

A Case Study Utilizing Multi-Method on The Implementation and Sustainability of Face-to-Face Classes in Magsaysay Districts, Division of Misamis Oriental, Philippines

ANALIZA BERNADOS SOCAOCO¹

¹Saint Joseph Institute of Technology, Butuan City, Philippines

ORCID NO. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7345-5335>

Corresponding author: analiza.socaoco@deped.gov.ph

Originality 100% • Grammar Check: 97% • Plagiarism: 0%

ABSTRACT

Article History:

Received: 01 Sept 2023

Revised: 03 Feb 2024

Accepted: 04 Mar 2024

Published: 28 Mar 2024

Keywords - education, face-to-face classes, covid-19 pandemic, rural education, mixed-methods, learning continuity plan, policy development, philippines

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, this case study examines the adoption and viability of in-person instruction in the Magsaysay districts of Misamis Oriental, Philippines. It fills in the knowledge gap about the unique customs and difficulties associated with the return of in-person instruction in rural areas. A mixed-methods approach was used in the study, incorporating focus group talks with school administrators and surveys. The results show that the district's schools have successfully included in-person instruction by following health regulations, implementing blended learning, working with stakeholders, and implementing corrective measures. However, difficulties have been observed, including learning loss and behavioral problems in students. In order to solve these issues and guarantee



© Analiza Bernados Socado(2024). Open Access. This article published by JPAIR Multidisciplinary Research is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). You are free to share (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material). Under the following terms, you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. You may not use the material for commercial purposes. To view a copy of this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

the district's continued capacity to provide in-person instruction, the study's conclusion suggests an improved learning continuity plan. Policymakers and educators working in similar rural environments can greatly benefit from this research's insightful observations, which emphasize the significance of customized approaches and continuous support for successful and long-lasting in-person instruction.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is significantly broad in scope and higher in demand because solutions need to be global in perspective (Kavrayici & Kesin, 2021). Many sectors of the Philippine government have been affected since the start of the community lockdown and quarantine. A more significant effect was the negative and downward shift in the nation's economy, along with the closure of public and private schools. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the said pandemic adversely disturbed the operations of public institutions and private sectors across the globe (Psychosocial, 2020). Schwab and Malleret (2020) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in poor production in many sectors and the closure of workplaces and schools. People are unable to leave their homes for an extended period, and there is a disruption in education and training at schools.

The return of face-to-face modality successfully commenced in June 2023. Many challenges were observed during the first school year, though less documented in the literature. Difficulties in the shift to full in-person or face-to-face classes were already expected by the teachers and school administrators, considering the issues encountered in the two school years of modular distance learning. In particular, teachers expressed concern about the "limited time to accommodate all learning concerns by learners." Some teachers also reported that they have limited teaching and learning resources. Teachers raised concerns about the "uncertain readiness of learners in face-to-face learning." Vicente et al. (2023) asserted that teachers experienced challenges in getting the attention of the learners in the face-to-face modality.

Teachers faced the challenge of adapting after online learning by developing new learning tools to support effective and optimal face-to-face instruction. As students have grown accustomed to online learning, it is crucial for both teachers and students to re-establish connections in the post-pandemic face-to-face learning environment. Inah (2015) emphasizes that interaction between teachers and students is essential in the learning process. Education involves this interaction to achieve its goals, occurring within a regulated and supervised

environment to ensure that learning activities align with educational objectives. Education supports the learner's self-development by fostering their potential, skills, and personal traits positively. Learning is an interactive process between students, teachers, and learning resources within a shared environment. This interaction is a form of social interaction involving relationships between individuals and groups (Inah, 2015). The teacher, as an individual, engages with a group of students, and learning is the process through which individuals acquire new behaviors through experiences and interactions with their environment.

The Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 22, Series of 2023, has been introduced to establish a comprehensive set of guidelines to enhance the educational framework in the Philippines. This order underscores the importance of providing equal access to high-quality education, fostering inclusive learning environments, and guaranteeing that all students, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, are given the necessary assistance to excel.

This study was made to generate a comprehensive picture of the first school year of face-to-face classes. Through a mixed-methods approach, this paper presents the readiness of the schools and the actual implementation of face-to-face modality. It also unfolds the experiences of the school administrators from the start until the commencement of the school year 2022-2023. Documenting the implementation and sustainability of face-to-face classes following the coercive closures of schools due to the pandemic in Magsaysay, Misamis Oriental. The expected results will serve as a benchmark for the Department of Education in future planning and development.

FRAMEWORK

Two of the best-known frameworks for educational management are those by Bolam (1999) and Morgan (2005). However, Bush et al. (2006) main theories, which are classified into six major models of educational management, were highlighted. These models, which include formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguous, and cultural, also parallel leadership models. In the formal model, administrators wield authority sanctioned by their official positions within the organization and are answerable to supervising bodies for their organization's activities. This model is closely linked with transformational or managerial leadership, which emphasizes the importance of leaders focusing on functions, tasks, and behaviors. The belief is that by competently carrying out these functions, leaders can facilitate the work of others in the organization (Leithwood et al., 1999).

The foundation of a high-quality education system is its ability to achieve

the specific goals and outcomes of individual schools. It should be tailored to the needs of students, communities, and society while empowering learners to gain knowledge and essential 21st-century skills (Stone & Bruce, 2007). While various factors can contribute to keeping learners out of school, ineffective learning is a key issue. This can be attributed to poor teaching quality, the presence of unqualified faculty, mismanagement by school administrators, and ineffective leadership and governance (De Grauwe, 2005). Ultimately, the effectiveness of schools ties back to their implementation of school-based management (Edge & Khamisi, 2012).

According to Buckridge and Guest (2007), as cited by Shonubi (2012), effective school leaders exhibit strong leadership and management skills that have a positive impact on student success. This includes a focus on fundamental subjects, creating a well-organized and conducive learning environment, implementing effective instructional strategies, coordinating educational programs, and providing guidance and support to teachers. Additionally, effective school leaders demonstrate a commitment to educational development, innovation, and mission-driven leadership while effectively communicating the school's vision with a focus on student support, assessment, and academic progress. Valentine and Prater (2011) noted that the role of school leaders has become increasingly complex due to changes in society, political expectations, and the nature of schools as organizations.

Conceptualizing the theories and concepts and integrating the empirical literature as well as the government policies, guidelines, and memorandum, Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the School Management and Strategic Plan for the Implementation of Face-to-Face Classes amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. Different learning modalities can be adopted by an educational institution in Misamis Oriental as promulgated by CHED and DEPED through their Memorandum Order and also after the result of the School-Based Assessment conducted by the stakeholders on the capability and status to support face-to-face classes. Through a Joint Memorandum between DOH, CHED, and DepEd, schools recommended establishing a Crisis Management Team in coordination with the Health Services Unit that will supervise the health protocol requirements Like Wearing Face masks, Physical Distancing, and Approval of Off-Campus Activity by LGU.

Figure 1: *Conceptual framework of the study*

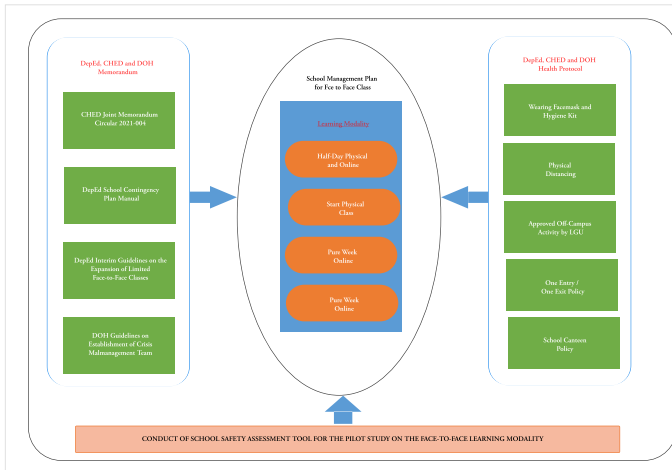
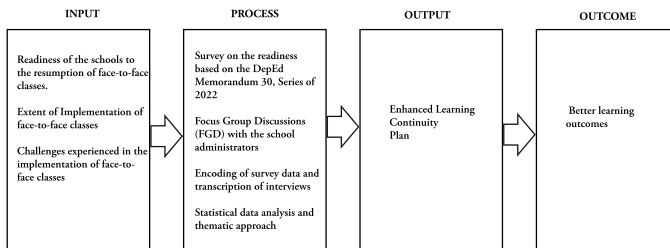


Figure 2: *Research flow using the Input Process Output Outcome (IPOO) model*



In this case study, the implementation and sustainability of face-to-face classes in the Magsaysay Districts of Misamis Oriental, Philippines, were examined using a multi-method approach. The study focused on three key inputs: the readiness of schools to resume face-to-face classes, the extent of implementation of these classes, and the challenges experienced during their implementation. The process involved conducting surveys to assess readiness based on the DepEd Memorandum 30, Series of 2022, and holding focus group discussions (FGD) with school administrators. DepEd Memorandum 30, Series of 2022, issued by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines, outlines the guidelines and protocols for the resumption of face-to-face classes in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This memorandum emphasizes the importance

of ensuring the safety and readiness of schools before reopening. It mandates a comprehensive assessment of school facilities, health and safety protocols, and the preparedness of teaching and non-teaching staff.

The survey data were encoded, interviews were transcribed, and both statistical data analysis and thematic analysis were applied to the collected information. The output of this comprehensive analysis was an Enhanced Learning Continuity Plan designed to address the identified challenges and improve the execution of face-to-face classes. Ultimately, these efforts resulted in better learning outcomes for students, demonstrating the effectiveness of a well-structured and carefully evaluated approach to resuming traditional classroom education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to describe the implementation and sustainability of the face-to-face modality in public secondary schools in the Magsaysay district, Division of Misamis Oriental. The specific objectives are to (1) identify the practices used by the district's schools to implement the plans and protocols for a face-to-face setup after the pandemic, (2) explore the opportunities experienced by the schools in the district while implementing the face-to-face modality, (3) examine the challenges faced by the schools in the district during the implementation of the face-to-face modality, (4) determine the extent to which the identified opportunities are manifested in the Magsaysay district, (5) assess the extent to which the identified challenges are manifested in the Magsaysay district, and (6) design an enhanced learning continuity plan for the Magsaysay district, Division of Misamis Oriental, based on the findings.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This case study utilized a mixed method of research. This well-known approach is deemed appropriate for this research because the objectives are answerable by both quantitative and qualitative evidence. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), problem statements 5 and 6 are answered using quantitative data. On the other hand, qualitative data are used to answer problem statements 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Further, triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data was done to enrich the discussions and their relevant implications. Triangulation in this context refers to the use of multiple data sources or methods to cross-verify and validate the findings, ensuring a more robust and credible understanding

of the research problem. By triangulating data, the study enhanced its validity and reliability, drawing on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to present a well-rounded analysis.

Research Site

The area of the study includes the two districts of Magsaysay in the Division of Misamis Oriental: Magsaysay Districts I with Cabalawan Integrated School (Cabalawan IS), Damayuhan National High School (DaNHS), and Kibungsod National High School (KNHS) as representing secondary schools; six secondary schools from Magsaysay District II. These are the Abunda Integrated School (AbIS), Artadi Integrated School (AIS), Consuelo National High School (CNHS), Kandiis Integrated School (KIS), Gumabon National High School (GNHS), and Tama Integrated School (TIS). In total, this study was conducted in nine (9) public secondary schools in the Division of Misamis Oriental.

Research Respondents

Nine (9) school heads from the two districts of the Division, Districts I and 2, served as the main study respondents of this research. Table 1 below shows the schools managed by the school heads.

Table 1

Description of the schools as represented by the school heads as study respondents

Name of Schools	Number of Teachers	Number of Non-teaching Personnel	Population of Students
Artadi Integrated School (District 2)	15	0	193
Cabalawan Integrated School (District 1)	13	0	181
Damayuhan National High School (District 1)	11	0	192
Kandiis Integrated School (District 2)	22	0	750
Kibungsod National High School (District 1)	54	3	931
Abunda Integrated School (District 2)	14	0	210
Consuelo National High School (District 2)	42	3	1,015
Gumabon National High School (District 2)	8	3	159
Tama Integrated School (District 2)	12	0	216

Instrumentation

Several guide questions were formulated to answer problems 2, 3, and 4. These open-ended questions were used to gather the experiences of the respondents regarding the practices done by the schools in the Division in implementing the plans and protocols under face-to-face set-up after the pandemic, the opportunities experienced by the schools in the Division implementing face-to-face modality, and the challenges experienced by the schools in the Division implementing face-to-face modality.

Moreover, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire was developed to determine the extent of the opportunities identified in problem three manifested in Magsaysay Districts, and the extent of the challenges identified in problem 4 manifested in Magsaysay Districts as rated by the respondents. Further, the guide questions and the Likert-scale questionnaire were validated through experts' opinions, including the validation from the panel members and the adviser.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study subscribed to the existing policies and laws that protect everyone's rights, including data privacy and confidentiality. Also, because of the ongoing restrictions on community quarantines, this study strictly adhered to the maximum health and safety measures enforced by the Inter-Agency Task Force for COVID-19 or IATF. To achieve these conditions, the following steps were undertaken: First, the researcher drafted and sent a request letter to the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) for permission to conduct the study. The said letter was routed through the designated public secondary district supervisors in compliance with the existing chain of communication and commands.

Second, after the approval of the letter requests, the researcher sent letters of invitation to the school heads or principals for a face-to-face interview. This was to give all respondents time to consider their participation in the offered interview. The research objectives, risks, and benefits were clearly discussed in the invitation. It was further emphasized to them that their participation was voluntary and that they were never forced to participate. If they had already promised to participate, it was clear that they still had the right to withdraw from the interview at any point in the process. This mechanism ensured the completeness of high ethical standards.

Third, when confirmations from the respondents were guaranteed, the researcher set the final schedule and other details of the interview. The interview was scheduled based on the respondents' availability and in the most convenient place.

Lastly, during the interview, the respondents were asked to read and sign the informed consent form before raising the first question. The researcher was always ready for assistance when the respondents wished for clarification. As research respondents, the school principals were informed that the conversation was recorded and kept confidential. The proponent further informed each respondent regarding the mechanism by which the data were safely handled. The respondents were assured they would be notified of the result they requested.

Research Ethics Protocol

As preliminary specified in the data gathering procedure, ethical considerations were prioritized. During the interview, the respondents were informed of the risks and benefits possibly implied by the interview. The research objectives and scope were also made transparent so that respondents were aware of the purposes and uses of the data they would share. As previously mentioned, all rights and privileges as research subjects were explained to the participants. These rights included anonymity from the study, confidentiality of data, the right to reject or withdraw from participation in the survey, and the right to demand the results of the study as part of the dissemination initiatives.

Statistical Treatment

Mean and Standard Deviation. These tools were used to describe the extent to which the opportunities identified in problem 3 manifested in Magsaysay Districts, and the challenges identified in problem 4 manifested in Magsaysay Districts. They are particularly useful for answering problems 5 and 6.

Thematic Analysis. This qualitative analytical technique was used to treat actual phrases or statements that would come out of the planned interviews. This technique generated relevant codes and categories so that emergent themes were extracted. In particular, this technique in treating qualitative data was used to reach sufficient answers for problem statements 2, 3, and 4.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What practices are used by the district schools to implement the plans and protocols under face-to-face setup after the pandemic?

Table 2

Practices of Selected Schools in the District Of Magsaysay in the Implementation of Full Face-To-Face Instructional Modality Following the COVID-19 Pandemic

Actual Responses from the School Heads	Thematic Practices
<p>-We strictly follow the health and safety protocols issued by DepEd. (SH 1) As usual, I ensured everyone diligently wore face masks and practiced social distancing. -The school strictly adhered to health protocols, such as putting up thermal scans at the entrance and exit gates, using face masks, and posting signage from the entrance to the exit gate. (SH 3) -We designated handwashing areas in several spots on the school premises. (SH 5) -We ensured that all learners and personnel in the school complied with the health protocols. (SH 4)</p>	<p>Compliance with Health and Safety Protocols</p>
<p>- If there are learners who cannot attend classes in person due to COVID-like symptoms, we use the modules instead. (SH 2) -We decided to utilize modular for those learners who can't attend to school due to sickness or financial reasons. (SH 6) -We maximized the modules we produced during the pandemic. Since some learners encounter health and psychological problems, they can use modules instead of reporting to the school in person. (SH 1) -Since not all learners can report to school in person, we have adopted modules for those who cannot attend school due to health reasons. (SH 7)</p>	<p>Adoption of Blended Learning</p>

<p>-We strongly work with the stakeholders, including the barangay officials, to ensure the sustainability of the reopening of schools for a full in-person modality. (SH 2)</p> <p>-We closely work with parents because they play an important role in making the face-to-face modality successful.</p> <p>-Especially during the onset of school reopening, we tapped the assistance of the local officials to ensure that health protocols and safety measures were strictly observed. (SH 8)</p> <p>-The schoolwork is done with the following groups: the barangay council, the barangay health staff, and the division office for safety protocols and some health essentials. (SH 4)</p>	<p>Collaboration with Stakeholders</p>
<p>-We conducted several interventions before the actual class lessons because of the evident learning losses during the pure modular. (SH 9)</p> <p>-We instructed teachers to conduct a series of reviews on the basic lessons, particularly in reading, writing, and numeracy, because of the learning loss during the pandemic. (SH 6)</p> <p>-The schools implemented several recovery learning strategies in compliance with the mandate of DepEd regarding the National Recovery Learning Plan. (SH 1)</p>	<p>Conduct of Remedial or Intervention Strategies</p>

Table 2 presents the practices of selected schools in Misamis Oriental Division in implementing full face-to-face instructions. It can be observed that the four emerging themes, namely, Compliance with health and safety protocols, Adoption of blended learning, Collaboration with stakeholders, and conduct of remedial strategies, are expected to be the practices of the schools from the ten ASEAN countries. It only indicates that even in the local setting, school and community efforts are powerful forces that fuel the continuity of education despite the educational crisis. In the Philippines, as mentioned in the previous discussions, a joint agreement between DepEd and DOH highlights the requirements of the schools in terms of health protocols and procedures before the resumption of face-to-face classes is permitted.

Collaboration with stakeholders, especially with the host Barangays or communities, is imperative as mandated by law. One of the major requirements (based on SSAT) for schools to allow the resumption of limited face-to-face classes was the guideline that the barangays hosting the said schools must have had no COVID-19 cases over the past 28 days. This condition demands the full cooperation of respective barangays. DepEd's (2021) press release cited Briones's statement regarding the concerted effort of local government units (LGUs) and external partners in supporting the Department of Education (DepEd) to provide digital learning assistance during the school year. DepEd-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) 001, s. 2021 specifies the main protocol

and standards for the expansion of face-to-face implementation, following the positive results from the pilot phase. The parameters stipulated under the said JMC exposed the role of teachers and parents.

Adopting blended learning and conducting remedial activities in compliance with the national learning recovery plan have also emerged as best practices in the districts of Misamis Oriental. These manifest that continuity of education, despite the challenges in the past, is the way forward while interventions are simultaneously implemented. Inquirer.net (2022) further noted that continuity of education has always been a priority for DepEd, especially with the lessons learned from the pandemic.

Problem 2. What are the opportunities experienced by the schools in the district in implementing face-to-face modality?

Table 3
Opportunities Experienced By Schools in the District Of Magsaysay in the Implementation of Full Face-To-Face Instructional Modality Following the COVID-19 Pandemic

Actual Responses from School Heads and Supervisors	Themes
<p>- The pandemic has left us with instructional lessons to always consider a blended learning approach for continuity of learning whenever another round of pandemics happens. (SH 6)</p> <p>-It was an opportunity that the schools in the division have already owned validated modules in case another pandemic happens. When a student is absent for health reasons, the modules can be used as an alternative. (SH 9)</p> <p>-Behind the huge adjustment in distance learning, the production of modules and MDL are opportunities to prepare for other untoward calamities that may happen in the future. (SH 1)</p>	<p>Use of Distance Learning as an Alternative Modality in times of Crises</p>

-At the school level, we experienced the spirit of Bayanihan when many of the parents, barangay officials, and LGU representatives extended their hands in the re-opening of classes. (SH 8) Positive Support from Stakeholders

- Parents are even involved in reopening and sustaining their children to return to school after the pandemic. They are more active in GPTA meetings than before. (SH 5)

-Good governance and the political will of the local officials have manifested in the recovery of the schools from the pandemic by providing technical and logistical support. (SH 2)

-Different sectors, including families, local officials, and even private donors, have welcomed the re-opening of classes just to make education continue. (SH 7)

-The new normal has improved the digital skills of the teachers and school heads. The use of Zoom and other platforms provided an opportunity to make communication easier and faster. (SH 3) Use of Digital Platforms in Meetings and Collaborations

-The sprout of digital operations has forced digital leadership, which has played a significant role in the current trends of the educational landscape. Many teachers have integrated technologies into lessons. (SH 4)

-The use of digital tools has been one of the primary opportunities that came out of the pandemic and onwards. The division has adopted the use of cloud computing and communication to make the operations more efficient and effective. (SH 9)

-One of the best things I observed was how committed the teachers are to their sworn profession. They sacrificed a lot to ensure the continuity of learning. (SH 5) Rise of Committed Teachers in the Profession

- Yes. In those difficult times, you can see who among the teachers is committed to the profession. Many of them found the joy of ensuring education amidst crises. That is indeed remarkable. (SH 6)

- Teachers are performing well beyond their functions and deliverables. (SH 3)

The importance of coordination and cooperation among stakeholders is observed in many schools. The school's compliance with the requirements results from the substantial involvement of the teachers, personnel, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. The Bayanihan spirit of "Pagtinabangay" of all the stakeholders has displayed a practical role in the continuity of learning amidst the global educational crisis. On the other note, challenges are expected, considering a tough transition from modular distance learning (Viner et al.,

2020). The notable participation of parents in school activities has been observed even during modular distance learning.

According to Panol et al. (2021), parents attend school to help their children submit modules, additional activities, and other performance duties. At home, parents assist their children in answering the modular activities and monitor their progress to ensure that all modules are completed. Parents who work provide their children with enough time to complete all of the tasks in their modules.

Tria (2020) cited that parents have an essential role in preparing their children physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially for the full implementation of face-to-face classes. The basic role of parents is to provide for the needs of the pupils before they go to school, such as school supplies and other things. Malolos et al. (2021) emphasized that with the excitement the students feel in the reopening of schools, parents need to provide them with what they need in school.

Moreover, parents exert efforts to collaborate with school officials and teachers to give their all-out support for achieving the school's vision and mission. Dangle and Sumaoang (2020) cited that parents experienced difficulties using printed modules. According to Handebo et al. (2021), the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of students were the worries of parents because of poor social interaction under distance education that prompted parents to get involved in school plans and activities.

However, despite the evident support displayed by the parents, students have to play a prime role in the continuity of learning following the disadvantages during the pandemic. Several challenges are shown in Table 4 below.

In addition, teachers remained very committed to their functions, as indicated by their high level of performance. As stated by the respondents, teacher performance has not been an issue in the resumption of face-to-face classes. As a matter of personal experience, the Department of Education (DepEd) has been providing teachers and other school personnel with the necessary support in preparation face-to-face despite the limitations of the budget and logistic resources. Some teachers have even gone the extra mile to implement remedial classes and some forms of intervention just to recover the learning loss during the pandemic. Lapada et al. (2020) mentioned that despite the hurdles in the early quarters of distance learning, teachers and school heads have continually doubled their efforts to provide quality education. On another important note, peers also acted as another source of support that the students enjoyed. Accordingly, through group communication with friends using social media platforms, each learner can gain strength and courage to continue despite the challenges (Kelly, 2020).

Problem 3. What are the challenges experienced by the schools in the administration in implementing face-to-face modality?

Table 4 shows the challenges experienced by the school administrators during the return of face-to-face classes. It can be observed from the given table that the responses are primarily directed towards the learners. This means that in Magsaysay districts, schools do not have serious problems in facilities, parental support, and collaboration; serious issues point to learners' learning competency and behavior.

Table 4

Challenges Met By the School Administration in the Implementation of Face-To-Face

Responses	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners felt it was difficult to understand the lessons. (SH 4) -Many learners struggle to cope with some of their lessons and class activities. (SH 9) -Their level of learning is showing a lack behind. (SH 1) -Learners cannot directly understand the discussions since their last year was in modular distance learning. (SH 2) -Learners have no retention, and the reading gap is so evident. (SH 3) -Most of the learners cannot read or comprehend. A learning gap is brought about by two years of modular distance learning. (SH 6) -Learners cannot directly understand the discussions since their last year was in modular distance learning. (SH 5) -The learners found it difficult to cope with the competencies. (SH 7) -Evident problems are related to the learner's reading comprehension or learning gap. (SH 8) -Common problems are learners' reading readiness, literacy, numeracy, and low level of learning. (SH 1) 	Difficulties with the lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some learners are anxious and lack motivation. (SH 6) -Common problems faced by the learners were in terms of adjustments in face-to-face classes. (SH 2) -They have difficulty on how they manage their mixed emotions. (SH 5) -Learners lack motivation and interest in class participation, especially in terms of reading readiness. (SH 7) -Many learners misbehave in the class. (SH 4) 	Behavioral problems

During the actual interview, one of the respondents said,

“The main problem in the classroom is the learners’ readiness towards the lessons. We have problems with reading, writing, and numeracy. It is very hard for the teachers to teach the intended or supposed lessons knowing that nothing will happen.”

Castroverde (2021) stated that Filipino learners have been experiencing problems with modular distance learning, or MDL because they are forced to work independently. Students are unprepared for the lessons because essential competency requisites are not fully acquired during modular distance learning (Vicente et al., 2023; Cruz, 2021). In addition, DepEd confirmed that the two years of MDL in the Philippines have been coupled with problems with student participation and performance caused by poor motivation and support. Without the physical guidance of their teachers, many Filipino learners have struggled to study independently (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020). Most of the learners from public schools were used to the culture where teachers physically guided and motivated learners to learn in the classroom. With the pandemic, motivation was indeed compromised, and consequently, the quality of education was negatively affected.

Along with the learning loss, learners have also displayed undesirable classroom behaviors. One of the study participants said,

“Learners lack motivation and interest in class participation, especially in their reading readiness. Many learners go to school maybe just to see their friends but are unprepared for the lessons. Some learners have felt it hard to adjust.”

The given statement indicates that learning continuity mainly relies on how the learners will cooperate in the efforts provided by the school to recover from the negative and broad impact of the pandemic. The situation further calls for the attention of the Department of Education (DepEd) to strategize ways so that the gap in the learning process will be addressed in a timely fashion. At the same time, the country continues to produce human capital in the world market.

The difficulties encountered by the learners after being promoted to the next year level are common problems that many teachers in the school encounter. In the study of Vicente et al. (2023), it was found that many learners are not ready for face-to-face lessons. Competency problems include numeracy, writing, and reading.

Sarmiento et al. (2021) highlighted that learners' readiness for the new normal is an evident issue for the early implementation of face-to-face classes. This collaborates with the experience of school heads to further support the learners' poor readiness for face-to-face classes. Accordingly, it is one of the potential results of the two-year situation where learners have not achieved the desired learning competencies and are yet to be promoted to the next grade level.

Learners have encountered difficulties catching up with the lessons in the higher years. If this gap is not addressed correctly, it will affect the quality of human capital in the country (Cruz, 2021). Actions can be taken to compensate for deficits in the learning competencies, and learners will acquire the skills needed to prepare for the labor market. In support of Castroverde (2021), it was highlighted that most learners have hardly endured the challenges starting the second quarter because of problems with mental and physical health. In addition, Cruz (2021) emphasized that many learners failed to sustain the required submissions under modular learning because of the difficulties encountered in answering the assessments and the lack of motivation to strive harder without the teacher's presence. Many Filipino learners posited high dependence on the physical guidance of the teachers and were not learning from distance learning. In effect, face-to-face has been a huge adjustment for many.

Moreover, Bordey (2021) states that learners' lack of preparedness and physical distancing were among the challenges experienced by teachers and learners during the pilot implementation of face-to-face classes. At a Senate hearing, DepEd Assistant Secretary Malcolm Garma informed the panel that the DepEd's assessment showed limited time to accommodate all learners' concerns, and the limited teaching and learning resources were some difficulties encountered during the pilot face-to-face classes. Recorded from the report, Garma said,

“The third challenge that we have gathered from the field, from those participating, was the [lack of preparedness] of learners for the face-to-face learning, especially the Kinder and the Grade 1 because ito pong (pupils in) Kinder and Grade 1, are the ones who have not tried schooling because of school closures. So medyo naninibago po yung mga bata to go to classes (So face-to-face classes are new to them),”

“Other challenges that were encountered in the field is the difficulty to hear the learners and the teachers, yung (the) teachers din because they are wearing the yung (the) audibility ng kanilang (of their) instruction is really hampered or impeded because of the muffled effect of the face mask. Yan po yung isang bagay na

titignan natin (That’s one of the factors that we assess), on how to address this issue”

Aside from the problems cited, learners and teachers were adjusting to the standard health protocols imposed by the government, including wearing face masks and face shields, the use of alcohol, and physical distancing.

Problem 4. To what extent are the opportunities identified in problem 3 manifested in Magsaysay Districts?

Table 5
Extent of Identified Opportunities As Manifested In Magsaysay Districts

Identified Opportunities	Mean	SD	Extent
1. Use of distance learning as an alternative modality in times of crisis.	4.86	0.14	Very High
2. Positive support from stakeholders	4.92	0.12	Very High
3. Use of digital platforms in meetings and collaborations.	4.90	0.11	Very High
4. Rise of committed teachers in the profession.	4.87	0.08	Very High
Overall	4.89	0.11	Very High

Note: Mean score falling within 1.00-1.79: Very Low, 1.80-2.59: Low, 2.60-3.39: Average, 3.40-4.19: High, 4.20-5.00: Very High

Table 5 shows the extent to which the identified opportunities manifested in the Magsaysay district. It can be observed that all the items are coupled with mean scores with a very high descriptive extent. These mean scores entail that distance learning as an alternative learning modality, positive support from stakeholders, the use of digital platforms in meetings and collaborations, and the rise of committed teachers in the profession are very highly manifested in the schools within the Magsaysay district. In effect, the overall mean of 4.89 further supports the extent to which the mentioned opportunities are manifested is very high.

The findings in Table 4 reflect the reality that exists within schools after the resumption of face-to-face classes. In the study of Llego (2022), it was reported that many schools in the Philippines, including those in rural areas,

have acquired lessons imprinted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the educational landscape. The production of valuable modules and learning guides is a persistent advantage when asynchronous and synchronous classes are implemented due to other calamities like heavy rains and even high heat indices. In addition, using digital tools for learning has become a significant part of modern education, otherwise called the new normal.

Problem 5. To what extent do the challenges identified in problem 4 manifest in Magsaysay Districts?

Table 6

Extent of Identified Challenges As Manifested In Magsaysay Districts

Identified Challenges	Mean	SD	Extent
1. Learner difficulties with the lessons.	4.98	0.04	Very High
2. Behavioral problems among the learners.	4.96	0.05	Very High
Overall	4.97	0.04	Very High

Note: Mean score falling within 1.00-1.79: Very Low, 1.80-2.59: Low, 2.60-3.39: Average, 3.40-4.19: High, 4.20-5.00: Very High

Table 6 presents the extent of the identified challenges as manifested in the Magsaysay district. Two challenges are presented and are very highly manifested, as supported by the mean scores of 4.98 and 4.96. Students' difficulties with face-to-face lessons are very evident in many schools, as experienced by many of them. This observation is widespread in the literature.

Vicente et al. (2023) highlighted that learning loss and behavioral problems are the undesirable and negative impacts of the two years of purely modular learning. Castroverde (2021) also noted that many learners did not meet the most essential learning competencies while learning from home. Because of the evident deficits in the learning competencies of the learners, the Department of Education (DepEd), under the leadership of Vice President Sara Z. Duterte, who serves as the Education Secretary in a concurrent capacity, adopted the National Learning Recovery Plan (NLRP). As part of the NLRP, the National Learning Camp (NLC), an end-of-school-year voluntary program aimed at providing enrichment, consolidation, and intervention sessions for learners, was conducted on July 24, 2023. Accordingly, the NLC, DepEd said, has a two-fold purpose: to improve learning outcomes and support teachers in teaching better. "The initiative aims to create a camp-like atmosphere by integrating fun and engaging activities to foster learner interests, socio-emotional skills, personal growth, and

character development,” DepEd explained.

However, nearly one year after the implementation of the NLRP reports on its possible progress and status have not been made available to the public. However, teachers’ experiences can speak of the least learned competencies of many learners in numeracy and reading. In particular, many math teachers encountered cases of learners who do not know basic integer operations but are now in the stage of learning advanced algebra. In terms of reading, a national news report revealed that a significant number of senior high school students demonstrate poor reading comprehension. The study basically answers the question: Where has the NLRP gone so far in reversing the learning losses brought about by the pandemic? This question is highly considered in the enhanced learning continuity plan that is proposed in this paper.

Problem 6. Based on the findings, what enhanced learning continuity plan can be designed for Magsaysay District, Division of Misamis Oriental?

Rationale

Based on the significant findings presented in the discussions above, an Enhanced Learning Continuity Plan is proposed for the Magsaysay District, Division of Misamis Oriental, at this moment. The term “enhanced” is used because of the identified gaps in the effectiveness of the current national learning recovery program implemented by DepEd. As specified, there has been limited information about the status of the recovery efforts. However, experiences from teachers and school heads indicate significant competency gaps among learners in numeracy, reading, and writing. The proposed Enhanced Learning Continuity Plan includes comprehensive monitoring to ensure timely updates on areas needing improvement and to provide immediate solutions.

Furthermore, it incorporates strategies to address behavioral development, recognizing that positive behavior and social-emotional learning are crucial effective education. In addition to the pandemic, the plan addresses other risks such as extreme heat index, El Niño, La Niña, and peace and order issues, ensuring a resilient educational system. This comprehensive plan is meticulously documented to align with DepEd’s institutional format, enhancing clarity and facilitating effective implementation.

Table 7 contains the details of this plan, which aims to support both academic and behavioral growth among learners.

Table 7
Proposed Enhanced Learning Continuity Plan

Observed Gaps	Objectives	Plan of Action	Success Indicators	Means of verification	Persons Involved	Time frame	Source of Funds	Expected outcome
Absence of regular monitoring of the implementation of the DepEd's National Learning Recovery Plan	To implement timely monitoring of the learnings that are already recovered along with the implementation of the NLRP	Conduct regular monitoring of the competencies that have already been recovered and the competencies that remained least learned in a timely fashion	100% recovery of the learning loss will be closely monitored and reported.	Quarterly audit, monitoring, and reporting of the status of accomplishments of NLRP in terms of the percentage of the recovered competencies through time.	Teachers/Learners/ GPTA/ School administrators	July 1-19, 2024	20,768 MO OE	Sustainable monitoring reports of the learning recovery from the documented learning loss during distance learning
The distance learning modality contributed to evident learning gaps in reading, writing, and numeracy skills.	To recover the learning loss by implementing school-based initiatives in compliance with the mandates behind the NLRP	Implementation of monthly remedial or intervention sessions for all learners considering the results from the monitoring reports	90-100% of the learners will be able to acquire the desired learning competencies by 2025	Quarterly assessment of the learners' progress on the identified least learned competencies as indicators of learning loss.	Teachers/Learners/ GPTA/ School administrators	Aug to Oct 2024	25,000 MO OE	Complete recovery from the learning loss and continual improvement in the quality of learners
Behavioral problems manifested by the students potentially affect the learning process.	Promote better classroom and school behavior among learners to achieve better academic performance.	Incorporation of encouragement or moral recovery lessons from the classroom activities and conduct of moral recovery-promoting activities.	90-100% of the students or learners will manifest better behavioral dispositions in the classroom and in schools	Quarterly report cards from the teachers	Teachers and school heads	Year Round	N/A	Improve the behavioral disposition of the learners inside and outside the classroom

Uncertain preparedness of the schools for the risks of calamities such as extreme heat index, La Nina, Earth quake, and others	To improve the preparedness of the school constituents against disaster and prepare educational modalities that will ensure learning continuity in the event of unexpected calamities	Inclusion of educational flexibilities such as blended learning in the disaster preparedness and risk reduction plan of the schools	100% continuity of learning amidst other forms of pandemic or crisis	Every School Year	Teachers/ Learners/ GPTA/ School administrators	Every school assessment	100,000 MO OE	Highly flexible educational delivery that accounts for risk from calamities and crisis
--	---	---	--	-------------------	---	-------------------------	---------------	--

The limitations of this study include a focus on a specific rural area, Magsaysay Districts, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different contextual factors. The reliance on a mixed-methods approach, while providing rich insights, may also introduce subjectivity and potential biases in data interpretation. Additionally, the study’s sample size and scope may impact the validity of the conclusions drawn, as it may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the educational landscape. These limitations could affect the study’s overall validity, generalizability to broader contexts, and reproducibility of results in different rural settings or educational environments.

CONCLUSIONS

The new knowledge contribution of this study lies in its in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities specific to the implementation of face-to-face learning in Magsaysay Districts, Misamis Oriental, Philippines, providing valuable insights for enhancing educational continuity and student success in rural areas.

Based on the findings presented, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the Magsaysay district supports efforts to ensure the continuity of education, as evidenced by the best practices common to ASEAN schools. Secondly, the school closures have led to significant improvements in the educational landscapes of ASEAN countries, particularly in the utilization of technology in instructional modalities and blended learning in response to natural calamities. Thirdly, challenges in implementing face-to-face learning are evident in the Magsaysay district, mainly connected to learners’ learning loss. Fourthly, the identified opportunities can be optimized to improve the quality of education

in the country. Additionally, the identified challenges confirm existing literature, particularly regarding learning loss among learners. Lastly, an enhanced learning continuity plan is needed to address the gaps in the existing implementation of the National Learning Recovery Plan (NLRP).

The study's findings contribute to policy development by offering valuable insights for policymakers in developing tailored policies and strategies to support successful and sustainable in-person instruction in rural areas, emphasizing the importance of customized approaches and continuous support for effective educational outcomes.

Future research directions could include evaluating the long-term impact of the enhanced learning continuity plan in Magsaysay Districts on student outcomes, exploring the role of community engagement in supporting successful face-to-face class implementation, and conducting comparative studies across rural regions in the Philippines to identify common challenges and best practices for educational continuity post-pandemic.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

These practical translational research initiatives can improve the quality and sustainability of face-to-face education in rural areas of the Philippines, address the challenges identified in the study, and maximize student success opportunities. (1) Contextualized Remedial Programs: Create focused programs that close the reading and numeracy learning gaps affecting rural pupils, emphasizing comprehension and fundamental abilities. (2) Teacher Support and Training: To improve in-person instruction, train instructors continuously in technology integration, classroom management, and effective teaching tactics for a diverse student body. (3) Community Engagement: To meet the special needs of rural students, provide resources, establish a supportive learning environment, and foster connections with parents, local politicians, and community members. (4) Technology Integration: Upgrade rural schools' technological infrastructure and instruct instructors and students on using digital tools for communication and learning. (5) Policy Advocacy: Promote legislation that will support the implementation of the Enhanced Learning Environment by increasing financing for teacher training programs, infrastructure development, and resources in rural education.

LITERATURE CITED

- Bolam, R. (1999). Educational administration, leadership and management: towards a research agenda. *Educational management: Redefining theory, policy and practice*, 193-205.
- Bordey, H. (2021, December 17). Learner preparedness among hurdles in pilot in-person classes. *GMA News Online*. <https://tinyurl.com/4t6ecr67>
- Buckridge, M., & Guest, R. (2007). A conversation about pedagogical responses to increased diversity in university classrooms. *High Education Research & Development*, 26(2), 133-146.
- Bush, T., Glover, D., Bischoff, T., Moloi, K., Heystek, J., & Joubert, R. (2006). School leadership, management and governance in South Africa: A systematic literature review. *Johannesburg: Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance*.
- Castroverde, F., & Acala, M. (2021). Modular distance learning modality: Challenges of teachers in teaching amid the Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 10(8), 7-15.
- CHED. (2020). CHED COVID-19 ADVISORY NO. 3. <https://tinyurl.com/trc8vm2d>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. *Sage publications*.
- Cruz, K. (2021). Distance learning struggle continues. *The Manila Times*.
- Dangle, Y. R. P., & Sumaoang, J. D. (2020, November). The implementation of modular distance learning in the Philippine secondary public schools. In *3rd International Conference on Advanced Research in Teaching and Education* (Vol. 100, p. 108).
- De Grauwe, A. (2005). School-based management (SBM): Does it improve quality. *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, 1-14.

- Dep Ed Memorandum # 30, s. 2022. Dissemination of the Revised School Safety Assessment Tool for the Progressive Expansion of the Face-to-Face Classes. <https://shorturl.at/1MAN8>
- DepEd (2021). Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of Limited Face-to-Face Learning Modality. https://www.deped.gov.ph/wpcontent/uploads/2021/09/DEPED-DOH-JMC-No.-01-s.-2021_.pdf.
- DepEd. (2020). Official Statement Department of Education. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2020/05/06/official-statement-2>
- Edge, K., & Khamsi, K. (2012). International school partnerships as a vehicle for global education: student perspectives. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 32(4), 455-472.
- Handebo, S., Harrati, N., Chakroun, M., & Alharbi, A. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on education: Challenges for e-learning in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 11(1), 78-85.
- Inah, E. N. (2015). Peran komunikasi dalam interaksi guru dan siswa. *AL-TADIB: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Kependidikan*, 8(2), 150-167.
- Inquirer.net (2022, February 07). DepEd allows more grade levels to join the 'progressive expansion' of physical classes. <https://tinyurl.com/bde58ayf>
- Kavrayici, O., & Kesin, E. (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Businesses and Supply Chain Operations. *International Journal of Operations and Logistics Management*, 2(1), 1-16.
- Kelly, M. (2020). As COVID-19 pushes classes online, some students are caught in the broadband gap. *The Verge*, 5.
- Lapada, A. A., Miguel, F. F., Robledo, D. A. R., & Alam, Z. F. (2020). Teachers' COVID-19 awareness, distance learning education experiences, and perceptions towards institutional readiness and challenges. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching, and Educational Research*, 19(6).
- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

- Llego, M. A. (2022). DepEd School Contingency Plan Manual for the Implementation of Limited Face to Face Classes. <https://tinyurl.com/yhdamddt>
- Malolos, G. Z. C., Baron, M. B. C., Apat, F. A. J., Sagsagat, H. A. A., Pasco, P. B. M., Aportadera, E. T. C. L., ... & Lucero-Prisno III, D. E. (2021). Mental health and well-being of children in the Philippine setting during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health promotion perspectives, 11*(3), 267.
- Morgan, S. L. (2005). On the edge of commitment: Educational attainment and race in the United States. *Stanford University Press*.
- No, D. O. (83). s. 2012. Implementing Guidelines on the Revised School-Based Management (SBM) Framework. *Assessment Process and Tool (APAT)*.
- Panol, R. F., Caballes, D. G., Javillonar, M. G., Vasquez, A. G., & Valdez, M. R. (2021). Parental involvement in students' completion of learning tasks in Science. *Int. J. Sci. Res. in Multidisciplinary Studies Vol, 7*(5).
- Psychosocial, P. A. H. O. (2020). Mental health considerations during COVID-19 outbreak.
- Sarmiento, P. J. D., Sarmiento, C. L. T., & Tolentino, R. L. B. (2021). Face-to-face classes during COVID-19: a call for deliberate and well-planned school health protocols in the Philippine context. *Journal of Public Health, 43*(2), e305-e306.
- Schwab, K., & Malleret, T. (2020, July). COVID-19: The great reset. Geneva: Forum publishing.
- Shonubi, O. K. (2012). Propagation of Education Values through Proverb. *International Journal of Learning, 18*(10).
- Stone, J. E., & Bruce, G. S. (2007). Effective Schools, Common Practices. *Arlington: ECF*.
- Tria, J. Z. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of education in the Philippines: The new normal. *International Journal of Pedagogical Development and Lifelong Learning, 1*(1), 2-4.

- Valentine, J. W., & Prater, M. (2011). Instructional, transformational, and managerial leadership and student achievement: High school principals make a difference. *NASSP bulletin*, 95(1), 5-30.
- Vicente, R. S., Flores, L. C., Almagro, R. E., Amora, M. R. V., & Lopez, J. P. (2023). The Best Practices of Financial Management in Education: A Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 7(8), 387-400.
- Viner, R. M., Russell, S. J., Croker, H., Packer, J., Ward, J., Stansfield, C., ... & Booy, R. (2020). School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: a rapid systematic review. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(5), 397-404.