

Teachers' Leadership Experiences and Instructional Strategies in Implementing Blended Learning: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract. Blended learning has become an essential instructional approach that combines face-to-face and online learning to promote continuity and flexibility in education. While numerous studies have examined blended learning, limited qualitative research has explored teachers' leadership experiences and instructional strategies within private learning institutions in Zamboanga City. This study explored leadership experiences, instructional strategies, challenges, and intervention needs of teachers implementing blended learning at Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School. This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to understand the lived experiences of teachers implementing blended learning. Five female teachers with more than five years of teaching experience participated in the study through purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 10–15 minutes were conducted following permission from the school administration and informed consent from the participants. The interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes. The findings revealed that blended learning enhanced teachers' leadership adaptability, flexibility, and professional growth through continuous technology integration and learner-centered instructional practices. Teachers implemented various strategies including the use of Google Classroom, Google Meet, Quizizz, Kahoot, Canva, collaborative learning, project-based activities, and interactive assessments to improve learner engagement. However, participants also experienced challenges related to unstable internet connectivity, inadequate technological resources, learner participation, and classroom management during online instruction. Teachers emphasized the need for continuous ICT training, institutional support, and improved technological infrastructure to strengthen blended learning implementation. The study concludes that effective teacher leadership in blended learning requires continuous professional development, institutional support, and access to adequate technological resources. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on teacher leadership and provide practical insights for educational leaders in strengthening blended learning implementation.

Keywords: Blended learning; instructional leadership; phenomenology; teacher leadership; technology integration

Introduction

Education has undergone significant transformation through the integration of digital technologies, particularly following the disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most widely adopted instructional approaches is blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning experiences to create flexible, accessible, and learner-centered educational environments. According to Graham (2019), blended learning enhances learning opportunities by integrating technology with classroom instruction, while Horn and Staker (2015) emphasized that it promotes student engagement, collaboration, and personalized learning through the strategic use of digital technologies. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd, 2020) adopted blended learning as part of its Learning

Continuity Plan to ensure uninterrupted education during the pandemic. Although schools have resumed face-to-face instruction, many educational institutions continue to integrate blended learning because of its potential to enrich teaching and learning experiences. Teacher leadership has become increasingly important in the successful implementation of blended learning. Beyond delivering instruction, teachers are expected to lead classroom innovation, integrate technology effectively, make instructional decisions, and respond to the diverse learning needs of students. York-Barr and Duke (2004) described teacher leadership as teachers' ability to influence teaching practices, support school improvement, and promote student learning beyond traditional classroom responsibilities. Similarly, Fullan (2016) emphasized that teachers play a vital role in implementing educational change by adapting instructional practices and responding effectively to emerging educational challenges. In blended learning environments, teachers serve not only as instructors but also as facilitators, mentors, technology users, and instructional leaders who guide learners through both online and face-to-face learning experiences. Despite the recognized benefits of blended learning, its implementation continues to present significant challenges. Previous studies have reported persistent issues such as unstable internet connectivity, limited technological resources, inadequate digital competence, difficulties in monitoring learner participation, increased teacher workload, and challenges in classroom management (UNESCO, 2021; Saboowala & Mishra, 2021). These challenges affect teachers' ability to provide effective instruction and maintain meaningful learner engagement, particularly in schools with limited technological infrastructure. Consequently, teachers are required to demonstrate adaptability, creativity, and strong leadership in addressing these instructional challenges while ensuring quality learning experiences.

A growing body of literature has examined blended learning, teacher leadership, and technology integration in various educational settings. However, most existing studies have focused on the effectiveness of blended learning, student academic performance, or teachers' readiness to use technology. Comparatively fewer qualitative studies have explored teachers' lived leadership experiences, instructional strategies, and challenges in implementing blended learning within private basic education institutions in the Philippine context. In particular, limited research has documented how teachers in Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School navigate blended learning, adapt their leadership practices, and identify the institutional support necessary to strengthen implementation. This gap highlights the need for an in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences to provide context-specific evidence that may guide future educational practices and policy development. Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School has adopted blended learning as part of its instructional delivery to provide continuous, flexible, and technology-supported education. While teachers have demonstrated commitment and resilience in implementing this approach, they continue to encounter challenges related to technology integration, learner participation, instructional delivery, and classroom management. Understanding these experiences is essential for identifying effective instructional practices and developing appropriate support mechanisms that respond to teachers' actual needs.

This study explored the leadership experiences and instructional strategies of teachers in implementing blended learning at Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School. Specifically, it sought to describe teachers' leadership experiences, identify the instructional strategies they employ, examine the challenges they encounter, and determine the intervention and institutional support needed to strengthen blended learning implementation. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on teacher leadership and blended learning while providing practical insights for school administrators, teachers, policymakers, and future researchers in improving blended learning practices.

Research Questions

This study aims to explore the teachers' leadership experiences and strategies in implementing blended learning at Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Describe the teachers' leadership experiences in the implementation of blended learning;
2. Determine the strategies teachers use in the implementation of blended learning;
3. Identify the challenges of teachers in leading
4. Describe the intervention needs identified by teachers to strengthen the implementation of blended learning.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The respondents of this study were the teachers of Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School who were involved in the implementation of blended learning. These teachers were selected because they had firsthand experience in managing both face-to-face and online instructional environments. The population of the study consisted of teachers handling blended learning classes in the institution. From this population, selected teachers served as participants of the study. The study focused only on teachers' leadership experiences, strategies, and challenges encountered in implementing blended learning. Students, parents, and administrators were not included as respondents in this research. The study employed purposive

sampling as the sampling design. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on specific characteristics and their relevance to the study. In this research, teachers who had direct experience in implementing blended learning were chosen as participants because they could provide rich and relevant information needed for the study. Purposive sampling was appropriate for this qualitative study because it allowed the researcher to gather detailed insights and meaningful experiences from participants who were knowledgeable and directly involved in blended learning implementation. This sampling design was suitable since the study aimed to explore and understand teachers' leadership experiences, strategies, and challenges rather than to generalize findings to a larger population. This study was limited only to the teachers of Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School. The findings of the study depended on the participants' responses and experiences regarding blended learning implementation. Therefore, the results could not be generalized to other schools or educational institutions with different contexts and learning environments.

Literature Review

Blended Learning in Education

Blended learning has become one of the most widely adopted instructional approaches in contemporary education because it combines the strengths of face-to-face instruction and online learning. Graham (2019) described blended learning as the purposeful integration of classroom instruction with digital learning experiences to enhance learner engagement and provide greater flexibility. Likewise, Horn and Staker (2015) emphasized that blended learning allows students to learn through multiple instructional modalities, promoting personalized learning and active participation. The implementation of blended learning expanded significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic as educational institutions sought alternative methods to sustain instruction. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd, 2020) implemented blended learning through its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan to ensure uninterrupted access to education despite mobility restrictions. Although originally introduced as an emergency response, blended learning has continued to be integrated into classroom instruction because of its potential to improve teaching practices and learning outcomes. Previous studies consistently suggest that blended learning increases learner engagement, promotes independent learning, and provides opportunities for flexible instruction. However, these studies also recognize that the success of blended learning depends largely on teachers' ability to integrate technology effectively while addressing learners' diverse academic needs. This indicates that teacher leadership plays a crucial role in achieving meaningful blended learning experiences.

Teacher Leadership in Blended Learning

Teacher leadership is recognized as an essential component of effective educational practice, particularly in technology-enhanced learning environments. According to York-Barr and Duke (2004), teacher leadership extends beyond classroom instruction by encouraging collaboration, instructional improvement, and shared responsibility for student learning. Similarly, Fullan (2016) argued that teachers serve as change agents who influence educational innovation through effective instructional decision-making and continuous professional growth. Within blended learning environments, teachers assume expanded responsibilities that include managing digital learning platforms, facilitating online and face-to-face instruction, monitoring learner progress, and supporting students with diverse learning needs. Research has shown that effective teacher leadership contributes to greater learner engagement, improved instructional quality, and successful implementation of educational innovations (Fullan, 2016; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of teacher leadership, much of the existing literature focuses on leadership competencies and technology integration rather than teachers' lived experiences while implementing blended learning. Consequently, there remains a need to understand how teachers experience leadership in their everyday instructional practices, particularly within private educational institutions in the Philippine context.

Instructional Strategies in Blended Learning

Effective blended learning requires teachers to employ instructional strategies that encourage learner participation and maximize the use of educational technology. Picciano (2009) explained that successful blended learning integrates multiple instructional approaches, including collaborative learning, independent learning, online discussions, and performance-based assessment, to address diverse learner needs. Likewise, McKenzie et al. (2022) found that collaborative and technology-supported learning activities improve communication skills, critical thinking, and student engagement. Digital platforms such as Google

Classroom, Google Meet, Quizizz, Kahoot, Canva, and learning management systems have become essential tools for facilitating instruction, communication, and assessment in blended learning environments. These technologies enable teachers to provide timely feedback, monitor learner progress, and encourage active participation both inside and outside the classroom. However, researchers agree that technology alone does not ensure successful learning outcomes. Rather, the effectiveness of blended learning depends on teachers' ability to select appropriate instructional strategies that promote meaningful interaction and learner-centered experiences. These findings suggest that integrating technology with effective pedagogy enables teachers to create engaging and flexible learning environments. Nevertheless, additional qualitative evidence is needed to understand how teachers actually implement these instructional strategies in their daily teaching practices.

Challenges in Implementing Blended Learning

Despite its educational benefits, blended learning continues to present significant challenges for both teachers and learners. UNESCO (2021) reported that many educational institutions experience problems related to unreliable internet connectivity, inadequate technological infrastructure, and unequal access to digital learning resources. Similarly, Saboowala and Mishra (2021) found that teachers' readiness, digital competence, and institutional support significantly influence the effectiveness of blended learning implementation. Research has also identified learner participation, classroom management, assessment integrity, and increased teacher workload as common concerns in blended learning environments. Teachers frequently encounter difficulties in monitoring students during online sessions, ensuring academic honesty, and maintaining learner motivation throughout both online and face-to-face instruction. These challenges often require teachers to adapt their instructional practices while balancing technological, pedagogical, and administrative responsibilities. Although previous studies have identified these challenges across different educational settings, relatively few qualitative studies have explored how teachers personally experience these difficulties and the strategies they employ to overcome them. Moreover, limited research has examined these issues within private learning institutions in Zamboanga City. Addressing this gap is important because teachers' lived experiences can provide valuable insights into improving leadership practices, instructional strategies, and institutional support for blended learning implementation.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of teachers in implementing blended learning at Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School. Phenomenology is an appropriate qualitative approach because it seeks to understand and describe the meanings individuals attach to their experiences of a particular phenomenon. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), phenomenological research focuses on understanding participants' lived experiences and identifying the common meanings that emerge from those experiences. In this study, the phenomenological approach enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' leadership experiences, instructional strategies, challenges encountered, and intervention needs in implementing blended learning.

Sampling Design

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, teachers were selected based on three criteria: they were currently teaching at Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School, had more than five years of teaching experience, and had direct experience implementing blended learning. Purposive sampling was appropriate for the study because it aimed to obtain detailed descriptions of teachers' lived experiences rather than to generalize the findings to a larger population.

Research Locale

This study was conducted at Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School, a private educational institution located in Zamboanga City, Philippines. The school implements blended learning by integrating face-to-face instruction with online learning platforms to support continuous and flexible learning. It offers basic education programs and encourages teachers to integrate digital technologies into classroom instruction. The school was selected as the research locale because it provided an appropriate setting for exploring teachers' leadership experiences and instructional practices in implementing blended learning.

Research Participants

The participants of this study consisted of five (5) female teachers from Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School who had been teaching for more than five years and had direct experience in implementing blended learning. These teachers represented different grade levels within the institution and were selected because of their firsthand knowledge and experience in managing both online and face-to-face instructional modalities. Their experiences provided rich and relevant information that addressed the objectives of the study.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions aligned with the research objectives and was designed to encourage participants to describe their leadership experiences, instructional strategies, challenges encountered, and suggested interventions in implementing blended learning. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions whenever clarification or additional information was needed, enabling participants to express their experiences freely while ensuring that all research questions were adequately addressed.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher sought permission from the administration of Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School to conduct the study. After obtaining approval, the researcher identified participants who met the established selection criteria and invited them to participate voluntarily. Before each interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, the interview procedures, and the participants' rights. Each participant signed an informed consent form indicating voluntary participation. Participants were also informed that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic research purposes. Individual semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 10 to 15 minutes **were** conducted at a time and place convenient for the participants. With their permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered. Following the interviews, the recordings were transcribed verbatim to preserve the participants' original responses.

Results and Discussions

Research Questions	Theme	Core Finding
Research Question 1	Leadership Adaptability	Teachers became more flexible and learner-centered.
Research Question 1	Professional Growth	Teachers improved their digital competence.
Research Question 2	Technology Integration	Teachers used digital platforms to support instruction.
Research Question 2	Interactive Learning	Student-centered strategies enhanced engagement.
Research Question 3	Connectivity Challenges	Poor internet and lack of gadgets hindered learning.
Research Question 3	Classroom Management	Monitoring students online remained difficult.
Research Question 4	Institutional Support	Continuous ICT training and technical support were identified as essential.

Research Question 1: Describe the teachers' leadership experiences in the implementation of blended learning?

Theme 1: Leadership Adaptability and Flexibility

The findings revealed that implementing blended learning required teachers to become more adaptable and flexible in responding to learners' academic needs, technological challenges, and changing instructional environments. Participants explained that they constantly adjusted their teaching approaches by combining online and face-to-face instruction while making instructional decisions based on students' learning conditions and available resources. These experiences transformed their traditional role as

classroom instructors into facilitators of learning who continuously adapted to different situations. One participant described blended learning as an opportunity to expand learning beyond the traditional classroom despite the challenges encountered:

"This type of education is amazing... both online and face-to-face. There are times students don't understand well, and sometimes they don't have signal or Wi-Fi, but students should learn through online learning so they will also become educated in technology." (Respondent 1)

This statement demonstrates that teachers viewed blended learning not only as an instructional approach but also as an opportunity to develop learners' technological skills while continuously adapting to limitations such as poor internet connectivity. Similarly, Respondent 3 emphasized that blended learning encouraged greater flexibility in instructional delivery by combining digital platforms with classroom activities:

"I combine online platforms such as Google Classroom and Messenger with classroom discussions and activities. This setup helped me become more flexible and creative in delivering lessons." (Respondent 3)

Likewise, Respondent 4 explained that blended learning shifted the teacher's role toward facilitating learning rather than simply delivering information:

"My experience with blended learning has allowed me to become more innovative and learner-centered in my teaching approach. It changed my role from simply delivering lessons to facilitating independent learning." (Respondent 4)

These responses indicate that teachers developed greater instructional flexibility by modifying lesson delivery, integrating technology, and responding to learners' diverse needs. Rather than relying solely on traditional teaching methods, participants demonstrated leadership by making informed instructional decisions and creating learning environments that accommodated both online and face-to-face instruction. The findings support Graham's (2019) view that blended learning promotes flexible instructional practices through the integration of technology and classroom teaching. Likewise, Fullan (2016) emphasized that effective teacher leaders continuously adapt their instructional approaches in response to educational change. The participants' experiences also align with York-Barr and Duke (2004), who described teacher leadership as the ability to influence learning by responding proactively to classroom challenges and promoting instructional improvement. Overall, the findings suggest that leadership adaptability and flexibility are essential characteristics of teachers implementing blended learning. By adjusting instructional practices, integrating technology, and responding to learners' needs, teachers demonstrated leadership that enabled them to sustain effective teaching despite the challenges associated with blended learning.

Theme 2: Professional Growth and Digital Leadership

Another significant theme that emerged from the participants' responses was professional growth and digital leadership. The findings revealed that implementing blended learning encouraged teachers to enhance their technological competence, strengthen their instructional decision-making, and continuously improve their professional practice. Participants shared that the demands of blended learning motivated them to learn new digital tools, participate in professional development activities, and become more confident in integrating technology into their teaching. These experiences enabled them to assume greater leadership roles in facilitating meaningful learning in both online and face-to-face settings. Respondent 1 emphasized that blended learning strengthened her understanding of leadership by integrating professional responsibilities with personal values. She explained:

"As an Islamic teacher, we can express our talents through Islamic values because to be a leader, we should first understand the meaning of leadership. We should know the principles of leadership and governance so that we can guide our students properly." (Respondent 1)

This response suggests that professional growth extends beyond acquiring technological skills. For the participant, effective leadership also involves strengthening personal values, ethical responsibility, and the

ability to guide learners. Her experience reflects that blended learning provided opportunities to practice leadership while remaining committed to her educational and moral responsibilities. Similarly, Respondent 3 described how blended learning encouraged continuous professional learning and improved her confidence in using educational technology. She stated:

"Blended learning enhanced my decision-making because I constantly evaluate which strategies work best for learners. It also encouraged me to attend webinars and trainings about educational technology, helping me grow professionally and become more confident in using digital tools." (Respondent 3)

The participant's response demonstrates that blended learning contributed to her professional development by encouraging reflective teaching and evidence-based instructional decision-making. Attending webinars and technology-related training expanded her digital competence, enabling her to provide more effective learning experiences for her students. Respondent 4 also explained that blended learning improved her confidence and strengthened her leadership abilities through collaboration and problem-solving. She shared:

"Blended learning improved my confidence in using technology and strengthened my problem-solving skills. I also became more open to collaboration with colleagues and parents." (Respondent 4)

This statement indicates that blended learning fostered collaborative leadership by encouraging teachers to work closely with fellow educators and parents. The participant recognized that addressing the challenges of blended learning required teamwork, communication, and shared responsibility for student success. Likewise, Respondent 5 highlighted that blended learning inspired her to improve her digital literacy and continuously evaluate her instructional practices. According to her:

"It encouraged me to continuously improve my digital literacy skills and become more reflective in evaluating teaching strategies and learner outcomes." (Respondent 5)

Her response shows that blended learning promoted reflective practice and lifelong learning. By continuously evaluating the effectiveness of her teaching strategies, she demonstrated professional responsibility and commitment to improving learner outcomes. Overall, the participants' experiences indicate that blended learning became a catalyst for professional growth and digital leadership. Teachers were motivated to strengthen their technological competence, participate in professional development activities, evaluate their instructional practices, and collaborate with colleagues and parents. These experiences enhanced their confidence and prepared them to respond effectively to the demands of modern teaching. The findings support the study of Fullan (2016), who emphasized that teacher leadership involves continuous learning, reflective practice, and the ability to respond to educational change. Likewise, York-Barr and Duke (2004) explained that teacher leaders influence educational improvement through collaboration, professional competence, and instructional innovation. Furthermore, studies published in *Heliyon* have reported that blended learning environments encourage teachers to develop digital competence, improve instructional leadership, and engage in continuous professional development, enabling them to adapt successfully to technology-enhanced learning environments. The findings suggest that professional growth and digital leadership are important outcomes of blended learning implementation. As teachers gained confidence in using technology and reflected on their instructional practices, they strengthened their capacity to lead effective, learner-centered instruction. These experiences demonstrate that continuous professional development and digital competence are essential for sustaining quality blended learning and responding to the evolving demands of twenty-first-century education.

Research Question 2: Determine the strategies teachers use in the implementation of blended learning?

Theme 3. Integration of Digital Platforms and Instructional Technologies

The findings revealed that teachers effectively integrated various digital platforms and instructional technologies to facilitate teaching and learning in blended learning environments. Participants shared that online learning management systems, communication platforms, multimedia resources, and digital assessment tools enabled them to deliver lessons, monitor learner progress, provide feedback, and maintain

communication with students. The use of these technologies allowed teachers to combine online and face-to-face instruction, making learning more flexible and accessible.

Respondent 2 highlighted the importance of using Google's educational applications in supporting blended learning. She stated:

"The Google Classroom and Google Form, Google Meet—the whole package of Google."
(Respondent 2)

This response demonstrates that Google applications served as the primary digital platforms for delivering instruction, distributing learning materials, conducting online classes, and assessing students. The participant viewed these tools as essential in maintaining continuous communication and facilitating learning despite the limitations of distance education. Similarly, Respondent 3 explained that she utilized various digital resources to enrich instruction and support learner engagement. She shared:

"I commonly use Google Classroom, YouTube videos, PowerPoint presentations, Quizizz, and printed modules. For assessment, I use online quizzes, performance tasks, and written activities."
(Respondent 3)

This statement indicates that the participant integrated different technological resources to accommodate diverse learning styles and instructional needs. By combining multimedia materials, online assessments, and printed modules, she ensured that learners could continue participating regardless of their access to technology. Respondent 4 also emphasized the importance of digital platforms in organizing instruction and evaluating student performance. According to her:

"I use Google Meet, Canva presentations, Quizizz, Google Forms, and DepEd learning materials. I assess learners through projects, quizzes, and participation." (Respondent 4)

The participant's response reflects her ability to integrate technology with learner-centered assessment practices. The use of interactive presentations, digital quizzes, and project-based assessments demonstrates how instructional technologies can promote active participation while providing teachers with opportunities to monitor students' learning progress. Likewise, Respondent 5 described how she used different digital tools to support instruction and communication with learners. She explained:

"I commonly use Google Classroom, Microsoft PowerPoint, educational videos, Kahoot, and printed learning materials. Assessments include quizzes, projects, and written outputs." (Respondent 5)

Her response suggests that combining digital technologies with traditional learning materials enabled teachers to provide flexible learning opportunities while addressing the diverse needs of students. The integration of online and offline resources also helped ensure continuity of learning among students with varying levels of internet access. Overall, the findings indicate that the integration of digital platforms and instructional technologies became a fundamental strategy in implementing blended learning. Teachers selected technological tools based on instructional objectives, learner needs, and available resources. Rather than relying on a single platform, they employed multiple technologies to facilitate communication, deliver lessons, assess student performance, and enhance learner participation. These findings are consistent with Graham (2019), who explained that blended learning is most effective when digital technologies are purposefully integrated with face-to-face instruction to improve teaching and learning. Likewise, Picciano (2009) emphasized that educational technologies support communication, collaboration, assessment, and learner engagement in blended learning environments. Similarly, studies published in *Education and Information Technologies* reported that the effective use of digital platforms enhances instructional delivery, promotes student participation, and strengthens teachers' ability to manage blended learning successfully. The findings suggest that the integration of digital platforms and instructional technologies is an essential component of effective blended learning implementation. Teachers demonstrated instructional leadership by selecting appropriate technological tools, designing engaging learning experiences, and adapting digital resources to meet learners' educational needs. Their experiences highlight the importance of technological competence in supporting flexible, inclusive, and learner-centered instruction.

Theme 4. Learner Engagement through Interactive Instructional Strategies

The findings revealed that teachers employed a variety of interactive instructional strategies to encourage learner engagement and active participation in blended learning. Participants emphasized that meaningful learning occurs when students are actively involved in classroom discussions, collaborative activities, performance tasks, project-based learning, and technology-supported learning experiences. Rather than relying solely on lectures, teachers adopted learner-centered strategies that promoted communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and active participation in both online and face-to-face learning environments. Respondent 1 emphasized that performance-based activities were among the most effective strategies in determining whether students understood the lesson. She stated:

"I think for me is performance so that after giving our lesson or instructions, we can give them performance tasks so that we could assess if they really understood the lesson." (Respondent 1)

This response demonstrates that the participants considered performance tasks an effective strategy for promoting learner engagement and assessing students' understanding. Instead of relying only on written assessments, she encouraged students to demonstrate their knowledge through authentic learning activities. This approach enabled learners to apply what they had learned while providing the teacher with evidence of learning. Similarly, Respondent 2 highlighted the importance of encouraging students to participate both during online and face-to-face instruction. She explained:

"Most of the time I let them do the talking both in the online and the face-to-face classes. In the online they do the talking, and in the face-to-face they do the application." (Respondent 2)

She further added: *"You should call specific students to participate because in online classes it is difficult to know if they are really engaged. You cannot fully see what they are doing, so participation should be encouraged."* (Respondent 2)

These statements indicate that active participation was intentionally promoted by involving students in discussions and classroom activities. The participant recognized that online learning presents unique challenges in monitoring engagement; therefore, she deliberately encouraged students to participate verbally and interact during lessons. Respondent 3 also described using collaborative and interactive activities to sustain learners' motivation. She shared:

"I use collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, and interactive activities to keep learners engaged both online and offline."

She further explained:

"I encourage participation through online quizzes, group projects, interactive games, and classroom discussions. I also provide positive feedback and recognition to motivate students."

The participant's response demonstrates that learner engagement was promoted through collaborative learning experiences and timely feedback. By combining group work, educational games, and classroom discussions, she created opportunities for students to interact with both their peers and the teacher, resulting in a more engaging and supportive learning environment. Likewise, Respondent 4 emphasized the value of student-centered learning by integrating interactive presentations, online games, and collaborative activities into her instruction. According to her:

"I use interactive presentations, online games, breakout discussions, and reflection activities. I also encourage students to share ideas and participate in collaborative tasks."

This finding suggests that interactive instructional strategies encourage students to become active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information. Reflection activities and collaborative discussions also provided learners with opportunities to develop communication skills, critical

thinking, and teamwork. Respondent 5 likewise emphasized that varied instructional activities improved learner participation and academic performance. She explained:

"I provide interactive tasks such as online discussions, group presentations, and performance-based activities. I also give timely feedback to encourage participation."

She further noted:

"Providing varied activities and clear instructions has been effective in improving learner participation and academic performance."

These responses indicate that students became more engaged when teachers used diverse instructional approaches that encouraged interaction and provided clear expectations. Timely feedback also motivated learners to remain active and responsible throughout the learning process. Overall, the participants consistently emphasized that learner engagement was enhanced through interactive and student-centered instructional strategies. Performance tasks, collaborative learning, online discussions, project-based learning, interactive games, presentations, and immediate feedback encouraged students to participate actively and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. These strategies also enabled teachers to monitor learners' understanding while fostering collaboration and independent learning. The findings support the work of Picciano (2009), who emphasized that effective blended learning combines collaborative learning, independent learning, and technology-supported instruction to promote meaningful learning experiences. Likewise, Graham (2019) explained that blended learning is most effective when instructional strategies actively engage learners through interaction, collaboration, and authentic learning tasks. Furthermore, studies published in the Education and Information Technologies Journal have shown that interactive instructional approaches, such as collaborative learning, project-based activities, and digital learning tools, significantly improve learner motivation, participation, and academic achievement in blended learning environments.

The findings suggest that interactive instructional strategies are fundamental to successful blended learning implementation. Teachers demonstrated instructional leadership by designing learner-centered activities that promoted collaboration, communication, and active participation. Through the use of varied instructional approaches and meaningful learning experiences, teachers were able to create engaging learning environments that supported students' academic development while addressing the demands of blended learning.

Research Question 3: Identify the challenges of teachers in leading?

Theme 5. Technological and Connectivity Challenges

The findings revealed that technological limitations and unstable internet connectivity were among the most significant challenges encountered by teachers in implementing blended learning. Participants consistently shared that poor internet access, limited availability of gadgets, and inadequate technological resources affected students' participation, communication, and timely submission of learning activities. These challenges not only disrupted instructional delivery but also limited teachers' ability to facilitate meaningful learning experiences and monitor students' academic progress. Respondent 1 emphasized that many learners struggled to attend online classes because of limited access to internet services and digital devices. She explained:

"Actually, the challenge is that most of them are not attending the online class. Sometimes they don't have Wi-Fi, and they belong to poor families who cannot provide cellphones. We cannot blame them, so we try to help them by giving modular activities." (Respondent 1)

This statement demonstrates that socioeconomic factors significantly influenced students' participation in blended learning. Instead of attributing learners' absences to a lack of interest, the participants recognized that limited financial resources prevented many students from accessing online instruction. As a result, teachers adapted by providing printed modules to ensure that learning continued

despite technological constraints. Similarly, Respondent 2 identified unstable internet connectivity as one of the greatest barriers to effective online instruction. She shared:

"If we are conducting an online class and there is no internet access, especially with PLDT, we have to be considerate of our students. Instead of meeting them online, I send worksheets and the lesson outline so they can still understand the lesson." (Respondent 2)

The participant's response highlights the importance of teacher flexibility in addressing technological challenges. Rather than postponing learning, she modified her instructional approach by providing alternative learning materials, ensuring that students could continue learning despite internet disruptions. Respondent 3 likewise emphasized that inconsistent internet connectivity and limited access to gadgets affected students' participation in online learning. She stated:

"One major challenge is inconsistent internet connectivity and limited access to gadgets among students."

She further explained:

"These limitations affect students' participation and learning progress. Some learners cannot attend online sessions regularly or access digital materials immediately."

These responses indicate that technological limitations created unequal learning opportunities among students. Learners with limited internet access experienced delays in completing learning activities and participating in online discussions, which affected their academic progress. Likewise, Respondent 4 explained that poor connectivity and insufficient technological resources continued to hinder effective implementation of blended learning. She shared:

"Poor connectivity affects communication and timely submission of tasks. Limited gadgets also reduce students' access to learning materials."

This finding suggests that technological challenges affected not only students' ability to participate but also teachers' capacity to communicate effectively and monitor learners' performance. Delayed submissions and interrupted communication often required teachers to adjust deadlines and modify instructional plans. Respondent 5 also identified unequal access to technology as a continuing concern. She stated:

"Students with limited internet access often experience delays in completing activities and accessing online discussions."

Her response reinforces the experiences of the other participants by demonstrating that internet connectivity remains a persistent challenge that influences learner participation and academic performance. Overall, the participants consistently identified unstable internet connectivity, limited access to gadgets, and inadequate technological resources as major barriers to the successful implementation of blended learning. These challenges affected students' ability to attend online classes, complete learning activities, communicate with teachers, and participate actively in instruction. Consequently, teachers were required to adopt flexible instructional approaches, such as providing printed modules, alternative learning materials, and adjusted assessment schedules, to ensure continuity of learning. The findings are consistent with UNESCO (2021), which reported that inadequate technological infrastructure and unequal access to digital resources remain major obstacles to effective blended learning implementation worldwide. Similarly, Saboowala and Mishra (2021) found that unstable internet connectivity, limited technological resources, and insufficient digital access significantly affect the quality of blended learning and students' academic engagement. These findings also support studies published in the American Journal of Education and Technology, which identified technological inequality as one of the primary barriers to successful blended learning implementation, particularly in developing countries. The findings suggest that addressing technological and connectivity challenges is essential for sustaining effective blended learning. While teachers demonstrated adaptability by providing alternative instructional materials and modifying their teaching strategies, long-term success requires stronger institutional support, improved internet infrastructure, and equitable access to digital devices. Providing these resources would enable teachers to deliver instruction more effectively and ensure

that all learners have equal opportunities to participate in blended learning regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances.

Theme 6. Difficulties in Classroom Management and Learner Monitoring

The findings revealed that teachers experienced considerable challenges in managing classrooms and monitoring learner participation during blended learning. While face-to-face instruction allowed teachers to observe learners directly and provide immediate feedback, online learning limited their ability to monitor students' engagement, assess their understanding, and ensure the integrity of assessment activities. Participants explained that maintaining students' attention, encouraging active participation, and evaluating learning outcomes were more difficult in virtual learning environments than in traditional classroom settings. Respondent 2 emphasized that monitoring students during online classes was particularly challenging because teachers could not fully observe learners while they were completing their tasks. She explained:

"It is easier to implement during face-to-face classes. But in the online class, you should call the specific student to participate because we cannot really see what they are doing. We only see their faces, but we cannot see the actual materials they are using." (Respondent 2)

This statement indicates that the limited visibility of students during online instruction made it difficult for teachers to determine whether learners were actively participating or independently completing their work. As a result, teachers needed to adopt additional strategies, such as calling on students individually and encouraging class participation, to maintain learner engagement. Similarly, Respondent 3 explained that monitoring learners' progress became more difficult because some students experienced delays in submitting their activities due to internet connectivity problems. She stated:

"Some students submit tasks late due to connectivity problems. Monitoring learner participation online is also difficult compared to face-to-face classes."

The participant's response demonstrates that technological limitations affected not only instructional delivery but also teachers' ability to monitor students' learning progress effectively. Delayed submissions reduced opportunities for timely feedback and made it more challenging to evaluate students' understanding of the lessons. Respondent 4 also identified learner participation as one of the greatest concerns in blended learning. She shared:

"Some learners are less active during online sessions, making it difficult to monitor their understanding and participation."

This finding suggests that online learning environments may discourage active participation among some learners. Limited interaction between teachers and students can make it more difficult to identify learners who require additional academic support or instructional intervention. Likewise, Respondent 5 emphasized that monitoring students and maintaining academic honesty during online assessments remained challenging. She explained:

"Monitoring students' progress online and ensuring academic honesty during assessments are challenging."

This response highlights an important concern regarding the credibility of online assessments. Since teachers cannot directly supervise students during virtual examinations and activities, they face difficulties in determining whether submitted work accurately reflects students' own understanding and performance. Although Respondent 1 reported that classroom management concerns were less evident in face-to-face instruction because students generally followed classroom rules and teacher directions, she still acknowledged that online attendance and participation remained problematic due to limited internet access and technological constraints. This suggests that classroom management challenges varied depending on the mode of instruction, with online learning presenting greater difficulties than traditional classroom settings. Overall, the participants' experiences demonstrate that classroom management and learner monitoring remain significant challenges in blended learning. Teachers found it more difficult to supervise learners,

assess participation, provide immediate feedback, and maintain academic integrity during online instruction. Consequently, they employed various strategies, such as encouraging participation, monitoring submitted activities, and maintaining regular communication with students, to address these challenges. These findings are consistent with the study of Martin et al. (2020), which reported that maintaining learner engagement and monitoring participation are among the most common challenges encountered by teachers in online and blended learning environments. Similarly, Hodges et al. (2020) explained that the transition to online learning required teachers to develop new classroom management strategies because traditional methods of supervision were no longer applicable in virtual settings. Furthermore, studies published in the Education and Information Technologies Journal have shown that effective classroom management in blended learning requires continuous communication, interactive instructional strategies, and appropriate digital assessment practices to sustain learner engagement and accountability.

The findings suggest that effective classroom management in blended learning extends beyond maintaining order in the classroom. It also involves developing strategies that encourage active participation, monitor learner progress, provide timely feedback, and promote academic integrity in both online and face-to-face learning environments. Strengthening teachers' competencies in digital classroom management and learner monitoring may therefore contribute to improving the overall effectiveness of blended learning implementation.

Research Question 4: Describe the intervention needs identified by teachers to strengthen the implementation of blended learning?

Theme 7. Continuous Professional Development and Institutional Support

The findings revealed that teachers recognized the importance of continuous professional development and strong institutional support in strengthening the implementation of blended learning. Although the participants demonstrated adaptability and commitment in integrating blended learning into their teaching practices, they believed that sustained success depends on continuous training, improved technological resources, reliable internet connectivity, and administrative support. The participants emphasized that these forms of support would enhance their digital competencies, improve instructional delivery, and enable them to respond more effectively to the evolving demands of blended learning. Respondent 1 emphasized that teachers should be provided with regular seminars and training programs to strengthen their knowledge and skills in using technology for instruction. She explained:

"Teachers should continue attending seminars and training related to technology and blended learning so that we can improve our teaching strategies and better guide our students." (Respondent 1)

This response indicates that continuous professional learning is essential for improving teachers' confidence and competence in implementing blended learning. The participant recognized that professional development enables teachers to acquire new instructional strategies and remain updated with educational technologies. Similarly, Respondent 2 stressed the need for institutional support through improved technological infrastructure and reliable internet access. She stated:

"The school should continue supporting teachers by providing reliable internet connection and enough technological resources because these are very important in blended learning." (Respondent 2)

The participant's response suggests that the effectiveness of blended learning depends not only on teachers' efforts but also on the availability of institutional resources. Reliable internet access and adequate technological equipment allow teachers to conduct online instruction more efficiently and minimize interruptions during learning activities. Respondent 3 likewise emphasized the value of continuous ICT training and collaboration among teachers. She shared:

"Regular ICT training, professional development programs, and collaboration among teachers are necessary to improve our knowledge and strengthen blended learning implementation."

This finding demonstrates that professional development is most effective when combined with collaborative learning opportunities. Sharing experiences and best practices among teachers can improve

instructional strategies and promote continuous improvement in blended learning. Respondent 4 highlighted the importance of administrative support in sustaining effective blended learning. She explained:

"The school administration should continue providing technical support, updated learning resources, and opportunities for teachers to attend workshops and seminars."

This statement indicates that school leaders play an important role in creating an environment that supports innovation and continuous improvement. Administrative support enables teachers to focus on instructional quality while receiving the technical assistance necessary to implement blended learning effectively. Respondent 5 also emphasized that investing in teachers' professional growth and providing sufficient learning resources would improve the quality of blended learning. She stated:

"Providing more training, digital resources, and continuous support from the school will help teachers become more effective in implementing blended learning."

Her response reinforces the idea that professional development and institutional support work together to strengthen teachers' instructional practices and improve student learning outcomes. Overall, the participants consistently identified continuous professional development and institutional support as essential intervention needs for improving blended learning implementation. Teachers emphasized the importance of ICT training, seminars, workshops, collaboration with colleagues, reliable internet connectivity, updated technological resources, and sustained administrative support. These interventions were viewed as necessary for enhancing teachers' digital competence, strengthening instructional leadership, and ensuring the effective delivery of blended learning. The findings are consistent with Fullan (2016), who emphasized that educational improvement depends on continuous professional learning and collaborative leadership. Likewise, UNESCO (2021) highlighted that teacher training, digital competence, and institutional support are critical components of successful technology-integrated education. Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) argued that sustained professional development enhances teachers' instructional effectiveness and promotes continuous improvement in teaching practices. These studies support the participants' views that strengthening teachers' professional competencies and providing institutional support are essential for sustaining high-quality blended learning.

The findings suggest that successful blended learning implementation requires a shared commitment between teachers and educational institutions. While teachers play a central role in designing and delivering instruction, school administrators and other educational stakeholders must provide the necessary resources, training opportunities, and technical assistance to support teachers' professional growth. Investing in this intervention needs will contribute to more effective blended learning practices, improved instructional quality, and better educational outcomes for learners.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers' leadership in blended learning extends beyond the traditional role of classroom instruction. The participants' experiences revealed that implementing blended learning required adaptability, flexibility, and continuous professional growth to address the changing demands of technology-integrated education. Teachers assumed leadership roles by modifying instructional practices, integrating digital platforms, and creating learner-centered learning environments despite the challenges presented by blended learning. These findings support the view of Fullan (2016), who emphasized that effective teacher leaders facilitate educational change through innovation, reflective practice, and continuous professional learning. Likewise, York-Barr and Duke (2004) argued that teacher leadership is characterized by teachers' ability to influence instructional improvement and promote student learning through collaboration and professional competence. The study also found that teachers employed a variety of instructional strategies to enhance learner engagement in blended learning. The integration of digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Quizizz, Kahoot, and Canva, together with collaborative learning, performance-based tasks, and interactive classroom activities, enabled teachers to provide flexible and engaging learning experiences. These findings are consistent with Graham (2019), who explained that blended learning is most effective when technology is intentionally integrated with face-to-face instruction to improve learner engagement and instructional quality. Similarly, Picciano (2009) emphasized that combining multiple instructional approaches encourages meaningful learning and accommodates diverse learner needs. Despite these positive experiences, the findings highlight persistent challenges that continue to affect the implementation of blended learning. Participants consistently

identified unstable internet connectivity, inadequate technological resources, limited access to digital devices, difficulties in monitoring learner participation, and challenges in maintaining classroom management during online instruction. These findings support UNESCO (2021), which identified technological inequality as one of the major barriers to effective blended learning implementation worldwide. Likewise, Saboowala and Mishra (2021) reported that inadequate infrastructure and limited digital readiness reduce the effectiveness of blended learning, particularly in developing educational settings. Another important finding of the study is the participants' recognition of the need for continuous professional development and stronger institutional support. Teachers emphasized that regular ICT training, professional development programs, reliable internet connectivity, updated technological resources, and sustained administrative support are essential to improving blended learning implementation. These findings align with Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), who argued that continuous professional development strengthens teachers' instructional competence and improves student learning outcomes. Similarly, Fullan (2016) emphasized that educational improvement depends on collaborative leadership and sustained institutional support. Overall, the findings suggest that successful blended learning implementation is not determined solely by the availability of technology but also by teachers' leadership, adaptability, instructional competence, and the support provided by educational institutions. The participants' lived experiences demonstrate that effective teacher leadership enables educators to overcome instructional challenges while promoting meaningful and inclusive learning experiences. These findings contribute to the growing body of qualitative research on teacher leadership and blended learning by providing context-specific evidence from a private educational institution in the Philippines. Furthermore, they highlight the importance of investing in teacher capacity-building, technological infrastructure, and institutional support to sustain effective blended learning practices in the evolving educational landscape.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the conduct of this study to ensure the protection of the participants' rights and well-being. Prior to the commencement of the research, the researcher sought and obtained permission from the administration of Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School to conduct the study within the institution. After securing permission, the selected participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the research procedures, the expected duration of the interview, and the intended use of the data. The researcher explained that participation was entirely voluntary and that participants had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any point without penalty or negative consequences. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interviews were conducted. To protect the participants' privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. The names and personal identities of the participants were not disclosed in the manuscript. Instead, pseudonyms or respondent codes (e.g., Respondent 1, Respondent 2) were used in presenting the findings and verbatim quotations. All interview recordings, transcripts, and research documents were securely stored and were accessible only to the researcher. The collected data was used exclusively for academic purposes and was not shared with unauthorized individuals. The researcher also upheld the principles of honesty, integrity, and respect throughout the study by accurately presenting the participants' responses without alteration or misrepresentation. All sources of information used in the study were properly acknowledged through appropriate citation following APA 7th edition guidelines. Since this study was conducted as an academic research project within the institution and did not require formal review by an Institutional Ethics Review Board, ethical compliance was ensured through institutional permission, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and responsible handling of the research data.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the leadership experiences, instructional strategies, challenges, and intervention needs of teachers in implementing blended learning at Sarang Bangun Learning Center and High School. The findings revealed that blended learning has significantly influenced teachers' professional roles by requiring them to become more adaptable, technologically competent, and learner-centered in their instructional practices. Through their experiences, the participants demonstrated leadership by continuously modifying their teaching approaches, integrating digital technologies, and responding to the diverse learning needs of their students. The study further revealed that teachers employed various instructional strategies, including the integration of digital learning platforms, interactive classroom activities, collaborative learning, performance-based assessments, and technology-assisted instruction to promote learner engagement. These strategies enabled teachers to create flexible and meaningful learning experiences despite the challenges associated with blended learning. However, the findings also showed that teachers continue to encounter significant barriers, particularly unstable

internet connectivity, limited technological resources, difficulties in monitoring learners during online instruction, and challenges in maintaining learner engagement and assessment integrity. Despite these obstacles, the participants demonstrated resilience by adapting their instructional practices and providing alternative learning opportunities to ensure continuity of education. The study likewise highlights that continuous professional development, institutional support, reliable technological infrastructure, and ongoing capacity-building programs are essential to strengthening blended learning implementation. Teachers recognized that regular ICT training, collaborative professional learning, and administrative support enhance their confidence, instructional leadership, and ability to provide quality education in blended learning environments. Overall, the findings suggest that effective blended learning extends beyond the integration of technology. Its success depends on teachers' leadership, adaptability, professional competence, and the continuous support provided by educational institutions. By understanding teachers' lived experiences, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on teacher leadership and blended learning and provides valuable insights that may guide schools in developing policies and practices that promote sustainable, inclusive, and effective technology-enhanced education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation of blended learning and enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness. School administrators should reinforce institutional support for blended learning by ensuring reliable internet connectivity, updated technological resources, and adequate digital learning facilities, while also providing regular professional development programs focused on blended learning, digital pedagogy, educational technology, and instructional innovation. Opportunities for teachers to collaborate, exchange effective practices, and engage in reflective professional learning should likewise be strengthened. Teachers, for their part, are encouraged to continuously develop their digital competencies and instructional leadership through sustained participation in professional development activities, the adoption of innovative and learner-centered teaching strategies, and the purposeful integration of appropriate educational technologies to promote active participation and meaningful learning. At the policy and institutional level, the Department of Education (DepEd) and other educational stakeholders should continue developing and implementing policies, programs, and capacity-building initiatives that address persistent challenges related to technological access, internet connectivity, digital learning resources, and teachers' digital competence. Strategic partnerships with local government units, private organizations, and other relevant stakeholders may also be established to expand access to technological resources and strengthen support systems for both teachers and learners. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to extend the scope of the present study by examining teachers' leadership experiences in blended learning across different schools, educational levels, and geographic contexts. Further studies may also incorporate the perspectives of school administrators, students, and parents to provide a more comprehensive understanding of blended learning implementation. Employing mixed-methods, longitudinal, or comparative research designs may additionally provide deeper evidence regarding the factors that facilitate or constrain the effective and sustainable implementation of blended learning across diverse educational settings.

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