

Psychological Constraints of the Post-Pandemic Learning and Development Delivery Modalities: Narratives of School Principals

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Abstract: This qualitative research situated in the School Division of Guimaras delves into the narratives and experiences of five (5) school principals, with insights from the Division Human Resource Training and Development Focal Person. Grounded in Hustler's cognitive psychological and professional development theories and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, the study explores alternative approaches to continuous professional development, aiming to enhance teacher learning effectively. Using a validated researcher-made interview guide, the study gathered data on learning and development initiatives, participant practices, and challenges faced during the pandemic. The findings revealed that school principals navigated the challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions by crafting and implementing Basic Education-Learning Continuity plans. They addressed learning and development modalities by creating School Plans for Professional Development, enabling them to conduct various activities tailored to teachers' needs. Four delivery modalities were employed: Learning Action Cell, Relationship and Discussion-based Learning, Job-Embedded Learning, and Formal Learning. Each modality had its unique practices and challenges, reflecting the diverse contexts and needs of the school principals. To overcome these challenges, school principals demonstrated resilience leadership skills, characterized by passion, vision, creativity, interaction, and empowerment. Building upon existing theories and the 70-20-10 Learning Model, the study introduced the Learning and Development Model for Better Learning Outcomes (LDM for BLOs). This model emphasizes the roles of self-directed and interactive learners for both teachers and school principals in learning and development activities. The study contributes significantly to the field by introducing the Theory of Educational Intention and the LDM for BLOs, both of which warrant further exploration in future research. These findings shed light on effective strategies for enhancing teacher professional development and learning outcomes in challenging contexts.

Keywords: *school principals, learning modality, new normal, continuity plan, post-pandemic.*

1. Introduction

Education is considered a fundamental human right that should be accessible to people throughout their lives, with an emphasis on maintaining high quality (UNESCO, 2013). Quality education is a potent driver of development and has a significant impact on poverty reduction, health improvement, gender equality, peace, and stability (World Bank, 2022). Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) places importance on inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education, as well as lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015).

Teachers, like professionals in any field, require continuous professional development to enhance their skills (Popova et al, 2018). This development includes improving organization and planning (Queens University of

Charlotte, 2022), staying updated on research about how children learn, emerging classroom technology, and new curriculum resources (Edutopia, 2008). It boosts teachers' confidence and adaptability, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes (Queens University of Charlotte, 2022). William (2016) asserts that teachers, including school principals, should continuously strive for improvement, not because they are inadequate but because they can always become better. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasize that teacher professional development is crucial to equip students with the complex skills needed for the 21st century.

UNESCO (2015) emphasizes that technology should be integrated into the teacher development process rather than merely pushing it into classrooms. Building teachers' capacity has a lasting impact on education and child development. Teacher identity and agency play essential roles in online professional development, with course accessibility and reflective opportunities being beneficial factors (Howard, 2021).

Administrators or school principals should offer follow-up practice opportunities to support teachers in their professional development (Zhao et al., 2019). Various professional development programs are implemented in schools, including informal and formal programs (Henry & Namhla, 2019). Institutional policies also shape teachers' adaptation to online teaching, contingent on factors like IT infrastructure, support, and ongoing education (Alhawsawi & Jawhar, 2021).

Context and Background of the Study

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the National Academy of Teachers of the Philippines (NEAP) play crucial roles in providing teacher training and workshops. DepEd is committed to improving education quality and recognizes the need to strengthen the professional development of its 800,000 teachers (DepEd, 2019). This commitment aligns with its vision of continuous improvement to better serve stakeholders (DepEd, 2013). However, the landscape of teacher development in the Philippines is complex, with various units implementing training programs, leading to a lack of clear direction and metrics. To address these challenges, DepEd delayed the start of classes twice to allow for adequate preparation. Education Secretary Revesy Escobedo acknowledged that training for teachers on correspondence education had not been completed for all public schools, but progress was ongoing under NEAP. Teachers were expected to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies in various distance learning models, including printed modules, offline digital modules, and online, television, and radio lessons (Magsambol, 2020).

DepEd emphasizes the importance of providing professional development programs that meet the needs of teachers and administrators across different platforms and methods, including formal and on-the-job training (DepEd, 2019). These platforms can take various forms, such as face-to-face, synchronous online, asynchronous online, or modular approaches, and encompass formal and work-based learning methods (Rubens, 2021). The study's author, with 14 years of experience as a school head, outlines various learning and development activities in their schools, including in-service training, learning action cells, coaching, and job-embedded learning opportunities. The division provided basic knowledge and skills for various tasks, but some aspects, like relationship and discussion-based learning and job-embedded learning.

2. Objectives

The present study sought to explore the narratives of school principals on the implementation, practices, and challenges of the learning and development delivery modalities in the new normal. The following research questions were addressed in the current study: 1. How do the school principals manage the school operations and the implementation of learning and development delivery modalities amid the COVID-19 restrictions? 2. What are the school principals' practices and challenges in the implementation of learning and development delivery modalities such as Learning Action Cell (LAC), Relationship and Discussion-based Learning (RDL), and Job-Embedded Learning (JEL), and Formal Learning (FL)?

3. Methods

This study is a qualitative exploration of the implementation of learning and development modalities, the practices involved, and the challenges encountered by participants within the Schools Division of Guimaras,

particularly during the "new normal" brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative research, as described by Patton (2002), involves observing, questioning, and analyzing documents to understand what people do, know, think, and feel. It allows for in-depth exploration of the research problem, often employing open-ended questions to capture diverse viewpoints without imposing predefined survey categories.

The research is firmly rooted in the epistemology of constructivism, specifically social constructivism, which asserts that all knowledge and meaningful reality are constructed through human action and interactions, with meanings being socially constructed and transmitted. Within this framework, school leaders play a pivotal role in shaping the meaning and implementation of learning and development methods. Social constructionism further underscores the idea that people actively create social worlds, and much of what is considered objective reality is socially constructed and subject to change as societal norms evolve. The practices, implementation, and challenges of schools in delivering different learning and development modalities may depend on the perceptions, participation, and engagement of individuals within these activities.

The theoretical perspective supporting this narrative research is interpretivism, seeking culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social lifeworld. Interpretive qualitative research, as described by Dudovsky (2011), relies on a naturalistic approach to data collection, such as interviews and observations, and often involves secondary data analysis.

Narrative research is central to this study, with stories serving as raw data. These stories are collected through various methods, including interviews, to gain insights into participants' experiences. The analysis process involves coding transcripts, identifying patterns and themes within the stories, and exploring how these elements interact and relate to each other.

The study conducted face-to-face virtual interviews, adhering to COVID-19 restrictions, and obtained consent from participants before the interviews. A general interview approach was employed, utilizing a questionnaire structure to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant topics. Interview transcripts were coded in vivo or based on participants' language, and the resulting data were organized into categories and themes. The study ultimately presents findings through stories or anecdotes.

Respondents

Narrative research involves collecting personal experiences, causes, and consequences of events from individuals, typically through in-depth interviews and multiple interactions. Researchers often interview between 5 to 25 people who have experienced the phenomenon of interest, aiming to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject (Polkinghorne, 1989).

To ensure validity and reliability in narrative research, a triangulation strategy is employed. Triangulation entails using multiple data sources to create a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation. In this study, for instance, in-depth interviews with five principals and their respective schools' professional development plans were utilized to enhance the research's validity and reliability (Creswell, 2007).

Ethical considerations, including voluntary participation and maintaining a supportive relationship with participants, were paramount in the research process. Consulting with research panel members led to the decision that five participants would still be adequate and aligned with Polkinghorne's recommended range, thus ensuring the ethical conduct of qualitative research (Saldaña, 2011).

The five (5) school principals in this study have established the standards or benchmarks for learning and development implementation within the Schools Division of Guimaras, serving as reference points for evaluating other schools. The researcher carefully selected these participants based on specific criteria to ensure they were the most suitable individuals to provide detailed insights into the implementation of learning and development modalities, their practices in executing each modality, and the challenges faced in delivering these modalities at both the school and division levels.

Procedures of the Study

Before commencing the study, the researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Guimaras, with the research adviser's signed letter. Following approval, the researcher contacted six identified school principals and the division focal person, outlining the interview procedures, securing verbal consent, and discussing document preparation and submission. One school head declined participation due to ongoing dissertation work, which was respected, leaving five school principals and the focal person as participants.

Upon obtaining their consent and agreement, the researcher provided the approved letter, consent forms, and interview guide via Messenger a week before the virtual interview. Funds were provided two days before the interview to cover communication expenses. Microsoft Teams Application was chosen as the communication platform for its convenience, accessibility, recording capabilities, and adherence to COVID-19 safety measures.

During the virtual interview, participants were informed about the recording, and proceedings began after obtaining their consent. Questions covered their backgrounds, management of school operations during COVID-19, learning and development modalities, implementation practices, and encountered challenges. Follow-up questions were asked for clarity, and participants were asked to photograph necessary documents for submission.

After the interview, recordings were transcribed, coded, and categorized into patterns, major categories, and themes for analysis. The participants' generosity, cooperation, and time were acknowledged and appreciated by the researcher.

In qualitative research, data analysis is systematically conducted to search for and organize various materials, including interview transcripts, observation notes, and other non-textual data, gathered by the researcher. This analytical process aims to enhance the researcher's comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation, as outlined by Bogdan and Biklen in 1982. Narrative analysis, a specific approach, is utilized to examine data acquired from in-depth interviews and reviews of relevant documents. When conducting a narrative study, it is essential to analyze the data with a focus on the narrative's content, the chronological sequence of events, and pivotal moments or realizations, as emphasized by Creswell in 2007. The data analysis procedure involves the collection or reconstruction of data in a manner that is meaningful, clear, and comprehensive, all while maintaining fidelity to the accounts provided by the research participants, as highlighted by Noble and Smith in 2014.

4. Results and Discussion

In this research, five school principals from the DepEd Schools Division of Guimaras shared their personal and educational experiences through narratives. These experiences have played a crucial role in shaping or reshaping their cognitive, psychological, and professional development. Table 1 presents the diverse backgrounds of the school principals.

Table 1. Profile Of The School Principals

School Principals	Description	Profile
LG	The Product of Persistence	LG, a 55-year-old educational leader, is married to a retired seaman and is a mother of three children. Unfortunately, her eldest child passed away several years ago, her second child is currently in their third year of college, and her youngest child is in Grade 12. LG's family lives less than a kilometer away from her workplace, Makabuhay Central School, where she holds the position of School Principal II. In this role, she oversees the work of 42 teachers. LG has served as a school principal for 18 years.
Leam	The Hopeful Father	Leam, a 54-year-old educational administrator, is married to a master teacher at the local high school. With 24 years of experience, he has been serving as a school principal for an extended period. Currently holding the position of School

		Principal II at Makabayan Central School, Leam oversees the work of 20 teachers. Throughout his career, he has amassed a wealth of learning and development experiences, including involvement in regional training activities in various capacities such as planning, organizing, monitoring, evaluating, and serving as a resource person, all the way down to the district level.
Assie	The Consistent Achiever	Assie, at 47 years of age, holds the position of school principal and is married to a seafarer. Assie's educational background is rooted in her local community, where she achieved second honors during her elementary education in 1986 and emerged as the first honorable mention upon completing her secondary education at the barangay high school in 1991. With eight years of experience under her belt, she serves as School Principal II at Makabansa Elementary School, where she provides guidance to 23 teachers.
Aliza	The Planner	Aliza, aged 49, holds the position of school head and is married to a seafarer, with two children. Her family's residence is conveniently located less than a kilometer from her place of work, Makakalikasan Central School, where she assumes the role of School Principal II, overseeing the activities of 17 teachers. With a notable 14-year tenure as a school principal and a fully attained doctoral degree, she boasts a wealth of experience in learning and development. Her journey has encompassed participation in training programs from the school to the national level, serving as a resource person up to the division level, and taking on roles as a facilitator, planner, organizer, monitor, and evaluator at the district level.
Madam	The Chief's Wife	Madam, aged 52, has been married for 21 years to the head of one of the two units within the school's division and is the mother of their only child. She currently holds the position of school principal at Makatao Elementary School, where she oversees a staff of 19 teachers. She is currently in her 15th year serving as a school head.

Managing School Operations and Implementation of Learning and Development Delivery Modalities amid COVID-19 Restrictions

The pivotal role of school leaders has been especially evident during the global COVID-19 pandemic, characterized by widespread lockdowns and school closures worldwide. These leaders were tasked with orchestrating measures to ensure the continuity of education during these lockdowns and closures. Additionally, they bore the responsibility of establishing a safe learning environment once schools were permitted to reopen (Whang, 2021). Table 2 presents their narrated descriptions of managing school operations and implementation of learning and development delivery modalities amid COVID-19 restrictions.

Table 2. Narratives Of School Principals On Managing School Operations And Implementation Of Learning And Development Delivery Modalities Amid Covid-19 Restrictions

Participants	Narrative
LG	In my capacity as the leader, I am physically present on the premises every day, provided I am not subject to quarantine measures. The period of quarantine presented significant difficulties because there were outstanding matters that required our attention and signatures, particularly for office-related transactions. Our ability to attend meetings was also restricted, except when they were conducted virtually. On occasion, I delegated the authority to sign minor documents to the teacher-in-charge. However, for more significant documents, they had to be transported to my residence for my signature.
Leam	My teachers provided recommendations, such as avoiding in-person interactions and waiting for conditions to improve. They demonstrated cooperation by making preparations, including themselves, their classrooms, and our shared workspace. They exhibited a high level of collaboration in implementing our strategies.

Assie	As a leader, the pandemic posed a significant challenge. It was a demanding situation for us as school principals, but it motivated me to develop resilience and maintain hope. I remained dedicated to achieving the best results for our students, our educators, and our entire school community. We had to confront the pandemic's challenges directly and determine the best course of action to assist our institution.
Aliza	We typically collaborate with teachers to devise effective strategies for our students. However, our learners tend to struggle when studying independently, without the guidance of adults or teachers. In response, our teachers established a group chat to facilitate communication and connection with the students. Nevertheless, it's important to note that many of our students lack access to electronic devices. To address this issue, we've appointed a focal person in each community (<i>purok</i>) to establish communication with parents and students who don't have access to gadgets. These focal persons play a crucial role in disseminating information and instructions to both learners and parents.
Madam	We engage in extensive discussions to effectively implement this educational delivery for our students. Initially, we convened meetings involving both teachers and, at that time, some parents from each grade level. The purpose was to collectively strategize the next steps in the execution of this educational delivery approach. Consequently, we formulated the school learning continuity plan. Our initial focus was on guiding teachers in implementing this new service delivery method for students. We also addressed critical procedures and measures to ensure the safe and healthy delivery of learning services to teachers, students, staff, parents, and other stakeholders.

This research was conducted one year after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, which significantly impacted the country's educational system. I conducted interviews with participants, utilizing the modular distance learning delivery method, which was drawing to a close. Their recollections of experiences from the early days of the pandemic up to the time of the interviews were characterized by spontaneity and relaxation, yet tinged with intense emotions. These emotions encompassed the challenges they faced, moments of triumph over adversity, and an optimistic outlook for the upcoming school year. School principals have faced immense pressure to swiftly devise emergency education responses during the pandemic, often leaving them with limited time and energy to address immediate issues (Whang, 2021).

Practices and Challenges in the Implementation of Learning and Development Delivery Modalities

In the implementation of Learning and Development Delivery Modalities, school principals have common and unique practices and challenges in the Learning Action Cell, in Relationship and Discussion-based Learning, Job-Embedded Learning, and Formal Learning as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Common Or Unique Practices And Challenges In The Implementation of Learning And Development Delivery Modalities

Common or Unique Practices and/or Challenges	Narratives from School Principals
Learning Action Cell	In my school, we used to conduct Learning Action Cell (LAC) meetings monthly, typically in a face-to-face format. However, due to the ongoing pandemic, we have adjusted our schedule. Currently, LAC meetings are held every two to three months, unless there is an urgent need. For instance, if there's a new DepEd order or memo that requires immediate attention because our teachers require it, we convene while strictly adhering to social distancing and health protocols.
Relationship and Discussion-based Learning	Our usual practice is to pair experienced teachers with those who have strong skills and those who show potential. The more experienced teacher serves as a guide or mentor to the less experienced one, helping them work towards their goals. In my school, I have three master teachers who take on the role of coaching teachers in the primary grades. Fortunately, the teachers in these grades are very receptive to

	coaching and have a positive attitude towards it.
Job-Embedded Learning	We hold weekly conferences immediately after distributing modules to address any issues or concerns that parents may have. While we prefer face-to-face meetings, we maintain social distancing throughout the discussions. This is because, during online discussions with teachers through group chats (GCs), some issues and concerns might inadvertently be overlooked. In such cases, it's more effective to have a brief in-person meeting.
Formal Learning	We are currently executing structured educational activities such as in-service training, conferences, workshops, seminars, and, of course, motivating our teachers to enroll in graduate or post-graduate programs.

The Department of Education (DepEd), as a public educational institution, has been dedicated to enhancing its services to stakeholders, particularly since the onset of the 2020 pandemic. It has consistently provided guidance and support to its schools by issuing memoranda and orders. To facilitate the transition to the new normal in education delivery, DepEd released a field memorandum titled "Suggested Strategies in Implementing Distance Learning Delivery Modalities (DLDM) for School Year 2020-2021" (Memorandum DM-CI-2020-00162).

Furthermore, teachers' acceptance of new responsibilities demonstrates their willingness to engage in continuous learning while on the job. They actively seek to gain fresh insights and improve themselves by regularly reflecting on and evaluating their work practices. This behavior aligns with the findings of Palanas (2020), who identified it as a contributing factor to the successful learning and development of teachers.

In addition to these efforts, DepEd has conducted in-service training as a regular part of its Annual Calendar of Activities. Prior to the pandemic, this training occurred once per school year, typically during the semester break. However, during the initial year of the pandemic, it was conducted three times in a school year: in December 2020, February 2021, and March 2021 (DepEd, 2020; DepEd, 2021).

The Learning and Development Model for Better Learning Outcomes (LDM for BLOs) and The Theory of Educational Intention (TEI)

The findings of this study offer compelling evidence that school administrators have implemented a variety of learning and development delivery methods to advance the ongoing professional growth of their teaching staff, even in the face of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The manner in which these methods are put into practice is contingent on the leadership and managerial capabilities of school principals, the specific circumstances and needs of their educators, with a keen emphasis on their safety and well-being, and the accessibility of resources at their disposal. The narratives provided by these school leaders also reflect their resilience and leadership acumen in addressing the obstacles encountered during implementation and in devising actionable strategies for enhancing their current practices to align with DepEd's commitment to continual improvement in serving their stakeholders more effectively.

Drawing from these narratives and the established 70-20-10 learning models followed by DepEd, a novel Learning and Development (L & D) Model has been formulated, as depicted in Figure 1.

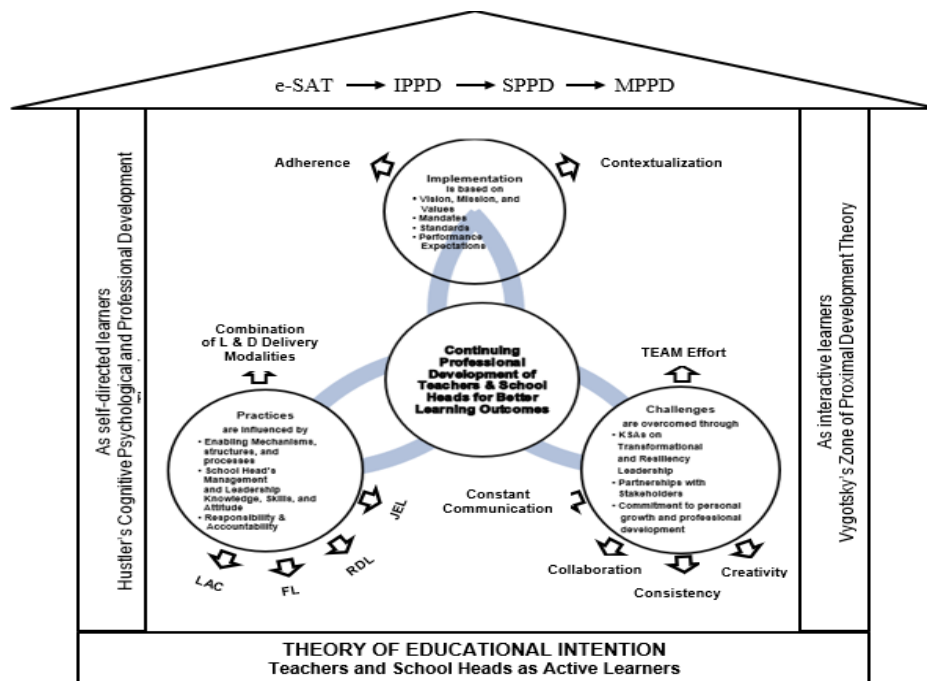


Figure 1. Learning And Development Model For Better Learning Outcomes (Ldm For Blo)

As indicated in Figure 1, The Learning and Development Model for Enhanced Learning Outcomes (LDM for ELOs) is rooted in the Theory of Educational Intention, wherein educators and school leaders make deliberate choices to actively participate in various learning and development initiatives. Here, "intention" is defined as a firm resolve to act in a specific manner (Merriam-Webster, 2022) and the mental state that drives an individual to engage in an action. Given their professionalism and status as adult learners, these teachers and school administrators possess the competence, expertise, and experience within the realm of education, and their commitment to their profession is already well-established.

The decision to be an active or passive learner in any learning and development endeavor lies with the individual concerned. Their actions before, during, and after these learning experiences are shaped by their intentions, which can be either genuine and enduring or insincere and fleeting. When their intentions are authentic, they will exhibit active engagement that extends beyond the learning environment and becomes an integral part of their character. This active involvement encompasses a wide range of roles, from being a mere participant to assuming more complex roles such as that of a facilitator or organizer in a learning and development activity.

Teachers and school principals are expected to embrace two vital active roles: (1) serving as self-directed learners, where they blend multiple learning and development delivery methods to complement or enhance their learning, guided by cognitive, psychological, and professional development theories; (2) adopting the role of interactive learners, wherein they acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies within their zones of proximal development, as advocated by Vygotsky. This learning occurs through interactions with peers, subordinates, supervisors, and other significant individuals.

Irrespective of the complexity or simplicity of their roles, individuals should wholeheartedly embrace their active roles by striving for exceptional performance, embodying the essence of excellence as advocated by John W. Gardner (BrainyQuote, 2022). Whether they serve as committee members, their aim should be to become the "most active member." If they function as resource persons during training sessions, their goal should be to be

recognized as 'the best resource person ever.' When tasked with documenting in a LAC session, their objective should be to excel as "the most efficient documenter." In coaching sessions, those in the role of coachee should strive to be "the most productive coachee."

Conversely, if their intentions are insincere, they may assume passive roles that are fleeting and short-lived, ultimately reverting to their old selves and habits. These passive roles may be likened to the term "members of the 4Ps." It's important to note that this term does not refer to the well-known acronym "Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program," a government poverty alleviation initiative. Instead, it signifies four Hiligaynon words: "Pungko, Pamati, Pamahaw, Puli," which translates to "sit, listen, eat, and go home" in English. This term is used to describe participants who display passive behavior during activities, expressing disapproval of their lack of engagement despite the efforts of facilitators.

The documents labeled e-SAT, IPPD, SPPD, and MPPD, situated on the roof of the Model, are essential records prepared by individual teachers, school administrators, and division human resource focal persons. These documents serve as the foundation for planning and implementing learning and development activities, addressing developmental needs or gaps, and enhancing competencies necessary for effective mandate delivery.

At the heart of the Model lies the ultimate goal of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers and school leaders, aimed at achieving improved learning outcomes. DepEd (2017) acknowledges the pivotal role of quality teaching in fostering quality learning and emphasizes the significance of enhancing the competence of educators for the long-term development of the nation.

The study findings indicate that the implementation of various learning and development delivery modalities is contingent on the expectations set by the agency, including DepEd and NEAP, encompassing their vision, mission, core values, mandates, teacher and school head standards, and performance management system. While adherence to these expectations is evident, there is room for contextualization, allowing schools to tailor their plans to their unique circumstances.

The execution of diverse learning and development delivery modalities is influenced by the presence or absence of enabling mechanisms, structures, and processes, as well as the management and leadership knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) of school leaders. Additionally, the level of responsibility and accountability exhibited by teachers and school administrators towards self-improvement and the enhancement of others' capacities plays a significant role. Notably, school principals who incorporate multiple delivery modalities, such as LAC, FL, RDL, and JEL, have demonstrated increased productivity and resilience compared to their counterparts with limited practices.

These challenges are surmountable through the development of school principals' and teachers' KSAs in transformational and resilient leadership, establishing partnerships with stakeholders, and committing to personal and professional growth. Effective communication, collaboration, consistency, and creativity emerge as potent drivers for teams to navigate the challenges posed by the "new normal" environment successfully.

5. Conclusions

The operational aspects of schools were significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, prompting school leaders to develop their Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) as a framework for managing school operations within these constraints. In their role as instructional leaders, they also devised the School Plan for Professional Development (SPPD) to guide the implementation of learning and development delivery methods.

The successful execution of the BE-LCP was largely attributed to the guidance provided by the division office, characterized by the issuance of directives and active cooperation, collaboration, and support from internal and external stakeholders. This involved continuous communication, collaborative decision-making through meetings, school leaders' regular presence in the school, adjustments to meet evolving demands, monitoring, evaluation, and the provision of technical assistance.

School leaders introduced four learning and development delivery modalities in their schools: Learning Action Cell (LAC), Relationship and Discussion-based Learning (RDL), Job-Embedded Learning (JEL), and Formal Learning (FL). Among these, LAC was the most frequently implemented due to the issuance of a DepEd Order institutionalizing it.

The management of various learning and development delivery modalities was a joint effort between school principals and teachers, anchored in the preparation of the School Plan for Professional Development. This plan served as the foundation for all learning and development activities throughout the school year, addressing teachers' development needs. School leaders demonstrated resilience and effective leadership by embracing transparency, fostering a vision, promoting creativity, facilitating teacher empowerment through training and facilitation roles, and transforming negative experiences into positive ones. Setting clear expectations for exemplary performance also contributed to improved teaching practices.

LAC implementation involved several key practices: (a) the establishment of the LAC Committee responsible for preparations, including proposals, resource allocation, physical arrangements, and human resources; (b) the actual conduct of LAC sessions lasting one to two hours, focused on specific topics delivered by internal resource persons, with a limited face-to-face format involving five to fifteen participants in each LAC group, subject to superintendent approval; and (c) post-evaluation activities. Minor challenges were encountered, but school leaders addressed them through effective practices. These included boosting the confidence of designated resource persons through encouragement and support, addressing potential teacher reluctance by rotating LAC roles, adapting to changing LAC topics due to urgent online platform needs, and mitigating health risks by hosting LAC sessions in spacious venues with health facilities and stringent health protocols. One best practice involved follow-up activities, such as group chats and coaching, to reinforce and apply knowledge gained from LAC sessions.

In the context of Relationship and Discussion-Based Learning (RDL), school leaders extensively implemented coaching, while mentoring, communities of practice, and teacher observation were applied to a limited extent, following adaptations required by the pandemic.

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