ABSTRACT

ABAO, ANGELY C., School of Graduate Studies, J.H. Cerilles State College, Mati, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur, JUNE 2022. **LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TVIs IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FLEXIBLE LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC.**

This study explored and examined the lived experiences of Technical Vocational Institutions in implementing flexible learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it sought to understand the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and adjustments of TVI administrators, trainers, and students as they navigated the transition to alternative learning modalities. Employing a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved TVI presidents, trainers, and students from selected Technical Vocational Institutions in Pagadian City. Data were gathered through interviews guided by Moustakas' phenomenological approach. The analysis followed Moustakas' framework, incorporating phenomenological reduction, bracketing, horizontalization, identification of significant statements, organization of meaning units, and development of textural descriptions. The study provided insights into how TVI administrators, trainers, and students experienced and adapted to the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic. Their experiences served as a basis for identifying potential strategies and institutional interventions to strengthen the delivery of technical vocational education during periods of educational disruption. Based on the study's focus, it is recommended that Technical Vocational Institutions strengthen their institutional preparedness by providing continuous professional development opportunities for teachers and trainers, particularly in flexible learning methodologies, digital instructional strategies, and effective communication. Furthermore, TVIs are encouraged to incorporate English Language Competency Training for Teachers and Trainers into their professional development programs. Such training should emphasize English communication proficiency, instructional language development, technical vocabulary, and effective delivery of lessons in English. Strengthening these competencies may help teachers and trainers communicate technical concepts more effectively, develop comprehensible instructional materials, and facilitate meaningful interactions with learners across different learning modalities. These proposed interventions may serve as a foundation for institutional improvement and inform TESDA's continuing efforts to enhance the quality, accessibility, and adaptability of technical vocational education.

Keywords: Technical Vocational Institutions, Flexible Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic, Lived Experiences, Phenomenology, Professional Development

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

"Schools should be the last to close and the first to reopen" UNESCO (2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has made an outrageous disruption on the global community. In the Philippines, which was smacked hard by the pandemic and holds the second largest burden of cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases in the East Asia Pacific (EAP), the government has rolled out plans to close schools. School closure was considered as a strategy to contain transmission (Minardi et al., 2020).

Technical Vocational Institutions (TVI) are institutions providing courses that are part of non-formal education in the Philippines. Under Republic Act 7796, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is mandated to provide technical education and skills development programs that allows out-of-school-youth and other interested students who want to learn and master practical skills that will make them job ready. TESDA-certified short courses pave way for all individuals even those without college degrees to undergo 30% theoretical and 70% practical training.

Prior to the pandemic, Zamboanga del Sur has thirty nine (39) Technical Vocational Institutions (TVI). Only thirty seven (37) operate and adopted flexible learning and because of the dangers brought by the pandemic, four schools have opted to stop their operation. In 2019, the enrolment is on its peak, reaches the total number 26,420. In 2020, it shrunk to 11,238. While in 2021 the number of enrolments recorded was 12,568.

TVI learners are experiencing learning crisis and skill gaps. Driving students of RCTI are complaining about the changes in their class schedules since the pandemic struck. Some would say, “I miss actual driving”……”it’s difficult to learn driving with a minimum of time given in the driving range.”…..”it’s more fun doing the practical driving than answering modules”……. “I need to be certified as soon as possible but the training activity takes time since we’re on flexible learning”. Learning loss will lead to skill loss and the skills people have relate to their productivity (Hanushek and Woessman, 2020). Of course, slower growth from the loss of skills in the present time will only be seen in the long term. However, when considered over this term, the impact becomes significant.

The Republic Act No. 7796 otherwise known as TESDA Act of 1994 mandates the institution to promote and strengthen the quality of technical education and skills development programs to attain international competitiveness. Section 14 of the Republic Act No. 10650 or the open Distance Learning (ODL) Act, declares that TESDA’s role in formulating, promulgating, disseminating and implementing the necessary policies, standards and regulations for the effective implementation of ODL in the country. On April 21,2020,The OPLAN TESDA Abot lahat: TVET towards the New Normal declares its mission for the agency “to adapt” to a “new normal” state in carrying out its mandate of providing skills training and certification to Filipinos on order to get jobs r earn livelihoods. Its objective includes the development of innovative and flexible regulatory programs that are adapted to the new environment and changing needs of the TVET sector. In consonance with these policies, TESDA affirms the necessity for implementing flexible learning in TVET. Flexible learning

delivery arrangements are face-to-face learning where in the knowledge contents and skill components are both delivered at the classroom and workshop areas of the TVI. There is also online learning that takes place outside the classroom using primarily or entirely the inter-connected computer or mobile device. While on the other hand, blended learning combines the traditional face-to-face learning and eLearning. The knowledge contents maybe delivered and learned via online platforms with the aid of offline eLearning technology while the skills components are delivered and learned at the classroom and workshop areas of the TVI. There is also distance learning where in traditional delivery mode of learning that takes place outside the training institution for both knowledge contents and skills components with the use of print learning materials and non-digital electronic resources.

The TVIs have the option to adopt of any of the following flexible learning delivery modes depending on their institutional needs, trainers' and learners' capability. To ensure the continuity of education despite the horrors of the coronavirus, vast number of institutions sought to implement flexible distance learning as a temporary substitute for in-class time. Learning can take place in different modalities, often distinguishing between face-to-face classroom instruction and virtual learning as well as asynchronous and synchronous learning (Chaeruman, Wibawa and Syahrial, 2018). Today, technologies are primarily used for virtual and asynchronous learning, while integration with face-to-face classroom instruction is used as blended learning. However, the institutions tried to adopt the alternate methods for teaching and learning such as

online or virtual methods which are not likely to provide quality of education as delivered in the classroom (Panthee et al., 2020; Viner et al., 2020).

The pandemic would have given the government a chance to use technology to reboot the country's education system, but it highlighted serious problems instead, including slow internet connectivity PHILIPPINE STAR, Varcas (2021). In a study conducted by Fabito et al., (2020) the researchers found three barriers and challenges that learners encountered in online learning. One is poor internet connection. Another related concept from Casillano (2019) indicated that only minimum of the learners has internet access thus impeding them to access the e-learning platform. In another study, poor students do not own laptops and mobiles gadgets (Cleofas and Rocha, 2021).

While remote learning has offered some educational edge for basic and higher education in academic learning, technical and vocational education has been particularly hit by the crisis. TVET programs suffer a double disadvantage since it deals with the enhancement of cognitive and psychomotor skills to produce work-ready workforce in the industry in no time. Training involves hands-on experience in workshops, laboratories or in the workplace, manipulation of heavy equipment and mere attention to instructors making sure that tasks are carried out well. Since vocational schools rely on practical training, such as in agriculture, tourism, health, land transportation, engineering, construction and crafts, there is no doubt that the struggle is high upon engaging to remote learning. Among TVET qualifications, combined school-and-work-based programs, where 25-90% of the curriculum is organized as work-based learning in enterprises have been particularly affected as businesses have closed.

Although TVET programs are attractive to employers and provides firm employment prospects to students either in or out of the country, the pandemic has created devastating uncertainty over what will happen next. Since TESDA already laid down a variety of training delivery modes, still it is not sufficient to address the needs of the technical vocational schools (TVIs) and the students therein. School owners are struggling in implementing flexible learning. School owners and staff are questioning whether traditional education will not continue after the pandemic, and how this sudden shift of delivery mode influences the education system globally.

Any teaching and learning issues concerning the experiences of TVIs during this pandemic is worth listening to, yet there is not much research done to this effect. Most of the available studies are mainly quantitative in nature either as assessment or experimental. There is however a need to do an in-depth analysis of the subjective experiences of TVIs to better understand their plight about this delivery mode of learning amidst the pandemic.

Considering the novelty of the research context, the researcher's purpose in conducting this research is to tackle, consolidate and understand the lived experiences of TVI heads, trainers and students in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic and be able to address their needs in the sudden shift of leaning mode while facing a world-health emergency.

Theoretical Framework

This research is largely utilizing transcendental phenomenology (TPh) developed by Husserl, and defined by Moustakas as a philosophical approach to

qualitative research methodology to better understand human experience. Pure TPh is grounded in the concept and conditioned upon setting aside all preconceived ideas (epoch) to see phenomena through unclouded glasses, thereby allowing the true meaning of phenomena to naturally emerge with and within their own identity (Moustakas, 1994).

To gain insight and understanding of the experiences of most TVIs, phenomenology both as a theory and as a method is employed in this study. Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. Through this process the researcher may construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. Through phenomenology as an approach to personality theory that places questions of individuals' current experiences of themselves and their world at the center of analyses of personality functioning and change. But as most phenomenological studies are exploratory, the researcher is very open to other insights that have emerged in the whole process. Phenomenology attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment or presupposition. It requires to look at things openly, undisturbed by the habits of the natural world. The challenge is to describe things as they are, to understand meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection. Meaning is created when the object as it appears in our consciousness, mingles with the object in nature: “what appears in consciousness is an absolute reality while what appears to the world is a product of learning” Moustakas explains (p. 27). The study is concurrent with the keypoints of Moustakas framework as it draws from lived

experiences of TVI heads, trainers and students in the implementation of flexible learning under the new normal setting.

Also, the researcher believes that this study is rooting on the social constructivist lens as a theory of learning proposed by Lev Vygotsky. School leaders and teachers that embrace flexible learning models are advocates of this theory as it composes of face-to-face, online and distance learning and that this theory takes place socially if the learning environment is supported with technology and modular instructions. By believing in the effectiveness of this theory, school heads and teachers must move from being “people who teach” to being “facilitators of learning”. Moreover, students are challenged to perform individual performance task, realistically solve problems and provide meaningful context. Creswell and Poth (2018) determined this as manifestation were “individual seek understanding of the world in which they live and work”.

Another theory that supports this study is John Dewey’s Progressivism .Turpin (2018) believes that a child-centered, individualistic approach to teaching learners is the best way to ensure that students learned what they needed to learn for the future success in real world scenarios. TVI heads and trainers who opted to teach using flexible learning are extending their best efforts to deliver learning through modular instructions and scheduled practical learning amidst the horrors brought by Covid-19.

In the formation of this study, the researcher believes that these theories support the exploration of the lived experiences of the technical vocational institutions since they are utilizing flexible learning delivery mode during the pandemic.

Conceptual Framework

This study aims to explore and dig deeper into the experiences of technical vocational institutions (TVIs) in their experiences in the implementation of flexible learning during this pandemic. A series of phenomenological interview were done which included the significant experiences, demographic locations, societal status, technology literacy and reliance of the participants. The data were gathered, transcribed and analyzed following phenomenology both as a method and an approach in understanding lived experiences. Through this process the researcher was able to present description and categorized the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrives at a more profound understanding of the TVIs implementation of flexible learning during this time of the pandemic. Presented on the schematic diagram is the first box which represents the collected experiences of TVIs in the implementation of the flexible learning during the pandemic. Upon listening and documenting the experiences of school heads, trainers and students, the researcher was able to present a detailed description and categorized the universal essence of these phenomenon following the phenomenological framework of Clark E. Moussakas, an American psychologist and one of the leading experts on humanistic and clinical psychology. The third box of the diagram, presents researcher's profound understanding of the how's and the why's in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic and was able to come up with insights and recommendations on the delivery of learning without compromising the health and security of the students. The framework of this study follows the input, process, output flow and is illustrated in schematic diagram exhibited in Figure 1.

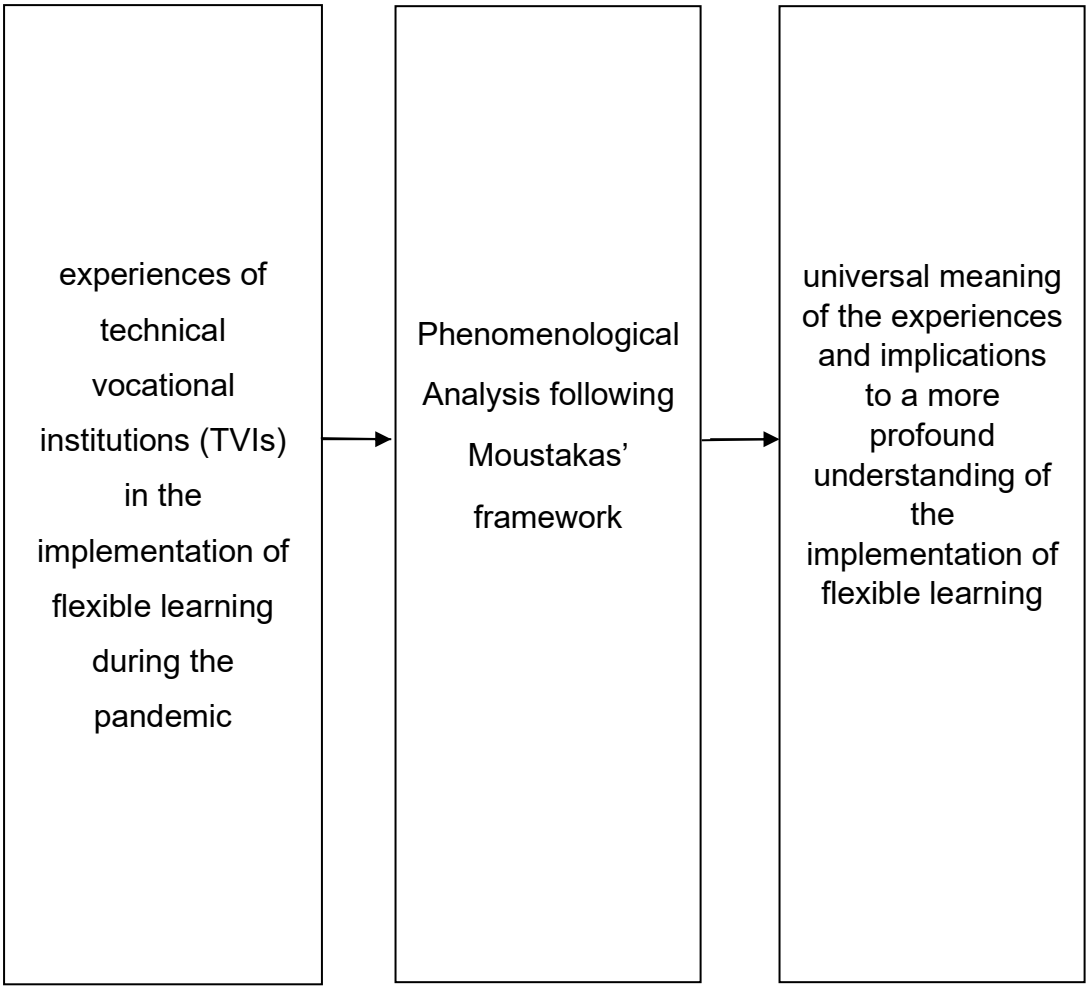

Figure 1. The Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study is conducted to explore the experiences of Technical Vocational Institutions in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic. By exploring into their lived experiences, this research presents a detailed description of the phenomena and in-depth understanding of each specific phenomenon, especially in the context of teaching and learning during this time of the pandemic.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is it like to be a TVI student, trainer, and school head in the implementation of flexible learning modalities during the pandemic?
2. What contexts or situations have typically influenced the experiences of these people, as a student, trainer and school head during the pandemic?

Significance of the Study

The study signifies the importance of exploring and doing in-depth understanding of such specific phenomenon of the lived experience of Technical Vocational Institutions in the implementation of flexible learning during this time of the pandemic. Results and findings would pave way for recommendations and insights to address not only the needs of Technical Vocational Schools but also the following;

TESDA. As the governing agency for skills development making citizens job ready in no time, it will be able to develop policies and programs delicately balancing education and economic objectives taking into consideration the

impact of COVID-19, develop competency standards to address emerging skills requirements of the current state we are in.

TVI Administrators. This research will hopefully help them reexamine, reflect and reassess the strengths and weaknesses of the offered curricula.

TVI Teachers/Instructors. This study could be of help in terms of determining the level of connectivity towards learners in times of emergencies and calamities as they are viewed to be the medium in relating day-to-day lessons.

TVI Students. This study wishes to promulgate and establish teacher-learner collaboration in attaining outcome-based education upon diving into flexible learning in determining the level of achievement of students as well as the success of the school.

Future Researchers. This study will pave way for them to establish a foundation in indulging through the points being discussed in this study that will fill in the gaps in the literature.

Scope and Limitation

This study was limited to a few Technical Vocational Schools (TVIs) in Pagadian City which implemented flexible learning in this time of the pandemic. Three schools participated in the study. Two school heads from different TVIs participated, while one trainer and one student came from another TVI.

The collected data were limited to a number of information-rich participants from these TVIs who satisfied or saturated the needed information to answer the questions raised in this study. The process of data gathering and the

data analysis were limited to the transcendental phenomenology framework of Clark E. Moustakas.

Because of the challenges of observing health protocols during this pandemic, the researcher limited means of gathering the data through electronic and limited face to face interviews.

The coding and categorization process were done by the researcher, the adviser and two intercoder/interrater who have done phenomenological research.

Definition of Terms

To facilitate better understanding of this study, the following terms are operationally defined:

Asynchronous eLearning. In this study this refers to idea that students learn the same material at different times and locations (umich.edu). it refers to the learner-centered process which uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing regardless of the constraints of time and place among a network of people.

Blended Learning. In this study this refers to the combination of the online and supervised workshop training where the knowledge and theories are conducted through the internet and the supervised workshop training are conducted face-to-face. It is a learning and training event or activity where e-learning, in its various forms is combined with more traditional forms of training such as classroom training.

Distance Learning. In this study this refers to a mode of learning in which trainees and teachers are physically separated from each other. It is a learner-

centered, guided-independent study making use of well-studied learning and teaching pedagogies to deliver well-designed learning materials through various media.

eLearning. In this study this refers to an umbrella term for providing computer instruction (courseware) online over the public internet, private distance learning networks or in-house via an intranet.

Face-to-face(F2F). In this study this refers to the instruction-led training in a traditional classroom setting.

Flexible Learning. In this study this refers to the provision of a range of learning modes or methods giving learners greater choice of when, where and how they learn. It can be limited face-to-face learning, online learning, distance learning, modular or mix face-to-face and modular instructions.

Lived Experience. In this study, this refers to a representation of the experiences and choices of a given person and the knowledge that they gain from these experiences. In phenomenological research, lived experiences are the main object of the study.

Online Learning. In this study this refers to learning delivery mode where learning generally takes place outside the classroom using primarily or entirely the internet-connected computer or mobile device to deliver the TVET program.

Phenomenology. It is a philosophy of experience. For phenomenology the ultimate source of all meaning and value is the lived experience of human beings.

Synchronous eLearning. In this study this refers to the live, real time facilitated instruction and learning-oriented interaction.

TESDA. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, a government agency tasked to managed and supervise technical education and skill development in the Philippines.

TVET. Technical-Vocational Education and Training, is an education or training process where it involves the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills relating to occupations in various sectors of economic life and social life comprises formal (organized programs as part of the school system) and non-formal (organized classes outside the school system) approaches. (UNESCO)

TVI. Technical Vocational Institution, a private or public school, training center, enterprise-based training center and other training facilities that offers TVET programs (source of target participants in this study).

Transcendental Phenomenology. largely developed by Husserl advocated by Clark Moussakas, is a philosophical approach to qualitative research methodology seeking to understand human experience. This refers to both the approach and the method of this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The pile of the related literature reviewed consists of phenomenological studies or researches on the lived experiences of school personnel and students in general. Literatures and articles about dwelling in and diverting to a “new normal” or flexible learning teaching model were also presented. Topics included in the review included; Formation of Flexible Learning, Definition of Flexible Learning, and Experiences in Flexible Learning,

These literatures were valuable in the present investigation since most of them are researches related during the pandemic. Some literatures where used to express and discuss the theories and to establish the research gap of this study.

Flexible Learning Modality

Flexible learning is widely used in the current situation of the Philippines. Even before the surge of the pandemic, flexible learning has already exist in our country. Morales (2012) expressed that it first started in Cubao in 2007. It refers to the ability to customize one’s pace, place and mode of learning. With pace, for example, students may take accelerated programs or engage in part-time learning to ensure they have time to work on the side. Learning can take place in a variety of settings, including in the classroom, at home via the Internet, while commuting or as part of a work-study program. The mode refers to the way that content is delivered by technology, modular instructions, typically through blended learning, fully online courses or technology-enhanced experiences.

Upon utilizing this dynamic teaching style, researchers found out the desirable level of effectiveness when combined with the traditional setting of learning.

Several studies have shown that technology driven instruction have been affecting academic excellence and the quality of the delivery instructions by the teachers in the face of the pandemic. Bert Tuga, president of Philippine Normal University (PNU), said that flexible learning had “moved the boundaries”. “We can now have a diverse range of students from all over the country and can flex our human resources where we may not have the staff numbers or specialist expertise,” Dr Tuga said. “PNU can become a virtual university accessible from across the globe and affordable to more people.” Rosana Mula from the government’s Agricultural Training Institute said: “We offer a blended mode of online and face-to-face, so digital learning resources can be accessed offline too. This means more and more students, even in coastal areas, can access resources, download them and study in their own time.” Sukarno Tanggol, chancellor of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, described how the institution had set up a flexible learning committee chaired by its vice-chancellor for academic affairs. As a government school, one of the challenges of widening access was the limits on student numbers imposed by the state. “We have about 30 per cent online modality and we pushed for fully online during the pandemic, but connectivity was an issue for some,” he said. “We have a feedback mechanism in place where we can adjust methodologies and we have been adapting our systems.” One of the key challenges for Philippines institutions is the lack of internet connectivity or access to devices faced by many students. Whereas global institutions reacted to the pandemic by shifting courses

to synchronous online delivery, universities in the Philippines have had to be more creative. Developing more flexible learning approaches has also meant a re-evaluation of course design. Melinda Bandalaria, chancellor of the University of the Philippines Open University, argued that this would help to open up lifelong learning to more people. “We are referred to as the ‘second chance university’ because we give people a chance who were not able to be part of the traditional education system,” she said. “Flexibility means different modalities that can answer different learning needs and, as universities, we need to be more decisive as to how we design this type of learning.” Massive open online courses, microcredentials and nano-degrees could all form part of a more student- and employer-led offering, she added.

Wilson, Luanne, Boldeman, Ursula (2012) conducted a study on “Exploring ICT Integration as a Tool to Engage Young People at a Flexible Learning Centre”. The Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) Flexible Learning Centres aim to provide a supportive learning environment for young people who find themselves outside of the mainstream secondary schooling system. Drawing on twenty first Century learning principles, the Centres aim to deliver a personalised learning experience with an emphasis on flexibility and individual choice. Provision of a comprehensive curriculum enables young people to make positive future life choices and successfully transition into employment and further training. The aim of this research project has been to work with teaching staff at a Flexible Learning Centre in North Queensland, Australia, to explore the value of integrating ICT in the form of Web 2.0 technologies to enhance young people's engagement with the subject of science.

However, in the sudden shift of learning delivery mode, challenges aroused. Partnerships with industry will be central to designing flexible and accessible courses that build skills for the fourth industrial revolution. Bonifacio Gabales, vice-president for academic affairs at the University of Southeastern Philippines, said one of the challenges for state universities was ensuring that course guidelines were approved, but that links with industry helped match and map competencies for students. He concluded: “Industry partners can share their thoughts on the skills they need, what the jobs are and the skills required. Partnership and networking is crucial.”

Another point taken from countless studies have established that technology is a beneficial supplement to the education system. One such study, done by Sean M. Corcoran, Ed.D, focuses on the effects that tablet apps have on reading instruction of first-grade students. The students using tablet apps performed better than the ones without these apps. The Philippines as a country would benefit greatly from providing more of its students with high-tech learning tools. Unfortunately, for impoverished areas of the country, that is not the current reality. An article published by OffCrowd points out that “Public education and technology are hard to provide, especially where [the] majority of the people are living beyond the daily means.” The article goes on to inform that a technology gap is present in the local schools of the Philippines and that this gap has been caused by a “lack of distribution of resources to the poverty line.” Without the proper resources, students in these lower-income areas will not receive the same educational support as students fortunate enough to come from higher-income regions. Filipino students suffering from the technology gap are the ones that

would benefit the most from these educational tools.

Flexible Learning is a method of learning where students are given freedom in how, what, when and where they learn. It is viewed as a set of educational philosophies and systems, concerned with providing learners with increased choice, convenience and personalization to suit the learner (Shervil). It is the ability to customize one's pace, place and mode of learning. Thus, it is also referred as a blended learning approach that combines face-to-face teaching method with online-based instructions or in-person delivery/fetching of printed modules. Blended learning does not have a pedagogy of its own, but it draws its strength from the three basic theoretical perspectives on learning: behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism. Therefore, a review of all these three basic learning theories and a few other theories derived from these that have relevance to the design of student-centered flexible learning environments (e.g., social constructivism, activity theory, and situated cognition) was made. Such a review of learning theories is critical to formulate a scaffold upon which this study can be grounded. As cited by Llego (2002) flexible learning can be characterized through a combination of face-to-face and online learning that can be done using modules, activity sheets and gadgets.

According to the Danish theorist Gynther (2005), the term blended learning was first used in the American literature and it meant a blend of traditional teaching and technology-based teaching using different forms for technology to support a wide variety of pedagogical methods. With the continuing advancement of digital technology, blended learning continues to develop along new dimensions merging the best features of conventional face-to-face

instruction and online learning (Graham, 2006). What actually is being addressed as blended learning is a variety of instructional approaches to meet students' pedagogical needs based on their unique learning styles and preferences. Therefore, it is often called 'hybrid instruction'. 'Blending' is a complex construct with several interpretations in diverse educational contexts. Driscoll (2002) points out that blended learning can mean different things to different people. It can mean: mixing affordances of web-based technology (e.g., live virtual classroom, self paced instruction, collaborative learning, streaming video, audio, and text) to accomplish an educational goal; combining various pedagogical approaches (e.g., constructivism, behaviorism, cognitivism) to produce an optimal learning outcome with or without instructional technology; combining any form of instructional technology (e.g., videotape, CD-ROM, web based training) with face-to-face instructor-led training;a powerful integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning styles, enabling students to master core content online while deepening critical thinking, problem solving and application of content mastery in a face-to-face setting. combining instructional technology with actual job tasks in order to create a harmonious effect of learning and working.

Experiences in Flexible Learning

The pandemic has pushed the education system to divert from traditional to dynamic style of teaching to cope with the needs of the present time. The disruption of COVID-19 in the educational system is of great magnitude that technical vocational institutions have to cope with at the soonest possible time. One emerging reality as a result of the world health crisis is the migration to online learning modalities to mitigate the risk of face-to-face interaction.

Flexible learning is generally aligned with instructional needs of learners and allows them to have an access to latest sources of knowledge and best practices in instruction and pedagogy according to their pace and convenience (HP Development Company, 2016). Flexible learning as an innovation in pedagogy seems to widen the academic horizon of students having more opportunities of innovative learning experiences. It also enhances their learning and learning achievement (Carman, 2005). Hence, it as a form of online or e-learning can be used at different levels of education (Hussain, 2007). Flexible learning appears at an upward continuum as more and more institutions are adopting it formally for instructional purpose. Bath and Bourke (2010) believes the creative use of technologies to enhance quality of education and learning of students. It decided to embrace blended learning by integrating emerging technologies with classroom instruction across the institution. It was based on the philosophy that “quality learning occurs when there is coherence and alignment between the technology, course environment, learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, and assessment demands of a course”. A study conducted in Saudi revealed that majority of the faculty members has understood their roles in blended-based environment (Aldosemani, Shepherd & Bolliger, 2018). It was found out that blended learning mitigates the delivery of teaching and learning access regardless of time and space (Aldosemani et al., 2018). Findings revealed a positive perception in academics towards the affordability that blended learning can bring in teaching and learning context. It emphasizes the view of blended learning as it delivers access to course materials regardless of time and space. Moreover a study conducted by Trajeco & De Guzman (2012)

showed that students' engagement in discussions improved through the help of a tablet-based learning environment. It enhanced their ability to submit their outputs anytime, anywhere. Another evidence of positive feedback of blended learning is the article of Cua (2020),featuring Jana a UST senior high school graduating student with a Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMMS) strand, makes online learning easy to cope with since time management availability is possible. It indicates significant valuation of personal space and convenience in accessing learning resources. Additionally, the concept of blended learning has been described as hybrid instructional approach that delivers positive opportunities for students' learning (Jokinen & Mikkonen, 2013). Results pointed out that collaborative planning, as described by most teachers, provide opportunities to enhance and to develop teachers' instruction in a blended learning environment. This helps teachers to ensure alignment of learning objectives with learning contents and activities; hence, it tends to be more holistic by integrating the instructional activities into wider teaching approach than of several smaller learning tasks. This explains that in the context of blended-based teaching, both components are intertwined. It differentiates and provides personalization towards attaining intended learning outcome (Arnesen, Graham, Short, & Archibald, 2019; Challob, Bakar, & Latif, 2016; Ward, 2016).

Although, eLearning emerged as an alternative to overcome the gaps of face-to-face delivery, it may not be holistically accepted for now as an effective alternative due to the following issues.

a.) Pure elearning is perceived as 'isolating' without any human interaction and does not fit well with the needs of the learners. Laurillard (1997)

argues that although the extent of student interactions in elearning courses may surpass those in traditional classroom courses, research has shown that the quality of e-learning suffers from the lack of human interaction

b.) Constraints of limited resources (financial hardware, and software constraints); for example, although e-learning has been found successful in some developed countries with certain type of learners, their use in developing countries require supplements for success due to poor infrastructure including limited telephone connections, poor Internet bandwidths, shortage of trained personnel and limited computer skills among both teachers and students.

In terms of the challenges on the use of blended learning (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019; Bataineh & Mayyas, 2017; Crawford & Jenkins, 2017; Medina, 2018; Shand & Farrelly, 2018), studies have shown that not all faculty members are inclined towards blended-based instruction (Benson et al., 2011). Some still considered the use of ICT as “time-consuming” (Benson et al., 2011, p.148). For example, it was revealed that preparations for lecture or teaching materials design and development on web-based platform require more time than face-to-face interaction. Some believe that the use of hybrid approach is more rigorous when it comes to teaching and learning preparations. This explains the idea presented by Ma'arop and Embi (2016) where they described blended learning as a burden, both physically and cognitively. Meaning, educators see the need to spend more time like designing the course platform, uploading of instructional materials, answering queries and evaluating students’ online outputs. Thus, it

increases their workload, such as the time required (Alebaikan & Troudi, 2010). .Moreover, as blended learning combines traditional classroom with online instruction; there emerges a complexity in terms of variety and diversity of learning environments, learning design(s) and as well as [learning styles of] the students (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; George, Walker & Keeffe, 2010; Vaughan, 2007) and narrow awareness. Similarly, cultural and technological diversity along with experiences of the Net-Generation create problems for blended learning and its success (Stacey & Gerbic, 2008; Elizabeth Stacey & Gerbic, 2008, 2009). Although different studies (Paechter & Maier, 2010; Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal, 2004; Ellis, Pardo, & Han, 2016; Graham, 2008; Kuo, Belland, Schroder, & Walker, 2014; Motteram, 2006; Paechter & Maier, 2010; Staker, 2011; Stockwell, Stockwell, Cennamo, & Jiang, 2015; Kiviniemi, 2014; Means, Toyama, Murphy, & Baki, 2013) have regarded blended learning a paradigm shift in teaching learning process and described it use, benefits and potential but it (LaBanca., Worwood, Schauss, LaSala, & Donn, 2013) “can unknowingly incorporate ineffective pedagogical strategies that do not promote creative and critical higher-order thinking skills” (p.28-29). Furthermore, they questioned the ability of teachers, availability of students-centered classrooms, instructional planning, coping with individual differences, diverse learning experiences [and learning styles] and purposeful interactions of students. Even so, Geiter, (2015) highlighted issues in online learning [education] regarding retention of students, readiness of college or university to embrace it and problems of “developmental education pedagogy” (p. xiii). Also Futch and Dziuban (2005) reported in their study a lower level of satisfaction among younger students due to problems of technology, time

management and course organization.

Generally, most reviewed related literatures in this section had pointed the evolution of a type of learning delivery borne of technological advancement of this century and of the recent pandemic. While it is effective in some institutions equipped with the needed technologies, there are some learning institutions which felt the negative effect of this learning delivery because of technological and personnel readiness.

The most challenging gap in most literature and studies is the understanding of the personal views and perspective of most TVIs which is not given much focus at the very least yet flexible learning appears to be the most accessible and convenient educational modality at the peak of the covid-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a detailed description and procedures in conducting the study. This chapter presents the research design, research environment, sampling design, research participants/respondents, research instruments, data-gathering procedure and data analysis and ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically transcendental phenomenology. This aims to do an in-depth analysis on the participants lived experiences. Qualitative research seeks to place the phenomenological understanding of the context, describe the behavior and beliefs, recognize the processes, and know the participants' lived experiences (Hennink et al., 2020). According to Cilesez, 2010 "The aims of phenomenological research are to reach the essence of the individuals' lived experience of the phenomenon while ascertaining and defining the phenomenon". This study termed respondents as "participants" as they participate in the research by sharing their experiences in an in-depth interview. Aside from limited face to face interviews, online interviews were also opted to collect the data because of its directness and adaptability in addressing the research questions and it is the safest method appropriate during the time of the pandemic.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur and among the select TVIs. In the province, there are 39 Technical Vocational

Institutions offering TESDA certified vocational courses to earn national certificates (NC) such as in construction, tourism, land and transportation, health and wellness, agriculture and information technology. During the pandemic, only 37 TVIs operated and opted to adopt flexible learning while 2 schools chose to stop their operation. In the whole Zamboanga del Sur in 2019, a total of 6,420 enrollees have been recorded. In 2020, there are about 11,238 students enrolled in various skills related courses. And in 2021, a total of 12,586 students have been enrolled.

Sampling Technique

In choosing the research participants, the researcher used purposive sampling for reasons that it involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) as it employs qualitative research. The researcher chose this sampling technique so that the researcher will be able to squeeze enough information out of the data collected and that the researcher will be able to access a particular subset of people as all participants of a survey are selected because they fit a particular profile. This is used for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources. In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) note the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner shall also be considered in the recruitment of research participants. In completing this research, the researcher opted to include three out of thirteen TVIs in Pagadian.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were two presidents from different TVIS, one teacher/trainer and one student from another TVI were recruited from the three selected TVIs in Pagadian City. The numbers of participants were not less than three, this is at the allowable number of participants according to Creswell when doing phenomenology. A detailed description of the participants is presented in Chapter 4.

Research Instrument/s

The researcher along with the recommendation of the adviser used Moustakas' Framework. The framework included templates of Research Questions, Theories, Interview Guide Questions and Method of Analysis. For this research, the sample interview questions were used during the limited face to face and the online interview. With consent from the participants, the researcher also opted to arrange a video and or audio recorded conference with them.

During the first scheduled interview, the researcher initiated and asks preliminary questions that took 15 minutes or so and then followed with asking the guide questions to the participants:

1. What dimensions are intimately connected with your experience as a student/trainer/school head in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic?
2. What incidents are intimately connected with your experience as a student/trainer/school head in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic?

3. Who are the people intimately connected with your experience as a student/trainer/school head in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic?
4. How does the experience affect you? What change do you associate with the experience?

During the second scheduled interview, the following guide questions were asked to the participants:

5. How does the experience affect significant others in your life?
6. How feelings are generated by the experience?
7. What thoughts stand out for you?
8. What bodily changes or states are you aware of when you are teaching?
9. Have you shared all that is significant with reference to your experience?

Data Gathering Procedures

Prior to the collection of data by means of interview, the researcher asked the participants to sign an inform consent form to attest that they voluntarily submitted themselves to participate in the study. The researcher observed the ethical standard of doing research during the conduct of the study by informing them ahead of time that the researcher will come by and personally deliver a letter informing them about how the researcher would love to take them as respective participants of the study. The participants were informed about the freedom to withdraw from the study on the time they wanted to. They were also informed of the privileges they will receive as participants. After the participants agreed and signed to the consent, the researcher set a time for the interview with

the participants. The first scheduled interview was a one-hour interview with each of the participants via face to face and messenger video call. But when the significant statements/data were not enough, the researcher considered repeating the interview by utilizing messenger video call at their most convenient time with follow-up questions to reach the expected answers.

The interviews were done with the aid of a camera or video recording app for recording of the participants' lived experiences. This was done to give ease on the recording of observations of the phenomenon.After each scheduled interviews, the researcher immediately transcribed the statements of each participant. Translation of some vernacular terms/words was also done with the help of the thesis adviser.

Depending on the data the participants have provided or when data became repetitious in many instances, then it was understood that there was already data saturation, hence it was advisable to consider stopping the collection of data and proceed to analysis. During the initial playback, interpretations and readings, irrelevant information and unimportant details were omitted. Similar ideas and contexts have been emphasized as part of the initial coding process, generating preliminary meaning units as recommended and cited by Giorgi (1985).

Analysis of Data

After the data gathering, the researcher did the preliminary data coding and tally. Data from interview in the form of significant statements were transcribed, tallied, coded, and classified.

The researcher then followed the framework of Moustakas in data analysis that employed phenomenological reduction, which includes bracketing, horizontalizing, organizing invariant qualities and themes, and constructing textural description (Moustakas, 1994). In this method, data analysis commences as soon as the first set of data are available. Foremost, data were obtained from the researcher's own experience. The use of horizonalization assigns equal value to each statement which represents a segment of meaning (Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

After horizonalization, the segments or significant statements were clustered into themes or the universal structures of Moustakas. Segments and themes will be synthesized into a description of the texture (the what) which results to root up on six universal structures namely time, space, bodily concerns, materiality, causality and relationship to self and others. Time is described as a person's experiences on a certain phenomenon in relation to time (Moustakas, 1994, Sailor 2013). Space on the other hand is a person's lived experiences involving the place or situations when he/she experienced the phenomenon. Bodily concerns, talks about the lived experiences which involves his/her body reactions such as emotions and feelings on the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Materiality is concern on how the lived experiences of a person are affected by the materiality or the reality of the world. Causality is described f how factors have influenced a person's lived experiences on the phenomenon (Buckley,as cited by Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, is the relationship to self and to others which is described to be person's lived experiences involving his/her personal reactions, introspection and interactions with others as well (Moustakas,1994).

Afterwards, these highlighted words and phrases were reflected on to find recurring similarities. Writing journals plays an important part in this reflection process. Textual meaning was then developed for each participant and included verbatim statement from each of the participants. Structural descriptions were then created from these individual textual descriptions (Moustakas, 1994).

The detailed result of the analysis is presented in the next chapter.

Ethical Considerations

Protecting anonymity of participants is the researcher's main concern. Anonymity was accomplished by naming the respondents as Participant 1,2,3 and 4 respectively. Prior to interviews, the participants were told with the benefits and risks and that they could withdraw from the study at any time and was given a consent form for them to sign. Confidentiality on the responses was properly observed by the researcher upon doing the interview. Journal writings, audio recordings were kept neatly and privately in a storage intended for research materials only to ensure safety and security. Moreover, the researcher guaranteed the integrity of the data being presented in this study. By doing so, the researcher avoided falsifying and plagiarizing evidences, data, findings and conclusion. The researcher also assures proper acknowledgement upon doing this study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter entails the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data being collected in the study.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to have a better understanding on the lived experiences of TVIs in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic. The research questions that guided this study were: (1) What is it like to be a student, trainer, and school head in the implementation of flexible during the pandemic? (2) What contexts or situations have typically influenced the experiences of these people, as a student, trainer and school head undergoing flexible learning during the pandemic?

This chapter also presents a demographics and characteristics of participants.

Demographics

The four (4) participants who agreed to volunteer and participate in this study were homogenous based on their connection and relationship in select Technical Vocational Institution in Pagadian City. However this group were heterogeneous pertaining to their function, age and gender. Participants ages ranges from 26 to 74 years. two females and two males. All participants were connected and have working relationship with TVIs.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of participants who agreed to participate in this study. For the purposes of this study, each

participant was then assigned a number, indicating the order of their participation, to ensure confidentiality of all data and protection of their privacy and identities. Ensuring confidentiality and gaining the participant's trust and sympathy were essential in the conduct of phenomenological interview.

Table 1. Demographic Summary of Participants

Participant	Age (Years)	Gender	Connection/Relationship to TVIs	Number of days/years connected to TVIs
1	26	M	Student	15 days (Driving NCII trainee)
2	51	M	Trainer	6 years
3	37	F	School President	4 years
4	74	F	School President	27 years

Participant 1

Participant 1 is a regular driving NCII trainee for 15 days (15 days/118 hours as prescribed by the Training Regulation in Driving NCII). During his enrolment in the height of covid-19, he expected to end his training for 15 days but to no avail due to face-to-face restrictions imposed by the TVI, and it was extended up to 20 days. After 20 days, he completed his training.

> *"I'm kind of excited and worried at the same time. Excited, because I am about to learn and acquire a new skill which is driving. And worried too because covid-19 pandemic restricts and limits in-school activities. The moment I started my training, the trainer first and foremost ask us if we're not feeling well, and if we are, we'll have to stay at home. They get our temperature checked, every now and then. We have to sanitize our hands from any entry and exit points, they provided us face masks too incase ours might get worn out. And so, that is our daily routine before and after we have our lecture and actual driving at school. Also, we were divided*

into two groups as to not congest in the lecture and driving range area. My interactions with my classmates and trainer is limited too. We don't talk in a long period of time and 1 meter distance is strictly observed. Our in-school activities starts from 8:00 in the morning and ends at 2:00 in the afternoon because they have to sanitize the school premises as well as the vehicle being used in the training. Monday and Wednesday is our face-to-face schedule while our modular instructions are scheduled on Tuesday and Thursday, Friday is scheduled for checking of modules. It was frustrating on my part as a student because I have to deal with answering modules, and face limited face-to-face activities at school with time restrictions. I always wanted to learn the skill itself for a long time but because of the pandemic, I have to adjust. Though it is a hassle procedure, knowing I have to spend short time in-school activities in an extended training time schedule, still I am obliged to follow because I am a student and it's for my own good too so I have to follow protocols, wholeheartedly." -- (Participant 1, interview response)

Participant 2

Participant 2 is a 51-year old TESDA certified Driving NCII trainer for 6 years. He was also employed as a part time trainer in Automotive Servicing NCII for 2 years. Aside from being a Driving NCII holder, he undergone various TESDA trainings too such as in Automotive Servicing NCII, Electronic Product Assembly and Servicing NCII, Consumer Electronics Servicing NCII and Automotive Servicing NCII. Although he is a Bachelor's degree holder in secondary education major in mathematics, he finds it comfortable and accessible to be employed under private schools under TESDA since he is also a Trainer's Methodology I Certificate (TMC-1) and National TVET Trainer Certificate (NTTC) holder. And that allows him to train specific training courses under the supervision and authorization of TESDA.

"For 8 years in service under TESDA, teaching in a TVI is fine until the pandemic occurred in 2019. At first I find it hard to adjust since I'm used to the conventional way of teaching which majority of schools activity is done in an actual physical face-to-face manner. Students come in school with

much zest and excitement for they will acquire and experience new skill. Me a s a trainer feel the same way too. I believe that the physical and actual exposure of students in skill acquisition is by far the most effective and efficient way to learn new skill. Since TESDA has designed training regulations that'll cater most of the learners industry-need skills, it is vital to teach them in an actual face-to-face manner. But because of the horror's brought by covid-19, this setting has been reversed. Instead of 70% practical or actual training and 30% theoretical instruction, it's now the other way around. As I've said, I find it hard to adjust and manage the schedule of training since we have to adhere with health and safety protocols every now and then. From checking of temperatures to each and every person entering and exiting the school premise down to sanitizing the entire area being walked by and used by clients, students and school staff in the end of the day. When doing face-to-face classes, talking is limited, interaction is restricted, skills training are affected. Days for in-person activities are limited to two days and two days for modules per week resulting to prolonged training time. As a trainer I am worried because the training schedule is compromised. Students might get bored or worst stop schooling. Yet on the other hand I am relived because the school is doing the best it can to provide and live up with expectation of our endeavors amidst the pandemic. To sustain the level of inspiration and interest among my students, as a trainer I encourage them to finish schooling and that this pandemic will end sooner or later. That they should keep going no matter what. As time goes, I get used to this sudden shift of teaching mode, as a trainer is it my utmost responsibility to keep my training engaging and interesting as possible especially now that we are facing a universal health emergency. This pandemic might be a menace in the eyes of many but for me, it gave me the opportunity and chance to explore and live in a dynamic way of teaching."--- (Participant 2, interview response)

Participant 3

Participant 3 is 37 years old and is a 4-year school president and at the same time owner of a private institution under TESDA in Zamboanga del Sur. She took office right after her father died in 2019. She is a BSED graduate major in English. She is also a businesswoman owning her own beauty products and perfume brand. She is known to be a very busy individual that is why she is used

to live a life full of responsibility, taking everyday tasks without hesitations. That is why she develops a sense of flexibility and resiliency from the nature of her work.

> *"The moment the pandemic struck, I felt the heavy weight of responsibility in my shoulder as an elected school president. Before, I'm only focused on my business, but after my father died my function doubled, added with the fact that I have to take actions in living up and hone in with school matters. TESDA has mandated every TVIs to adopt to a new normal. Guided with Circular memorandums and IATF instructions, we are advised to take flexible learning as a new teaching mode to cope with the needs of the present time and adhere to health and safety protocols as well. Of course, to keep the school operations in balance, I have to adapt to this changes. It saddens me too see that because of the pandemic, number of enrollees have been reduced down to 50%, training time schedules are limited to shorter time and extended to longer days. We even cut off some school staff due to insufficient funding. But because I took this responsibility, I have to man up and do the best I can to keep the school working. It was a challenge for me, knowing I'm new to this field, but because I am a businesswoman, working on my own business, I know how to work things out in a setting full of uncertainties. It's not always a sunny day, there comes a time that we have to endure rainy days but as it happens, we need to accept the reality and learn to dance in the rain. As a school president, adapting to changes is a vital aspect to go forward and keep going."-- (Participant 3, interview response)*

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a 74 year-old Doctor of Philosophy in Education Major in School Supervision and Administration with 27 years of experience as a school head of different schools both public and private. She was also a teacher in public school for 48 years and 6 years dressmaking NCII trainer under a technical-vocational institution. Now, she is currently the school head of one of the 39 TVIs in Zamboanga del Sur.

> *"With my supervisory and managerial functions and experiences from both public and private schools, I find this new normal setting not so new since I have been exposed to changes from my past experiences. From it, I learned the impression of adaptability. But never in my life have I ever*

experienced being squeezed in a pandemic wherein as a school head I have to conform to national health standards and protocols making sure the health and safety of our students and school staff will not be at stake. But because this is a national emergency, it is my role to be a model for my endeavors. Part of my role is to adapt to a new teaching delivery mode which is flexible learning wherein in we have to reconstruct the curriculum in line with the new normal standards imposed by TESDA. Upon the moment we piloted the flexible learning mode, the students as well as the trainers were unaccustomed but as time goes, they're able to live with it. We don't' know when this will end but one thing that keeps us going is that we learn to adapt to a new normal setting in order for us to move forward. There is no stopping in learning as long as we have the will to do it."--- (Participant 4, interview response)

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Data analysis is done through counter checking the significant statements of the four participants collected during the limited fa-to-face interview and/or messenger video conferencing. By transcribing their respective responses from the interviews, taking notes of important details and listening to their audio recordings multiple times, the researcher is able to familiarize the gist of their responses. Data analysis then proceeded by noting texts that were relevant to the research questions: (1) What is it like to be a student, trainer, and school head in the implementation of flexible during the pandemic? (2) What contexts or situations have typically influenced the experiences of these people, as a student, trainer and school head undergoing flexible learning during the pandemic?

Over time, after doing so, looking back and re-reading and reflecting on their responses, the researcher is able to see the emerging themes from the commonalities of their response. The following discussion of the study is the

synthesis from the descriptions of the experiences of the participants, utilizing quotes to communicate the essence of their experiences.

Universal Themes/Structures

Theme One: *Reopening*

Subtheme: *First day after lockdown*

The participants shared their experiences during the time they knew that they were given the go signal to reopen, operate, teach and go to school. As participant 1 said:'

> *"Finally I'm out after the long months of being stuck at home. It's good to be productive again".*

Participant 2 also shared his experience, stating:

> *"It was a relief when the school president called informing me about the good news, she told me that the school is going to reopen. So, I prepared myself, my stuff, everything. However, I am uncertain of the changes that'll happen in the teaching process since there is a pandemic. "*

Participant 3 and 4 also shared:

> *"After we complied and passed all the reopening requirements, it was a total comfort knowing we are eligible to operate again after the lockdown. But as expected only few people came to inquire and update, I feel bothered of what might happen since the lockdown paralyze our operations".*
>
> *"As the school president, it's a joyous day that we're back on track, though we see less people coming for couples of days still we're happy".*

It appears that participants felt the relief of being on track to education again after being jammed at their respective homes. Yet, on the other hand it also captures the feeling of uncertainty among the participants of the possibilities in the reopening of schools after the lockdown. They are unsure of how they would function and what is expected of them. According to the Theory of Affordances (Gibson 1977), external circumstances can instigate changes in values, and COVID-19 has provoked people to rethink the roles of schools, teachers and students (Colao et al. 2020; Darling-Hammond, Schachner, and Edgerton 2020). Uncertainty, by nature, is endemic to the teaching field. (Lortie 1975), encompassing didactic (being able to meet all learners' academic needs), practical (using appropriate teaching and intervention methods) and relational (certainty about building relationships with pupils and parents; Munthe 2001) uncertainties

Theme Two: *New Normal Set-up*

Subtheme: *Adhering to the health and safety protocols during in-school activities during pandemic*

All four participants described their experiences during their in-school activities amidst the pandemic.

. As participant 1 shared:

> *"I wake up every day knowing I have to gear up myself with facemask and alcohol. During my driving training in the heap of the pandemic, I felt excited and a little sad at the same time. Excited, because I'll get to do one of my greatest dreams which is to learn how to drive a vehicle and*

sad because time is limited for me to have the actual training in school. So every time it's my turn to take the steering wheel, I savor the moment. I feel so excited and happy when my schedule for actual driving comes and I am also eager to finish my modules and assignments at home since I love the course I took. That is why I take precautions not to get sick or not to get too overwhelmed with talking with my classmates in school. I devotionally submit myself to health check procedures. It is always an everyday routine every time we come in and out of school to follow certain health protocols such as sanitizing our hands and step on the footbath, check our temperatures and fill out the health checklist. It's kind of a hassle thing to do but we have to undergo it anyway because it's for our own safety too. But all those safety procedures are all worth it because I enjoy every moment of actual training even just for a short period of time".

Students need to overcome all of unexpected changes as quickly as possible (Dhawan,2020). Motivation is a complex aspect of human psychology and behavior that affects how people want to spend their time, how much energy they expend on each assigned task, how they think and feel about the task, and how long they are engaged in the task (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). They are used to face-to-face conventional teaching and had not found it easy to adapt to flexible learning wherein they are limited to access school. Yet, on the study conducted by the researcher the student is still eager and motivated to attend classes and work on modules despite the restrictions faced. Because of the pandemic, restrictions in interaction and limitations in in-school activities are imposed. Participant 2 added:

"I have to see to it as a trainer that the health and safety protocols are first and foremost properly observed by the students before we start the actual training in school. I am cautious with my actions. I don't take in students who are not feeling well, and if they are, I advise them to rest at home. During the actual training, I personally sanitized their hands and the vehicle specifically the steering wheel and the shifting gear or tools or anything that is used before another student uses them. Since students come from various places, I make sure that they always wear their face masks properly and that they are distant at each other and I don't allow them to talk for a long period of time during classroom discussions. And every time I handed them their modules for them to study and answer at home, I see to it that they wait in their respective seats. I find it hard to adjust in this unconventional way of teaching since I am used to the conventional one for eight long years . Yet on the other side of the coin, I consider it as an opportunity to explore my strengths and capabilities as a trainer."

Even before the pandemic, teaching profession is expected to assume vast number of roles with varying complexities. With the onset of covid-19 pandemic, protocols for flexible and or distance learning is required to abruptly change their practices including daily tasks and responsibilities. Covid 19 outbreak in the Philippines compelled all the educational institutions to change the mode of learning (Hew, Jia, Gonda, & Bai, 2020). This pandemic has brought a new streamline of teaching for participant 2. He is making his best to deliver the learning effectively while in a pandemic. He follows protocols not just for his

safety but most especially for the safety of his students as well. Participant 3 and 4 who are both school heads shared their views differently but in a harmonious manner. Participant 4 stated:

> "*It is an advantage to be prepared. Of course as the school head, it is empirical to follow health protocols in times like this so that my constituents will emulate. The moment we were given a go signal to start anew in the "new normal", we already ticked off the list on the IATF and TESDA health and safety checklist relative to TESDA circular No. 66-A s. 2020. The school setting had not been changed until this covid-19 came through. We provided footbaths, thermal scanners, sanitizing solutions, health checklist, painted visible walk marks, printed covid-19 safety reminders, mounted transparent barriers for offices and classrooms, provided face masks, designed sanitation plan for equipment, tools and workshop area, designated seat plans for incoming students, printed learning modules equivalent to the number of students per batch, posted signage disallowing the entry of person's with high temperature or flu-like symptoms, constructed an isolation area, arranged training schedules for limited face-to-face and distant modular instructions, upgraded our internet bandwidth for faster internet connection, considered work-from-home settings for auxiliary staffs, and scheduled a limited time frame for face-to-face classes. All this and more just to combat covid-19 threat."*

Participant 3 added:

> *It was a laborious thing to do, since we have so much responsibility to take care of as the school president. From complying with the health and*

safety protocols raised by TESDA and IATF to the adjustment on school management even stretching financial budget for health and safety materials are few of the many things to look unto. It was never easy to put up a school, but it's much difficult to lose one."

In the heap of covid-19, school heads are expected to be more flexible in managing school resources to keep up with frequently changing guidelines and circumstances. The management of the school by the administration underwent a radical change, thereby transforming the functions and responsibilities of their duties (del Arco etal., 2021). Effective leaders use and develop their personal qualities and specific traits or dispositions in order to bring about leadership practices (Leithwood etal., 2019). Leadership and management have always been the main responsibilities of school heads. They have various areas of responsibilities including human resources, financial resources, educational activities of students and teachers, external relations, well-being of students and teachers, and teaching students. They are even expected to make more complex decisions that were not needed before. According to Grint (2020), leadership is more necessary than management in times of crisis , as it focuses on solving complex problems with an unknown or difficult solution, mobilizing collective efforts and promoting collaboration. The researcher agrees with the truth that school heads put much pressure in their shoulders to take on emergency responses to school amidst the pandemic.

Theme Three: *Challenges during face-to-face and distance learning*

Subtheme: *feeling of anxiety and frustration*

The four participants expressed their experiences when they've undergone face-to-face and distance learning.

Participant 1 stated:

> *I have never been this anxious since the start of covid. I am the type of person who looks out for my wellbeing. To avoid getting sick, I always eat right, I take vitamins and take a bath every day. And every time I have my face-to-face classes, I always carry with me my own alcohol and extra face mask. I have an uneasy feeling every time I get out of the house knowing that the threat of the virus is just around the corner. When I'm at school I felt being isolated because each of us is restricted to talk comfortably at each other and we have this distance that we have to observe. Face-to-face classes before when I was in high school is so much fun, I get to interact with my classmates and teachers with no worries, laugh with them, share with them my snacks, and we even do group study and group projects. . It's a nice feeling to have people around who loves to have my company. But today, face-to-face classes are not that kind of fun. As the pandemic hits, I felt being close but so far. During modular activities, I have to do it alone unlike before I get to do paper tests and activities and brainstorm ideas with classmates but now it's just me. Sometimes when we have our online classes, I can't even get into the google classroom because of the unstable internet connectivity. It's even harder to answer modules knowing the fact that I have to do it alone. I feel stressed sometimes when I can't finish my tasks outside school. Although*

I enjoy being in school because I get to learn a skill of my choice but still I have to endure doing it and learn it alone.

Participant 2 felt the same way as he stated:

It worries me to see that the number of students enrolled in my class is decreased. Unlike before covid, I get to enjoy teaching vast number of students. We developed an atmosphere of unity and joy especially when I initiated the practical training, in their eyes I could see their excitement. During their highway drive, I could sense their focus upon maneuvering the vehicle. I could hear some of their classmates from the back seat taking notes and commenting on the actions their respective classmate have taken upon driving the vehicle. I make evaluations after their driving performances. Some would laugh when I joke about them acting like a jumping horse or a swerving snake on the road. But above all, I make sure that at the end of the evaluation, I give them serious comments and advices to ponder to, that driving is not a joke to laugh at but a responsibility to carry because sooner or later they'll become professional drivers. And sometimes during lunch time, we agreed to have a boodle fight. We grill fish and prepare kinilaw to satisfy our hungry stomachs. It was a good feeling getting students united by this small get together. But now, it's the other way around. It's frustrating to see that only few students are enrolling because of the threat of covid-19. There is limited time given for face-to-face classes with limited number of students per session to teach to. We couldn't do highway drive with many student passengers at

> *the back seat, we couldn't have a boodle fight anymore, we couldn't do group activities in the workshop. All this activities have been paralyzed due to the virus. Modular instructions are done away from school, and what frustrates me is that I get to design modules every now and then. Its stressful to check modules, honestly. And what frustrates me the most is that some of the students don't answer them seriously. I felt that my efforts are wasted.*

Frustration occurs in situations when a person is hindered from achieving the desired or perceived outcome. It is experienced when the results of goals do not meet the expectations based on the efforts exerted. Its causes can either be internal or external. Internal sources involve disappointment on not achieving the set goal or when the goals interfere with one another. On the other hand, external sources involve circumstances outside the person's control.

As for participants 3 and 4, they stated:

> *It is our responsibility to look deeply into the situation. We have to see to it that our facilities in school are ready and prepared to battle the threat of covid-19. Although we feel the pressure every day, we need to be vigorous and energized to face this time full of uncertainty.*

Participant 3 added:

> *I feel worried of what might happen if we let our guards down. Being cautious is not just being cautious. We have to go to the ground to make sure that everything is well taken care of. From gearing the school facilities down to toughening school staffs.*

Participant 4 also shared:

I have a mixed feeling of uncertainty and insecurity in a sense that trust to one another is at stake due to covid-19 virus. Questions like, what if one of us is infected? How can we cope with it? When will this come to an end?

In Moustakas framework, this theme is classified under Bodily concerns as it shows the feeling of anxiety due to the uncertainties brought by covid-19 among the participants. When will this come to an end? How are we going to hold up in this situation? These are few of the questions emerged from reflecting from the participants' responses. Depression and anxiety are serious mental health problems that contribute to psychosocial and academic dysfunction (Alfoukha et al., 2019). Having experienced epidemics or natural disasters increases long-term levels of depression in populations (Mak et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2018; Morganstein and Ursano, 2020). Experiencing more upsetting events in life and finding it difficult to cope with them are also predictors of anxiety, stress, and depression (Zou et al., 2018). It is a common fear nowadays that teachers, school heads and other workers have is being infected with the Covid 19 virus. The spread of Covid 19 caused fear among individuals. In communities, people become suspicious towards others in terms of the disease spread. Others are even afraid of becoming sick or die due to the virus (Khan, Mamun, Griffiths, &Ulah, 2020).

Theme Four: *Facing the reality*

Subtheme: *Adapting to change*

The four participants described how they are affected by the reality of the world. They experienced the same horrors brought by covid-19. This

phenomenon taught the participants to develop a sense of flexibility and adaptability. Flexibility in a sense that they'll be able to adjust with the constraints of time. And adaptability, be able to accept, live in and cope up to be able to survive. Adjustment is needed to cope up with the needs of the situation. Adaptability is the key to sustain the momentum in learning effectively amidst the pandemic. It is hard but it's doable. As participant 1 specified:

> *During the pandemic, I experienced having limited actions inside the classroom as well as experienced having difficulty working on my modules, but as time goes I get used to the idea that I need to go with the flow. In time, I have grown brave and courageous facing the pandemic.*

Participant 2 also added:

> *Even though we are facing uncertain times like this, I don't lose hope. That is why I always encourage my students and my co-workers to look at situations positively. Every day at school, I tell them that this shall pass. I may feel down and weary sometimes, but that doesn't mean for me to give up.*

Participant 3 elaborated:

> *Being the prime mover of the institution, I should look into the welfare of my school, my staff, and clients. Adapting to a new course of teaching and school management may seem difficult, but I have to do it anyway since everyone is relying on me. Fighting against this unseen enemy is hard, but losing what my father has entrusted me is harder.*

Participant 4 also shared:

Above all things, we still have to be thankful for giving and keeping us alive in this time of pandemic. Facing day-to-day hurdles is extra challenge at this time. We have to get closer to the God Almighty as what I always practice to myself. I find it helpful and it eases my worries.

From Moustakas framework, this is classified under Materiality as it shows the how experiences are affected by the reality of the world and how this participants face and adapt the situation being faced.

The pandemic forced the school heads to change and quickly adapt to a fluid situation in which they had little control (Beauchamp et al., 2021). A study revealed that several of the school presidents found organizing everyday life at their school according to the changes in infection control guidelines challenging. The school heads had limited experience with crisis management and protracted crisis situations of this magnitude. The participants shared their views differently but the thought came down with a sense of unity. The teaching and learning process assumes a different shape in times of crisis. When disasters and crises (man-made and natural) occur, schools and colleges need to be resilient and find new ways to continue the teaching–learning activities (Chang-Richards et al., 2013). According to Pertuz and Sebastian (2017), to avoid inappropriate functioning and have a healthy learning community, adjusting to the system is needed. In this new normal, flexibility, adjustments, and considerations are needed based on how one understand, respond, and manage an ever-changing environment.

Theme Five: *Moving Forward*

Subtheme: *The dire need to continue school operations amidst the pandemic*

Participants have shared their insights about how their significant roles affect the continuity of education despite being threatened by the horrors of covid-19. School closures and learning loss during the covid-19 pandemic can have a long term impact on the current cohort of learners. They may likely to affect economic potential and productivity in adulthood thus undermining the country's competitiveness. In this view, participant 1 shared:

> *I am still thankful that we can still go to school even though we have restrictions in doing so. It's my choice to get into schooling knowing the mere fact that there is a worldwide threat of virus, because I don't want to be stopped by that anyway. There are many modes I believe to access learning even I am at home. For example, I enrolled at a tesda online program. There they offer vast number of programs that only requires me to attend online, after I finish the course, they've sent me my e-certificate. It's amazing how education has evolved. I am happy that despite everything that happened, still there is no stopping in learning.*

Participant 2 also shared:

> *I may not be as techy as every trainer should be but I am eager to embrace the new era if that would mean to continue the education of our learners. I am grateful that the school I'm working in is able to supply the materials needed to start anew in this pandemic. Modules are printed for students to access remotely. That way, they could still learn in their homes. Because I believe, if school stops operating, many would suffer.*

Participant 3 and 4 also shared the same views:

If we don' take actions, many students might rely only in theoretical instructions through modules and online data, what about the practical exercises? We believe it is not enough to learn by the books or by the context only but it is empirical to learn also through actual performance especially that we are a TESDA school, we should carry on the standards bared by the agency and that is to perfect and master industry-ready skills among our citizens.

The four participants shared how education plays an important role in making our lives more meaningful especially in these difficult times. We need to strive hard to be able to survive.

Because of education's accountability to the world, especially to the learner's life, education must not be stopped even if there is a health crisis surging. The education of the learners must be continued even though there is still the presence of threats caused by CoViD-19, it is because if the education of the learners will be stopped, the learners may tend to loss their interest and love for learning. The learners may tend to forget everything that they have acquired in school through the years. That is why, education must continue even if there is a health threat.

Moustakas framework stand in this emerging theme which falls under causality proves that the experiences of the participants have been influenced by the phenomenon like having pandemic at the time being. It is empirical to move forward and live with the constraints of the surroundings because that is life should be lived.

Theme 6: *Getting close despite the distance*

Subtheme*:* *Empathy*

Participants have shared their experiences and how they needed each other to survive together. Empathy allows us to understand what other people are thinking and feeling, to emotionally engage with them, and to care for their well–being (S. Karsten, 2019). Participant 1 stated:

> *In the pandemic, with myself alone, I could not survive and finish my training if not for the support of my family, my trainer for his encouragement, the school and the school staffs. I'm glad I've finished my training without getting sick. To my classmates, though we never bonded that much but by seeing them with smiling eyes (because half of our faces are covered with face masks) every time we see in school is enough. I think being physically healthy is not sufficient, we also need to be mentally healthy too.*

Participant 2 also shared:

> *It is necessary to be close with people not literally physical though, we can still talk through social platforms such as messenger or google meet or on the phone. At least we'll be able to feel that we are not alone in this pandemic. In my experience as a trainer, communication is very important. It gives us a sense of belongingness and acceptance.*

Participant 3 also added:

> *The pandemic has brought us closely. Friends, family and co-workers plays an important role to keep our sanity intact while facing this pandemic.*

Participant 4 also stated:

> *This phenomenon has brought us closer to God. I believe it takes a disaster to get us closer. Prayers are powerful, so powerful that it brought together broken families, tie loose knots between friends and most of all it gave us the faith to go forward. I am thankful that in my age, I was given a chance to live and to inspire students and workmates that everything shall pass if we'll work on things together. Without God, living is meaningless.*

In this theme, relationship to self and others under Moustakas framework is entailed. This describes the personal reactions and interactions with others as well. So much have been told by the participants on how they are holding up against covid-19. They get support from their family and friends and co-workers. Physical separation curtails the spread of the virus, yet the practice of physical distancing inherently limits people's in-person social interactions, which may narrow their sense of social connection (Markel et al., 2007). The reduction in the physical availability of social connections is concerning, as over a century of research has proven how crucial social connection is for well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2018; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Maslow, 1943; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, published literature reviews about past pandemics have revealed that quarantining or separating those who may be infected to minimize the spread of a disease leads to long-lasting negative psychological effects—a finding that is important to keep in mind as the pandemic continues (Brooks et al., 2020)

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study on the lived experiences of TVIs in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic are depicted. The conclusions were based on the purpose, research questions and results of the study. The essentialities of the findings and the development of recommendations will also be elucidated.

The researcher adopted a phenomenological approach to achieve the goals of the study. Qualitative interviews were conducted among four purposively selected participants with different positions and functions in selected TVIs in Pagadian City. The interviews were conducted, audio-recorded, noted then transcribed and analyzed. Themes and categories that emerged from the data were augmented with literature, including literature from the internet. Rigors and trustworthiness of the data were observed and ethical considerations respected.

Findings

The findings defined below were centered on the experiences of the four participants, the research question, the objectives and the themes emerging from the data analysis. The research questions to be answered were:

1. What is it like to be a student, trainer, and school head in the implementation of flexible during the pandemic?

2. What contexts or situations have typically influenced the experiences of these people, as a student, trainer and school head radio upon undergoing flexible learning during the pandemic?

By answering these questions, the study achieved the following transcendental phenomenology objectives:

- Described the experiences of TVI students, trainers, school heads/presidents in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic
- Gained an in-depth understanding of their experiences

Upon doing this research, the researcher found out the highs and lows of the participants experiences in living up with the new normal setting, utilizing flexible learning during the pandemic. Participants shared and expressed their valuable experiences as a student, as a trainer and as school heads, coping up with the needs of time. As a student, the participant expressed his joy as well as his frustrations upon going through the limitations in accessing theoretical and practical learning. Although he felt the need to continue his interest in learning, still he finds it very challenging to live up with the constraints of the present time. On the other hand, the trainer as the participant, also expressed his views upon taking up the unconventional way of learning. His past experience as a trainer is too different compared to his experiences at the moment. He finds it hard to adjust but eventually he learned to cope and live with it. The school heads, although they come from different TVIs, still they shared common points and introspection about how they are holding up in the face of the pandemic. As

school heads, the researcher believed that they held a great responsibility and too much pressure specially that they were academically challenged with the threats of covid-19. The researcher felt the magnitude of their need to move forward and adhere to the health and safety protocols in order for them to continue the process of learning. The researcher gained deep understanding upon listening and reflecting in their valuable experiences. There are frustrating points to take note of from their experiences. Like being challenged, pressured, threatened and not secured from the vileness brought by the pandemic. On the other side of the coin, there are also positive points to behold from the fragments on the interview being made with the participants. Like being able to see them gain the sense of bravery, optimism, responsibility and strengthened faith to God upon going through the pandemic while continuing the course of education and of life.

Summary of the Data

Six themes and subthemes emerged from the data gathered. The findings were discussed according to the six themes that emerged from the data:

Six themes as identified from the universal structure of Moustakas' framework are identified as Time, Space, Bodily Concern, Materiality, Causality and Relationship to others.

The researcher believes that theme one labeled as "Reopening" with subtheme "First day after lockdown" falls under Time as it describes a person's lived experience in relation to time. It's a timely phenomenon since Covid-19 was not expected to come and destroy the course of our daily life. Restricted

reopening of institutions are considered one of the joyous days after lockdown was mandated. The trouble brought by Covid-19 had snatched away precious moments and good times including being able to attend classes in person and being able to graduate in a physical manner. Such things happen in an ordinary day. But because of the pandemic, those moments are held captive.

Theme two which talks about “The New Normal Set –up” with subtheme, “Adhering to the health and safety protocols during in-school activities during the pandemic” is classified under space as it entails lived experiences involving the place or situation a person experienced the phenomenon. In ensuring the health and safety of school endeavors, it was strictly strategized by the health and safety governing bodies to let institutions follow certain protocols in order to continue the course of education. Students, trainers, school heads and faculty members were strictly advised to adhere with the safety mandates in order for them to live up with the new normal set-up.

Theme three, “Challenges during face-to-face and distance learning” with subtheme “Feeling of anxiety and frustration” falls under bodily concerns as it describes a person’s lived experiences which involved his/her body reactions such as emotions and feelings. Negative feelings were formed during the Covid-19 pandemic wave. As such that the participants expressed how they were greatly affected emotionally with the experiences being lived at the moment.

Theme four which is “Facing the reality” with subtheme “Adapting to change” is sorted to the universal structure materiality as it expresses how the lived experiences of a person are affected by the reality of the world. Upon doing the interview, the researcher saw the potential points that the selected

participants were able to develop the sense adaptability. As they were able to hold up and go on with life even if there are grave threats of pandemic.

Theme five which is “Moving Forward” with subtheme “the dire need to continue school operations amidst the pandemic” falls under causality as it tells how the certain factors have influenced a person’s lived experiences on the phenomenon. The participants were highly believed to be positive minded people as they chose to move forward and not be shackled with chains of Covid-19. There is no stopping in learning. The pandemic wasn’t successful to immobilize the course of learning but rather gave the chance to explore unconventional and effective ways to promote learning in an advance and progressive manner, and that is utilizing the means of flexible learning.

Lastly, theme six, talks about relationship to self and others, the researcher believed that the theme for this universal structure is “Getting close despite the distance” with subtheme “empathy”. Upon delving into the heart of this research, the researcher found out that the participants we’re brought closely by the pandemic. The researcher inferred that the phenomenon of having the pandemic had been the key to open doors for broken relationships to mend, shattered feelings to be heard and fate to God be strengthened.

The Themes and their Implications

Theme One: Reopening

Subtheme: First day after lockdown

The first day of school is often met with some anxiousness and excitement from teachers, parents, and students, as they consider the challenges and

successes they will encounter over the course of the school year. However, during the pandemic it brought unimaginable challenges.

Theme Two: New normal set-up

Subtheme: Adhering to the health and safety protocols during in-school during pandemic

New normal had urged the participants to follow certain health protocols to continue the in-school activities. Certain procedures have been undergone by the participants such as the checking of temperature through thermal scanners every now and them, filling out of the health checklists, the mandatory wearing of facemasks, and proper observance of social distancing. These health and safety protocols were routinely followed by the respective TVIs as prescribed by the IATF and TESDA governing bodies.

Theme Three: Challenges during face-to-face and distance learning
Subtheme: feeling of anxiety and frustration

Several challenges were encountered during face-to-face and distance learning especially for participant 1 who is a student, said he felt anxious when going out to school due to the threats posed by covid and he felt frustrated and isolated upon working on his modules alone, participant 2,3 and 4 also expressed their insecurities and uncertainties upon dwelling with the threats of the present time, as participant 4 stated that she has trust issues and suspicions in interacting with individuals at school.

Theme Four: Facing the reality
Subtheme: Adapting to change

As shown from the interview responses from the four participants, it showed the coping mechanism being established like being able to adapt to the

present situation being faced. As participant 1 stated that he developed the sense of bravery and courage, he sees the circumstance not a hindrance to stop schooling. Adapting to change is basically the probable choice to counter-attack the dilemmas brought by covid-19. As for participant 4, she elaborated that having trust and faith to God will always work things out.

Theme Five: Moving Forward

Subtheme: The dire need to continue school operations amidst the pandemic

Without any doubt, education is not exempted in the savage disruption of covid-19. School closures and learning loss during the pandemic can have a long-term negative impact on the current cohort of learners. That is why there is a need to continue the education process. As participant 3 and 4 stated, it's not enough to learn just by the context, as a TESDA school, harnessing skills should be the prime focus of the TVIs to meet the needs of the industry Whether there is a pandemic or not. Education should never be stopped.

Theme Six: Getting close despite the distance

Subtheme: Empathy

In this time of pandemic it is essential to keep our mental health at its sound state. As for the participants, they expressed how being close to loved ones, co-workers, family and friends plays an important part in keeping their sanity intact. Staying in touch like calling and messaging, listening or even smiling at each other can help feel more connected. This is important for the mental health, especially now that the pandemic encourages the idea of isolation.

Conclusion

The limitations in physical activities in school due to the pandemic had pushed TVIs to adapt flexible learning. A sudden change from conventional

learning to flexible learning as we call it “new normal” teaching delivery mode brought by the pandemic is complicated. All respondents had distinctive lived experiences. On the optimistic view of the issue, flexible learning amidst the pandemic allowed them to explore other ways to learn, create and design educational methods that is beyond expectation. Regardless, there are also some unpleasing experiences that our participants had been through. Most of them felt anxious and worried of the threat posed by covid-19. They feel uneasy when they go out from their homes and frustrated because some of the students do not take modules seriously. They also feel not secured and unsafe upon thinking that their co-workers might be infected. Though they might feel this way, they tried their best to cope and ease down their negative feelings by treating the situation positively. Talking and communicating with family, friends, co-workers and having faith to God are mechanisms they believed helped them survive the pandemic. Constant communication with others is very essential at these trying times. Empathy and understanding each state helps boost sanity.

In terms of the need to continue education, the pandemic has paved ways to explore new normal pedagogies. Embracing alternatives like utilizing technology-based platforms and modular instructions for distance learning justified and maintained the momentum of education function.

The covid-19 pandemic brought strengths and weaknesses, new opportunities to overcome boundaries, face dangers and develop hopes for TVIs implementing flexible learning. Flexible learning has opened doors for schools to explore new opportunity to adapt and embrace new normal pedagogies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and insights gained from this study, the researcher proposes the following recommendations to strengthen the implementation of flexible learning in Technical Vocational Institutions (TVIs). These recommendations are intended for TESDA, TVI administrators, teachers and trainers, students, and future researchers. As emphasized by UNICEF (2020), preventing a learning crisis from becoming a generational catastrophe requires urgent and collective action.

1. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)

As the governing agency for technical vocational education and training, TESDA should continuously review and enhance its policies and programs to address the challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare institutions for future educational disruptions. Training regulations should be revisited to incorporate preventive measures and relevant occupational health and safety competencies. Furthermore, TESDA should support continuous professional development programs that emphasize the upskilling and reskilling of teachers and trainers, particularly in technological literacy, flexible learning strategies, and the effective delivery of online and offline instructional materials.

2. TVI Presidents, School Heads, and Administrators

TVI administrators should continue adopting flexible, innovative, and responsive educational approaches to accommodate the diverse needs of learners. They should strengthen modular and online instructional delivery, provide adequate technological resources, and establish institutional policies that promote educational continuity and meaningful teacher-student interaction.

Furthermore, TVIs are strongly encouraged to institutionalize English Language Competency Training for teachers and trainers as part of their continuing professional development programs. This training should focus on strengthening English communication skills, grammatical accuracy, technical vocabulary, instructional language proficiency, and effective classroom communication. Particular emphasis should be placed on developing teachers' ability to explain technical concepts clearly, prepare comprehensible instructional materials, facilitate classroom discussions, and communicate effectively in both face-to-face and flexible learning environments. TVI administrators should conduct periodic training needs assessments and evaluate the effectiveness of these programs to ensure continuous improvement in instructional quality and teacher competency.

3. TVI Teachers and Trainers

Teachers and trainers should continuously enhance their professional competencies by reviewing existing training regulations, strengthening occupational health and safety practices, and promoting mental health awareness among learners. They should actively participate in professional development programs focusing on digital literacy, innovative teaching strategies, and effective delivery of online and offline instruction.

Additionally, teachers and trainers are encouraged to participate in English Language Competency Training to improve their communication skills and instructional effectiveness. Strengthening their proficiency in English, particularly in the use of technical terminology and the explanation of vocational concepts, may contribute to clearer instruction, improved learning materials, and more meaningful interactions with students.

Teachers and trainers should also remain adaptable, resourceful, and responsive to technological advancements and changing educational demands.

4. TVI Students

Students should develop adaptability, self-discipline, and independent learning skills to maximize the benefits of flexible learning. They are encouraged to explore available educational resources, strengthen their digital literacy, and actively participate in modular, online, and face-to-face learning activities whenever accessible. Students should also maintain open communication with their teachers and school administrators regarding learning difficulties, technological limitations, and other challenges that may affect their academic progress.

5. Future Researchers

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further phenomenological studies exploring the experiences of TVI administrators, teachers, and students in implementing flexible learning. Additional research may investigate the long-term effectiveness of flexible learning strategies, the professional development needs of vocational educators, and the relationship between teachers' English language competency and instructional effectiveness. Further studies may also examine the impact of English Language Competency Training on teachers' instructional practices and students' learning experiences in technical vocational education. Such investigations may provide empirical evidence to support the development of more responsive educational policies and professional development programs.

REFERENCES

Al-Samarai, S., M. Gangwar and P. Gala (2020), *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Education* Washington; https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33739

Challenges of Flexible Learning Models. (2015, October 12). Study.com https://study.com/academy/lesson/challenges-of-flexible-learning-models.html

CNN Philippines (2020). *748 private schools suspend operations this school year,* https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news2020/9/9/privateschools-temporary-closure

Custodio, A. (2020, July 24) Blended learning is the new normal in Philippine education.. The Manila Times. https://manilatimes.net/2020/07/24/supplements/blended-learning-is-the-new-normal-inphillipine-education

Dhawan, S. (2020). Online learning: A panacea in the time of COVID-19 crises. *Journal of Educational Technology, 49 (*1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10/1177/0047239520934018

Ferlazzo, L. (2020, August 19) Flexible Learning in the Age of Covid-19, Education Week. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-flexible-learning-in-the-age-of-covid-19/2020/08

Karalis, T. (2020). Planning and Evaluation during Educational Disruption: Lessons Learned from COVID 19 Pandemic for Treatment and Emergencies in Education. *European Journal of Education Studies, 7* (4). https://doi.org/10/5281/zenodo.3789022

Looking to the future of flexible learning in the Philipines https://www.timeshighereducation.com/hub/blackboard/p/looking-future-flexible-learning-philippines

Murgatrodt, S. (2020, August 12). COVID-19 *and Online Learning, Alberta, Canada.* Doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.31132.85120

Petrie, C. (2020). *Spotlight: Quality education for all during COVID-19 crisis (*hundred Research Report #01) United Nations. https://hundred.org/en/collections/quality-education-for-all-during-coronavirus

Phenomenological Research Methods http://www.psyking.net/HTMLobj3856/Moustakas.Phenomenological_Theory.pdf

Phenomenological Research Methods, Clark Moustakas,1994 https://books.google.com.ph/books?hl=en&lr=&id=pp11AwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=who+is+clark+moustakas&ots=O9Ra_tNBEY&sig=ebIeKNWL4U_PDAyxeYzXjHzfX7M&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=who%20is%20clark%20moustakas&f=false

Philippine Daily Inquirer (2020). *Students worry about online learning due to slow PH internet.* https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1267743/students-worry-about-online-learning-due-kto-slow-ph-internet#ixzz6druP16CT

Technology's Impact on Education – The Philippines (2020) https://yourshumanly.org/technologys-impact-education-philippines/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw8O-VBhCpARIsACMvVLNmfx5kIQsbEvdgcYIaaz4ufJB6Aa_ctgEt63WOCZu0KdsHlBOBResaArKuEALw_wcB

TESDA Circular No. 37 s. 2009. *Subject: Guidelines in the Implementation of eLEarning TVET*

TESDA Circular NO.062, series 2020: *Guidelines in Implementing Flexible Learning in TVET*

Tria, J. Z. (2020, June 3). *The COVID-19 Pandemic through the lens of Education in the Philippines: The New Normal.* ResearchGate. *https://www.researchgate.net/publications/341981898_The_COVID19_Pandemic_Through_the_lens_of_Education_in_the_Philippines_The _New Normal*

Understanding Transcendental Phenomenology *https://www.regent.edu/journal/emergingleadershipjourneys/understandingtranscendentalphenomenology/#:~:text=Transcendental%20phenomenology%20(TPh)%2C%20largely,experience%20(Moustakas%2C%201994).*

United Nations (2020). *Policy brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond.* UnitedNations https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wpcontent/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf

UNESCO (2020), COVID-19 educational disruption and response, UNESCO website, https://en.unseco.org/covid19/educationalresponse

WHO. (2020a). *R&D Blueprint and COVID—19.* Retrieved from https://www.who.int/teams/blueprint/covid-19

WHO. (2020b). *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation REPort-51.* World Health Organization. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/situation-reports/20200311-sitrep-51-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=1ba62e57_10

J.H. CERILLES STATE COLLEGE
jhcsc.main@yahoo.com
School of Graduate Studies

APPENDIX A

April 18,2022

Dear Participants,

I am **Angely C. Abao,** a graduate student at J.H. Cerilles State College, Main Campus. I am currently conducting a research project titled **Lived Experiences of Technical Vocational Institutions (TVI) in the Implementation of Flexible Learning during the Pandemic.** The purpose of the project is to **determine and consolidate the experiences of TVI heads, trainers, students and other TVI related workers in order to come up with solutions that'll enable the TVIs to cope up with national health emergencies.** I am sincerely asking you to take part of the study because you are one of those who can provide significant information for my research. I am inviting you to accomplish the attached survey questionnaire.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, you may or may not write/include your name. Copies of the project will be provided to my thesis adviser and to our SGS dean. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all the questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaires through email or messenger and or voice record your answer upon clicking the record button on messenger.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. If you would like a summary copy of this study, you may indicate it at the last page of the questionnaire with proper contact information and details as to where and how the summary copy will be sent to you. Completion and return of the questionnaire will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact and reach me through the contact details I provided below. Thank You.

Sincerely,

Angely C. Abao
Cellphone Number: **0976-099-7469 / 0912-823-9677**
Messenger account: **Angely Abao**
Email Address: **2017angelyabao@gmail.com**

J.H. CERILLES STATE COLLEGE
jhcsc.main@yahoo.com
School of Graduate Studies

APPENDIX B

Study: Lived Experiences of TVIs in the Implementation of Flexible Learning during the Pandemic

Interview Questions:

1. What dimensions are intimately connected with your experience as a school head implementing flexible learning during the pandemic?

Ano ang mga sukat ang malapit na konektado sa iyong karanasan bilang pinuno ng paaralan sa pagpapatupad ng flexible learning sa panahon ng pandemya?[

2. What incidents are intimately connected with your experience as a school head in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic?

Ano ang mga insidente ang malapit na konektado sa iyong karanasan bilang pinuno ng paaralan sa pagpapatupad ng flexible learning sa panahon ng pandemya?

3. Who are the people intimately connected with your experience as a school head in the implementation of flexible learning during the pandemic?

Sino ang mga tao ang konektado sa iyong karanasan bilang pinuno ng paaralan sa pagpapatupad ng flexible learning sa panahon ng pandemya?

4. How does the experience affect you? What changes did you have in your experience?

Paano nakakaapekto sa iyo ang karanasan? Ano ang mga pagbabago ang iniuugnay mo sa karansan?

5. How does the experience affect significant others in your life?

Paano naaapketuhan ng karanasan ang mga tao sa paligid mo sa iyong buhay?

6. How feelings are generated by the experience?

Paano nabuo ang mga damdamin ng karanasan?

7. What thoughts stand out for you?

Ano ang mga saloobin ang namumukod tangi para sa iyo?

8. What bodily changes or states are you aware when you are teaching?

Ano ang mga pagbabagong pisikal o estado ang nalalaman mo kapag nagtuturo ka?

9. Have you shared all that is significant with reference to your experience?

Naibabahagi mo ba ang lahat nang may kabuluhan sa pagtukoy sa iyong karanasan?

J.H. CERILLES STATE COLLEGE
jhcsc.main@yahoo.com
School of Graduate Studies

APPENDIX C

The School President/Administrator
_____
Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur

April 18,2022

Subject: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Angely C. Abao, a graduate studies student of JH Main Campus. Respectfully, I would bring into your kind concern that I want to conduct a research for my Thesis Writing II which involves **Lived Experiences of TVIs in the Implementation of Flexible Learning during the Pandemic.** For the same reason, I will be requiring a little of your time to participate in my interview, guided with the interview questions I prepared.

I am sincerely seeking your kind permission and time for the completion of the above-said research. This research will be conducted under the guidance of Dr. Vilma C. Grengia.

I shall be highly obliged if you look into this matter and approve my request. Thank you for time.

Yours truly,

Angely C. Abao
SGS MAED EdAD II Student

Cellphone Number: **0976-099-7469 / 0912-823-9677**
Messenger account: **Angely Abao**
Email Address: **2017angelyabao@gmail.com**

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Background

Name	:	ANGELY C. ABAO
Home Address	:	KALIAN, MARGOSATUBIG ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR
Date of Birth	:	APRIL 26,1992
Place of Birth	:	BAGALUPA, LABANGAN ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR
Civil Status	:	MARRIED
Name of Father	:	ABUNDIO Y. ABAO JR.
Name of Mother	:	JESSICA C. ABAO
Email Address	:	2017angelyabao@gmail.com

Educational Background

Graduate	:	Master of Arts in Education Major in Educational Administration J.H. Cerilles State College Mati, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur SY 2021-2022
Tertiary	:	Bachelor in Elementary Education (Gen.Ed) J.H. Cerilles State College Margosatubig Unit SY 2014-2015
Secondary	:	Kalian National High School Kalian, Margosatubig Zamboanga del Sur SY 2008-2009
Elementary	:	Kalian Elementary School Kalian, Margosatubig Zamboanga del Sur SY 2004-2005