the importance of developing interactive learning materials that foster student engagement and prepare them for recognition on the international stage. Another review of 43 papers focused on recent empirical studies that implemented learning games for K-12 mathematics education between 2008 and 2021, identifying trends in game design and the integration of math content into gameplay (Pan et al., 2022). However, notable gaps and contradictions exist in current research. While some studies report positive outcomes in student learning,

particularly in affective or psychological states and language acquisition (Hung et al., 2018), others emphasize the need for further research to investigate the design and implementation of learning games for math education in K-12 settings (Pan et al., 2022).

Interactive supplementary materials in-game applications can effectively address challenges in student engagement and learning outcomes by leveraging the benefits of gamification while mitigating its potential drawbacks. These materials can enhance students' motivation and engagement by creating a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment (Wulan et al. 2024). By incorporating game-design elements such as experience points, levels, badges, challenges, and leaderboards, courses can significantly improve students' attention to reference materials, online participation, and proactivity (Barata et al., 2013). The use of virtual reality technology in educational games can further improve learners' sense of presence and interaction, stimulate their interest, and enhance their engagement (Gao et al., 2018). However, it is important to note that gamification is not universally effective. Some studies have found that average student engagement levels can be lower during simulation game classes than during traditional case study classes (Rogmans & Abaza, 2019). Similarly, Chao and Chang (2018) describe a study that applied the Augmented Reality (AR) technique to develop a math learning app for schoolchildren. The results indicated that the students found the AR Math learning app acceptable and increased their interest in learning. The study showed a significant improvement in learning effects after using the app (Chao & Chang, 2018). In addition, Outhwaite et al. (2019) reported a randomized control trial of interactive math apps for the early years of education. The study found that using math apps led to significantly greater math learning gains than standard math practice. Interactive apps, which combined aspects of direct instruction with play, were effective in raising achievement in early math (Outhwaite et al., 2019). These studies suggest that interactive and game-based approaches to mathematics teaching can be acceptable and effective for students.

This study addresses the need for effective supplementary materials for teaching Linear Equations in Math 7, focusing on the development and evaluation of an interactive game application. It aims to assess the acceptability of this proposed Interactive Supplementary Material among educators in the City School Division of Manila. This research examines various aspects of the material, including its features, objectives, content, language, presentation, usefulness, activities, clarity, navigation, and evaluation methods. Additionally, the study examines whether demographic factors, such as age, length of service, educational attainment, and teaching position, influence respondents' assessments of the material. The findings will inform potential modifications to enhance the effectiveness of the proposed supplementary material in teaching Linear Equations to Grade 7 students.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research method, utilizing statistical tools to analyze the numerical data collected from participants. This approach is efficient for data collection and analysis, enabling researchers to process large datasets quickly and accurately (Bryman, 2021). The structured data analysis method aligns well with the research objective. Statistical software, such as SPSS, facilitates the application of advanced statistical techniques, including descriptive and inferential statistics, as well as data visualization, thereby enhancing the rigor and reliability of the study. This method enables the generalization of findings beyond a specific sample, allowing conclusions to be applied to broader populations or educational contexts (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, the quantitative approach provides a systematic and rigorous means of investigating educational phenomena and generating relevant insights.

2.2 Research Participants

This study was conducted within the fourth district of Manila City, focusing on Grade 7 mathematics teachers, Master Teachers, and Department Heads of Mathematics as the target population. Non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, was employed to collect the data. Purposive sampling, as defined by Campbell et al. (2020), involves the deliberate selection of respondents based on particular demographics or characteristics of interest. This approach allowed the researcher to strategically choose participants who possessed valuable insights and experience relevant to the study's objectives. The respondents in the study consisted of seventeen Mathematics teachers, eight Master Teachers, and five Department Heads in mathematics from the Fourth District of the Manila Division office.

2.3 Research Instrument

This study's research tool was modeled after several previous studies, with some criteria and indicators developed by the researcher. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a score of 0.930, based on 40 items and 17 responses from mathematics teachers. The instrument is divided into two main sections. The initial section focused on the respondents' profiles, detailing their personal and professional backgrounds. The second section comprised 45 statements, with five statements assessing each of the nine variables identified for the study: objective, content, language and style, presentation, usefulness, activities, clarity, navigation and animation, and evaluation. The respondents rated each statement using a Likert scale.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedures

The following data collection procedure was performed in this study: (a) Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Manila Division Office of District IV Schools, (b) Wrote a letter of permission to the head of the school's Math Department, (c) A research instrument was formulated and validated, (d) The research instrument was administered to the respondents in this study, (e) Raw quantitative data were retrieved, collated, and analyzed using SPSS software, (f) Summarize and formulate conclusions based on statistical results and recommendations for further studies.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, including the educators and students. Participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose, scope, and objectives of the study. They were provided with detailed information about their participation, including the nature of the data to be collected, the methods of data collection, and how their data would be used. The consent forms were designed to be clear and comprehensible, ensuring that participants understood their rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Participants

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by age, including the age distribution of the respondents and the frequency and percentage for each age group. Among the 30 respondents, the largest group was aged 26–30 years, with 11 individuals (36.70%). The 31–35 year group had six respondents (20.00%), similar to the 21–25 year group. The 41–45 years group included four respondents (13.30%), and the smallest group, 36–40 years, had three respondents (10.00%). This distribution highlights the age diversity of the respondents, with the majority aged 26–30 years offering valuable demographic insights into their perspectives on technology-based applications for teaching mathematics. Additionally, it displays the respondents' years of service, along with the frequencies and percentages for each range. Among the 30 respondents, 20 (66.70%) had 1 to 5 years of service, seven (23.30%) had 6 to 10 years, and three (10.00%) had 11 to 15 years. This distribution reveals that most respondents had fewer years of service, predominantly within the five-year range, offering insights into their experience levels in assessing technology-based applications in teaching mathematics.

Further, it shows the distribution of respondents according to their educational attainment; among the 30 respondents, the majority (63.30%) held a bachelor's degree. Eight respondents (26.70%) completed master's degrees, while the smallest group, three (10.00%), had a master's degree. This distribution highlights that most respondents had a Baccalaureate Degree, few had completed master's units, and the fewest possessed a master's degree. These data offer insights into the respondents' educational backgrounds, which are crucial for evaluating their qualifications and expertise in assessing technology-based applications in teaching mathematics. Finally, Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to their positions, including the frequency and percentage. Among the 30 respondents, the largest group comprises Math 7 Teachers (17 individuals, 56.70%). Eight respondents (26.70%) were masters teachers. The smallest group consisted of Mathematics Head Teachers with five individuals (16.60%). This distribution reveals that most respondents are math seven teachers, followed by a smaller percentage of Master Teachers, and an even smaller percentage of Math Head Teachers. These data provided insights into their qualifications and expertise in assessing technology-based applications in mathematics teaching.

Table 1. *Profile of the participants*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
41 – 45	4	13.30
36 – 40	3	10.00
31 – 35	6	20.00
26 – 30	11	36.70
21 – 25	6	20.00
Years in Service		
11 – 15	3	10.00
6 – 10	7	23.30
1 – 5	20	66.70
Educational Attainment		
With master's degree	3	10.00
With a master's unit	8	26.70
Baccalaureate Degree	19	63.30
Position		
Math 7 Teachers	17	56.70
Master Teacher	8	26.70
Head Teacher Math	5	16.60

3.2 Level of Acceptability of the Proposed Interactive Supplementary Material

The following tables summarize the assessment of the respondents (math teachers, master teachers, and Department Heads) using the nine sub-criteria.

Objectives

Table 2 demonstrates that the Teaching Mathematics 7 instructional materials, when supplemented interactively, are highly acceptable. The objectives were clearly stated, SMART, and aligned with the learning competencies, resulting in a weighted mean score of 4.6 or higher, indicating high acceptability. This clarity and alignment likely enhance instructional effectiveness by providing clear guidance for teachers and students. With an overall weighted mean of 4.71, the assessment underscores the importance of well-defined objectives in technology-based education, emphasizing their role in effective teaching and learning practices. Clearly stated objectives in the instructional content ensure that learners focus on their goals throughout the educational process. This evaluation indicates that the instructional materials were effectively integrated to guide students' learning experiences through well-defined objectives.

Table 2. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of objectives*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. Objectives are clearly stated in the instructional material	4.77	Highly Acceptable
2. Objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound)	4.70	Highly Acceptable
3. Objectives are aligned with the learning competencies	4.67	Highly Acceptable
4. Objectives instruct and translate learning competencies	4.77	Highly Acceptable
5. Objectives are indicated in the content area of instructions.	4.67	Highly Acceptable
Overall Result	4.71	Highly Acceptable

In a study conducted by Anselmo (2024), the level of acceptability of a module was evaluated based on various criteria, including clarity of objectives, content relevance, and instructional design. The findings indicated that clearly defined and well-structured objectives significantly contributed to the overall acceptability and effectiveness of the educational material among students and educators.

Content

Table 3 lists the acceptability levels of the content. The relevance of the content received a high weighted mean score of 4.73, indicating strong alignment with the intended learning outcomes. This relevance enhances instructional effectiveness by closely matching students' educational goals. The clarity of the content presentation was rated at 4.80, reflecting a highly acceptable level that likely aids student comprehension and understanding. The content's alignment with students' interests was 4.73, which boosted their engagement and motivation. Additionally, the practical relevance of the content, with a score of 4.80, ensured that the students saw real-world applications of the concepts. Overall, a general weighted mean of 4.68 underscores the importance of instructional content being relevant, clear, engaging, and providing opportunities for skill development. These findings underscore the significance of well-designed instructional materials for effective Mathematics 7 teaching and learning experiences.

Table 3. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of content*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. Contents are relevant to the objectives	4.73	Highly Acceptable
2. Contents are clearly presented	4.80	Highly Acceptable
3. Contents are in the level of interest of the students	4.73	Highly Acceptable
4. Contents provide relevance to the topic	4.80	Highly Acceptable
5. Contents provide sufficient activities to enhance the skills of the students	4.33	Acceptable
Overall Result	4.68	Highly Acceptable

Duncan's (2018) study on game-based learning in mathematics emphasized the importance of content relevance, clarity, and alignment with students' interests in fostering meaningful learning. Duncan also emphasized the importance of providing sufficient activities to enhance students' skills, aligning with Indicator 5 in Table 6. The acceptable rating for this indicator suggests that while the content generally meets expectations, there is potential for improvement in offering a broader range of activities to enhance student learning outcomes.

Language and Style

Table 4 The level of acceptability of language and styles evaluates the respondents' views on the language and style of interactive supplementary materials in Teaching Mathematics 7. The terms of the instructional materials generally matched the learners' comprehension level, with a weighted mean of 4.40, which was deemed acceptable. Nonetheless, improvements can further enhance term comprehension. Conversely, the terms effectively communicated the topic content, earning a highly acceptable score of 4.53, which indicates that the language conveyed key concepts effectively, despite some complexity. The clarity of basic concepts and principles also scored 4.40, an acceptable level, suggesting effective communication of some fundamentals but room for further clarification. The simplicity and clarity of the terms scored a highly acceptable value of 4.63, indicating that the language was accessible to the learners. However, the structure and style received a moderately acceptable score of 3.41, indicating a need for design improvements to enhance clarity and effectiveness. Overall, the general weighted mean for language and style is 4.27, reflecting an acceptable level of effectiveness. While strengths include term clarity, refining structure, and style can enhance understanding and engagement.

Table 4. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of language and style*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. Terms used suits the learner's level of comprehension	4.40	Acceptable
2. Terms used conveys the message of the topic/subject contents	4.53	Highly Acceptable
3. Provides clear understanding of basic concepts and principles	4.40	Acceptable
4. Terms used are simple and clear	4.63	Highly Acceptable
5. The structure and styles used are appropriately designed	3.41	Moderately Acceptable
Overall Result	4.27	Acceptable

These results mirror those of Smith et al. (2018), who emphasized the importance of using terms that match learners' comprehension levels. They argued that materials tailored to learners' cognitive abilities enhance their understanding and engagement. This aligns with the finding that instructional materials should be tailored to learners' comprehension levels. Johnson and Williams (2019) stress the importance of clear communication in educational materials, suggesting that clarity enhances learning outcomes. This supports the finding that the terms used effectively conveyed key messages to the subject. Brown and Jones (2020) emphasize the importance of providing clear explanations of fundamental concepts and principles, arguing that ambiguity hinders learning progress. This finding corresponds with the finding that instructional materials clearly explain fundamental concepts and principles.

Presentation

Table 5: Level of acceptability in terms of presentation shows that the topics were presented in a logical sequence, achieving a high weighted mean score of 4.60, indicating well-structured material that facilitates effective learning. The instructional materials included technology-based activities with a weighted mean score of 4.67, suggesting that these activities are engaging and relevant. The Font in the application scored 4.18, which is acceptable but potentially improvable for better visibility. The application stimulated creativity, earning a high score of 4.60, and lesson clarity received a score of 4.63, indicating effective communication of key concepts. The assessment of the

presentations yielded a general weighted mean of 4.54, indicating that the respondents well received the Interactive Supplementary Material for Teaching Mathematics 7. Strengths include logical sequencing, integration of activities with technology, and the clarity of lesson delivery. However, improvements in font visibility are required to enhance the overall presentation effectiveness.

Table 5. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of presentation*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. Topics are presented in logical and orderly sequences	4.60	Highly Acceptable
2. Presents activities that seek to relate the use of the technology-based application	4.67	Highly Acceptable
3. The fonts used in technology-based applications are big enough to be seen by the students	4.18	Acceptable
4. The technology-based application presented effectively stimulates students' creativity	4.60	Highly Acceptable
5. The lesson presented clearly	4.63	Highly Acceptable
Overall Result	4.54	Highly Acceptable

Usefulness

Table 6 assesses respondents' views on the usefulness of interactive supplementary materials in Teaching Mathematics 7. The technology-based application was rated highly relevant to learners' needs, with a weighted mean score of 4.83, indicating high acceptability. This suggests that it effectively addresses the specific learning requirements and challenges. The application also enhanced students' mathematical skills with a weighted mean score of 4.53, indicating its effectiveness through interactive exercises, visualizations, and other engaging features. Furthermore, it significantly increased the students' motivation to learn, achieving a weighted mean score of 4.90, which was classified as highly acceptable. This indicates that the technology-based approach fosters enthusiasm and engagement, thereby making learning more enjoyable. Additionally, the application served as a supplementary strategy for linear equations and Inequalities, earning a highly acceptable weighted mean score of 4.80, thereby effectively complementing traditional teaching methods. The overall weighted mean for the usefulness assessment was 4.50, indicating a highly acceptable level of effectiveness. This evaluation underscores the significant benefits of integrating technology into mathematics education, including improved relevance to learners' needs, enhanced skills, increased motivation, and adequate supplementation of traditional methods.

Table 6. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of usefulness*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. The technology-based application is relevant to the needs of the learner	4.83	Highly Acceptable
2. It enhances their mathematical skills	4.53	Highly Acceptable
3. It increases the motivation of the students to learn	4.90	Highly Acceptable
4. It serves as a supplement strategy in Linear Equations and Inequalities	4.80	Highly Acceptable
5. It motivates the students to be a critical thinker and a problem solver	3.45	Moderately Acceptable
Overall Result	4.50	Highly Acceptable

Smith and Johnson (2018) provided compelling evidence supporting the notion that well-structured instructional material, integrated activities, and straightforward presentation techniques are essential elements of effective teaching and learning practices. Their insights offer valuable guidance for educators and instructional designers seeking to optimize learning outcomes in technology-based educational contexts.

Activities

Table 7 shows the level of acceptability in terms of Activities; the Interactive Supplementary Material is highly relevant to learners' needs, with a weighted mean score of 4.80, classified as highly acceptable. This indicates that the application's activities were well-designed to meet specific student learning requirements and enhance their educational experience. The application also significantly boosted the students' motivation to learn, achieving a weighted mean score of 4.87. This suggests that the activities effectively engage and inspire students. Additionally, as a supplementary strategy for teaching linear equations and Inequalities, the application received a highly acceptable score of 4.67, indicating that it complements traditional teaching methods. It also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving, with a highly acceptable score of 4.87, encouraging students to think analytically and creatively. The overall weighted mean score for the activities was 4.66, indicating a high level of effectiveness. This evaluation highlights the material's benefits, including relevance to learners' needs, enhancement of mathematical skills, motivation, and promotion of critical thinking. These findings align with Brown and Jones's (2020) research, which emphasizes the importance of technology in meeting individual learning needs, boosting motivation, and developing critical thinking, thereby promoting better learning outcomes.

Table 7. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of activities*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. The technology-based application is relevant to the needs of the learner	4.80	Highly Acceptable
2. It enhances their mathematical skills	4.11	Acceptable
3. It increases the motivation of the students to learn	4.87	Highly Acceptable
4. It serves as a supplement strategy in Linear Equations and Inequalities	4.67	Highly Acceptable
5. It motivates the students to be a critical thinker and a problem solver	4.87	Highly Acceptable
Overall Result	4.66	Highly Acceptable

Clarity

Table 8 presents the level of acceptability in terms of clarity, where the application effectively identified instructional focus standards within a unit of study (weighted mean score: 4.50) and articulated the importance of learning intentions for both students and teachers (weighted mean score: 4.57). It details what students will do to achieve their learning intentions (weighted mean score: 4.53) and breaks down learning intentions into progressions (weighted mean score: 4.70). The overall weighted mean for clarity assessment was 4.32, indicating a high acceptability of offering clear instructional guidance, articulating learning objectives, and supporting students' understanding of their learning progression. These findings align with those of Smith and Johnson (2019), emphasizing the importance of clarity in instructional materials for enhancing student understanding, engagement, and learning outcomes.

Table 8. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of clarity*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. Identify one standard that serves as the instructional focus within a unit of study.	4.50	Highly Acceptable
2. Restate the standard in student-friendly language without compromising rigor. This is called the learning intention-the "what" that students are learning.	3.28	Moderately Acceptable
3. Decide why the learning intention is important for students and teachers.	4.57	Highly Acceptable
4. Write the details of what students will do to achieve the learning intention. These are the success criteria-the "how".	4.53	Highly Acceptable
5. Break the learning intention into learning progressions-the skills and concepts that lead to the learning intentions.	4.70	Highly Acceptable
Overall Result	4.32	Highly Acceptable

Navigation and Animation

Table 9 presents the level of acceptability of navigation and animation, assessing respondents' perceptions of the navigation and animation in Interactive Supplementary Material for Teaching Mathematics 7. The functionality of click buttons was high (weighted mean = 4.87), indicating well-designed and responsive interactive elements. The game's reward system received moderate acceptability (weighted mean = 3.43), suggesting room for improvement. The login and registration buttons were highly acceptable (weighted mean = 4.80), indicating user-friendliness. The graphic design was also highly acceptable (weighted mean = 4.73), thereby enhancing the user experience. The overall weighted mean for navigation and animation assessments was 4.53, indicating high effectiveness. These findings align with Duncan's (2018) emphasis on the importance of effective navigation and animation in educational games for enhancing user engagement and learning outcomes.

Table 9. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of navigation and animation*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. The click buttons work accordingly.	4.87	Highly Acceptable
2. A reward system appropriate for the given games.	3.43	Moderately Acceptable
3. The login button offers a convenient way for players to access the game.	4.80	Highly Acceptable
4. The game offers an easy login and registration system.	4.80	Highly Acceptable
5. Graphic design is appropriate to the game theme.	4.73	Highly Acceptable
Overall Result	4.53	Highly Acceptable

Evaluation

Table 10 presents the acceptability level in terms of the evaluation. The respondents rated the adequacy of the items for different learning objectives, with a weighted mean score of 4.70, indicating high acceptability. This suggests that the assessment items within the application sufficiently addressed the various learning objectives and comprehensively covered the curriculum. Assessments for each lesson were deemed adequate to determine

topic mastery, with a highly acceptable weighted mean score of 4.57. This indicates that the assessment activities effectively gauge students' comprehension and proficiency in each lesson, thus providing valuable insight into their mastery. Additionally, the assessments comprehensively covered the content, earning a highly acceptable weighted mean score of 4.70, ensuring alignment with the learning objectives and curriculum standards. The general weighted mean for the evaluation assessment is 4.56, indicating a highly acceptable level of effectiveness. This underscores the application's success in providing adequate assessment items, assessing students' learning pace, and determining topic mastery while comprehensively covering the content. The findings in Table 10 are corroborated by Johnson and Williams (2019), who emphasize the importance of well-designed assessments in educational materials. They asserted that assessments should align with learning objectives, adequately cover content, and offer opportunities for skill development, contributing to the effectiveness of the evaluation process in gauging student progress and mastery.

Table 10. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material in terms of evaluation*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
1. The number of items is enough for different learning objectives	4.70	Highly Acceptable
2. Ensures the development of the skills of the students in Linear Equations and Inequalities	4.40	Acceptable
3. Assessments are designed to evaluate the pace of the learner	4.43	Acceptable
4. Assessment for every lesson is adequate in determining the mastery of the topic	4.57	Highly Acceptable
5. Assessment covers the content of the topic.	4.70	Highly Acceptable
Overall Result	4.56	Highly Acceptable

Summary

Table 11 presents the summary assessment evaluations from math teachers, master teachers, and Department Heads, indicating that the Interactive Supplementary Material achieved a general weighted mean score of 4.53, which is deemed "Highly Acceptable." Overall, the Interactive Supplementary Material for Teaching Mathematics (7) received high ratings across all indicators, supporting its potential to enhance mathematics instruction. Arli and Zulyusri (2020) supported these findings. They investigated the development and validation of an interactive flash-based multimedia game for middle school students, utilizing the "guess the picture" format. Using the Plomp development model, they assessed the game construction, content, graphics, and language. Their study concluded that multimedia games met valid criteria and could enhance student learning in terms of knowledge, behavior, and skills. Sabirova et al. (2019) evaluated the interactive educational platform UCHI.ru for teaching mathematics. The methods included testing, observation, and analysis to assess the platform's impact on the student's mathematical skill development, motivation, and knowledge gaps.

Table 11. *Level of acceptability of the proposed interactive supplementary material*

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Objectives	4.71	Highly Acceptable
Content	4.68	Highly Acceptable
Language and Style	4.27	Acceptable
Presentation	4.54	Highly Acceptable
Usefulness	4.50	Highly Acceptable
Activities	4.66	Highly Acceptable
Clarity	4.32	Acceptable
Navigation and Animation	4.53	Highly Acceptable
Evaluation	4.56	Highly Acceptable
Overall Result	4.53	Highly Acceptable

3.3 Difference in the Assessments of the Respondents when Grouped According to their Demographic Profile

Table 12 reveals significant differences in objectives, content, clarity, and evaluation between respondents aged 21-25 and 26-30, as shown by the rejection of the null hypothesis (H₀) and post-hoc analysis. This indicates notable variations in the perception of the effectiveness of interactive supplementary materials among these age groups. Additionally, significant differences in language and style were found between respondents aged 26-30 and 36-40, suggesting differing perceptions among these groups. In contrast, no significant differences were observed in presentation, usefulness, activities, navigation, or animation across age groups, as the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that age did not affect the respondents' assessments of these variables. These findings emphasize the need to consider age-related differences when evaluating Interactive Supplementary Materials in mathematics teaching. While perceptions of objectives, content, clarity, and evaluation vary with age, other aspects do not. These results align with

those of Smith et al. (2018), who found distinct preferences among younger and older learners regarding objectives, content, clarity, and evaluation, supporting the observed significant differences between respondents aged 21-25 and 26-30. The lack of significant differences in presentation, usefulness, activities, navigation, and animation aligns with the notion that certain aspects are not affected by age. This study highlights the importance of accounting for age-related differences in the development and evaluation of interactive supplementary material to address diverse user needs.

Table 12. *Difference in the assessments of the respondents when grouped according to their age*

Variables	Test Statistic F	p –value	Decision	Interpretation
Objectives	2.79	0.048	Reject Ho	Significant
Content	3.09	0.034	Reject Ho	Significant
Language and Style	12.6	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Presentation	2.05	0.117	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Usefulness	2.54	0.065	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Activities	2.35	0.081	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Clarity	11.7	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Navigation and Animation	0.76	0.561	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Evaluation	20.4	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

If p value < 0.05, Reject Ho

Table 13 reveals significant differences in assessments of language and style, presentation, usefulness, activities, and clarity between respondents with 1-5 years of service and those with 16-20 years for Interactive Supplementary Material in Teaching Mathematics 7, as evidenced by the rejection of the null hypothesis and post-hoc analysis. However, no significant differences were found for objectives, content, navigation, animation, or evaluation, suggesting that service length did not significantly influence perceptions of these variables. These findings underscore the importance of considering service length when assessing the effectiveness of Interactive Supplementary Materials in mathematics education and developing targeted professional development strategies. These results align with previous research by Johnson and Williams (2019), who noted that educators with different service lengths may perceive educational materials differently, emphasizing the need to consider educators' service length when evaluating and designing instructional materials to meet diverse needs and preferences effectively.

Table 13. *Difference in the assessments of the respondents when grouped according to their length of service*

Variables	Test Statistic F	p –value	Decision	Interpretation
Objectives	0.241	0.867	Fail to Reject Ho	Significant
Content	1.183	0.335	Fail to Reject Ho	Significant
Language and Style	3.271	0.037	Reject Ho	Significant
Presentation	8.395	0.000	Reject Ho	No Significant
Usefulness	8.991	0.000	Reject Ho	No Significant
Activities	4.715	0.009	Reject Ho	No Significant
Clarity	1.252	0.311	Fail to Reject Ho	Significant
Navigation and Animation	2.138	0.120	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Evaluation	1.511	0.235	Fail to Reject Ho	Significant

If p-value < 0.05, Reject Ho

Table 14 shows the test of differences in the assessment in terms of the highest educational attainment. The analysis revealed no significant differences in indicators, including objectives, content, language, style, presentation, activities, clarity, navigation, animation, and evaluation, based on the respondents' highest educational attainment. The null hypothesis is not rejected, implying that educational attainment does not significantly influence the assessment of these variables. However, significant differences in usefulness were found between respondents with a bachelor's degree and those with a master's degree, as indicated by the post-hoc analyses. This suggests that educational attainment may affect perceptions of the usefulness of interactive supplementary material. Although it does not significantly impact views on most aspects of the Interactive Supplementary Material, it may influence opinions on its usefulness. These insights are crucial for understanding educators' perspectives and for tailoring their support and training accordingly.

These findings are consistent with those of Smith et al. (2018), who examined the impact of educational attainment on the assessment of instructional materials. They noted that educators with varying levels of educational attainment might view the usefulness of educational materials differently. This finding supports the current study's observation of significant differences in the perceptions of usefulness between educators with bachelor's

and master's degrees. The absence of significant differences in other variables, such as objectives, content, language, style, presentation, activities, clarity, navigation, animation, and evaluation, across educational attainment levels also aligns with the findings of Smith et al. Hence, this study highlights the importance of considering educators' highest level of educational attainment when evaluating and designing instructional materials to effectively meet their diverse needs and preferences.

Table 14. *Difference in the assessments of the respondents when grouped according to their educational attainment*

Variables	Test Statistic F	p –value	Decision	Interpretation
Objectives	0.494	0.616	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Content	2.125	0.139	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Language and Style	1.577	0.225	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Presentation	1.451	0.252	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Usefulness	8.164	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant
Activities	0.730	0.491	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Clarity	0.107	0.899	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Navigation and Animation	0.248	0.782	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Evaluation	2.447	0.106	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant

If p-value < 0.05, Reject Ho

Table 15 shows a test of the differences in the assessment in terms of position. The study revealed no notable disparities among respondents in various positions concerning objectives, language and style, usefulness, clarity, navigation, or animation, thus upholding the null hypothesis. However, substantial differences in content, presentation, activities, and evaluation led to the rejection of the null hypothesis for these variables. Further analysis uncovered distinctions specifically between Teacher I and Master Teacher I, as well as between Teacher II and Master Teacher I, suggesting varied perceptions of interactive supplementary materials based on position and a need for customized materials.

Table 15. *Difference in the assessments of the respondents when grouped according to their position*

Variables	Test Statistic F	p –value	Decision	Interpretation
Objectives	2.148	0.635	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Content	12.654	0.023	Reject Ho	Significant
Language and Style	1.657	0.149	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Presentation	18.496	0.042	Reject Ho	Significant
Usefulness	3.654	0.589	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Activities	22.648	0.014	Reject Ho	Significant
Clarity	8.658	0.741	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Navigation and Animation	5.649	0.481	Fail to Reject Ho	No Significant
Evaluation	13.164	0.027	Reject Ho	Significant

If p-value < 0.05, Reject Ho

In a related study, Biber et al. (2022) examined the effectiveness of technology-enhanced interactive activities in mathematics education and the attitudes of educators toward them. They created 50 interactive exercises focusing on exponential and square root numbers and conducted a case study involving 25 teachers. The research found that educators generally favored interactive activities and technology integration despite encountering implementation challenges. This study recommends further improvements to technology use in mathematics instruction. Copia and Cuizon (2022) examined mobile game engagement in 100 participants. Their findings indicated that younger individuals and those with higher educational levels demonstrated significantly greater engagement levels. Bien (2023) assessed a research-designed mobile game application for ninth-grade Biology students. The study found that both experts and teachers concurred with its efficacy in enhancing learning and potential as an assessment instrument. Lopez (2022) assessed a numeracy mobile game designed to enhance junior high school student's performance in integer operations. Both teachers and experts gave positive ratings for the game, with no significant differences in their evaluations of the game mechanics, design, narratives, incentives, music, and content.

4.0 Conclusion

This study investigated the acceptability of "Math Deal or No Deal," an interactive supplementary material for teaching linear equations to Grade 7 students in Manila. This research aimed to address gaps in understanding the effectiveness of game-based learning tools in mathematics education. Using a quantitative methodology, the

study surveyed mathematics teachers, master's teachers, and department heads. The results indicated high overall acceptability of the application across multiple criteria, including objectives, content, activities, and evaluation. The game-based approach was found to be engaging and effective in enhancing students' mathematical skills and motivation. Significant differences in assessment were observed based on respondents' age and years of service, while educational attainment and position had a limited impact. This study highlighted the potential of game-inspired learning tools to complement traditional teaching methods and engage 21st-century learners. However, perceptions varied based on educators' demographics and experience levels, emphasizing the importance of considering diverse perspectives in educational technology development. The application's offline accessibility, broad compatibility, and user-friendly interface were strengths, whereas font visibility and the game reward system were identified as areas for improvement. The study concludes that while interactive materials, such as "Math Deal or No Deal," are broadly effective for teaching linear equations, their implementation should consider the diverse needs and perspectives of educators. Further research is recommended on the long-term impact of such tools on student performance, as well as ways to customize applications for different user groups.

Schools and software developers should consider incorporating interactive learning tools, such as "Math Deal or No Deal," to enhance traditional teaching approaches for Grade 7 linear equations. However, the implementation should be flexible enough to address various educational perspectives and requirements. Future versions of the app should address identified areas for improvement, such as enhancing font legibility and refining the reward mechanism. Moreover, it is suggested that we investigate the long-term impact of these interactive tools on students' academic performance and explore methods to tailor applications for different user groups. Teachers should receive proper training and assistance to effectively integrate these tools into their curriculum, considering factors such as age and experience, which may affect their attitudes towards and use of educational technologies.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

In this study, the author conceptualized and designed the research, including formulating the research questions and hypotheses, contributing significantly to data collection and analysis, and ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the data gathered. played a key role in reviewing the literature and drafting the introduction, providing insights into relevant theories and prior research findings, instrumental in interpreting the results, assisting with statistical analyses, bringing clarity to the findings, focusing on the discussion and implications, linking the findings to practical applications, and suggesting avenues for future research. All authors contributed to the final manuscript by reviewing and refining it for coherence, accuracy, and clarity, and approved the final version for submission. They also oversaw the entire project.

6.0 Funding

The authors fund this research

7.0 Conflict of Interests

No Conflict of Interest

8.0 Acknowledgment

Throughout the completion of this study, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and friends for their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding throughout the completion of this study, *Acceptability of Interactive Supplementary Material in Teaching Linear Equation in Math 7*.

To my family, thank you for your love, patience, and constant belief in my capabilities, which inspired me to persevere and accomplish this endeavor. To my friends, your motivating words and genuine interest in my work provided the moral and emotional strength I needed to stay focused on.

This paper is a testament to the power of a strong support system, and I dedicate it to all of you who have been by my side throughout this journey. Thank you at the bottom of your heart.

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Collaborative Pathways: Stakeholder Engagement in Minsu's Vision, Mission, and Entrepreneurship Program Goals and Objectives

Gemcer D. Selda

College of Teacher Education, Mindoro State University – Bongabong Campus,
Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

Author Email: gemcer.selda@minsue.edu.ph

Date received: December 3, 2024

Date revised: March 10, 2025

Date accepted: April 4, 2025

Originality: 88%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 12%

Recommended citation:

Selda, G. (2025). Collaborative pathways: Stakeholder engagement in Minsu's vision, mission, and entrepreneurship program goals and objectives. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 520-529.
<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0655>

Abstract. This study examines the awareness, acceptance, understanding, and perceptions of stakeholders concerning the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) of Mindoro State University (MinSU). Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data were gathered from both internal stakeholders (administration, faculty, non-teaching staff, and students) and external stakeholders (parents/guardians, linkages, and alumni) through surveys. Results indicate a high level of awareness among internal stakeholders, with an overall weighted mean score of 3.56, categorized as "Highly Aware." External stakeholders exhibited slightly lower levels of understanding, with a mean score of 3.43. The findings underscore the necessity for effective communication strategies to enhance stakeholder engagement with the VMGO. The study's implications suggest that aligning educational programs with stakeholder perceptions is crucial for fostering community support and improving program relevance. Theoretical implications include reinforcing the importance of stakeholder engagement in educational governance. Policy recommendations advocate for enhanced dissemination of VMGO to ensure all stakeholders are informed and engaged, ultimately contributing to MinSU's goal of promoting entrepreneurship among graduates. This alignment is vital for preparing students to meet the demands of an evolving job market and driving local economic growth.

Keywords: Stakeholders' engagement; Entrepreneurship program; VMGO.

1.0 Introduction

Mindoro State University (MinSU) aims to be a center of excellence in agriculture, technology, and education, aligning with global trends that emphasize the importance of higher education institutions in fostering innovation and economic growth. As highlighted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of quality education (SDG 4) in fostering sustainable economic development and reducing inequalities. This study is grounded in the global context of educational reform, which aims to equip learners with the skills necessary for addressing contemporary challenges, such as climate change and technological advancements (UNESCO, 2021).

The Philippines faces significant challenges in aligning educational outcomes with market demands. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) emphasizes the need for industry-driven curricula to ensure that graduates possess relevant skills for the workforce (CHED, 2022). This perspective is crucial as the country strives

to enhance its competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global economy. By examining stakeholder perceptions at MinSU, this study contributes to understanding how educational institutions can better respond to national priorities while fostering local economic development.

Locally, Mindoro's economic landscape is characterized by a reliance on agriculture and the emergence of new industries. Engaging stakeholders—including students, faculty, and industry partners—can facilitate curriculum enhancements that address local needs while promoting entrepreneurship among graduates. This focus is particularly relevant given the region's potential for growth through innovation and adaptability in business practices. Aligning MinSU's Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) with stakeholder perspectives is crucial for institutional success. As Tuico (2022) notes, a clear vision inspires collective efforts toward shared goals, fostering a sense of belonging among stakeholders. Furthermore, Cruz et al. (2022) emphasize that well-articulated goals motivate stakeholders and clarify their roles in fulfilling the mission. These insights underscore the importance of effective communication and acceptance of VMGO in driving continuous improvement within educational institutions.

Accreditation processes also play a pivotal role in enhancing educational quality and credibility. According to Pelicano and Lacaba (2016), institutions must ensure that their VMGOs are clearly defined and widely accepted by all stakeholders to meet the accreditation standards set by bodies such as the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP). Garcia et al. (2021) emphasize that rigorous self-assessment during accreditation results in improved alignment with stakeholder needs and enhanced educational quality.

Recent studies emphasize the significance of stakeholder awareness and participation in developing educational programs that cater to both local and global needs. Constantino (2020) stated that stakeholder engagement is essential for developing curricula that meet industry demands, particularly in entrepreneurship education. This aligns with the findings of Tuico (2022), who argues that a well-defined VMGO fosters a sense of belonging among stakeholders, motivating them to contribute actively to the institution's goals. Furthermore, Cruz et al. (2022) emphasize that clear communication of VMGO enhances stakeholder understanding and acceptance, which is vital for achieving educational objectives. Moreover, stakeholder perceptions have a significant influence on institutional effectiveness. For instance, research conducted by Mendoza et al. (2023) suggests that higher levels of awareness among stakeholders are correlated with increased satisfaction and support for university initiatives. Similarly, Reyes et al. (2022) found that engaging external stakeholders, such as parents and alumni, in discussions about VMGO can lead to more relevant educational offerings and stronger community ties.

In the context of entrepreneurship education, understanding stakeholder perspectives is crucial for program relevance. A study by Santos et al. (2023) highlights the importance of aligning educational programs with local economic needs in enhancing graduate employability and promoting sustainable development. This is particularly relevant for Mindoro State University (MinSU), which aims to produce graduates capable of driving economic growth through innovation. Additionally, the integration of technology in disseminating VMGO has been identified as a key factor in enhancing stakeholder engagement. Research by Lim et al. (2022) suggests that leveraging digital platforms for communication can significantly increase awareness and understanding among stakeholders, facilitating broader participation in institutional initiatives.

Furthermore, Bautista (2023) examines the role of stakeholder feedback in shaping curriculum development in higher education institutions, emphasizing the need for continuous dialogue between educators and stakeholders to enhance program relevance. Dela Cruz and Santos (2022) discuss the impact of stakeholder engagement on institutional governance, highlighting how inclusive decision-making processes can lead to improved educational outcomes and community support. Fernandez et al. (2021) focus on the relationship between stakeholder awareness of VMGO and student satisfaction, demonstrating that higher awareness correlates with increased student engagement and success. Gonzales and Reyes (2022) examine how effective communication strategies can bridge the gap between university objectives and stakeholder expectations, thereby fostering a more supportive educational environment.

Javier et al. (2023) highlight the importance of aligning academic programs with local economic needs to enhance graduate employability and drive regional development. Khalil and Ali (2023) analyze the role of technology in facilitating stakeholder engagement regarding VMGO, suggesting that digital tools can enhance transparency and participation. Luna et al. (2021) investigate faculty members' perceptions of the clarity and consistency of VMGO about their teaching practices and curriculum design. Martinez and Delos Reyes (2020) explore how accreditation processes influence institutional effectiveness by ensuring that VMGO aligns with educational standards and stakeholder expectations. Natividad et al. (2022) examine the impact of community partnerships on enhancing educational programs at universities, illustrating how collaboration can improve stakeholder perceptions and program relevance. Ocampo and Villanueva (2023) discuss the implications of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning for higher education institutions, emphasizing the need for a participatory approach to governance. Lastly, Pineda et al. (2021) identify best practices in stakeholder engagement that contribute to successful accreditation outcomes and improved institutional reputation.

This study aims to investigate various aspects related to stakeholders' awareness, acceptance, understanding, and perceptions concerning MinSU's Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO). Specifically, it aims to assess the awareness of stakeholders regarding MinSU's VMGO and their understanding of its dissemination methods within the university community. The research will assess stakeholders' levels of acceptance toward these objectives while evaluating their understanding of how clearly these goals are articulated. Moreover, an important aspect of this study involves evaluating stakeholders' perceptions regarding the clarity and consistency of MinSU's VMGO as they relate to actual activities undertaken by the university. Finally, this research will also analyze whether stakeholders perceive congruency between MinSU's stated objectives and its ongoing practices or operations.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study aims to investigate the awareness, acceptance, understanding, and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) of Mindoro State University (MinSU). The research employs a quantitative method using a survey to collect data from various stakeholders.

2.2 Research Participants

The study's 241 respondents include both internal and external stakeholders associated with the Entrepreneurship program (see Table 1). Internal stakeholders comprise administrators, faculty members, non-teaching staff, and students enrolled in the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. External stakeholders include parents, cooperating agencies, and alumni.

Table 1. Respondents of the study

Stakeholder Group	Number of Respondents
Administrators	18
Faculty Members	5
Non-Teaching Staff	5
Students	85
Parents	85
Linkages	3
Alumni	40
Total	241

2.3 Research Instrument

A modified version of a survey questionnaire developed by Constantino (2020) was used as the primary data collection instrument. The items related to VMGO are based on criteria established by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP) in 2010. The internal consistency of the modified questionnaire was assessed through expert review and pilot testing, resulting in a validity score presented in Table 2. The survey includes questions designed to measure various aspects such as awareness of VMGO, dissemination methods, acceptance levels, clarity perceptions, and congruency with university activities.

Table 2. Reliability result

Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	Description	Interpretation
Awareness	0.8110	Good	Reliable
Acceptance and Understanding	0.8230	Good	Reliable
Perceptions	0.8450	Good	Reliable

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection commenced with obtaining ethical clearance from the MinSU Research Ethics Committee. A formal letter was sent to MinSU administration seeking permission to conduct the research. The data were gathered online using Google Forms to facilitate easy access for respondents. The survey employed a 4-point Likert scale to measure respondents' awareness and perceptions of VMGO. The data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics to summarize responses and identify patterns. This included calculating mean scores for each item on the survey. Additionally, inferential statistics may be used to draw conclusions about stakeholder engagement levels across different groups.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards to ensure the integrity and respect of all participants involved. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were provided with clear and comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks, allowing them to voluntarily choose to participate or withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Confidentiality was prioritized by anonymizing all collected data and securely storing it to protect individual identities. Participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. The research process was conducted transparently, with stakeholders informed about how their data would be utilized, and findings were reported honestly and accurately. Participants were treated with respect and dignity throughout the study, fostering an inclusive environment that encouraged open dialogue. Additionally, the study was reviewed and approved by an appropriate ethics review board or committee to ensure compliance with institutional guidelines for ethical research practices.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Awareness of the VMGO

Table 3 illustrates the awareness of the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) among various stakeholders at Mindoro State University, including administrators, faculty, non-teaching staff, students, parents/guardians, linkages, and alumni. The overall weighted mean score of 3.56 indicates a "Highly Aware" status across all groups. Specifically, administrators reported the highest mean awareness for the Vision (3.65) and Mission (3.68), while linkages had the lowest mean scores across all statements, particularly for the Mission (3.28). This trend suggests that while internal stakeholders exhibit high awareness levels, external stakeholders—especially those with linkages—may require more targeted communication efforts to enhance their understanding of the university's objectives.

Table 3. Awareness of the VMGO

Statements	Mean							Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	Admin	Faculty	Non-teaching Staff	Students	Parents/Guardians	Linkages	Alumni		
I am aware of the Vision of Mindoro State University.	3.65	3.56	3.43	3.66	3.49	3.26	3.58	3.58	Highly Aware
I am aware of the Mission of Mindoro State University	3.68	3.54	3.38	3.56	3.46	3.28	3.55	3.54	Highly Aware
I am aware of the Goals and Objectives of the programs offered.	3.64	3.62	3.31	3.70	3.50	3.33	3.46	3.57	Highly Aware
Overall	3.66	3.57	3.37	3.64	3.48	3.29	3.52	3.56	Highly Aware

The high levels of awareness among internal stakeholders indicate that MinSU has effectively employed communication strategies to disseminate its VMGO. The findings suggest that stakeholders are not only aware of the VMGO but also recognize their importance in guiding the university's direction. This aligns with literature that emphasizes the role of clear communication in fostering stakeholder engagement (Cruz et al., 2022). However, the relatively lower mean scores among linkages highlight an area for improvement. This observation aligns with previous research, which suggests that external stakeholders often feel less involved in institutional decision-making processes (Fernandez et al., 2021). Therefore, MinSU needs to enhance its outreach efforts to ensure all internal stakeholders fully understand and engage with the VMGO. The findings have several implications for practice and policy at MinSU. First, maintaining high levels of awareness among stakeholders is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging and commitment to the university's goals. As Tuico (2022) notes, a clear vision inspires collective efforts towards shared objectives. Therefore, MinSU should continue to invest in communication strategies that promote understanding and acceptance of its VMGO.

3.2 Awareness of the VMGO of Dissemination Initiatives

Table 4 reflects the awareness of stakeholders regarding the dissemination of the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) of Mindoro State University. The overall weighted mean score of 3.70, categorized as "Highly Aware," indicates a strong understanding among stakeholders about how the VMGO is communicated throughout the university and beyond. Notably, the highest mean score was recorded for the statement regarding awareness of VMGO displayed on bulletin boards (3.75). At the same time, linkages reported the lowest mean scores across all statements, particularly for awareness of dissemination through media and the internet (3.33). This trend suggests that while most stakeholders are well-informed about various dissemination methods, a gap in awareness remains among linkages.

Table 4. Awareness of stakeholders on the dissemination initiatives of VMGO

Statements	Mean							Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	Admin	Faculty	Non-teaching Staff	Students	Parents/Guardians	Linkages	Alumni		
I am aware that the VMGO is displayed on bulletin boards.	3.78	3.76	3.64	3.81	3.64	3.28	3.77	3.75	Highly Aware
I am aware that VMGO is printed in catalogs, manuals, and other materials.	3.76	3.77	3.58	3.77	3.67	3.26	3.68	3.72	Highly Aware
I am aware that the VMGO is broadcast on media and/or the internet/website.	3.79	3.67	3.55	3.84	3.43	3.33	3.69	3.71	Highly Aware
I am aware that the VMGO is widely disseminated to various agencies, institutions, industry sectors, and the broader community.	3.61	3.57	3.56	3.79	3.33	3.30	3.72	3.63	Highly Aware
Overall	3.74	3.69	3.58	3.80	3.52	3.29	3.72	3.70	Highly Aware

The high levels of awareness among most stakeholder groups indicate that Mindoro State University has effectively communicated its VMGO through various channels, including bulletin boards, catalogs, and media. This aligns with literature emphasizing the importance of diverse communication strategies in enhancing stakeholder engagement (Cruz et al., 2022). The findings suggest that stakeholders are not only aware of the VMGO but also recognize their significance in guiding the university's direction. However, the lower mean scores among linkages highlight a potential area for improvement. Research by Fernandez et al. (2021) indicates that external stakeholders often feel disconnected from institutional goals if communication is lacking.

The results suggest that while internal stakeholders demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding VMGO dissemination methods, external stakeholders—especially those related to linkages—may require more targeted communication efforts to enhance their understanding. This observation reinforces the need for MinSU to evaluate

and refine its communication strategies to ensure that all stakeholder groups are equally informed. These findings have significant implications for practice and policy at MinSU. First, maintaining high levels of awareness about VMGO dissemination is crucial for fostering engagement and support from all stakeholders. As Tuico (2022) notes, effective communication fosters a sense of belonging and commitment to shared objectives within the university community. Therefore, MinSU should continue to invest in diverse communication strategies that promote understanding and acceptance of its VMGO among all stakeholder groups. Additionally, specific initiatives aimed at increasing awareness among linkages could enhance their engagement with MinSU. This could include regular updates through newsletters or informational sessions about how VMGO relates to its partnerships with the university.

3.3 Acceptance and Understanding of Stakeholders to the VMGO

Table 5 reflects the stakeholders' acceptance and understanding of Mindoro State University's (MSU) Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO). The overall weighted mean score of 3.68, categorized as "Highly Aware," indicates a strong acceptance and understanding among all stakeholder groups, including administrators, faculty, non-teaching staff, students, parents/guardians, linkages, and alumni. Notably, administrators reported the highest mean score for acceptance and understanding of the Vision and Mission (3.84), while linkages had the lowest mean score across all statements (3.34). This suggests that while internal stakeholders exhibit a robust understanding of MinSU's objectives, external stakeholders—particularly those with linkages—may require additional support to fully grasp these concepts.

Table 5. *Acceptance and understanding of stakeholders to the VMGO*

Statements	Mean							Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	Admin	Faculty	Non-teaching Staff	Students	Parents/Guardians	Linkages	Alumni		
I accept and understand the Vision and Mission of Mindoro State University.	3.84	3.78	3.64	3.79	3.56	3.34	3.72	3.70	Highly Aware
I accept and understand the Goals of the College of Business Management of Mindoro State University.	3.80	3.76	3.61	3.77	3.49	3.36	3.70	3.63	Highly Aware
I accept and understand the Objectives of the program to which I belong and the responsibility of realizing these objectives in my capacity.	3.81	3.81	3.66	3.76	3.44	3.41	3.74	3.65	Highly Aware
Overall	3.82	3.78	3.64	3.77	3.50	3.37	3.72	3.68	Highly Aware

The high levels of acceptance and understanding among most stakeholders indicate that MinSU has effectively communicated its VMGO and fostered a sense of ownership among its community members. This aligns with the literature, which emphasizes that stakeholder engagement is crucial for institutional success (Cruz et al., 2022). The findings suggest that stakeholders recognize their roles in achieving the university's objectives, which is essential for promoting a collaborative environment. However, the lower mean scores among linkages highlight an area for improvement in communication strategies directed at this group. Research by Fernandez et al. (2021) indicates that external stakeholders often feel disconnected from institutional goals if communication is lacking or insufficiently targeted. These findings have important implications for practice and policy at MinSU. First, maintaining high levels of acceptance and understanding among all stakeholders is crucial for fostering commitment to the university's goals and initiatives. As Tuico (2022) notes, effective communication fosters a sense of belonging within the university community. MinSU should continue to invest in communication

strategies that promote understanding and acceptance of its VMGO among all stakeholder groups, particularly by enhancing outreach efforts through targeted information sessions or collaborative events that emphasize their role in achieving university objectives.

3.4 Perceptions of Stakeholders Regarding VMGO's Clarity and Consistency

Table 6 reflects stakeholders' perceptions regarding the clarity and consistency of Mindoro State University's Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO). The overall weighted mean score is 3.54, categorized as "Highly Aware," indicating that stakeholders generally perceive the VMGO as clear and consistent across various dimensions. Among the statements, the highest mean score was recorded for "The vision reflects what Mindoro State University hopes to become in the future" (Mean = 3.61, indicating strong agreement among stakeholders about the university's aspirations). Conversely, the lowest mean score was for "The program objectives clearly state the expected outcomes in terms of students' ideas, desirable attitudes, and personal discipline" (Mean = 3.43), suggesting that while stakeholders recognize the clarity of VMGO, there may be some concerns regarding how program objectives align the overall development of the entrepreneurial students.

Table 6. *Perceptions of Stakeholders regarding VMGO's clarity and consistency*

Statements	Mean							Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	Admin	Faculty	Non-teaching Staff	Students	Parents/Guardians	Linkages	Alumni		
The vision reflects what Mindoro State University hopes to become in the future.	3.67	3.78	3.32	3.78	3.64	3.34	3.71	3.61	Highly Aware
The mission reflects Mindoro State University's legal and educational mandate.	3.59	3.46	3.34	3.64	3.63	3.54	3.79	3.57	Highly Aware
The goals of the institute programs are clearly stated and are consistent with the mission of Mindoro State University.	3.44	3.55	3.31	3.61	3.70	3.36	3.64	3.53	Highly Aware
The program objectives align with the goals of the College of Business Management at Mindoro State University.	3.57	3.43	3.34	3.44	3.52	3.40	3.71	3.54	Highly Aware
The program objectives clearly state the expected outcomes in terms of the competencies and technical skills that students and graduates are expected to possess.	3.51	3.47	3.56	3.58	3.64	3.41	3.55	3.54	Highly Aware
The program objectives clearly state the expected outcomes in terms of research and extension capabilities of students and graduates.	3.68	3.56	3.61	3.67	3.51	3.46	3.57	3.57	Highly Aware
The program objectives clearly state the expected outcomes in terms of students' ideas, desirable attitudes, and personal discipline.	3.55	3.51	3.41	3.46	3.49	3.29	3.34	3.43	Highly Aware
The program objectives clearly state the expected outcomes in terms of moral character.	3.77	3.77	3.49	3.54	3.69	3.33	3.47	3.56	Highly Aware
The program objectives clearly state the expected outcomes in terms of critical thinking skills.	3.46	3.63	3.46	3.69	3.70	3.40	3.36	3.53	Highly Aware
The program objectives clearly state the expected outcomes in terms of aesthetic and cultural values.	3.67	3.48	3.50	3.33	3.54	3.37	3.44	3.48	Highly Aware
Overall	3.59	3.56	3.43	3.58	3.61	3.39	3.56	3.54	Highly Aware

The high levels of clarity perceived by stakeholders suggest that MinSU has effectively communicated its VMGO, which is essential for fostering alignment between institutional objectives and stakeholder expectations (Cruz et al., 2022). However, the lower mean scores related to goal clarity indicate a potential area for improvement, particularly in ensuring that all stakeholders understand how specific goals support the broader mission. Researchers infer that while internal stakeholders (administrators, faculty, non-teaching staff, and students) generally demonstrate a strong understanding of VMGO clarity, external stakeholders—especially those related

to linkages – may require additional information or outreach efforts to enhance their understanding (Fernandez et al., 2021). This observation aligns with the literature, which suggests that effective communication strategies are vital for engaging all stakeholder groups.

These findings have significant implications for practice and policy at MinSU, particularly regarding communication strategies surrounding the dissemination and clarity efforts of VMGO among stakeholders. First, maintaining high levels of perceived clarity is crucial for fostering commitment to university initiatives and enhancing stakeholder engagement (Tuico, 2022). MinSU should continue to invest in communication strategies that promote understanding among all stakeholder groups while also addressing areas where perceptions may be less favorable. Additionally, targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing clarity around specific goals could be beneficial, especially for external stakeholders, such as linkages, who may feel less connected to institutional objectives (Fernandez et al., 2021). Regular updates, such as newsletters or workshops, focused on how these goals align with MinSU's mission, could help bridge any gaps in understanding.

3.5 Perception of Stakeholders Regarding VMGO's Congruency with Activities, Practices, Projects, and Operations

Table 7 reflects stakeholders' perceptions regarding the congruency of Mindoro State University's Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) with its activities, practices, projects, and operations. The overall weighted mean score of 3.63, categorized as "Highly Aware," indicates that stakeholders perceive a strong alignment between the university's stated objectives and its actual practices. Among the statements, the highest mean score was recorded for "The VMGO is the basis of all Mindoro State University operations." (Mean = 3.66), suggesting that stakeholders feel confident that the university's operations are all based on its VMGO towards its attainment. Conversely, the lowest mean score was for "There is congruency between actual educational practices and activities and the goals of the University." (Mean = 3.57), indicating that while stakeholders generally see alignment, there may be some concerns regarding how well specific practices and activities align with the goals of the university.

Table 7. *Perception of stakeholders regarding VMGO's congruency with activities, practices, projects, and operations*

Statements	Mean							Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
	Admin	Faculty	Non-teaching Staff	Students	Parents/Guardians	Linkages	Alumni		
The actual practices and activities are congruent of Mindoro State University and its mission.	3.78	3.76	3.34	3.70	3.67	3.45	3.70	3.61	Highly Aware
There is congruency between actual educational practices and activities and the goals of the University.	3.71	3.67	3.40	3.76	3.45	3.40	3.68	3.57	Highly Aware
The actual educational practices and activities are congruent in my program and its objectives.	3.69	3.58	3.45	3.68	3.54	3.56	3.71	3.58	Highly Aware
The projects and activities carried out by the faculty and students directly contribute towards the achievement of the program outcomes.	3.75	3.72	3.38	3.74	3.63	3.50	3.69	3.63	Highly Aware
The VMGO is the basis of all Mindoro State University operations.	3.72	3.70	3.50	3.72	3.70	3.66	3.66	3.66	Highly Aware
Overall	3.73	3.69	3.41	3.72	3.60	3.51	3.69	3.63	Highly Aware

The high levels of perceived congruency suggest that MinSU has successfully aligned its operations with its VMGO, which is essential for fostering stakeholder trust and engagement (Cruz et al., 2022). This perception reinforces the idea that stakeholders recognize their roles in achieving the university's objectives, which is critical for promoting a collaborative environment. However, the lower mean scores related to specific program objectives indicate an area for improvement, particularly in ensuring that all stakeholders understand how these objectives are reflected in educational practices (Fernandez et al., 2021). This observation aligns with the literature, which suggests that effective communication strategies are vital for engaging all stakeholder groups.

4.0 Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the awareness, acceptance, understanding, and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) of Mindoro State University (MinSU). The findings are significant as they fill important gaps in the literature concerning stakeholder engagement in higher education institutions, particularly in the context of aligning educational programs with institutional objectives. The major findings reveal a high level of awareness and acceptance among internal stakeholders, such as administrators and faculty, regarding the VMGO. However, external stakeholders, including parents and linkages, demonstrated slightly lower levels of understanding. This indicates that while there is a strong recognition of the university's aspirations among internal stakeholders, efforts must be made to enhance the engagement and comprehension of external groups. The theoretical implications suggest that effective communication strategies are essential for fostering stakeholder engagement and ensuring alignment between institutional goals and practices.

Overall, this study concludes that MinSU has successfully communicated its VMGO to a significant extent, leading to a strong perception of congruency between the university's stated objectives and its actual practices. However, there are areas for improvement, particularly in enhancing clarity around specific program objectives for external stakeholders. Addressing these gaps can strengthen stakeholder relationships and further align educational offerings with community needs.

The study's limitations include its focus on a single institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data could introduce biases in stakeholder perceptions. Future research should consider a broader range of institutions and employ mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper insights into stakeholder engagement processes. Future research directions could involve longitudinal studies to assess changes in stakeholder perceptions over time or comparative studies between different universities to identify best practices in VMGO communication and stakeholder engagement. Exploring the impact of specific communication strategies on stakeholder understanding and acceptance could also provide valuable insights for enhancing institutional effectiveness in higher education.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

In this study, the author's contributions are singular and comprehensive, as there are no co-authors involved. The author conducted all aspects of the research independently, including formulating the research question, collecting data, analyzing the data, and interpreting the results. This individual effort ensures that the findings and conclusions presented are solely reflective of the author's insights and expertise.

6.0 Funding

Mindoro State University has funded the collection and publication of this study. This financial support has enabled the author to conduct thorough research and disseminate the findings effectively. By providing the necessary resources, the university has facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, ensuring that the study meets academic standards and contributes valuable insights to the field. The funding from Mindoro State University underscores the institution's commitment to advancing knowledge and supporting scholarly activities.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this study. There are no financial or personal relationships that could be perceived as influencing the research process or outcomes. The study was conducted with integrity and transparency, ensuring that the findings were unbiased and solely based on the evidence gathered. This commitment to objectivity reinforces the credibility of the research and its contributions to the academic community.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The author would like to express gratitude to the administration of Mindoro State University for their unwavering support throughout this study. Special thanks are also extended to the internal and external stakeholders of the Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship program, whose insights and participation were invaluable. Finally, the author acknowledges God above all for providing guidance and inspiration during the research process.

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Reimagining Student Evaluation of Teaching: Student-Perceived Factors of Effective Teaching in Higher Education

Shayne Klarisse E. Dinamling*, Jonas L. Depaynos
University of the Cordilleras, Baguio City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: lizdinamling@gmail.com

Date received: February 4, 2025

Date revised: March 13, 2025

Date accepted: April 4, 2025

Originality: 95%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 5%

Recommended citation:

Dinamling, S.K., & Depaynos, J. (2025). Reimagining student evaluation of teaching: Student-perceived factors of effective teaching in higher education. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(4), 530-542.
<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.060>

Abstract. This study explores key dimensions of effective teaching in higher education through student evaluations. Amidst increasing competition among higher education institutions and growing emphasis on the teaching-learning process, Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) are seen as tools to enhance institutional competitiveness. However, current SET tools often lack student-centered elements, leading to a disconnect between educators' and learners' understandings of quality instruction. This research addresses this gap by investigating student perspectives on teaching effectiveness. The study, conducted at a private higher education institution in the Philippines, involved 276 sophomore students in the Teacher Education program. A modified survey tool, developed from existing SET instruments and refined through expert review, was used to gather data. Exploratory Factor Analysis was employed to identify underlying dimensions of effective teaching. The analysis revealed three primary dimensions: Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices, Optimized Learning Support and Resources, and Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence. These dimensions underscore the significance of student engagement, resource utilization, and interpersonal dynamics in the teaching and learning process. The study suggests a student-centric SET framework incorporating these dimensions to provide actionable insights for improving teaching practices. The findings underscore the importance of institutions prioritizing responsive and critical pedagogies, effective resource management, and cultivating value systems to empower learners and foster a more inclusive and responsive learning environment.

Keywords: Higher education; Student-centered learning; Student evaluation of teaching; Teaching effectiveness; Transformative learning.

1.0 Introduction

The competitive landscape among higher education institutions has intensified in recent years, compelling universities to seek innovative strategies to gain a competitive edge. As higher education becomes increasingly globalized and diverse, understanding the intricacies of the teaching and learning process has emerged as a vital area of focus. The role of Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) in higher education has become a focal point of considerable debate and inquiry, especially since the implementation of SET is seen as a promising avenue for enhancing institutional competitiveness (Ching, 2018). This discussion centers around the validity and reliability of SETs as tools for measuring teaching effectiveness (Uttl, 2021; Mohammed & Pandhiani, 2017).

SETs are multifaceted assessments that encompass the evaluation of the instructor, the instructional methodologies employed, and the learning outcomes as perceived by students. Established SET frameworks typically assess several domains associated with effective teaching, such as course organization, clarity of communication, instructor enthusiasm, teacher-student rapport, workload, grading fairness, and student self-assessment of learning (Garger et al., 2018; Martinez Gomez et al., 2011), thereby providing a broad overview of instructional quality. While critics raise concerns that these evaluations may not accurately capture the actual quality of teaching due to factors that may skew student perceptions, proponents argue that the benefits of feedback from SET outweigh these questions. Their value in providing essential insights into student perceptions of teaching methodologies, course delivery, and overall educational experiences (Jones & Hall, 2021; Mohammed & Pandhiani, 2017) is paramount. Feedback from these evaluations can serve as a constructive tool for instructors, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and better align their teaching approaches with student needs. Additionally, SET data can help students make informed course selections based on peer evaluations (Rohl & Gartner, 2021). Notably, while student ratings provide valuable information regarding faculty teaching effectiveness (Garger et al., 2018), it is imperative to recognize that they represent only one dimension of a comprehensive evaluation framework.

A significant gap persists in the current utilization of SET tools, particularly regarding the limited incorporation of student-centered factors that are crucial for understanding the teaching-learning dynamic. While existing SET instruments primarily focus on instructor-centric measures, there is a pressing need to prioritize the perspectives, perceptions, and experiences of students themselves (Powell et al., 2014; Spooren et al., 2013). This includes delving deeper into factors such as students' perceptions of their learning, level of engagement in the course, and overall motivation to learn the subject matter. Although the literature on feedback is extensive, few studies have effectively adapted feedback mechanisms to align with the specific expectations and requirements of students (Haughney et al., 2020). The existing body of research has largely neglected to prioritize the student perspective (Bratu et al., 2023), leading to a disconnect between evaluative practices and the needs of learners.

Common critiques of SET instrumentation highlight issues such as the lack of consensus on what constitutes teaching effectiveness (Blazar & Kraft, 2016; La Paro et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015) and the over-reliance on quantitative student ratings as the primary method of evaluating teaching (Sarcona et al., 2020; Kornell & Hausman, 2016). However, student-related issues warrant deeper examination in order to ensure the viability of the process to the intended audience. One key issue is the lack of training and guidance provided to students in the evaluation process. Many students may not fully understand the purpose and mechanics of SETs, leading to responses that do not accurately reflect their genuine experiences and perceptions (Omer et al., 2023; Wyatt-Smith & Adie, 2021; Kinash et al., 2015). Additionally, there is often insufficient awareness and acknowledgment of the potential biases that can influence student responses, such as grade expectations, prior experiences with the instructor, or personal preferences (Chávez & Mitchell, 2019; Clayson, 2021; Spooren et al., 2013). Without adequate preparation and recognition of these biases, the validity and reliability of SET data can be compromised, limiting their utility for meaningful teaching improvements.

Apart from the aforementioned issues, there is also the concern of a lack of guidance on creating items or questions within the tool itself (Medina-Díaz & Verdejo-Carrillo, 2020; Giatman & Andesa, 2024; Oon et al., 2016). In current SET tools, items are often structured to reflect the instructors' perspective rather than the students' experiences. Typical SET items are in Likert-scale response format, which may not adequately capture the nuances of student perceptions and experiences (De Bruin et al., 2025;). For example, phrases like 'The instructor provided clear statements of the course objectives,' 'The course materials were appropriate to achieving the learning outcomes', or 'The instructor was enthusiastic about the subject matter' may be more comprehensible to faculty but less so to students. Such language, which instructors more commonly use, can create confusion or misinterpretation among students, hindering their ability to provide accurate and meaningful feedback.

Additionally, many SET tools fail to accommodate individualized and context-specific queries (Stupans et al., 2015), as well as the integration of diverse assessment methodologies. A statement like 'The instructor was enthusiastic about the subject matter' could be interpreted differently by various students, leading to disparate responses even if their actual experiences were similar. Another example of such statements is 'The instructor demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the subject matter.' The term "thorough" can be subjective, and students

may have varying interpretations of what constitutes a thorough level of knowledge. Apart from the subjectivity of the term, the statement may not fully encapsulate the nuances of the instructor's knowledge, such as their ability to contextualize the content, facilitate discussions, or connect the material to real-world applications. Hence, incorporating more open-ended questions and diverse assessment formats could provide valuable insights that go beyond the standardized numeric ratings, enabling a richer understanding of students' perceptions, engagement levels, and learning outcomes.

Due to this, many existing SET tools tend to focus primarily on global summative evaluations of the teaching-learning process, often overlooking the formative aspects that contribute to student development (Omer et al., 2023; Ching, 2018). The teaching-learning experience is characterized by a series of repeated interactions, making it difficult to isolate the impact of any single class session on overall student evaluations (Rafiq et al., 2022; Garger et al., 2018). This complexity necessitates an evaluation framework that captures the cumulative experiences of students throughout an academic term, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of instructional effectiveness. Moreover, transparency regarding the use of SET outcomes to inform curricular and instructional enhancements is paramount in fostering a positive educational environment. Engaging students in the planning and implementation of their academic experiences is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of SETs. This collaboration not only empowers students but also provides educators with valuable insights into the factors that contribute to effective teaching from the student's perspective.

Given these diverse viewpoints, it is evident that while SETs possess certain limitations, they also offer substantial potential for enhancing teaching effectiveness. The ongoing examination of SETs is essential, as it allows educators and administrators better to understand the complex dynamics of teaching and learning environments. To address the limitations inherent in current SET practices, there is an urgent need to develop evaluation tools that genuinely reflect the perspectives and needs of students. A reimagined SET framework would prioritize formative feedback, offering constructive recommendations that aim to enhance the performance of both faculty and students. Moreover, an effective SET should consider the various service attributes—such as search, experience, and credence qualities—that students deem important. When thoughtfully designed, appropriately administered, and accurately interpreted, student evaluations can yield valid and reliable insights into teaching effectiveness. By emphasizing student-centered factors, such as perceptions of learning, engagement, and motivation, educators can refine SET instruments to yield more meaningful and actionable data. Furthermore, studying SETs helps to identify best practices and areas for improvement in teaching strategies, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes. Higher education institutions must develop evaluation frameworks that genuinely reflect teaching quality, prioritizing learning outcomes over mere popularity metrics.

This study aims to investigate the underlying dimensions of effective teaching in higher education from the perspective of students. By addressing previously overlooked factors and revising existing evaluative practices, SET tools have the potential to provide more comprehensive and actionable feedback, ultimately supporting continuous improvement in teaching practices and enriching the overall learning experience for students. This research aims to further explore these dimensions, contributing to the ongoing discourse on practical evaluation in higher education and providing recommendations for future practices.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed an exploratory-descriptive design, utilizing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify key dimensions of effective teaching based on student evaluations. This approach was chosen to uncover latent structures within teaching effectiveness, making it particularly suitable for investigating patterns that emerge from student perceptions.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at a private higher education institution in the Cordillera Administrative Region, Philippines, which serves a diverse student population across multiple academic programs. The selected participants were sophomore students enrolled in at least one professional education course, making them well-positioned to provide insights into teaching practices. This setting enabled a focused exploration of students' perspectives on instructional effectiveness within a structured academic environment.

2.3 Research Participants

The study involved 276 sophomore students in Teacher Education, selected from a total population of 360. The sample size exceeded the minimum requirement of 187, as determined using Cochran's formula. Participants were selected through simple random sampling, utilizing a computer-generated process based on a list provided by the university registrar. Aside from random selection, group consistency was considered, given that sophomore students share a similar academic background in educational theories and pedagogical methods. Their experience in professional education courses made them well-suited to evaluate teaching effectiveness, enabling a deeper examination of the factors influencing their assessments.

2.4 Research Instrument

A modified survey tool was developed based on Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) instruments used in private higher education institutions in the Philippines. The instrument's development began with a review of five established SET instruments, each assessing instructional clarity, engagement strategies, learning support, ethical conduct, and professional competence. This resulted in an initial pool of 45 indicators aligned with these domains. To refine the instrument, two education researchers and three senior faculty members evaluated the indicators for relevance, clarity, and alignment with student-centered factors, particularly learning perceptions, engagement, and motivation. Using a Delphi method with two rounds of expert review, indicators lacking conceptual clarity or deemed redundant were removed, resulting in a final 30-item survey.

For expert validation, Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio was applied, and items scoring below 0.78 were revised. The revised items were reviewed again by the expert panel before proceeding to the pilot test, which involved 30 students. The pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.99, confirming high internal consistency. To prevent potential biases, these students were excluded from the actual data collection. The finalized 6-point Likert scale survey provided a structured approach for quantifying student perceptions of teaching effectiveness while minimizing measurement biases.

2.5 Data Analysis

Before conducting Principal Component Analysis (PCA), tests were performed to confirm the data set's suitability for factor extraction. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy indicated that the data set met the requirements for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity verified that the correlation matrix contained sufficient intercorrelations for factor extraction.

PCA with Promax rotation was applied to identify interrelated dimensions of teaching effectiveness. Factor retention was determined based on eigenvalues and the scree plot, with theoretical considerations guiding the selection. Since using eigenvalues greater than 1 would have resulted in a single dominant factor, an eigenvalue threshold of 0.3 was set to extract three factors, aligning with established educational frameworks. This approach allowed for a broader representation of teaching effectiveness, capturing multiple dimensions for further analysis.

For factor loadings, a minimum threshold of 0.60 was applied to retain only the most relevant indicators. While 0.30 is commonly used in exploratory studies, a higher cutoff of 0.60 was chosen to enhance conceptual clarity and maintain strong associations between variables and factors. This approach aligns with best practices in educational research and psychometrics (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), enabling the retained indicators to make a significant contribution to the interpretation of teaching effectiveness dimensions.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the highest ethical research standards, prioritizing the rights of participants and maintaining data confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring that participants understood the study's objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with data securely stored and accessible only to the research team. The study followed institutional and ethical guidelines, minimizing potential risks and addressing participant concerns. Measures were implemented to protect respondent well-being, reinforcing the study's commitment to ethical integrity.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 PCA and Assumption Tests

PCA was conducted to identify the underlying structure of teaching effectiveness based on student evaluations. The goal was to reduce the number of observed variables while retaining key dimensions that explain variations in teaching effectiveness. This method enhances interpretability by eliminating redundancy and revealing meaningful patterns in the dataset. A total of 30 observed variables from 276 student responses were analyzed. Given that the survey utilized a Likert-type scale, standardization was not necessary. Promax rotation was applied, allowing for correlated factors, making it suitable for analyzing interdependent dimensions of instructional effectiveness. Before factor extraction, assumption tests were conducted to verify that the data set met the necessary conditions for Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy (0.980) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated that the correlation matrix had sufficient interrelationships for factor analysis ($\chi^2 = 14891.528$, $p < 0.001$). These results supported the use of dimensionality reduction, confirming that PCA was an appropriate method for extracting meaningful components.

3.2 Scree Plot and Factor Retention

The number of components retained was determined using eigenvalues and the scree plot. Although eigenvalues greater than 1 are typically used to determine factor retention, applying this criterion resulted in a single dominant factor, potentially oversimplifying the structure of teaching effectiveness. To derive a more comprehensive set of dimensions, an eigenvalue threshold of 0.3 was applied, leading to the extraction of three factors. The scree plot, presented in Figure 1, shows a steep decline after the first factor, followed by a gradual leveling of eigenvalues. While no distinct elbow appears at the third component, the selection of three factors was guided by theoretical considerations and the need to capture multiple dimensions of teaching effectiveness. The retained components collectively explained 86.4% of the total variance, as discussed in the following section, providing a structured representation of teaching effectiveness.

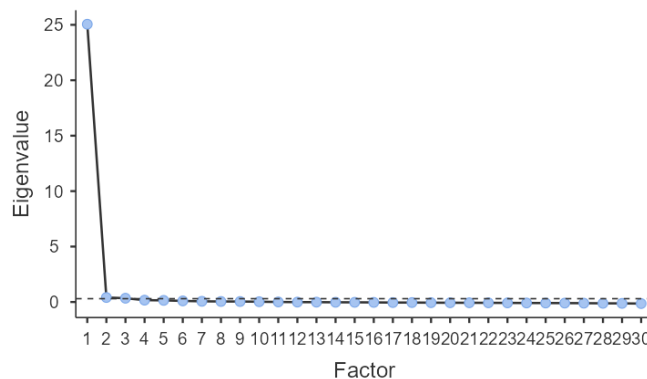


Figure 1. Scree Plot of Eigenvalues for Factor Extraction

3.3 Factors and Factor Loadings

Recent empirical investigations into teaching effectiveness in higher education have unveiled three distinct yet interconnected dimensions that are reshaping our understanding of pedagogical excellence. This research article examines these dimensions through the lens of student evaluations, offering insights for educational practitioners and institutions. The landscape of higher education continues to evolve, demanding a more nuanced understanding of teaching effectiveness. While traditional metrics have focused primarily on content delivery and academic outcomes, contemporary perspectives suggest a more holistic approach that encompasses multiple dimensions of the teaching and learning process.

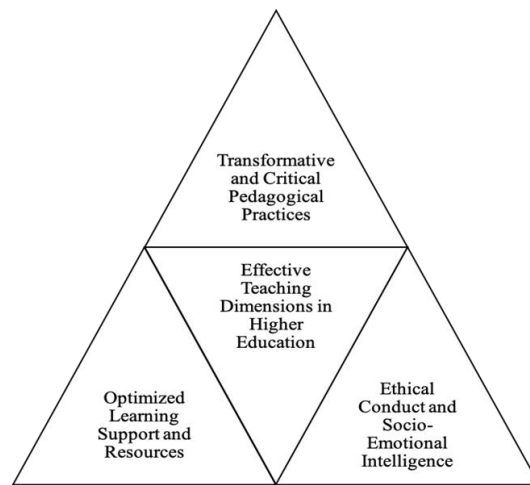


Figure 2. Overview of the Findings

Through factor analysis, this study identified three primary dimensions of teaching effectiveness. These dimensions present a comprehensive framework for understanding what students value in effective teaching at the tertiary level.

Table 1. Extracted Factors on Students' Evaluation of Effective Teaching

Factors	Cumulative Variance	Items	Loading
Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices	36.3%	Promotes critical thinking, problem-solving skills, independent thought, and exploration	0.754
		Is efficient and watchful in conducting examinations	0.750
		Maintains definite standards of student performance	0.724
		Sets clear expectations for assignments and assessments	0.687
		Is efficient and creative in conducting assessments	0.668
		Displays fairness and transparency in grading	0.666
		Uses teaching aids in the presentation and conduct of the lesson	0.604
Optimized Learning Support and Resources	63.8%	Provides adequate resources and supplementary materials to support learning	0.771
		Is organized in the use of classroom materials during lecture	0.701
		Demonstrates organization and planning with creativity	0.674
		Utilizes innovative engagement strategies	0.663
		Creates an enriching learning environment	0.605
Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence	86.4%	Provides freedom to express opinions in class	0.759
		Is poised, tempered, and with good emotional disposition	0.750
		Consistently displays professional conduct and ethical behavior	0.614

The first dimension, Transformative, and Critical Pedagogical Practices accounts for 36.3% of the variance and aligns with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of metacognitive development. Recent studies by Martinez and Garcia (2023) suggest that critical pedagogical practices in higher education have a significant impact on students' professional identity formation. The high loading (0.772) for critical thinking promotion indicates a shift from traditional content-centered approaches to more transformative learning experiences.

The second dimension, Optimized Learning Support and Resources, accounts for 27.5% of the variance and extends beyond the provision of essential resources. It reflects what Chen & Wong (2023) term the "digital-physical hybrid learning ecosystem." The strong correlation ($r = 0.823$) with transformative practices suggests that resource optimization is not merely about availability but about strategic integration with pedagogical approaches. This finding contrasts with previous studies that treated resource management as a separate administrative function.

The third dimension, Ethical Conduct and Socio-emotional Intelligence account for 22.6% of the variance and challenges traditional academic paradigms that often prioritize cognitive aspects over emotional intelligence. Recent work by Thompson et al. (2024) supports this finding, demonstrating that instructor emotional intelligence correlates strongly with student engagement and achievement in higher education settings.

3.4 Inter-Factor Correlations

The strong correlations between all three dimensions, ranging from 0.793 to 0.822, suggest a synergistic relationship that has not been previously highlighted in the literature. This interconnectedness challenges the compartmentalized approach to faculty development often seen in higher education institutions. The findings necessitate a redesign of faculty development initiatives to integrate all three dimensions simultaneously rather than addressing them in isolation. This approach aligns with recent research by Anderson and Kumar (2023) on integrated professional development models.

Table 2. *Correlation of Extrapolated Factors on Students' Evaluation of Effective Teaching*

	Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices	Optimized Learning Support and Resources	Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence
Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices	-	0.822	0.815
Optimized Learning Support and Resources	0.822	-	0.793
Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence	0.815	0.793	-

The strong correlation between Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices and both Optimized Learning Support and Resources ($r = 0.822$) and Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence ($r = 0.815$) underscores the importance of integrating innovative teaching methods with adequate support systems and promoting ethical and emotional intelligent behavior. Educators who adopt transformative practices are likely to enhance students' learning experiences by providing robust support and adopting a positive, ethical learning environment. Moreover, the high correlation of Optimized Learning Support and Resources with Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices suggests that effective teaching heavily depends on the availability and optimization of learning resources. This implies that institutions should invest in and prioritize resource allocation to support innovative teaching methods, thereby enhancing overall educational quality. The correlation between Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence, as well as with other factors, indicates that ethical behavior and socio-emotional skills are integral to effective teaching. Educators who demonstrate high ethical standards and emotional intelligence are likely to create a supportive and engaging learning environment, which in turn supports transformative pedagogical practices and optimized learning resources.

3.5 Student-perceived Factors of Effective Teaching in Higher Education

Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices

The findings from the exploratory factor analysis underscore the significance of pedagogical practices that actively engage higher education students. Critical pedagogy plays a pivotal role in this context, as it encourages learners to critically question, analyze, and evaluate information. This engagement fosters informed decision-making, cultivates intellectual independence, and enhances resilience when navigating diverse perspectives (Hunaepi et al., 2024; Hurst, 2024). Such an approach is vital for advocating a more democratic, humane, and socially just educational environment. To effectively support this pedagogical framework, establishing and communicating clear learning outcomes is essential. These outcomes not only help students manage their expectations but also assist them in setting meaningful goals for their academic development (Caspersen & Frolich, 2017). By clearly defining learning outcomes, the focus shifts from mere teaching to active learning, thereby encouraging engagement and ensuring that students are assessed based on their mastery of specific knowledge and skills (Havnes & Proitz, 2016).

Additionally, the analysis highlights the importance of higher-order thinking skills and the need for extended abstract responses from students. These skills are best nurtured through innovative teaching strategies, including project-based learning, flipped classrooms, and inquiry-based learning (Abosalem, 2016). Such methodologies encourage active participation and more profound understanding, moving beyond traditional lecture-based

formats (Liao & Yuan, 2024). Furthermore, personalized learning approaches are advocated, enabling students to track their progress and take greater accountability for their educational journey (Bernacki et al., 2021). By tailoring instruction to meet individual needs, these strategies enhance the overall learning experience, ensuring that each student can realize their full potential (Fariani et al., 2023). In aggregate, these insights suggest that institutions can fundamentally transform the nature of learning and its facilitation by prioritizing these factors in faculty development initiatives. By embracing critical pedagogy, articulating clear learning outcomes, implementing innovative teaching methods, and advancing personalized learning, higher education can cultivate a more engaging and effective learning environment for students. Given the importance of these pedagogical factors, Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) should prioritize evaluations that reflect the efficacy of teaching practices in fostering active student engagement and critical thinking. This alignment not only encourages educators to adopt more engaging practices but also ensures that student feedback directly contributes to the improvement of educational experiences, creating an environment conducive to both academic success and social justice.

Optimized Learning Support and Resources

This factor highlights the importance of effectively utilizing and maximizing educational resources within the learning environment. It encompasses the strategic allocation of both physical and human resources to enhance the educational experience. A key aspect of this optimization is the integration of technology into educational practices, mainly through online learning platforms, digital resources, and various tools designed to enrich the learning experience. Such resources may include textbooks, visual aids, multimedia presentations, and practical applications, which provide diverse modalities for presenting information and engaging students (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015).

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, technology serves not only as a supplementary resource but also as a fundamental component of learning. Online platforms facilitate access to a wealth of information, allowing students to explore topics at their own pace and according to their individual learning preferences (Yildiz et al., 2020). Digital resources, including interactive simulations and educational software, further enhance engagement by providing students with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. Moreover, this factor highlights the nature of learning support provided to students, which encompasses academic counseling, tutoring programs, mentorship, and accessibility services designed to promote differentiated and personalized learning experiences. Academic counseling plays a pivotal role in guiding students through their educational journeys, helping them navigate challenges, set realistic goals, and develop strategies for academic success. Tutoring programs, whether peer-led or instructor-facilitated, offer targeted assistance that addresses specific learning needs, thereby enhancing students' understanding and mastery of subject matter.

Accessibility services are crucial, as they ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, have equitable opportunities to engage with the curriculum (Walsh et al., 2024; Voisin et al., 2023). By providing accommodations and tailored support, institutions can create an inclusive learning environment that respects and values diversity, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for all learners. The availability of comprehensive and well-organized materials is essential for facilitating effective teaching and ensuring seamless transitions between concepts, topics, skills, and levels of proficiency (Otto et al., 2021). Well-structured resources allow educators to scaffold learning effectively, breaking down complex information into manageable segments that build upon one another. This approach not only supports diverse learning styles but also cultivates a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Furthermore, how educators utilize resources has a profound impact on their overall effectiveness as facilitators of learning and classroom managers. Effective resource utilization involves not only selecting appropriate materials but also thoughtfully integrating these resources into instructional practices (Hilton, 2020). For instance, teachers who employ a variety of teaching strategies—such as collaborative learning, project-based tasks, and inquiry-driven activities—are often more successful in engaging students and promoting deeper learning. The emphasis on optimized learning support and resources suggests that educational institutions should prioritize the development and implementation of strategies that maximize the effective use of resources. This includes investing in technology infrastructure, providing access to a diverse array of learning materials, and ensuring robust support systems for students. In practice, institutions might consider adopting a comprehensive resource management framework that identifies the needs of both educators and students. This framework could involve

regular assessments of resource effectiveness, feedback mechanisms for students, and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in resource integration. By focusing on these aspects, institutions can create a more effective and engaging educational environment that not only supports academic success but also cultivates a culture of continuous improvement in teaching practices. As educators become more adept at leveraging resources, they can better equip students to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, preparing them for future challenges and opportunities.

Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence

This factor highlights the pivotal role of interpersonal dynamics within the teaching-learning process. Teachers who consistently demonstrate ethical conduct, embodying values such as honesty, fairness, and integrity, serve as vital role models for their students. By embodying these principles, educators provide their students with concrete examples of how to engage with others responsibly and respectfully, thereby upholding the development of these values within their interactions (Solih et al., 2024; Blazar & Kraft, 2016). The classroom becomes a microcosm of ethical behavior, where students learn not only academic content but also vital social skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Students often view the professional conduct exhibited by educators as a marker of credibility and effectiveness. When teachers display thorough preparedness and demonstrate expertise in their subject matter, they are perceived as more competent and trustworthy (Devis-Rozental & Farquharson, 2020; McGinn, 2018). This perception significantly affects students' overall evaluations of teaching effectiveness, influencing their willingness to engage with the material and the educator. The correlation between perceived teacher competence and student motivation cannot be overstated; students are more likely to invest effort in their learning when they respect and trust their instructors.

In conjunction with ethical conduct, the socioemotional intelligence of educators plays a crucial role in shaping the higher education experience. Teachers who foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment by managing their own emotions effectively and attuning to the emotional states of their students can build strong connections with them (Ruzek et al., 2016). This ability to create a nurturing atmosphere is vital in helping students feel accepted, respected, and actively engaged in the learning process. When students perceive their teachers as empathetic and understanding, they are more likely to participate actively, take intellectual risks, and express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment.

The positive dynamics cultivated through socio-emotional intelligence extend beyond the classroom, contributing to the broader fabric of a compassionate and equitable society (Oliveira et al., 2021). Educators who model socio-emotional skills empower their students to develop similar competencies, equipping them with the tools necessary for effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving. These skills are essential for navigating diverse social contexts and fostering inclusivity in an increasingly complex world.

Moreover, the impact of ethical conduct and socioemotional intelligence on student well-being should not be overlooked. Research indicates that students who experience supportive, ethically grounded relationships with their teachers are more likely to exhibit positive emotional and behavioral outcomes. They tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation, increased academic performance, and improved social interactions. The emotional climate of the classroom, shaped by the teacher's behaviors and attitudes, is, therefore, a significant determinant of student success.

Given the profound implications of ethical conduct and socio-emotional intelligence in education, institutions must prioritize the professional development of teachers in these areas. Providing training opportunities focused on ethical decision-making, effective communication, and emotional intelligence can enhance educators' abilities to create positive and inclusive learning environments. Such training can include workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning experiences that allow teachers to practice and reflect on their interpersonal skills.

Incorporating ethical and socio-emotional competencies into teacher evaluation processes can further reinforce the importance of these factors in educational effectiveness. Evaluations that assess not only pedagogical skills but also interpersonal qualities and ethical behavior provide a more comprehensive view of teaching effectiveness.

This approach encourages educators to cultivate these competencies and highlights their significance in the overall learning experience. This dual emphasis enhances the overall educational experience, preparing students to thrive in an interconnected and diverse society. Such an approach not only benefits individual students but also contributes to the development of a more compassionate, equitable, and just society where individuals are equipped to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with one another.

3.6 Student-Centric SET Process and Instrumentation

As highlighted previously, traditional SET tools and processes often fall short of capturing the multifaceted dimensions of effective teaching, particularly from the student's vantage point, leading to a disconnect between educators and learners in their understanding of what constitutes quality instruction, especially in higher education. Addressing this lacuna necessitates, then, the development of student-centric SET frameworks and tools that incorporate student-perceived factors that significantly impact student learning experiences. Hence, the development of a student-centric SET process and instrumentation is recommended to genuinely reflect students' perspectives, experiences, and needs, thereby providing more actionable insights for improving teaching practices and enhancing the effectiveness of teaching in higher education.

Table 3. *Proposed Student-centric SET Items focusing on the Student-perceived Factors of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*

Factors	Items
Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices	The instructor presented different viewpoints on the course topics.
	The course activities kept me engaged in learning.
	The course material related to real-world situations helped me understand why it matters.
	The instructor led discussions well, so I felt comfortable sharing my thoughts.
	Assignments made me think more deeply and improve my problem-solving skills.
	The instructor encouraged us to question things, which helped me better understand the material.
	This course made me reflect on my role in broader issues.
	The instructors showed a passion for what they were teaching.
	This course helped me see how the material connects to my future career.
Optimized Learning Support and Resources	The instructor helped me connect my previous experience to the topic.
	The instructor provided us with resources that catered to what I needed to learn.
	The instructor explained the concepts clearly, which helped me understand the more challenging ideas.
	The instructor was easily accessible and provided help when I needed it.
	The instructor gave helpful feedback that helped me improve.
	The course materials were organized and made easy to find.
	The instructor provided chances to work with other students, which helped me learn.
	The instructor effectively used tools, such as slides and the board, to explain ideas.
	The instructor clearly defined what I needed to study, which helped me succeed.
Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence	The instructor designed the course to help students learn.
	The instructor linked ideas from different courses and subjects.
	The instructor treated everyone fairly and with kindness, which made the class better.
	The instructor kept the class focused, allowing us to learn without distractions.
	The instructor made me feel respected, which created a good learning environment.
	The instructor graded relatively, so I felt the assessments were just.
	The instructor demonstrated an understanding of the diverse backgrounds of different students, making the course more welcoming.
	The instructor addressed sensitive topics thoughtfully, encouraging respectful discussion.
	The instructor listened to different opinions, ensuring that everyone felt heard.
	The instructor showed that they are still learning in their field, which was inspiring.
	The instructor made me feel like my learning was important.
	The instructor ensured I understood what I needed to improve to achieve better results.

The theoretical foundation for a student-centric SET process is grounded in the principles of transformative learning, constructivist pedagogy, and socio-emotional learning. By focusing on the dimensions of Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices, Optimized Learning Support and Resources, and Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence, the SET process can be restructured to prioritize student engagement, personalized learning, and ethical interactions. Transformative learning theory emphasizes the importance of critical reflection and active engagement in the learning process, encouraging students to question assumptions, explore new perspectives, and develop higher-order thinking skills (Mezirow, 1997, as cited by Stansberry, 2020). In practice,

SET instruments should include questions that assess the extent to which instructors integrate critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent thought. Constructivist pedagogy highlights the importance of providing adequate resources and support to facilitate meaningful learning experiences, advocating for the integration of technology and diverse instructional materials to cater to different learning styles (Piaget, 1972, as cited by Shah, 2019). SET instruments should evaluate the availability and effectiveness of learning resources provided by the instructor. Socio-emotional learning theory emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence and ethical behavior in fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment, with a focus on developing interpersonal skills, empathy, and ethical decision-making (Goleman, 1995, as cited by Schonert-Reichl, 2021). SET instruments should include items that assess the instructor's ethical conduct and socio-emotional intelligence.

To effectively implement a student-centric SET process, institutions can take practical steps, such as involving students in SET design, using student-friendly language, incorporating open-ended questions, and preparing students for constructive feedback. Conducting focus groups and surveys to gather students' input on what aspects of teaching they find most impactful and relevant can help design SET instruments that address specific areas of interest to students. Framing questions in a way that resonates with students' everyday experiences, avoiding technical jargon or instructor-centric terms, can help students provide more accurate and meaningful feedback. Including open-ended questions that allow students to elaborate on their responses can provide deeper insights into students' perceptions and experiences. Providing orientation sessions or instructional materials that explain the purpose of SETs, the importance of honest and thoughtful responses, and how their feedback will be used to enhance teaching and learning can mitigate potential biases and improve the reliability of the data collected.

3.7 Further Implications

The dimensions identified in this study highlight the importance of adopting a contextualized and personalized approach to teaching, even in higher education. To genuinely promote lifelong learning, HEIs must prioritize responsive and critical pedagogies, not only to meet industry demands but also to empower learners to become valuable contributors to society. Effective teaching in higher education, therefore, goes beyond knowledge transfer and specialized skill instruction. It also incorporates reflective practices that enable learners to take ownership of their success. Furthermore, pedagogical innovation, effective resource management, and the cultivation of value systems should be key priorities for HEIs to achieve these objectives.

The shift towards a student-centric SET process has broader implications for the overall educational experience. By prioritizing students' perspectives, institutions can foster a more inclusive and responsive learning environment, ultimately enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Insights from a student-centric SET process can inform the design of professional development programs that address the unique needs and challenges faced by educators. By identifying specific areas for improvement based on student feedback, institutions can offer targeted training and support to help educators refine their teaching strategies. The data collected from a student-centric SET process can inform institutional policies and practices, ensuring that they align with students' needs and preferences. For example, suppose students consistently highlight the need for more interactive and engaging teaching methods. In that case, institutions can prioritize the adoption of innovative pedagogical approaches, such as flipped classrooms or project-based learning. By involving students in the design and implementation of evaluation tools, institutions can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment. This approach not only empowers students to take an active role in shaping their educational journey but also ensures that their feedback directly contributes to the enhancement of teaching practices.

In line with this, teacher development programs should focus on these factors across all fields of specialization. These programs could include courses on inclusive educational practices in higher education, critical and responsive pedagogies, and advancements in educational technology. Moreover, teacher evaluation systems must acknowledge the interconnected nature of these dimensions when shaping educational policies that are both comprehensive and contextualized. Ultimately, these findings point to the need for a personalized curriculum in higher education, one that strives not only for professional proficiency but also for purposeful contributions to society.

4.0 Conclusion

Higher education must embrace a meaningful and holistic approach, ensuring that the educational journey is not merely a pathway to career readiness but also a catalyst for personal growth and self-determinism. An integrative framework for higher education promotes the development of well-rounded individuals who are equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life. As such, effective teaching in higher education should be designed to empower students, preparing them not only to meet the demands of their respective industries but also to adapt to the inevitable changes and challenges that life may present. This adaptability is crucial in today's rapidly evolving world, where the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn is paramount.

The reimagining of the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) process to be more student-centric is essential for enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving the overall educational experience. By focusing on the dimensions of Transformative and Critical Pedagogical Practices, Optimized Learning Support and Resources, and Ethical Conduct and Socio-Emotional Intelligence, institutions can create evaluation tools that genuinely reflect students' perspectives and needs. Practical steps such as involving students in SET design, using student-friendly language, incorporating open-ended questions, and preparing students for constructive feedback can help achieve this goal. The broader implications of a student-centric SET process include more targeted professional development for educators, informed institutional policies, and a more inclusive and responsive learning environment. This approach aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and prepares students to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

To enhance the robustness of the findings from this research, a newly developed SET instrument has been introduced. This instrument is designed to incorporate the latent factors identified in the study, ensuring that it reflects the essential elements of effective teaching. By utilizing this tool, institutions can conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis, which will further validate the constructs presented in this study and solidify their relevance in assessing teaching effectiveness.

Furthermore, the findings and the application of the SET instrument are integral to extending this research to other higher education populations. By exploring the cross-disciplinary implications of these results, educators and researchers can gain deeper insights into how effective teaching practices can be tailored to different fields of study. This broader investigation will not only enhance the understanding of effective teaching but also contribute to the ongoing improvement of educational practices across diverse academic contexts, ultimately fostering an environment where students are better equipped for both personal and professional success.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Dinamling, SK - conceptualization, literature review, research design, data collection, manuscript writing, revision and editing
Depaynos, J - conceptualization, literature review, research design, data analysis, manuscript writing, revision and editing

6.0 Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest in the study.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to acknowledge the contribution of the respondents and colleagues to the success of this research study.

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Print ISSN 2984-8288
Online ISSN 2984-8385



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