Experiences of School Administrators During Limited Face-to-Face Classes

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Abstract. Limited face-to-face classes involve limiting students' daily attendance at face-to-face sessions on campus. This study explored the lived experience of 10 school administrators in implementing limited face-to-face classes in Central Visayas, Philippines. These administrators were part of the state universities and colleges that practiced limited face-to-face classes after the Philippine government decided to reopen the classes, guided by the implementation guidelines through a CHEd Joint Memorandum Circular, after the lockdowns in the COVID-19 pandemic. These administrators had been part of the universities and colleges for two years before the pandemic. This study employed a descriptive phenomenological research design, utilized a semi-structured interview guide, and used Collaizi's seven steps to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the universities and colleges made academic adjustments to the curriculum, the teaching and learning strategies, and teacher professional development. Emotional and psychological support was also provided to schools to nurture the well-being of the students, teachers, and staff. Communication and collaboration inside the school and with the stakeholders were promoted. Despite the newness of the phenomena, the limited face-to-face implementation was positively carried out. Research related to full face-to-face may be conducted.

Keywords: Limited face-to-face classes; school administrators; lived experience; universities and colleges

1. Introduction

Global customary educational practices were disrupted and the global economy was badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, school administrators were compelled to transition to online classes despite needing to prepare for this new learning mode. Online teaching quickly became essential in every country's educational system (Joaquin et al., 2020). Education management transformed into a new learning context, with students and teachers no longer interacting in person. Traditional methods were modified and adapted to a digital platform unfamiliar to many (Soussi, 2020).

As schools embraced digital culture and technology, learning management became "cyberized" (Sener, 2014, cited in Kentnor, 2015). Because of its flexibility and ease, the restricted face-to-face configuration was well-received by both teachers and students (Brooks, 2022). Parents appreciated that their children no longer needed to commute to school every day, and students enjoyed more time with their families, being able to study from anywhere (Isla, 2022). The online learning environment alleviated many previous concerns for students and their parents.

However, as online education progressed, complaints from teachers and students drew the attention of school administrators and the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd). Coman et al. (2020) highlighted that the main challenges in online learning were teachers' insufficient technical skills, resistance to change, and difficulties in effectively managing the virtual classroom. Isla (2020) stated that online learning comes with many technical challenges, besides being costly and complex for less fortunate families. Some teachers also voiced that they needed to be more proficient in technology. During online classes, students struggle to focus on the screens, fix technical difficulties, and feel isolated (Gautam, 2020; Bunghanoy & Sumalinog, 2023). Students became less responsible and accountable for learning (Thompson, 2021). Additionally, teachers insist that students learn less with the online learning modality. They knew and worked less since the teachers were not physically present to impose discipline.

According to Tamm (2022), teachers need more time to give meaningful feedback to their students. Teachers have caught students cheating when working on online tasks (Trent, 2021). Due to slow internet connectivity, students also struggled with participation and interaction (Alipio, 2020). Many countries worldwide, including the Philippines, temporarily shifted to online learning but, in terms of learning, most students and parents experienced the disadvantages of online education.
As the risks of COVID-19 started to decline, the Philippine government considered opening schools and welcoming college students in limited face-to-face classes. Limited face-to-face classes involved limiting the daily attendance of students on campus for face-to-face sessions based on their enrolled courses or academic year. This was managed through a rotating schedule, ensuring compliance with physical distancing and health protocols (Legal Education Board, 2022). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also supported the government's decision to reopen schools. Before the plan to open the classes in the fourth quarter of 2021, the Philippines was listed as one of the remaining five

countries that had yet to conduct in-person classes since the virus hit the country in 2019 (Montemayor, 2021; Valente & Cruz, 2022). The president of the country, Rodrigo R. Duterte, expressed his support for the proposed implementation of limited face-to-face classes in higher education institutions (HEIs) (ABS-CBN News, 2022). To slowly translate the plan into action, the HEIs released some guidelines to be adhered and followed strictly by the institutions who decided to populate the schools again with students (CHEd Joint Memorandum Circular, 2021).

A total of 161 universities started limited face-to-face classes, prioritizing education, moving forward despite the pandemic, and striving to deliver quality education (Malipot, 2021). Many progressive plans have been studied and implemented to assist institutions, especially those who cannot meet the basic guidelines. Despite the return to some face-to-face learning, some schools remained doubtful and were unwilling to shift back due to the concerns about health (UNICEF, 2020).

Parents were also hesitant to send their children back to school for fear of virus contamination. Parents preferred online classes because it was safe. Some of them complained about the discomfort experienced by students by the health precautions inside the classroom. They needed more confidence in the institution's implementation of health and safety protocols (Moaje, 2021). Conflict between some parents' doubts and the state's persistence to reopen the classes existed. However, although there were opposing views, many HEIs started implementing the return to face-to-face learning. In contrast, some HEIs continued to thrive in meeting the requirements and learning to implement primary health protocols in school settings.

A noticeable knowledge gap needed to be explored so that the schools that attempted to reopen could be fully prepared and completely aware of the possible challenges during implementation. The identified gaps could be filled through the lived experiences of the administrators of the different universities and colleges that started the implementation since only minimal studies delved into the lived experiences of the implementers of limited face-to-face classes, such as the vice presidents for academic affairs (VPAAs) of the different universities and colleges. Their challenges and best practices would be interpreted. From the administrators' lived experiences, the realities of the difficulties met and best practices applied to real scenarios could be the best guide for policy recommendations regarding how limited face-to-face classes should be implemented. Through this study's results, plans designed by other administrators may be enhanced, modified, and solidified. In a broader sense, the results of this research were envisioned to lead to the success of limited face-to-face classes and become an instrument for regular classes to return. In this study, information related to finances was excluded in the best interests of the schools.

2. Statement of the Problem

The study explored the lived experience of the 10 informants, VPAAs, as administrators in state universities and colleges currently allowed to conduct limited face-to-face classes.

Specifically, it answered answer the following questions:
1. What modifications were made to the curriculum during the limited face-to-face classes?
2. What are the coping strategies observed and initiated by these administrators?

3. Methods

This section displays the research design used in this study, the informants involved, the research environment, the data-gathering procedure, and the data analysis steps.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative approach, specifically the descriptive phenomenological research design by Collaizi (1978). This research design aimed to uncover the "essence" or "essential structure" of any phenomenon being studied, identifying the characteristics that define it and distinguish it from other phenomena.

3.2 Research Environment

The study was conducted at different universities and colleges in Central Visayas, Philippines. Central Visayas is the location for schools that constantly produce top achievers in licensure examinations. Some of the learning institutions in this region are among the 161 schools (Malipot, 2021) that decided to reopen face-to-face classes in response to the challenges of online learning.

3.3 Research Informants

The 10 VPAAs were purposively chosen as informants. These administrators were part of the state universities and colleges that practiced limited face-to-face classes after the Philippine government decided to reopen classes, guided by the implementation guidelines through a CHEd Joint Memorandum Circular. These administrators had been part of the universities and colleges for two years before the pandemic so it would be safe to assume that they had enough knowledge of the schools' operation before it shifted to limited face-to-face classes from the temporarily adopted online learning. They also managed and led the implementation of limited face-to-face classes for one year. The informants were school administrators directly involved in implementing the limited face-to-face classes with regard to academic, health, and communication.

3.4 Research Instruments

A semi-structured interview guide was used for this study. Its content was checked and validated by three research professors. The questions capture the challenges met and best practices applied during limited face-to-face classes.

3.5 Data Gathering Procedure

a) **Pre-gathering stage**. The study proposal was sent to the Ethics Review Committee before the data collection phase so they could verify that the study complied with ethical considerations. The informants were also emailed an informed consent letter. A demographic letter asking for the participants' details, preferred times for the interviews, and any equipment they have access to was also.

b) **Actual data gathering stage**. The data were gathered virtually. The participants were made aware that although the interview would be recorded, it would remain private. The duration of the interview was 45 to 60 minutes. The interview started with some introductory questions to create rapport and prepare the participants for the research questions. A critical informant interview used to gather the data then commenced. It was a qualitative, in-depth interview with people who knew what was happening in the community. It further involved conversing with people with explicit and informed perspectives on the program and plan being evaluated (Macfarlan, 2014). In this study, the VPAAs were the learning community experts who could identify problems and provide potential solutions. As the interview progressed, the researcher jotted down what had been observed from the participants, such as the sighs, pauses, reluctance, facial expressions, etc. of the participants.

c) **Post-data gathering stage**. The interview ended after data saturation was reached. The participants' details were collected for the distribution of tokens. After the participants had been interviewed, data analysis followed. The recordings were played multiple times as the researcher transcribed and captured the meanings, clusters of themes, and emerging themes from the transcripts using interpretive phenomenological analysis steps. After the entire data analysis process, the recordings have been kept until the study has been published.

3.6 Data Analysis

The seven steps of Collaizi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological method were used:

1. **Familiarization**. By going over each participant's account several times, the researcher gets to know the data completely.

2. **Identifying significant statements**. The researcher identifies all statements in the accounts that directly relate to the phenomenon under investigation.

3. **Formulating meanings**. The researcher discerns meanings pertinent to the phenomenon by carefully analyzing significant statements. To remain faithful to the phenomenon as experienced, the researcher must reflexively set aside their preconceptions, although Colaizzi acknowledged that achieving complete bracketing is impossible.

4. **Clustering themes**. The researcher groups the identified meanings into consistent themes across all accounts. It is essential to set aside preconceptions to prevent any potential influence from existing theories.

5. **Developing an exhaustive description**. The researcher comprehensively describes the phenomenon, integrating all the themes identified in the previous step.

6. **Producing the fundamental structure**. The researcher reduces the comprehensive description to a brief, concise statement that highlights only the aspects considered essential to the structure of the phenomenon.
7. **Seeking verification of the fundamental structure**. The researcher presents the introductory structure statement to all participants (or a subsample in more extensive studies) to verify if it accurately reflects their experiences. Based on their feedback, the researcher may revise earlier steps in the analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

After an intensive analysis of the data, the following themes and sub-themes emerged, as seen in the table.

Table 1. *Study's Themes and Sub-Themes*

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	
Theme 1: Academic and Curriculum Adjustments	Sub-Theme 1:	Curriculum Modifications
	Sub-Theme 2:	Teaching and Learning Strategies
	Sub-Theme 3:	Professional Development for Teachers
Theme 2: Emotional and Psychological Support	Sub-Theme 1:	Student Well-Being
	Sub-Theme 2:	Staff Well-Being
Theme 3: Communication and Collaboration	Sub-Theme 1:	Communication with Parents and Guardians
	Sub-Theme 2:	Communication with the School

Theme 1: Academic and Curriculum Adjustments

The informants stressed that the schools made significant academic and curriculum adjustments to adapt to the changing educational landscape. These adjustments included substantial curriculum modifications, which involved merging essential content and delivering it through hybrid methods to address the current concerns of the students and educators better. To maintain continuity in teaching and learning, HEIs must shift to flexible teaching modalities, adjust the curriculum, enhance faculty capabilities, and implement a strategic plan (Dayagbil et al., 2021; Sanchez et al., 2023). The teaching and learning strategies were also reviewed, making them more interactive and engaging, to ensure that students remained motivated and involved, regardless of whether they were learning in person or online. To support these changes, teachers had to undergo a series of comprehensive training sessions designed to equip them with some knowledge and skills to address the new challenges effectively. These training programs were crucial in helping educators become proficient with new teaching tools and platforms, enabling them to implement best practices for hybrid and blended learning. The teachers were upskilled to come up with solutions (Cronin, 2021). Skills can be managed individually, such as self-motivation and adaptability, and overcoming technological pressures by adjusting to organizational and client demands (Chavez et al., 2023). Additionally, ongoing

support and resources were provided to ensure teachers could continuously adapt and refine their approaches, and maintain high education standards throughout the transition.

Sub-Theme 1: Curriculum Modifications. School administrators decided to modify the curriculum by prioritizing essential content since the lesson delivery had shifted to hybrid methods. With the hybrid instruction of lessons, face-to-face and online classes were conducted.

Determining and selecting the topics and competencies should be done carefully. For example, lessons requiring experiments, actual performance, or demonstrations must be delivered face-to-face. Lessons that only necessitate lectures and discussions must be offered online. Adjustments were also applied to assessment and evaluation practices. These adjustments ensured that assessments were fair and reflective of the varied teaching methods. New criteria and formats were also developed to accommodate the unique challenges of in-person and virtual learning environments.

> *"There were a lot of adjustments done because the learning modality has been changed from face-to-face to hybrid."* Participant 8

> *"In the beginning, it was impossible, but yes, we modified everything from lesson delivery mode, assessment to evaluation."* Participant 3

> *"Adjustments were made to address problems in the delivery of the content, the teaching modality, and the entire teaching process."* Participant 1

The extensive adjustments made in response to the shift from face-to-face to hybrid learning modalities imply a significant transformation in the educational landscape. This transformation underscores the importance of flexibility and innovation in education, revealing that schools can adapt rapidly to new circumstances with sufficient support and determination. The primary approach involved converting the existing on-campus assessments into an online format (Slade et al., 2021). The successful modification of lesson delivery modes, assessments, and evaluation practices demonstrates that educational institutions can overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges to meet the needs of their students.

Furthermore, these changes suggest that the future of education may increasingly incorporate hybrid models, blending in-person and online learning to maximize effectiveness and accessibility. The ability to address and resolve issues in content delivery, teaching modalities, and the overall teaching process highlights the potential for ongoing improvements and innovations in education. This experience prepares schools for potential disruptions and opens up new possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning practices in a post-pandemic world.

Sub-Theme 2:Teaching and Learning Strategies. The informants mentioned that teaching and learning strategies were also adjusted to facilitate practical learning

experiences for students. This encompasses using technology in classrooms, which involves integrating digital tools and resources to enhance learning and make lessons more accessible and engaging. Interactive and engaging learning methods are also critical, including techniques involving students in the learning process, such as group discussions, hands-on activities, and multimedia presentations. Additionally, providing support for students with learning difficulties is an essential strategy, ensuring that all students receive the individualized attention and resources they need to succeed, whether through specialized instruction, accommodations, or additional tutoring. These strategies collectively aim to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that addresses the diverse needs of all students (Pregoner & Baguio, 2024).

Rey and Ann remarked:
> *"The use of technology was integrated into the lesson because it can help support students' learning. It has become part of the strategies that teachers should use."* Participant 7

> *"We have to adjust our teaching and learning strategies because it's the only way to address the problem of the change of learning modality."* Participant 4

Integrating technology into lessons implies a transformative shift in educational practices, emphasizing the essential role of digital tools in supporting student learning. By incorporating technology as a core component of teaching strategies, educators can create more interactive, engaging, and accessible learning experiences. This shift highlights the potential for technology to address diverse learning needs, making education more inclusive and adaptable to individual student requirements. Hickling et al. (2021) and Creely et al. (2021) posited that most of the modifications to teaching involve the use of tools or techniques, such as conducting synchronous tutorials via video meeting rooms.

Adjusting teaching and learning strategies in response to changing learning modalities emphasizes the importance of flexibility and innovation in education. The necessity to adapt to hybrid or fully online environments has driven educators to rethink and refine their approaches, ensuring that students continue to receive quality education despite the challenges. The adoption of e-learning as a regular component of the educational process has significantly increased for both students and lecturers (Triskova et al., 2022; Cronin, 2021). This adaptability addresses immediate concerns and prepares the conditions for long-term improvements in educational practices, preparing institutions to handle future disruptions better and to enhance their teaching methods continuously.

Sub-Theme 3: Professional Development for Teachers. Continuous education and training programs were also adjusted to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge. This included training on new teaching tools and platforms and equipping educators with the technical proficiency needed to use digital resources and software effectively in their instruction. It also involved learning best practices for hybrid and blended learning, where teachers were trained in strategies to integrate in-person and online teaching methods seamlessly,

ensuring that all students benefit from a cohesive and engaging learning experience. Additionally, professional development provided ongoing support and resources for teachers, offering continuous access to instructional materials, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities to help them stay updated with the latest educational trends and improve their teaching practices. This comprehensive approach to professional development aimed to empower teachers to deliver high-quality education in a constantly evolving educational landscape.

> *"The training we designed was no longer what we used to have. We train them how to handle classes in a hybrid modality and the resources we give them are fit to the new modality."* Participant 9

> *"We provided them training that was relevant to the hybrid learning modality because it is the professional development that they need."* Participant 1

A shift in training design indicated a profound change in teachers' professional development approach, emphasizing the need for relevance and adaptability in response to new educational modalities. By focusing on handling classes in a hybrid modality, the training ensured that educators were well-prepared to manage the unique challenges of combining in-person and online instruction. One adjustment was the increased role of educators as facilitators, who guide, monitor, and motivate their students remotely (Jelinska & Paradowski, 2021; Sacre et al., 2023). This targeted training equipped teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to effectively utilize technology and innovative teaching methods, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience for students.

Providing training relevant to the hybrid learning modality underscores the importance of aligning professional development with current educational needs. Fortunately, students and teachers' adaptation to school after the pandemic was moderate but significant (Sayi et al., 2024; Sumalinog, 2022). It highlights a proactive approach to teacher support, ensuring that educators know best practices and provide appropriate resources tailored to the new teaching environment. This approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement and resilience, enabling teachers to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain high education standards, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students in the long term.

Theme 2: Emotional and Psychological Support
Emotional and psychological support encompasses a range of initiatives and resources to foster the mental and emotional well-being of students and staff within the educational environment. Awareness of psychosocial and emotional support has changed educators' views of their students and prompted them to explore new teaching roles (Schenzle & Schultz, 2024; Chaudhry et al., 2024). Student well-being included providing mental health resources and counseling to help students navigate the anxiety and stress related to the pandemic. Schools implemented activities and programs that promoted social-emotional learning, and taught students crucial skills, such as resilience, empathy, and emotional regulation.

Staff well-being focuses on establishing robust support systems for teachers and staff, recognizing the importance of their mental health in maintaining a positive educational atmosphere. This involved helping educators balance work and personal life under the new circumstances imposed by hybrid or remote teaching modalities and offering stress management and coping strategies to ensure they could handle the added pressures effectively. Together, these efforts aimed to create a supportive environment where everyone in the school community felt valued and equipped to manage their emotional and psychological health, ultimately leading to a more productive and harmonious learning environment.

Sub-Theme 1: Student Well-Being

Student well-being is a comprehensive approach taken by schools to ensure that students are mentally and emotionally healthy and equipped to succeed in their academic and personal lives. This involved providing mental health resources and counseling, which offered students access to professional help and support for various psychological issues. Addressing anxiety and stress related to the pandemic was a crucial component, as the ongoing health crisis has significantly impacted students' mental health, requiring targeted interventions to help them cope with these unprecedented challenges.

According to Xu et al. (2021), internal and external support for students should be observed to support the students' learning environment. Activities and programs promoting social-emotional learning were also implemented to teach students essential skills, such as emotional regulation, empathy, and resilience. These programs aimed to foster a supportive and understanding school environment, enabling students to develop strong interpersonal relationships and effectively manage their emotions, contributing to their overall well-being and academic success.

> *"We conduct online counseling to students initiated by the school health team and we also connected with the local government to help them."* Participant 2

> *"It has become one of our priorities because we received reports from students' council about the well-being problems of the students."* Participant 5

> *"The students are our main clients and we felt the need to provide them that based on the survey done."* Participant 4

The implementation of online counseling by the school health team, in collaboration with the local government, signified a proactive approach to addressing the mental health needs of students. This initiative highlighted the school's commitment to prioritizing student well-being and recognized the critical impact of emotional and psychological support on overall academic performance and personal development. At the University of Gdańsk, the Academic Psychological Support Centre was created to welcome students who need help (Rudnik et al., 2021). Similarly, at the University of Genoa, a psychological counseling service for students was established to comprehend the students' needs for support during the pre and post-pandemic periods better (Pace, 2022;

Sumalinog et al., 2022). By offering accessible mental health resources, the school ensured students had the necessary support to navigate challenges and maintain their well-being, particularly during the pandemic.

The prioritization of student well-being in response to reports from the students' council underscores the importance of listening to and addressing the student body's concerns. The school's actions, driven by survey results indicating significant well-being issues, reflect a data-informed approach to decision-making. This responsiveness demonstrates a deep commitment to the health and happiness of students but also fosters a supportive and inclusive school environment where students feel heard and valued. Hamilton and Gross (2021) mentioned that the responsive and integrated education system should be flexible so that students' concerns before and after the pandemic would be addressed. By centering the needs of their "main clients," the students, the school fosters a culture of care and support essential for immediate and long-term educational success.

Sub-Theme 2: Staff Well-Being
Staff well-being involves the comprehensive efforts made by educational institutions to ensure the overall health and happiness of their teachers and staff, recognizing that their well-being is fundamental to creating a productive and positive academic environment. This includes developing robust support systems for teachers and staff, which provide essential resources and a network of assistance to address their professional and personal needs. These support systems can include access to professional counseling, mentorship programs, and peer support groups, all of which help create a community of care and mutual support.

Additionally, in response to the evolving demands of hybrid and remote teaching, there was a strong emphasis on balancing work and personal life under new circumstances. Schools implemented policies and practices that helped staff manage their professional responsibilities while ensuring they had sufficient time and energy for individual pursuits, thereby preventing burnout. In transitioning from classroom to limited face-to-face, schools must strengthen their focus on prioritizing social and emotional support for educators (Ferren, 2021; Goles et al., 2024).

Furthermore, stress management and coping strategies are integral to staff well-being initiatives, with schools offering training and resources to help educators develop effective techniques for managing stress. These can include mindfulness exercises, time management skills, and access to wellness programs, all designed to equip staff with the tools they need to stay resilient and maintain their well-being in the face of ongoing challenges.
Schools aimed to create a supportive and sustainable working environment where educators could thrive by prioritizing staff well-being in these multifaceted ways.
> *"Our teachers were also supported. They underwent work and personal life balance. Stress management was also part of it."* Participant 1

"We helped them manage stress and some coping mechanisms."
Participant 7

"Balanced life and some stress management support were provided."
Participant 10

The support provided to teachers, including work-life balance initiatives and stress management programs, indicates a comprehensive approach to staff well-being. By offering these resources, the school acknowledges the critical role of a balanced life in maintaining educators' mental and emotional health. This support helps teachers navigate the complexities of their professional responsibilities while ensuring they have the time and space to focus on their well-being. Such initiatives reduce burnout and enhance job satisfaction and retention, leading to a more stable and motivated teaching staff. According to Garcia-Alvarez et al. (2022), positive psychology interventions enhance teachers' well-being, boost psychological resources, and mitigate psychosocial risks such as discomfort.

Moreover, the emphasis on stress management and coping mechanisms underscores the school's commitment to equipping teachers with the tools needed to handle the pressures of their roles effectively. For Alvarez et al. (2021), relationships between teachers and students are crucial for developing well-being, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing strategies for managing stress and fostering resilience allows teachers to perform their duties more efficiently and confidently. This proactive approach to staff well-being can improve teaching quality, as educators who feel supported and balanced can better engage with their students and deliver high-quality education. Ultimately, these efforts contribute to a healthier, more positive school environment for staff and students.

Theme 3: Communication and Collaboration
Communication with parents and guardians is crucial, as it involves providing regular updates and disseminating critical information about students' well-being and school activities. Establishing feedback mechanisms and involving parents in decision-making ensures their concerns and queries are addressed effectively, building a supportive network around the students.

Communication among administrative and teaching staff was emphasized within the schools. This involved coordinating efforts to ensure a unified approach to student support, maintaining transparent decision-making processes, and utilizing digital tools for efficient communication. These practices helped create a cohesive and responsive educational environment. Furthermore, the need for communication with external stakeholders, such as partnerships with health authorities and community organizations, was highlighted. These collaborations facilitated sharing best practices with other schools and engaging with educational bodies and policymakers to advocate for necessary resources and policies.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic heightened communication professionals' challenges in building trust (Meng et al., 2024). School closures required improved

coordination and communication focused on the most critical issues (Hulme et al., 2021). Fortunately, new communication strategies emerged to address the problem. This comprehensive communication strategy not only supported the emotional and psychological well-being of students and staff but also strengthened the overall resilience and adaptability of the educational system.

Sub-Theme 1: Communication with Parents and Guardians
Communication with parents and guardians involves establishing an ongoing dialogue between schools and families to ensure that parents and guardians are well-informed and actively engaged in their children's education. This communication includes providing regular updates and disseminating critical information about various aspects of school life, including academic progress, extracurricular activities, and upcoming events. It also entails establishing feedback mechanisms that allow parents to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions, ensuring their voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes. By actively involving parents in decision-making, schools can address problems and queries effectively, fostering a sense of partnership and collaboration between home and school.

During the coronavirus pandemic, enhancing students' communication skills was necessary to alleviate the stress and anxiety related to fear of failure (Alkhamaiseh, 2022). Open communication was encouraged. This open and transparent communication helped build trust and strengthened the support network around students, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and academic success.

> *"Mechanism on communication with the parents and guardians was initiated to make sure that the learning materials and other changes in the rules of the hybrid implementation of learning reached their knowledge."* Participant 5

> *"We make sure that communication with their guardians is open for queries and concerns to be addressed immediately."* Participant 2

> *"Communication with the family of the learners was initiated for updates, information-dissemination, and decision-making to be done effectively."* Participant 8

Initiating a communication mechanism with parents and guardians reflected the school's proactive approach to ensuring that essential updates regarding learning materials and changes in hybrid learning implementation are effectively conveyed to families. By establishing this mechanism, the schools aimed to maintain transparency and accountability, ensuring that families were well-informed and involved in their children's education. This initiative facilitated the dissemination of crucial information and provided an avenue for parents and guardians to voice queries and concerns, fostering a collaborative partnership between home and school. However, school leaders also faced challenges, including communication with families and professional development for staff, mainly due to technological unfamiliarity (Wharton-Beck, 2024).

Moreover, the emphasis on open communication with guardians signifies the school's commitment to addressing parental queries and concerns promptly and effectively. By keeping lines of communication open, the school creates a supportive environment where families feel valued and heard, contributing to a positive school-home relationship. Additionally, the initiation of communication with the families of students for updates, information dissemination, and decision-making underscores the school's dedication to fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility in the educational process. The collaboration between them hastens the establishment of proper communication. In accordance, Azorin and Fulla (2022) believed collaboration can build school systems crucial for navigating the new post-pandemic challenges humanity confronts. By involving families in decision-making, the schools promoted transparency and cooperation, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience for students.

Sub-Theme 2: Communication within the School
Effective employee communication is vital to any organization's vitality (Ndlela, 2022). Communication within a school in a school setting refers to the seamless exchange of information, ideas, and feedback among administrative and teaching staff within an educational institution. This communication involves robust coordination among administrative and teaching staff to ensure the smooth operation and effective implementation of school policies and procedures. This communication framework is central to transparent decision-making processes, ensuring that all stakeholders are informed and involved in decisions that affect the school's operation and direction. These processes build trust and collaboration among staff members by fostering transparency creating a supportive and cohesive work environment.

Additionally, communication within the schools was facilitated using digital tools for efficient communication. These tools, such as email, messaging applications and collaborative platforms, enabled staff members to communicate quickly and effectively, regardless of their physical location. By leveraging digital communication platforms, schools streamlined communication processes, enhanced transparency, and promoted collaboration among staff members, ultimately contributing to the overall success and well-being of students and staff within the school community.

> *"Proper coordination among administrative and teaching staff was established for efficient communication using digital tools."* Participant 4

> *Communication and coordination for efficient decision-making was turned electronic, swerving away from traditional printed letters for communication."* Participant 6

Establishing proper coordination among administrative and teaching staff signifies a shift towards streamlined communication and collaboration within the school. By using digital tools, the schools facilitated efficient communication among staff members regardless of their physical location. This initiative promoted transparency, enhanced productivity, and fostered a cohesive work

environment, ultimately leading to more effective decision-making and smoother operations. When teachers were asked about their preferred medium, most of them favored environments that blend synchronous and asynchronous communication channels (Hadad et al., 2024; Michela et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the transition to electronic communication and coordination for decision-making reflects the schools' adaptability and responsiveness to modern technological trends. By moving away from traditional printed letters, the schools embraced the efficiency and convenience of digital communication methods, enabling faster dissemination of information and more timely decision-making processes. This shift saves time and resources and ensures that staff members are updated with the latest developments, enhancing overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

Examining educational practices during the limited face-to-face classes revealed a multifaceted response that comprehensively addressed academic, emotional, and safety-related challenges. Primarily, the academic adjustments highlighted schools' adaptability, as institutions implemented crucial modifications to curricula and teaching strategies. These changes were essential to ensure the continuity of education, particularly in the context of hybrid learning models that emerged as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, emotional and psychological support initiatives were prioritized, emphasizing the holistic well-being of both students and staff. By fostering resilience and providing essential support systems, schools aimed to create a nurturing environment that could withstand the pressures of an unprecedented crisis.

Additionally, effective communication and collaboration strategies were employed to facilitate transparency, coordination, and active community engagement. These strategies were vital in maintaining a strong connection between the school and its stakeholders, ensuring that everyone was informed and involved in the decision-making processes. Moreover, robust health and safety protocols were implemented to guarantee the physical well-being of all stakeholders, thereby creating a safe and secure learning environment. Cumulatively, these efforts reflected an unwavering commitment to resilience, innovation, and student-centeredness, which were crucial in navigating the complexities of the crisis.

The lessons learned during this period of disruption will undoubtedly inform future educational practices, ultimately fostering a more adaptable, inclusive, and resilient educational landscape that is well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and communities. The study found that teaching practices during the limited face-to-face foster resilience and encourage innovation to create a more inclusive educational environment.

6. Recommendations

a) School administrators may carry out long-term research on the efficacy of programs designed to provide emotional and psychological support during the pandemic. The long-term effects of these support networks on the mental health of faculty and staff may be investigated.

b) Future research might examine how to maintain and enhance these tactics in classrooms that have recovered from the pandemic.

c) Futher studies may examine how adaptive educational institutions concentrate on how to handle crises in the future. Examining how the pandemic's lessons are being incorporated into long-term educational strategies is one way to do this.

d) Through the use of innovative techniques and the promotion of a continuous improvement culture, schools may concentrate on developing resilience. This entails making technological investments, educating educators about hybrid teaching techniques, and advocating for a student-centered approach that takes into account a range of learning requirements.

7. Acknowledgment

8. References

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