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Tertiary English Teachers' Experiences of Pedagogical Complexities in Using Online Platforms for Blended Learning: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the pedagogical experiences of tertiary English teachers in using online platforms for blended learning, focusing on the challenges they encountered, the strategies they employed, and the insights they gained. Guided by the Complex Adaptive Blended Learning System (CABLS) framework, the study involved 17 tertiary English teachers from a private higher education institution. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 10 teachers and a focus-group discussion involving seven teachers. The interview and discussion data were analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological approach, which involved identifying significant statements, formulating meanings, clustering themes, developing an exhaustive description, and validating the findings with participants. The findings revealed that teachers experienced interconnected technological and pedagogical difficulties, including unstable internet connectivity, technical problems, limited student engagement, assessment and feedback demands, adapting instructional resources, and managing time and workload. To address these concerns, teachers described strategies that included improving access to technological resources, strengthening regular assessment and feedback, using flexible instructional designs, establishing clear communication, seeking professional training and support, collaborating with colleagues and students, reinforcing academic integrity, and incorporating interactive and gamified activities. The teachers' reflections also highlighted the importance of resilience, adaptability, professional growth, empathetic learning environments, positive teacher–student relationships, and flexibility in responding to learners' needs. Overall, the findings suggest that effective use of online platforms in blended learning depends not only on technological access but also on responsive pedagogical practices, sustained professional development, institutional support, and meaningful teacher–student interaction. The study offers insights that may inform teacher development and institutional planning for blended English instruction.

Keywords: Blended Learning; English Language Teaching; Online Platforms; Pedagogical Experiences; Tertiary English Teachers

Introduction

The integration of online platforms into blended learning has reshaped the pedagogical practices of tertiary English teachers. Rather than simply transferring classroom activities to digital environments, blended instruction requires teachers to coordinate face-to-face and online learning, select appropriate digital resources, facilitate meaningful interaction, and develop assessment practices suited to different instructional settings. Trust and Whalen (2020) emphasized that digital pedagogy requires the reconsideration of conventional teaching practices to promote engagement, critical thinking, and active learning. Similarly, Cutri et al. (2020) highlighted the demands of integrating technology into instruction while accommodating differences in learners' digital competencies. These demands are particularly relevant to English language teaching, where communication, interaction, and opportunities for language practice are central to the learning process.

Previous studies have documented several difficulties associated with technology-supported instruction. Agustina and Cahyono (2021) reported that university-level English instructors experienced difficulties designing interactive online lessons, balancing synchronous and asynchronous instruction, and sustaining student engagement. Rahman et al. (2021) likewise identified concerns involving instructional

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material adaptation, online participation, assessment, and technological infrastructure among university English teachers in Bangladesh. In the Philippine context, Tolentino-De Leon (2021) described educators' difficulties adapting conventional teaching practices to distance learning, particularly when institutional guidance and resources were limited. Other studies conducted in Mindanao and Northern Mindanao also identified unstable internet connectivity, inadequate institutional support, limited digital literacy training, and difficulties maintaining interaction in online learning environments (Dela Peña & Gonzales, 2021; Quirino & Boholano, 2022).

Although these studies provide evidence of the challenges associated with online and blended instruction, their findings also suggest that such difficulties are interconnected. Technological limitations may restrict communication and participation, while inadequate preparation and institutional support may constrain teachers' ability to develop appropriate instructional materials and assessment strategies. Moreover, the demands of managing online and face-to-face instruction may affect teachers' time, workload, and capacity to respond to learners' needs. Thus, examining these concerns requires attention not only to the difficulties themselves but also to how teachers respond to them and make sense of their experiences.

Against this background, the present study explored the pedagogical experiences of tertiary English teachers in using online platforms for blended learning. It examined the challenges they encountered, the strategies they employed to address these challenges, and the insights they gained from their teaching experiences. The study was conducted at a private higher education institution in the Philippines. Institutional and regional identifiers are withheld in this manuscript to preserve anonymity during blind review.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges did tertiary English teachers encounter in implementing online platforms in blended learning?
2. How did tertiary English teachers cope with the challenges of implementing online platforms in blended learning?
3. What insights did tertiary English teachers gain from implementing online platforms in blended learning?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study explored the lived experiences of 17 tertiary English teachers in a private, nonsectarian higher education institution in Davao City in using online platforms for blended learning. It focused on the pedagogical challenges they encountered, the coping strategies they employed, and the insights they gained from these experiences. Using a phenomenological approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews and a focus-group discussion and analyzed following Colaizzi's seven-step method. The study was limited to tertiary English teachers in the selected institution. It did not include students, administrators, or teachers from other disciplines or institutions. It also did not measure platform effectiveness or student learning outcomes, as its primary concern was understanding teachers' lived experiences. Through this phenomenological inquiry, the study sought to provide an integrated understanding of the pedagogical demands associated with incorporating online platforms into tertiary English instruction and to generate insights that could inform teacher development and institutional support.

Literature Review

Pedagogical Adaptation in Blended English Instruction

Blended learning requires teachers to reconsider how instructional content, activities, and assessments are delivered across face-to-face and online environments. Trust and Whalen (2020) emphasized the need to reconfigure teaching practices to integrate technology with meaningful learning interactions. Similarly, Cutri et al. (2020) discussed the demands placed on educators as they navigate the relationship between in-person and remote instruction and respond to differences in digital literacy.

These demands are particularly evident in English language instruction, where teachers need to provide opportunities for communication, collaboration, and language practice. Agustina and Cahyono (2021) found that university English instructors experienced difficulties designing interactive online lessons and balancing synchronous and asynchronous activities. Hoang et al. (2021) also reported that teachers' selection of information and communication technology (ICT) tools was influenced by institutional requirements, platform functionality, teachers' technological competencies, lesson content, and convenience. These findings indicate that effective platform use depends on the alignment of technological tools with instructional purposes rather than on technology adoption alone.

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The adaptation of instructional materials is another important consideration. Rahman et al. (2021) identified difficulties in modifying traditional teaching materials for online instruction and maintaining student participation in virtual discussions. Montgomery et al. (2015) similarly emphasized the importance of selecting and using digital resources to support course development and instructional delivery. Collectively, these studies suggest that pedagogical adaptation involves the deliberate selection, modification, and integration of instructional resources to suit the demands of blended English teaching.

Technological and Institutional Conditions

The effectiveness of blended instruction is influenced by the technological resources and institutional support available to teachers and learners. Limited internet connectivity, inadequate equipment, insufficient technical assistance, and restricted access to appropriate platforms may disrupt instructional delivery and participation. Quirino and Boholano (2022) identified unstable connectivity and limited institutional support among the concerns experienced by educators in a Philippine higher education setting. Dela Peña and Gonzales (2021) likewise highlighted the need for digital literacy training to help teachers develop and implement online instructional strategies.

Professional development is closely connected to these institutional conditions. Bond et al. (2021) emphasized that insufficient opportunities for professional development may limit teachers' capacity to develop digital competencies and integrate technology effectively. Rasheed et al. (2020) also discussed educators' reservations about online instruction, suggesting that teachers' readiness and attitudes may influence the adoption of blended-learning practices. In addition, Ibrahim and Ismail (2021) associated blended-learning implementation with increased workloads, time constraints, and technical difficulties, while MacIntyre et al. (2020) described the anxiety experienced by language educators during the transition to online teaching.

These findings indicate that teachers' experiences cannot be understood solely in terms of individual technological competence. Their capacity to implement blended instruction is also shaped by access to resources, institutional assistance, professional learning opportunities, and the demands of managing different instructional modes.

Student Engagement, Dialogue, and Assessment

Student engagement and meaningful interaction remain important concerns in online and blended English instruction. Rapanta et al. (2020) emphasized the difficulty of sustaining student motivation and meaningful interaction when teaching activities move into online environments. Alam et al. (2022) similarly examined the challenges of maintaining engagement and classroom interaction when face-to-face communication is limited. These concerns are particularly significant in language teaching because learners need opportunities to participate in discussions and practice language skills.

The availability of communication tools does not necessarily guarantee meaningful dialogue. Teachers must design activities that encourage participation and provide timely responses to learners' questions and difficulties. Ahern et al. (2016) highlighted the potential of social media to facilitate student communication and collaborative learning. Khandaker et al. (2021) also emphasized the need to align online and face-to-face teaching practices to support student engagement and learning.

Assessment presents another pedagogical concern. Ferdig et al. (2020) discussed the difficulties of adapting conventional assessment practices to online environments and the need to consider alternative approaches, such as electronic portfolios and discussion-based evaluations. Teachers must also address the provision of timely feedback and concerns regarding academic integrity. These demands require assessment strategies that are appropriate to the instructional mode while maintaining the validity and integrity of learning evaluation.

Taken together, the literature indicates that engagement, dialogue, and assessment are interconnected. Teachers' ability to sustain participation depends partly on the quality of instructional activities, the accessibility of communication channels, and the feedback and guidance provided throughout the learning process.

Teacher Coping Strategies and Professional Adaptation

Research has also examined how educators respond to the demands of online and blended instruction. Canada et al. (2020) reported that English teachers addressed resource limitations, technological difficulties, and student engagement concerns through professional development, collaboration with colleagues, and the use of available online resources. Ghanbari and Nowroozi (2021) similarly identified improvements in technological competence, adjustments to assessment practices, and the development of support structures as responses to online teaching difficulties.

Collaboration and professional learning have also been examined in studies conducted in the Philippines. Enarsao (2023) found that teachers adapted to blended learning by improving their technical

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skills and building collaborative relationships. Simbajon (2021) identified coping strategies used by English teachers to manage workload, time, student behavior, and connectivity concerns. Basmayor and Pardillo (2023) likewise reported the use of innovative teaching approaches, professional development, and online resources to address technological barriers and student disengagement.

Other studies emphasize the importance of flexibility and continuing adjustment. Ayar (2023) examined coping strategies among English instructors delivering synchronous electronic lectures and identified functional, approach-oriented, and cognitive techniques for managing stress. Dziuban et al. (2021) underscored the need for ongoing evaluation and adjustment of blended-learning strategies in response to the changing needs of teachers and learners.

These studies suggest that coping with blended-learning challenges involves both individual and collaborative responses. Teachers may develop technological competencies, modify instructional designs, seek institutional or collegial assistance, and explore alternative ways of engaging learners. Such responses demonstrate the need for adaptability and continuing professional development in technology-supported instruction.

Insights from the Implementation of Blended Learning

The implementation of blended learning has also provided educators with opportunities to reconsider their instructional practices and professional roles. Khandaker et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of integrating online and face-to-face teaching approaches to support student learning and engagement. Montgomery et al. (2015) highlighted the role of digital resources in improving course development and instructional delivery, while Mousa and Arslan (2023) discussed the need for flexible teaching approaches following the rapid transition to online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research has also indicated that blended learning can encourage teachers to develop new technological and pedagogical competencies. Hoang et al. (2021) found that teachers used ICT tools for lesson delivery, communication, and collaboration, with their choices shaped by instructional and institutional considerations. A study involving English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Hong Kong, as described in the manuscript, also identified both the opportunities and difficulties associated with virtual classrooms, including improved accessibility alongside challenges in conducting interactive language activities and maintaining work–life balance.

These findings indicate that teachers' experiences of blended learning extend beyond the immediate resolution of technological problems. They may also involve changes in instructional beliefs, professional competencies, approaches to learner interaction, and understandings of the relationship between technology and pedagogy. Examining these insights is therefore important for understanding how teachers make meaning of their experiences and how these experiences influence their subsequent instructional practices.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of tertiary English teachers who used online platforms in blended learning. It examined the challenges they encountered, the strategies they employed to address those challenges, and the insights they gained. Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological approach guided the analysis through the identification of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering of themes, and development of a comprehensive description of the phenomenon.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at a private, nonsectarian higher education institution in Davao City, Philippines. The institution was selected because its English teachers handled major and general education subjects and had experience integrating online platforms into blended learning.

Research Participants

The participants were 17 tertiary English teachers: 10 participated in the IDIs and seven in the FGD. Their accounts provided insights into the pedagogical and technological challenges of blended learning, the strategies used to address them, and the lessons they gained. Alphanumeric codes were assigned to protect their identities throughout the study.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument was a semi-structured interview guide based on the study's three research questions: (1) the challenges encountered in using online platforms; (2) the strategies employed to address

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these challenges; and (3) the insights and recommendations gained from the experience. Probing questions encouraged participants to elaborate and provide specific examples. Three experts validated the guide for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. The complete validated instrument is presented in Appendix E. Individual interviews elicited detailed personal accounts, while the FGD encouraged participants to share, compare, and elaborate on their experiences. Both methods provided complementary perspectives on the phenomenon.

Data-Gathering Procedures

The researcher first secured institutional permission and ethical clearance. Eligible English teachers were identified through the appropriate academic office and were subsequently invited to participate. Informed consent was obtained before data collection. The researcher conducted face-to-face IDIs and an FGD using the validated interview guide. Participants were given opportunities to clarify their responses and provide additional information. With their consent, the sessions were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to document relevant observations. The recordings were transcribed for analysis, and participant codes were used to maintain confidentiality. All research materials were stored securely.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What challenges did tertiary English teachers encounter in implementing online platforms in blended learning?

Challenges Encountered by Tertiary English Teachers

The analysis identified eight interconnected themes describing the pedagogical and technological challenges experienced by tertiary English teachers in using online platforms for blended learning. These themes were internet connectivity and access challenges, difficulties in sustaining student engagement, technological and digital literacy challenges, assessment and evaluation challenges, instructional resource adaptation challenges, time management and workload challenges, trust and academic integrity challenges, and communication and timely feedback challenges.

Table 1. Challenges Encountered by Tertiary English Teachers in Using Online Platforms for Blended Learning

Essential themes	Core ideas
1. Internet Connectivity and Access Challenges	Unreliable connections; interrupted instruction; delayed access to materials and assessments
2. Challenges in Sustaining Student Engagement	Limited participation; difficulty maintaining attention; delayed feedback
3. Technological and Digital Literacy Challenges	Limited familiarity with online platforms; LMS navigation difficulties; insufficient digital skills
4. Assessment and Evaluation Challenges	Difficulty assessing student competencies; concerns about assessment authenticity; need for alternative evaluation methods
5. Instructional Resource Adaptation Challenges	Developing suitable materials; aligning resources with course requirements; addressing diverse learner needs
6. Time Management and Workload Challenges	Balancing online and face-to-face instruction; delayed checking of submissions; increased workload
7. Trust and Academic Integrity Challenges	Establishing trust; concerns about plagiarism; verifying the authenticity of student work
8. Communication and Timely Feedback Challenges	Delayed responses; difficulty addressing inquiries; limited immediate interaction

Internet Connectivity and Access Challenges

Participants identified unreliable internet connectivity as a major obstacle to instructional continuity and the completion of academic tasks. They described delays, slow connections, and instances of complete disconnection.

One participant explained that unstable connectivity caused delays in implementation: “didn't have a matched connectivity, so some delays happen during the implementation” (I1G1P1). Another shared that slow internet access affected assessment checking because “it takes time to read and it really eats up your time to finish checking the assessment” (F1G1P9). These accounts illustrate how connectivity problems affected teachers’ instructional efficiency and workload.

Challenges in Sustaining Student Engagement

Teachers experienced difficulty encouraging students to participate actively in online classes, particularly during verbal discussions and technical activities. One participant shared, “you keep on calling

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and calling them, but still to no avail...that I find challenging, urging the students to speak" (I1G1P5). Another emphasized the difficulty of addressing students' technical concerns, explaining that "it was very difficult to walk them through" (I1G1P5). Participants also highlighted the importance of providing immediate assessment feedback to sustain student motivation.

Technological and Digital Literacy Challenges

Participants described difficulties in navigating learning management systems and becoming familiar with online teaching applications. One teacher admitted, "I still don't know how to use the Google meets, the zoom is really hard at first" (I1G1P3). Another explained, "we were introduced with the LMS, so we are not really kind of familiar with the system" (I1G1P3). These experiences reflected the need for digital skills and technical assistance when integrating online platforms into instruction.

Assessment and Evaluation Challenges

Teachers expressed concerns about assessing student competencies and ensuring the authenticity of online submissions. One participant explained, "we cannot really assure whether it's really authentic since we have a lot of applications online that is readily available" (F1G1P6). Another observed that evaluating students' abilities was more difficult without face-to-face interaction. These accounts revealed the limitations teachers experienced in verifying student understanding and maintaining assessment integrity.

Instructional Resource Adaptation Challenges

Developing and modifying instructional materials to suit blended learning requirements was another difficulty. One participant stated, "the most difficult thing that I encountered was the conceptualization of the materials" (I1G1P2). Another emphasized that "crafting of the materials that would suit the students in blended learning was the most difficult for me" (I1G1P2). Participants also described difficulties aligning existing syllabi with appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

Time Management and Workload Challenges

Teachers reported difficulties balancing online and face-to-face instruction, preparing materials, and checking student submissions. One participant emphasized the importance of managing time, stating, "you have to know how to manage your time" (I1G1P4). Another explained that online classes affected the time allotted for other responsibilities. These accounts reflected the additional workload associated with managing multiple instructional modalities.

Trust and Academic Integrity Challenges

Participants identified difficulties establishing trust and maintaining consistent communication in online learning environments. One teacher expressed hesitation about maintaining an open-door policy because of concerns about providing timely support (F1G1P9). Another explained that consultation, feedback, and regular monitoring sometimes prevented early communication with students (I1G1P6). These experiences also reflected concerns about verifying student work and maintaining academic integrity.

Communication and Timely Feedback Challenges

Teachers experienced difficulties responding promptly to student inquiries and providing timely feedback because of competing responsibilities and limited resources. One participant shared that "addressing student inquiries to maintain an active and responsive learning environment is unattainable" when there were many tasks to accomplish (I1G1P4). Another explained that ensuring timely feedback on assignments was sometimes hampered (F1G1P6). These accounts highlighted the importance of accessible communication channels and manageable teaching workloads.

Research Question 2: How did tertiary English teachers cope with the challenges of implementing online platforms in blended learning?

Coping Strategies Employed by Tertiary English Teachers

Eight themes emerged from participants' accounts of how they addressed the challenges of blended learning. These themes were augmenting technological resources, strengthening assessment and continuous improvement, optimizing time and flexibility in instructional design, mitigating communication gaps, maximizing training and support, promoting collaborative learning, upholding academic integrity, and integrating interactive and gamified approaches.

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Table 2. Coping Strategies Employed by Tertiary English Teachers

Essential themes	Core ideas
1. Augmenting Technological Resources	Using multiple platforms; diversifying content delivery; developing digital instructional materials
2. Strengthening Regular Assessment and Improvement	Providing constructive feedback; monitoring student progress; reflecting on teaching practices
3. Optimizing Time and Flexibility in Instructional Design	Modifying activities; providing accessible resources; organizing online materials
4. Mitigating Communication Gaps	Giving clear instructions; extending deadlines when appropriate; maintaining communication
5. Maximizing Training and Support	Attending seminars; developing digital skills; utilizing institutional training
6. Promoting Collaborative Learning	Seeking peer assistance; sharing knowledge; collaborating with colleagues
7. Upholding Academic Integrity	Establishing honesty policies; using authentic assessments; discussing ethical responsibilities
8. Integrating Interactive and Gamified Approaches	Using interactive quizzes, role-playing, multimedia, and game-based activities

Augmenting Technological Resources

Participants described using various digital platforms and resources to support instructional delivery and communication. One participant explained, “we really have to use Google, Meet or Zoom or the Collaborate in our blackboard for us to disseminate information to our students, to give clear instruction to our students” (I1G1P7). Others described using different media platforms and creating supplementary instructional materials. These strategies demonstrated teachers’ resourcefulness in using available technologies.

Strengthening Regular Assessment and Improvement

Teachers emphasized constructive feedback, monitoring student performance, and continuous self-evaluation. One participant stated, “we really made a comment because it's really important for my students” (I1G1P3). Another explained, “in order for us to grow, we have to continuously assess and evaluate what are the things that we can actually work on” (I1G1P5). These responses highlighted the importance of ongoing assessment in improving both student learning and teaching practices.

Optimizing Time and Flexibility in Instructional Design

Participants adapted instructional activities and provided alternative learning resources to accommodate students’ needs. One teacher shared, “I made modifications for the benefit of my students” (I1G1P7). Another explained that supplementary materials were provided so students could study independently. These strategies reflected the importance of flexible instructional planning and accessible learning resources.

Mitigating Communication Gaps

Teachers addressed communication difficulties through clear instructions, flexible deadlines, and virtual meetings. One participant explained, “If you don't have the clear instruction, you're not going to meet what you have expected them to do” (I1G1P3). Another emphasized that clear communication helped reduce student confusion during virtual meetings (F1G1P7). These practices supported clearer expectations and more responsive instruction.

Maximizing Training and Support

Participants recognized professional development and institutional assistance as important in improving their digital competencies. One teacher stated, “the school is very supportive with trainings... We are given trainings on how to use our new Blackboard learn” (I1G1P4). Another emphasized the value of training in adapting teaching strategies (I1G1P2). These experiences demonstrated the contribution of institutional support to teachers’ preparedness for blended learning.

Promoting Collaborative Learning

Teachers relied on colleagues and peer assistance to improve their technological and instructional skills. One participant explained, “what helped me cope also was the collaboration. The collaboration. I collaborated with other teachers” (F1G1P4). Another highlighted the value of sharing knowledge and skills with colleagues (I1G1P4). These accounts illustrated how professional collaboration provided practical and emotional support.

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Upholding Academic Integrity

Participants employed strategies to reinforce honesty and accountability in online assessments. One teacher stated, "I emphasize the importance of honesty in all assessments and require students to acknowledge an academic integrity pledge before submitting their work" (F1G1P3). Others described using thought-provoking assignments and open discussions about academic misconduct. These practices emphasized ethical responsibility in digital learning.

Integrating Interactive and Gamified Approaches

Teachers used interactive activities and game-based strategies to encourage participation and motivation. One participant shared, "I incorporate interactive activities such as virtual role-playing and storytelling games to enhance student engagement" (I1G1P9). Another described using gamified quizzes and rewards to motivate students (I1G1P6). These strategies reflected efforts to make online instruction more participatory and engaging.

Research Question 3: What insights did tertiary English teachers gain from implementing online platforms in blended learning?

Insights Gained by Tertiary English Teachers

The insights reported in this section are presented as an interpretive synthesis of the challenges and coping strategies documented under Research Questions 1 and 2. They are not treated as a separate set of independently established themes because the current manuscript does not present a distinct set of significant statements and participant quotations for Research Question 3.

Table 3. Synthesized Pedagogical Insights Drawn from the Challenges and Coping Strategies

Synthesized insight	Interpretation based on reported findings
1. Resilience in responding to challenges	Recognizing the importance of perseverance and maintaining a constructive outlook when encountering technological and instructional difficulties.
2. Adaptability in instructional practice	Understanding the need to adjust teaching practices in response to changing instructional contexts and learners' needs.
3. Empathy toward learners' circumstances	Recognizing the importance of understanding students' individual circumstances and providing appropriate consideration and support.
4. Supportive teacher–student relationships	Appreciating meaningful communication, interaction, and support as essential to maintaining teacher–student connections in blended learning.
5. Professional growth and digital competence	Recognizing that the use of online platforms encourages continuous learning and the development of digital and pedagogical competencies.
6. Pedagogical flexibility	Understanding the importance of balancing online and face-to-face instruction and modifying teaching approaches to suit learning objectives and contexts.

The accounts presented under the first two research questions suggest that teachers' experiences involved more than resolving immediate technological difficulties. Their descriptions of interrupted connectivity, limited student participation, assessment concerns, and increased workload, together with their efforts to use alternative platforms, adjust instructional activities, and seek assistance, point to the importance of resilience and adaptability in blended instruction. These are interpretive insights drawn from the reported challenges and responses rather than additional themes independently established through a separate analysis.

The reported efforts to maintain communication, provide feedback, extend deadlines when appropriate, and respond to students' varied learning circumstances also suggest the importance of empathy and supportive teacher–student relationships. This interpretation is consistent with the role of dialogue in Moore's (1993) Transactional Distance Theory. It should be understood as a synthesis of the communication and engagement findings reported under Research Questions 1 and 2.

The strategies involving professional development, peer collaboration, the use of multiple platforms, and the modification of instructional materials further suggest that blended learning requires continuing professional growth and pedagogical flexibility. These insights follow from the participants' reported coping practices and do not constitute a separate set of participant-derived themes.

Taken together, the findings suggest that effective blended learning depends on teachers' capacity to respond to technological and instructional difficulties, adapt teaching practices, communicate with learners, and continue developing their digital and pedagogical competencies. Viewed through the CABLS framework,

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these synthesized insights reflect the interdependence of teachers, learners, technology, content, and institutional support.

Discussion

This chapter interprets the findings in relation to the reviewed literature and the study's theoretical frameworks: the Complex Adaptive Blended Learning System (CABLS) framework and Moore's Transactional Distance Theory.

Challenges Encountered by Tertiary English Teachers

The findings indicate that teachers' challenges were interconnected rather than isolated. Connectivity and digital literacy difficulties affected instructional continuity, while limited student engagement and delayed communication complicated the delivery of online lessons. Assessment concerns, resource adaptation, and workload further increased the demands of blended instruction.

These findings are consistent with the concerns raised by Trust and Whalen (2020), Rapanta et al. (2020), and Rasheed et al. (2020), who emphasized the need for appropriate technological resources, instructional preparation, and teacher support in online and blended learning. The findings also illustrate the CABLS framework's emphasis on the interdependence of teachers, learners, technology, content, institutional support, and learning resources (Wang et al., 2017).

From the perspective of Moore's (1993) Transactional Distance Theory, difficulties in sustaining student engagement and communication reflect challenges in maintaining meaningful dialogue between teachers and learners. Limited interaction and delayed feedback may increase transactional distance, particularly when instructional structure and learner support are insufficient. Thus, the findings suggest that effective blended learning requires not only technological access but also deliberate instructional design and sustained teacher–student interaction.

Coping Strategies Employed by Tertiary English Teachers

The findings demonstrate that teachers responded to blended learning challenges through technological resourcefulness, continuous assessment, flexible instructional design, clear communication, professional development, collaboration, academic integrity measures, and interactive teaching strategies.

These strategies reflect the adaptive nature of blended learning described in the CABLS framework. Teachers adjusted their use of technology, instructional resources, and learning activities in response to students' needs and institutional conditions. The importance of professional development and institutional support is also consistent with Trust and Whalen (2020) and Philipsen et al. (2019), who emphasized the need to strengthen teachers' competencies for online and blended instruction.

The findings further support Moore's (1993) theory, particularly the role of dialogue and structure in reducing transactional distance. Clear instructions, regular feedback, collaborative activities, and interactive strategies provide opportunities for meaningful communication and student participation. These practices suggest that teachers' coping strategies involved not only managing technological difficulties but also maintaining instructional relationships and learning continuity.

Insights Gained from the Teachers' Experiences

For Research Question 3, the insights were synthesized from the challenges and coping strategies reported under Research Questions 1 and 2. The findings suggest the importance of resilience and adaptability in responding to technological and instructional demands; empathy and meaningful communication in addressing learners' circumstances; and professional growth and pedagogical flexibility in sustaining blended instruction. These are interpretive conclusions drawn from the existing findings, not independently established themes.

This synthesis is consistent with the CABLS framework, which views blended learning as a dynamic system involving the interaction of teachers, learners, technology, content, and institutional support. It also relates to Moore's (1993) Transactional Distance Theory because clear communication, feedback, and supportive interaction help address the psychological and communicative distance that may arise in technology-mediated learning.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance and institutional permission were secured before the commencement of data collection. The study was approved by the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) under Protocol No. UMERC-2023-196 on May 16, 2023. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature before providing informed consent. They were also assured of their right to decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

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Confidentiality was protected through the use of participant codes and secure data storage. Throughout the research process, the participants' privacy, autonomy, and dignity were respected.

Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of tertiary English teachers in using online platforms in blended learning, focusing on their challenges, coping strategies, and insights. Regarding the first research question, teachers encountered interconnected challenges involving internet connectivity, student engagement, digital literacy, assessment, instructional resource adaptation, time management, academic integrity, and communication. These difficulties affected instructional continuity and the effective delivery of blended English instruction. For the second research question, teachers addressed these challenges by using multiple technological platforms, strengthening assessment and feedback, adopting flexible instructional designs, improving communication, seeking professional training, collaborating with colleagues, promoting academic integrity, and integrating interactive and gamified activities. The third research question was addressed through an interpretive synthesis of the findings for Research Questions 1 and 2. The reported challenges and coping strategies pointed to the importance of resilience, adaptability, empathy, supportive teacher–student relationships, professional growth, and pedagogical flexibility. These insights were presented as conclusions drawn from the existing findings rather than as a separate set of themes requiring additional quotations. Overall, the findings indicate that effective blended learning requires the integration of reliable technology, responsive pedagogical practices, institutional support, professional development, and meaningful teacher–student interaction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, higher education institutions should strengthen internet connectivity, provide accessible technological resources, and maintain technical support for teachers and students. Regular professional development should be offered to improve teachers' digital competencies and their ability to design effective blended instruction. Teachers should continue adopting flexible instructional approaches, accessible learning materials, clear communication practices, authentic assessment methods, and interactive activities to improve student engagement. Institutions should also encourage collaborative planning, peer mentoring, and shared development of instructional resources to reduce workload and promote professional learning. Future researchers may examine blended learning across multiple institutions, disciplines, and geographic settings. Studies may also include student and administrator perspectives and employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to investigate changes in teaching practices and learning outcomes.

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