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## EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS DURING VIRTUAL MEETINGS: BASES FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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### ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explored the experiences and challenges of purposely chosen fifteen teachers during virtual meetings as the basis for developing an intervention program in the District of Tigbauan, Schools Division of Iloilo. Participants participated in in-depth interviews guided by a validated researcher-made interview schedule. Data were interpreted through thematic analysis. The results showed that instructors' experiences in virtual meetings were characterized by both chances for professional development and collaboration and difficulties with internet connectivity, multitasking, technical proficiency, and participation. Teachers used proactive coping mechanisms such as ingenuity, emotional control, and reliance on the support of stakeholders and the school head to show resilience, adaptability, and professionalism in the face of these obstacles. The recent DepEd ARAL Program Intervention Program in response to these findings. This program focuses on developing capacity in digital literacy, adaptive management, and psychosocial well-being.

**Keywords:** *Virtual Meetings, Teacher's Experiences, Challenges, Intervention Program*

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## INTRODUCTION

The transition to virtual meetings has significantly reshaped professional interactions among elementary teachers, particularly in the realms of training, administrative discussions, and collaboration. While virtual meetings offer accessibility, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness, they also present unique challenges that may hinder effective communication, engagement, and overall productivity. Despite existing research on virtual meeting best practices, communication barriers, and organizational commitment, a gap still exist in comprehending the specific experiences and challenges of elementary teachers in this setting, particularly in the Philippine educational context.

Existing research highlights best practices for virtual meetings, such as structured agenda and active participation strategies, but these are primarily designed for professional industries rather than elementary education (Rubinger et al., 2020). Studies also identify common virtual team challenges, including technological issues, lack of interaction, and miscommunication, yet they do not specifically address teachers' experiences (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020).

While organizational commitment influences the perceived effectiveness of virtual meetings, prior research has mainly focused on general professionals rather than elementary educators (Prasetyo et al., 2022). Studies on virtual learning highlight technical and engagement challenges, they primarily examine higher education rather than the specific needs of elementary teachers in professional meetings (Derasin et al., 2021). These gaps emphasize the need for research tailored to elementary teachers' virtual meeting experiences.

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While the Department of Education (DepEd) has issued various policies and guidelines on professional development and virtual engagements, there remains limited research on how effectively these policies address the real-time challenges faced by elementary teachers in virtual meetings. The extent to which these policies provide adequate support and training remains unclear, highlighting another gap in the literature.

Given these deficiencies, this investigation aims to address the gap by examining the experiences and challenges of elementary teachers during virtual meetings. By identifying key challenges and opportunities for improvement, this research will serve as a foundation for an intervention program designed to improve the effectiveness, engagement, and experience of teachers in virtual meetings. This study aims to enrich the body of knowledge by offering context-specific insights and practical recommendations to assist elementary teachers in effectively navigating the virtual environment for professional collaboration.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology, including the study's design, participant profile, data collection procedures, research instruments, and data analysis techniques. The study aimed to examine the virtual experiences of elementary teachers during meetings, serving as a foundation for developing an intervention program in the District of Tigbauan, Schools Division of Iloilo (SDO-Iloilo).

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## Research Method

In this study, participants who satisfied predetermined inclusion criteria were chosen using a qualitative method known as purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews led by a researcher-developed tool were used to collect data. The interviews were transcribed using a reflexive theme analysis approach. With a focus on researcher reflexivity, theoretical foundation, and active participation in theme generation, thematic analysis is a method for methodically finding, evaluating, and interpreting patterns of shared meaning across qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

Teachers' experiences and difficulties in online meetings were examined in the interviews. The interview guide created by the researcher ensured transparency for both the researcher and the respondents by offering a methodical yet adaptable procedure. Significant themes and sub-themes were produced by carefully interpreting the data using reflective thematic analysis, in accordance with the methodology outlined by Braun and Clarke (2023).

## Research Design

This study used a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and challenges of participants with school teachers' virtual problems during meetings. According to Neubauer, Witkop, and Varpio (2019), phenomenology aims to explore and describe a phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it, without prior assumptions or biases. The main goal of this study was to capture and examine the virtual experiences and challenges encountered by teachers during virtual sessions. By examining each practice's unique experiences and problems, the study aimed to provide a thorough knowledge of how

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these practices function in the educational setting and uncover the deeper meanings, difficulties, and effects associated with them.

Nicholls (2019) asserts that the study demonstrated the importance of participant perspectives in understanding the subject matter. We looked at the unique experiences and challenges that each participant had with virtual meetings, which were impacted by their unique jobs, backgrounds, and environments. This approach made it possible for the study to recognize the range of perspectives and the complex factors that shaped teachers' virtual experiences and difficulties.

### Participants of the Study

Participating in this study were 15 teachers who work for the Schools Division Office of Iloilo (SDO-Iloilo). The names of the respondents were given to the researcher by the heads or principals of individual school.

A total of 15 individuals were considered for this study. Purposive sampling was considered for selecting study participants.

### Sampling Design

Purposive sampling is a kind of non-probability sampling where participants are specifically selected according to particular traits, expertise, or experiences pertinent to the study's goals. This ensures that the data gathered is rich and closely related to the study's goal (Tajik, Golzar & Noor, 2025).

The selection of participants was guided by specific inclusion criteria. These included:

- (1) having worked as elementary school teachers in a public school for at least five years;
- (2)

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having workstations in SDO-Iloilo; and (3) having firsthand knowledge of virtual meetings pertaining to professional development and engagement for public school teachers.

### Research Instrument

To explore the experiences and challenges faced by elementary school teachers during virtual meetings related to their roles in the SDO-Iloilo, the study utilized an interview guide developed by the researcher.

The instrument comprised four components: (1) The Letter to Respondents, which formally informed participants of their selection while ensuring confidentiality; (2) The Letter of Consent to Interview, through which participants indicated their willingness or refusal to take part, signed and dated accordingly; (3) The Profile of Respondents, documenting each participant's preferred code name and relevant personal information; and (4) an interview schedule containing four open-ended questions aligned with the study's main objectives.

All interviews were audio-recorded to accurately capture the discussions.

### Validity of the Research Instrument

To establish the instrument's validity, the initial draft was first assessed by the thesis adviser and subsequently examined by experts in science, tests and measurements, and statistics for item inspection and face and content validation. Each item was examined by the expert panel based on a number of criteria, including appropriateness or suitability, relevancy, sentence structure, linguistic clarity, and other relevant considerations. The final draft of the instrument was updated to include the errors, suggestions, and recommendations for improvement.

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Rather than performing a reliability test, the study focused on ensuring construct, face, and content validity. The validation was carried out by professionals, and their feedback was integrated prior to gathering data.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), content-related evidence of validity required that the format and content be in line with the definition of variables and the sample of the subject being assessed. This helped to validate the questionnaire's items. When creating the final draft, the panel of validators' remarks, revisions, and recommendations about the interview guide's contents were taken into account.

The design and content of the instrument were created in accordance with established research ethics.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

To ensure the well-being of all participants and research personnel, the researcher strictly adhered to government-mandated safety protocols throughout the study. Formal permission to conduct the research was requested from the SDO-Iloilo. Following approval, the researcher gave the signed letter to the principals of the individual schools, who helped potential study participants. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to choose participants who actively participated in online meetings at their educational institutions. This targeted selection ensured that participants possessed relevant experiences and insights related to the study topic.

After identifying the participants, the researcher coordinated with the school heads to schedule interview sessions. Individual, one-on-one interviews were conducted at each school to gather comprehensive and diverse perspectives. By encouraging the exchange of

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experiences and viewpoints, the researcher was able to lead participants in in-depth conversations. To fully capture the participants' comments and ensure that the complete range of their reactions and ideas were recorded, interview sessions were videotaped. Before conducting the interviews, the researcher made sure the participants understood the recording's aim and obtained their informed agreement to record the conversations.

The researcher compiled the data gathered for analysis after the interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2023), a reflexive thematic analysis methodology was employed to methodically find, examine, and evaluate patterns of shared meaning within the dataset. Instead of treating themes as merely emerging from the data, this method places an emphasis on the researcher's reflexivity, theoretical foundation, and active participation in theme generation.

By using this approach, the researcher was able to give a thorough and thorough exploration and detailed depiction of the participants' experiences and difficulties with virtual meetings pertaining to public school teachers' professional growth and school engagement. The analysis's conclusions provided the basis for evaluating these practices' efficacy and pinpointing areas where the intervention program needed to be strengthened.

### Data Analysis

The interview guide's validity was assessed by a panel of experts, and all remarks on the instrument were carefully taken into account.

For analysis, the conversations and interviews were transcribed. The gathered data was examined using a reflexive thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, which emphasizes the

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researcher's active engagement in creating themes, reflexivity, and theoretical grounding, is a qualitative technique for methodically finding, examining, and interpreting patterns of shared meaning throughout a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The approach includes interpretive labor in choosing codes and creating themes that reflect participants' experiences, even if it offers a detailed explanation of the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study was conducted to determine the virtual experiences of elementary teachers during meeting as bases for intervention program in the District of Tigbauan, Schools Division of Iloilo (SDO - Iloilo).

This study employed a phenomenological approach within the qualitative research framework. This method was suitable because it allowed the researcher to examine a group of individuals in order to gain a deeper understanding of their lives or particular aspects of their experiences, with a focus on their practices.

The respondents of this study were fifteen (15) teachers from SDO-Iloilo. The inclusion criteria served as the basis for their deliberate selection.

A schedule of interviews created by the researcher was the instrument utilized in this study to collect data. It was validated for both content and construct. The qualitative data that was gathered and examined using thematic analysis. Transcripts of interviews with 15 participants who were purposefully chosen were included in the data.

Data collection and documentation were conducted using a mobile phone equipped with an audio recorder, contingent upon the respondents' consent.

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The interview guide was validated by a panel of experts, and all feedback and recommendations were incorporated. Necessary permissions, particularly from individual participants, were secured to enable the researcher to conduct the study. Interviews were conducted in locations convenient for the respondents, with the researcher personally visiting schools or communities.

Through in-depth, one-on-one interviews, participants' responses were fully captured using the mobile audio recorder. Each respondent was asked the questions individually to obtain their perspectives on the study topic. Following the completion of the interviews, the researcher consolidated all gathered data.

The collected information was then analyzed using a thematic approach.

The findings of the study are presented as follows:

As based on the in-depth interview, teachers characterized their experiences with virtual meetings as a mix of hurdles in technological proficiency, connectivity, and multitasking, as well as chances for collaboration. Online meetings encouraged professional development and accessibility, but they also put instructors' flexibility, time management, and fortitude to the test as they balanced their teaching responsibilities with technological demands. The most frequent issue mentioned by teachers, especially in rural and isolated schools, was erratic internet availability. Active participation in meetings was impeded by poor signal strength, reliance on mobile connectivity, and weather-related disruptions. These difficulties impacted access to professional development and curtailed learning continuity. This sub-theme emphasizes the ongoing digital gap in education and the necessity of better

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institutional support and infrastructure to guarantee fair access to online learning environments. Teachers frequently had to multitask in order to juggle their teaching duties and attendance at virtual meetings. Teachers were obliged to split their time between students and administrative duties because of the overlap between scheduled meetings and instructional hours. This sub-theme emphasizes the need for improved time management systems and institutional scheduling flexibility, as well as how instructors' workload increased and work boundaries became more hazy due to digital professional engagements. Due to their inadequate digital literacy and unfamiliarity with online platforms, many teachers had difficulties. In order to assist teachers develop digital confidence and resilience in handling virtual environments, this sub-theme highlights the necessity of ongoing ICT capacity-building, peer mentoring, and practical training programs. Teachers saw virtual sessions as chances for collaboration and professional development in spite of the difficulties. These virtual communities encouraged creativity, information exchange, and a revitalized sense of belonging among teachers. This sub-theme demonstrates how, with the right setup and guidance from leaders, virtual meetings can develop into long-lasting venues for ongoing education and career advancement. Teachers valued the cost-effectiveness, flexibility, and ease of virtual meetings. This sub-theme emphasizes how online modalities promoted inclusion and resource efficiency while increasing accessibility, especially for teachers in remote locations. It suggests that professional learning programs should continue to offer hybrid and virtual approaches. It was frequently difficult to stay engaged and focused during virtual sessions. This sub-theme highlights the necessity of engaging and well-structured

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virtual meeting designs to sustain engagement by demonstrating how distractions, subpar facilitation, and technological difficulties frequently decreased participation and learning outcomes. Teachers showed resiliency and flexibility in overcoming digital obstacles in spite of these obstacles.

Similarly, teachers' stories showed how their involvement and productivity were impacted by erratic internet connectivity, conflicting tasks, and a lack of digital skills. They showed resiliency, inventiveness, and resourcefulness in handling the demands of the virtual environment in spite of these obstacles. During virtual sessions, teachers frequently cited weak and erratic internet connections as the biggest challenge. Discussions were delayed, participation was disrupted, and comprehension of the meeting's substance was hampered by connectivity issues. These stories highlight the digital divide among educators, especially those working in distant schools, and the pressing need for support for technological infrastructure and fair internet access. Teachers frequently had to multitask between managing students and engaging online, finding it challenging to balance their teaching responsibilities with attending virtual sessions. The experiences of these participants demonstrate how teachers' concentration was impacted by scheduling conflicts and task overlap, highlighting the necessity of institutional scheduling coordination and regulated time management. Lack of ICT expertise and inexperience with digital tools like Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams were problems for many teachers. These incidents highlight the necessity of continuous ICT capacity-building and digital literacy training to boost instructors' self-assurance and effectiveness in online interactions. Teachers found it challenging to focus during virtual

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meetings due to a variety of distractions, including background noise, disruptions in the classroom, and household duties. These problems highlighted the value of interactive meeting formats and brief, well-structured online meetings by lowering engagement and causing cognitive fatigue. Teachers demonstrated flexibility and inventiveness in resolving the many difficulties. They planned backup plans, used mobile data, looked for peer support, and located regions with stronger signals. The teachers' perseverance, problem-solving skills, and dedication to lifelong learning are highlighted in the participant responses—qualities necessary for succeeding in the digital learning environment.

In addition, teachers demonstrated collaboration, emotional resilience, and adaptive learning practices in spite of limitations. When dealing with erratic connectivity and limited technology, educators showed ingenuity. To guarantee participation, the participants made use of Wi-Fi extensions, mobile data, and backup devices. This sub-theme emphasizes self-directed learning and proactive problem-solving as essential elements of teacher resilience in digital environments. Teachers stressed that in order to overcome logistical and technological obstacles, administrative and stakeholder cooperation was essential. This sub-theme demonstrates how moral support, infrastructure upgrades, and supportive leadership boosted teachers' confidence and motivation in online learning environments. Teachers emphasized professionalism, patience, and emotional control as important coping strategies. Despite ongoing technological difficulties, the participants' optimistic and introspective perspective allowed them to stay composed, involved, and resilient. This sub-theme is consistent with

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research that highlights the importance of emotional fortitude in controlling Zoom fatigue and maintaining output in online settings.

Moreover, the proposed intervention program for this study is based on the experiences, difficulties, and coping mechanisms of the participants in virtual meetings. This program is a comprehensive program created to enable educators to successfully engage, adjust, and prosper in the age of digital learning. The program was created in response to research showing that teachers frequently encountered difficulties in virtual settings, such as erratic internet access, a lack of ICT proficiency, and conflicting tasks during online sessions. The participants' replies highlight the urgent need for a planned intervention that takes into account instructors' mental health, adaptive management, and digital competency. Thus, via focused capacity-building, peer mentorship, and digital empowerment activities in line with the Department of Education's nationwide recovery efforts, the intervention program seeks to enhance teacher resilience and leadership.

Three crucial aspects—professional development, adaptive management, and psychosocial well-being—that are drawn from the teachers' real-world experiences are the emphasis of the TEAM ARAL intervention. These testimonies demonstrate the importance of community and institutional support in maintaining teachers' involvement and motivation. As a result, the program's design includes programs like the ARAL Learning Hubs, Digital ARAL Bootcamp, and ARAL Support Circles, all of which are designed to improve instructors' digital literacy, teamwork, and emotional resilience.

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## CONCLUSION

The discussion of the insight was based on the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study. Critical issues were raised to highlight the crucial implication of this study.

Virtual meetings have changed the way that teachers participate in professional development. Teachers' flexibility and readiness to adopt new technologies show their tenacity and dedication to lifelong learning. The digital divide and disparities in access to technology among public schools are also made clear by this change. Although digital platforms have the potential to democratize education, teachers run the danger of burnout and disengagement in the absence of formal institutional support and training.

The core issue rests not just in technology limits but also in institutional and organizational preparation for digital transformation. Increased workload, poor connectivity, and low ICT proficiency all indicate more serious structural flaws in the infrastructure and application of educational policies. Reforms in workload management and contextualized digital literacy training are desperately needed, as demonstrated by teachers' difficulties with multitasking and technological difficulties.

The importance of community, teamwork, and emotional intelligence in maintaining resilience during digital shifts. Teachers' resourcefulness and dependence on administrative and peer assistance show that coping is a group process influenced by culture and leadership rather than just an individual activity. This implies that both institutional and psychosocial underpinnings are necessary for effective educational resilience.

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