



ASEAN Journal of Education

Journal homepage: <https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/AJE>



Thriving in a New Space of Virtual Homeroom Advising: A Phenomenological Inquiry

Ryan V. Lansangan*, Hanilet C. Banzuelo, Walner A. Saturno & Evelyn T. Tiangsing

University of Santo Tomas, Junior High School, Manila, 1008 Philippines

Article info

Article history:

Received: 31 December 2021

Revised: 11 June 2022

Accepted: 29 June 2022

Keywords:

Phenomenology, Virtual homeroom advising, Lived experiences, Online learning

Abstract

Examining homeroom advisers' experiences in the conduct of their migrated tasks in the online platform can help schools gauge teachers' needs to move beyond the survival phase of the new educational delivery platform to a thriving phase that conforms to the demands of the new normal education. Relying on a phenomenological approach of inquiry, this study explored the meanings held by ten purposively selected Junior High School teachers on their experiences as homeroom advisers in the context of online education during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thematic analysis revealed that the participants' lived experiences could be dynamically described in spaces where they situate themselves in a new teaching platform. These spaces are termed as space for new opportunities as their perceptions towards the new normal education; space for flexibility in confronting the challenges; space for reflection and resiliency in exploring different coping strategies; space for creativity in establishing effective practices; and space for growth and professional learning in improving the quality of online advising. The study further concludes that becoming a homeroom adviser in the new normal involves situating themselves in these thriving spaces, which redirect their personal and professional identities as advisers in pursuing resilient and undisruptive teaching and learning.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic affected almost all aspects of everyday life. The pandemic breakout in early 2020 and its persisting global impact have significantly altered many aspects of lives in a matter of days. Yehezkel (2020) underlines the collapse of order in all organizations, including the field of education. Learning institutions halted the default face-to-face mode and remodeled the new face of instructional delivery depending on the technological affordances of both learners and teachers. This included refocusing the

learning content, method of transfer of learning, and approaches to assessment while sticking to the very purpose of educational services.

While this sudden shift showcased creativity and innovations in crisis learning as it distorted the status quo, and even if it was deemed to be convenient and interesting to some (Kedra & Kartidis, 2020), unprecedented challenges were raised, such as a lack of stable internet connectivity that impedes optimum preparation and participation in online teaching and learning; lack of readiness to online teaching, lack of

consistency and discipline, heavy workloads and digital fatigue, and absence of socialization. Indeed, it postured exceptional experiences for teachers, confronting them with an entirely new atmosphere. That continuity of their profession was only possible through adopting different modalities that are very different from how they approach conventional classrooms.

The roles of teachers have evolved from simple to complex when it comes to technology-driven instruction. But beyond the instructional duties that teachers are required to fulfill, they are also expected to maintain social coherence with their students to account for the social aspect of learning. Cited from Putri, Andrinigrum, Rofiah, and Gunawan (2019), affirming this is the acknowledgment that teachers play various roles as educators, instructors, mentors, trainers, advisors, class managers, demonstrators, correctors, inspirators, informants, organizers, motivators, initiators, facilitators, innovators, mediators, and evaluators. Teachers' functions revolve not only on instruction in delivering the contents but also in educating students for character formation and supporting the non-intellectual needs of the students in the learning process. Jensen, Price, and Roxa (2020) affirmed that contextual factors influence the approaches of teachers on these responsibilities not just in the face-to-face contexts but also in the digital context. Though this virtual educational delivery is not entirely new, and many institutions have implemented it for many years, the demands of this era compelled teachers to examine their professional identity and responsibilities vis-à-vis technology-enhanced teaching because of the added factor, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lansangan and Gonzales (2020) narrated the voices of teachers in the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic about their dilemmas in performing their tasks amidst the looming uncertainty brought by the global health crisis. Previous studies underscored impending factors in embracing this platform not only on familiarization with technology but even the difficulty in understanding the dynamics of online education (Farooq, Rathore, & Mansoor, 2020). These lead them to unpredictable scenarios of experiencing certain levels of distress and digital fatigue; some even showed anxiety and depression. The extent to which teachers have coped with these challenges and accounted for the different factors was what König, Jäger-Biela, and Glutsch (2020) described as relevantly unexplored.

Much research has focused on how the learning environment facilitates instruction in various means and scales Martin, Sun, and Westine (2020) but rarely has it explored teachers' experiences with specialized tasks aside from instruction. One of the common tasks in basic education, aside from the actual teaching, is becoming a homeroom adviser. Homeroom advisers are expected to be an essential source of influence for students' development (Shi, 2021) in assisting them in their learning trajectories and behavior management. With the changing context, these roles of homeroom advisers have evolved through time, and their duties in advising during the COVID-19 pandemic are testimonies of their continuous commitment to fulfilling their roles as professional educators. Lowenthal, Borup, West, and Archambault (2020) affirmed the importance of examining teachers' perceptions and experiences in the conduct of their tasks in the online platform to better recognize their different approaches and coping strategies in the changing landscape of educational delivery.

Objectives

Upholding the idea that one mechanism to understand how homeroom advisers experience online advising is by looking into the lens that magnifies their reconstructed experiences and articulating the meaning they ascribe to these experiences. Hence, the primary purpose of this study is to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of homeroom advisers in the context of online learning during the pandemic. The online platform of advising in the context of the current study is defined as the kind of instructional delivery and advising where teachers and their students communicate through technology virtually.

The overarching lead question that guided this inquiry was, *What does it mean to be a homeroom adviser in an online platform?* Specifically, it aims to attain the following research objectives:

1. to describe the perceptions of homeroom advisers towards online advising;
2. to examine the challenges that homeroom advisers encountered in the conduct of their roles in online advising;
3. to determine the coping strategies of homeroom advisers in addressing the challenges that they encountered in online advising;
4. to articulate the effective practices of homeroom advisers in online advising; and

5. to identify homeroom advisers' perceived professional learning needs in their professional growth as educators in the context of online advising.

In an attempt to explore such lived experiences of the teachers, this inquiry may pave the way to provide the academe with a basis relying on the concrete experiences of homeroom advisers to understand further the needed support and appropriate professional intervention for the teachers that can enable them to effectively perform their roles amidst the challenges associated in online advising.

Conceptual framework

This current work is framed on the concept that teachers' execution of roles is context-dependent. When the context changes around where teachers are situated, they respond by redirecting new expectations and responsibilities while upholding the core of their roles as educators. The role of introducing the new platform of instructional delivery and the onslaught of the pandemic through the lens of the participants in the study serve as the context in this study. Nordlöf and Höst (2019) opine that this context-dependency can both limit and boost the teachers. It is, therefore, crucial to understand their experiences in practice to better recognize their needs.

Methodology

The current study adapted phenomenology as its method of inquiry to pay closer attention to the distinct experiences of homeroom advisers, which is affirmed by Creswell and Poth (2018) as a means of exploring the perspectives and human experiences of participants under investigation. This mode of inquiry revolves around how homeroom advisers made meaning out of their lived experiences vis-à-vis their exposure to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants.

The selection of 10 homeroom advisers from 66 faculty members utilized a purposive sampling method enabling the researchers to select participants who had the experience with the phenomenon and could give credible information. The teachers were from a private secondary school in the city and handled Junior High School students. Inclusion criteria involved teachers who had at least five years of experience being homeroom advisers and were serving as full-time teachers in the selected school during the time where the interview was conducted.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Participants

Code	Gender (M = male /F = female)	Age	Marital Status (S = single, M = married)	Years in Teaching	Years as Home- room Adviser	Grade Level Handled
T1	M	25	S	4	4	9
T2	F	43	M	23	12	10
T3	M	46	M	26	16	7
T4	F	52	M	23	6	9
T5	F	26	S	3	2	8
T6	F	59	M	31	31	7
T7	F	26	S	2	2	8
T8	M	34	M	13	9	7
T9	F	60	M	39	39	10
T10	F	35	M	14	9	8

The interview guide as the data gathering tool primarily included the following questions to capture the informants' lived experiences: *What are your perceptions towards online homeroom advising during the pandemic? What are the challenges that you encountered in the conduct of your roles in online advising? How do you cope with addressing the challenges that you face in online advising? What are your perceived professional learning needs as homeroom advisers in your professional growth as educators in online learning? What recommendations can you offer to address the gaps based on your experiences?* Probing questions were asked depending on the flow of the conversation during the interview.

Semi-structured virtual interviews were utilized as a primary method of data collection. Participants were invited through an email that noted the nature and objectives of the investigation, the informed consent, and the specific details concerning how the data would be gathered and treated. Interviews were conducted through zoom video conferencing for around one hour, and the participants were given the freedom to respond in either English or Filipino language. Consent on turning on the camera and recording the online interview was also asked before conducting the interview.

In the analysis of the gathered data, the voice recordings of the informants were transcribed verbatim and converted into field texts. Responses in Filipino were translated to English. After transcription, a software for thematic analysis known as Quirkos was used to facilitate the identification of the codes, categories, and themes from the transcripts. To ensure the accuracy of information shared by the participants, member checking

was done by providing them with a matrix reflecting their responses and the identified codes to account for whether it resonates with their lived experiences. The themes drawn from the analysis were presented as findings and supported by illustrative quotes from the subjects.

Results

A framework summarizes the analysis of the findings of this inquiry. The framework's core centers on the homeroom advisers in the online platform surrounded by different layers that describe the dynamics of their lived experiences in performing their duties during the pandemic.



Figure 1 Summary of findings on virtual homeroom advising

The layers around the core are the identified drivers: competence, commitment, and compassion, allowing homeroom advisers to sustain their tasks, specifically in ensuring the cycle of learning and the formation of their learners. These virtues magnify how they adapt to the new educational atmosphere, including their perceptions, perceived challenges, coping, strategies, new practices, and perceived needs and support. Rippling from the core to the layers of drivers and their lived experiences, this unique educational experience for homeroom advisers gave them several spaces to occupy to thrive in the new normal. These spaces defined their lived experiences as space for new opportunities as their perceptions towards the new normal education; space for flexibility in confronting the challenges; space for reflection and resiliency in

exploring coping strategies; space for creativity in establishing effective practices; space for growth and professional learning in improving the quality of online advising.

Discussion

The various spaces describing the lived experiences of homeroom advisers are discussed below.

Perceptions of Homeroom Advisers Towards Online Advising: Space for New Opportunities in Realigning Thoughts and Emotions

The onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic brought not only new roles and responsibilities to homeroom advisers but also served as a stimulus that triggered their emotions towards the task assigned to them. Confirming this is an excerpt from the work of Keller and Becker (2020), describing teaching as a passionate profession with intense and emotional activity. Affecting this emotion is the use of the new platform of online teaching and learning, which by its very nature presents barriers for homeroom advisers to perform their tasks as compared to their long years of experience in the default face-to-face. Though confronted with new expectations and demands of the entirely new context, some participants expressed positive feelings towards their experiences like a sense of fulfillment, happiness, learning opportunity, and productivity. Some participants mentioned, *"It is fulfilling because I established rapport with my advisors. I became close to them"* (T1); *"First of all, I was happy to be of service to the young kids even in a different setting."* (T6); *"As advisers, our abilities need to be converted to capabilities. Let's make our homeroom tasks meaningful, fun and exciting!"* (T9).

However, some participants find their tasks as online homeroom advisers tedious, stressful, tiring, and disappointing. T10 acknowledged that *"...online teaching is much more tedious and stressful than the usual face-to-face..."*. They associate these impressions with how they handle different students and the effort to find the appropriate mechanism to guide them. As T2 shared, *"Now, I would say that I am tired, literally. Though this is relative of course. Yes, it is a pandemic, and I would say that I am prepared for that mentally. But what I am not prepared for would be the sense of expectations to the advisory class assigned to me."*

Challenges that Homeroom Advisers Encountered in Online Advising: Space for Flexibility in Confronting the Battlefields of the New

Teaching-Learning Platform

Cited from the work of Belgica, Calugan, Dumo, and Simber (2020), it was described that online class eliminates the human connection and impacts students' motivation and class interaction. But as part of the educative process, it is not only the students who are facing the battles brought by the situation. Homeroom advisers identified their battles in using technology, handling their respective advisees, dealing with parents, and personal dilemmas.

Battlefield on technology. One of the significant challenges for homeroom advisers was the technicality in setting up and maintaining a functional virtual class net and accommodating all the technology-related ancillary tasks. T7 shared, *"Connectivity and efficiency of equipment/gadgets used often hindered accessibility in reaching out to those students with academic concerns. I felt limited mostly in getting student responses and participation in HRO activities due to connectivity issues."* With the perceived technical difficulties, homeroom advisers also felt stressed and scared. *"... I struggled on that aspect. Yes, I know my content but being dependent on technology is another issue."* revealed by T9. Trust and Whalen (2021) showed this in their study among K to 12 teachers, where challenges included the access, evaluation, and capacity to use it in designing instruction and supporting student and family use of technology.

Battlefield with the students. Giving premium to the formation of values of every student, even in an online set-up, is still a must in whatever context. Homeroom advisers observed this primarily in terms of their advisees' compliance, attendance, and some forms of misconduct. It was a general observation that it became more difficult on their end to do personal monitoring and guidance. T8 noted, *"It is quite difficult to make follow-ups on those students who do not comply... Also, those students who are reported by their subject teachers who have deficiencies."*

With such a limitation on social interactions, homeroom advisers felt that they could not literally and wholly express themselves, unlike before. There is a certain feeling that their words might give different meanings or impressions to the students and their parents. T10 stated that *"Sometimes I feel so limited with the way I want to express non-approval over a student's behavior. I need to consider proper lines of statements and be cautious with my gestures and facial expressions..."* Several participants shared that at times they had feeling

of being ineffective, which tested their patience and even challenged them emotionally. T3 stated, *"Sometimes I would feel intentionally ignored for there were instances that my advisees would not cooperate."*

Likewise, some homeroom advisers' were confronted with online misbehaviors, such as addressing cyberbullying, cheating, and even non-participation in school-wide events. which tested their patience, understanding, and commitment to value formation. T6 shared, *"...frustrating at times because some students were not obedient, not that responsible, seemed not serious with their studies but I tried to understand them knowing how difficult the situation was"*.

Performing ancillary tasks such as dissemination of weekly instructional schedule, information dissemination, preparation of the mid-quarter report, and monitoring examination were also perceived as part of their battles in the virtual platform. In doing this, Chiu (2021) affirmed that digital support must fully address students' needs to engage them in the online platform.

Battlefield with the parents. The transition to a completely online learning environment changes the established routines at home, not just for students but also for their parents. The current setup strengthens the active partnership between their home and the school. However, some participants find it challenging to develop such an active partnership. T8 stated that *"Some parents are not responsive."* An et al. (2021) confirmed this in their work about teachers' feelings, experiences, and perspectives in emergency online teaching. There are clear cases where they seemingly ignored important announcements or reminders.

Though the role of communication of homeroom advisers to students and parents is important, its abuse became a source of stress on the part of the teachers because of the absence of restrictions on time and privacy. T8 narrated, *"...when some of them even expect subject teachers to be always available for a response all the time even on weekends. It seems that some of them would like to have an answer right after they have sent their message either through email or Facebook messenger."* T10 further affirmed, *"Teachers now work like being in a call center as students and some parents suddenly do not have the concept of time."*

Battlefield with their selves. The homeroom advisers, human as they are, also struggled with their personal lives. While performing their tasks as facilitators of learning, they are also confronted with many personal problems, especially on pandemic-related issues. T5

shares her feelings of being alone and different, *“My being alone in a unit seated on a three-floor structure where most of the occupants in the other units have given up occupancy even intensified my feeling of being alone. All these experiences sometimes caused one to feel different, how much more with the students.”* And as they accommodate all their responsibilities in the workplace and negotiate their personal problems, the feeling of saturation worsens due to the absence of social interaction. T10 imparted, *“In the academe, it sometimes makes us feel saturated; this is normally felt even during the normal situation. All the more with this pandemic where we are mostly at home. We just simply miss going out as a family as I also imagine the same sentiments of my students.”* Jakubowski and Sitko-Dominik (2021) affirmed this teachers’ experience of a certain level of stress, anxiety, and depression during the pandemic.

Coping Strategies of Homeroom Advisers in Addressing the Challenges: Space for Resiliency and Reflection

Amidst the perceived challenges the homeroom advisers face, their strong commitment to the professional is manifested by how they devise their personal and professional coping strategies to situate themselves in the new process of homeroom advising. Three themes emerged from this: establishing a mindset, exploring collaboration, and diverting their attention.

Establishing mind-set. One of the challenges often experienced in managing a class is enforcing rules and policies, which are expected to be established by a homeroom adviser being the first implementer in the process. With the new platform, it cannot be assumed that students already know how to interact virtually (Walton, 2020). Homeroom advisers adhere to the concept of establishing a routine as very significant in the process. T7 claimed that *“setting things by order and routine among self and students religiously are the best means for me of getting things settled in this online learning.”* Mindset training establishes a classroom culture (Zeeb, Ostertag, & Renkl, 2020). As T2 expressed, *“My coping strategies would really have something to do with the proper mindset. Probably since I was trained to work under pressure. It gave the advantage. And I am a very prayerful person. Whenever I think that things are not doing well, I talk to God. When I am frustrated, I use my energy to do things at home to divert my attention. I even ask my kids for a short drive just to have a break.”*

Exploring collaboration. Homeroom advisers

alone cannot sufficiently provide the needed guidance and assistance by the students. The limitation of face-to-face encounters is a barrier to reaching out to students. Thus, asking for aid in regulating student behavior, most especially during the pandemic, is crucial here. Washington (2016), Oates (2017), and Newchurch (2017) affirmed a good relationship between parents and teachers to support student engagement and achievement.

Behavior management serves as the main key in every teacher’s instruction. Students’ expected behavior must be properly laid down and managed for any strategy to become effective. In this regard, collaborating with parents makes an effective strategy to support proper behavior. As cited by Hedenbro and Rydelius (2019), parents have a great deal of influence on their children’s development. Collaborating with parents increases a child’s achievement and aids teachers’ improvement and reflective practices. Such collaboration, when effectively done, lessens the unnecessary burden of homeroom advisers. T9 affirmed, *“Accommodation and collaboration with parents were helpful. But at first, it was stressful. But I told them we are all struggling and coping. Them and their children. We need to help each other during this time.”* Advisers also find this collaboration as a means of soliciting feedback which can serve as an avenue for home-school collaboration. As T5 shared, *“I find it essential, making immediate and frequent feedback as well as maintaining a good rapport with parents as it truly serves the purpose of a more meaningful home-school collaboration.”*

Likewise, collaboration with colleagues remained a source of strength, as mentioned by T4 *“...a reiteration of the best practice per grade level, a team effort, and a collaborative sharing. It will help us a lot next school year. We need to help each other to become productive as class advisers. It will be great learning for all of us.”*

Diverting attention. This pandemic has abruptly changed and interrupted everyone’s routine to differing degrees. The academic field was not spared from the effects of this change. For instance, to perform their task effectively and thoroughly, homeroom advisers must have a stable and good blend of thoughts and emotions. However, they are just humans and vulnerable. Participants narrated diverting their attention aside from their transactional duties into some spiritual and personal engagements to cope with the challenges.

Heightened spirituality remains a strong attention-diverting force against weakening factors like saturation and burnout; as T7 stated, *“Prayers helped*

me a lot. I seek God's daily guidance so I would get through the tasks of the day." Frederick, Dunbar, and Thai (2018) confirmed this as one of the ways to prevent and cope effectively. Along with the spiritual aspect is family, being considered another teacher's source of motivation. For instance, T10 shared, *"Having a son who would usually join me in doing my duties as a classroom adviser lightens the moment. I just have to be on the lookout to warn him not to give comments whenever no one gives a response to what I am asking. This is one good part of a pandemic where I can perform my duties and at the same time be with my kid practically the whole part of the day."*

Effective Practices of Homeroom Advisers in Online Advising: Space for Creativity

The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated teachers to devise measures to adopt different practices to adapt to the present scenario's needs (Schultz & Demers, 2020) to ensure effective online learning facilitation. Homeroom advisers identified behavior modeling, utilizing multiple communication platforms, establishing routines, using motivational strategies, and monitoring students' cooperation as effective practices.

Modeling. To cope with the challenges of online advising, some participants employed modeling as one of their practices. For them, the reflection of good behavior must be manifested first by the advisers so students can see and imitate it. Homeroom advisers emphasized that they become models to their advisees when they show professionalism when dealing with students and parents, even online. Teachers' modeling of discipline dramatically impacts students' character formation and achievement. T6 exemplified, *"I made sure to enter the session early in order to motivate my students to do the same."*

Utilizing multiple communication platforms. Duraku and Hoxha (2020) and Lansangan (2020) emphasized that multiple means to communicate with students and parents about school issues as one of the factors influencing the attitudes of teachers and learners toward online learning. Five participants (T2, T4, T6, T8, and T10) stress the importance of a group chat in disseminating information to the students and parents. T2 elucidated, *"When I started with the very first assembly to them, I gave out all the situations and realities. I always communicate to them all the things that they need to know about the school. I utilize the group chat. It is just a matter of consistency in communicating with them."* Some advisers shared that

even parents were helping them with communication. As shared by one participant, *"My parent representative is very cooperative. The existence of a parent group chat compensates for the absence of physical collaboration with parents. Constant communication with parents, when the need arises, strengthened teacher-parent partnership"* (T5).

Establishing routines. Establishing and maintaining routines reduces the complexity of any learning environment (Haras, Calhoun, Olson, & Rosenberg, 2021). For the homeroom advisers, the mechanism of structuring routines helped the students demonstrate proper online behavior; and set proactive measure to avoid confusion on the part of the learners. Practices are employed in giving instructions, checking attendance, releasing the weekly instructional schedule, and distributing letters to parents. T7 confirmed, *"Setting things by order and routine among self and students religiously, are the best means for me to get things settled in this online learning."*

Using variety of motivational strategies. Bovermann and Bastiaens (2020) asserted that motivation is a crucial factor for students learning behavior in the online set-up since lack of it is linked to contextual issues in the comfort of the learners' home (Yates, Starkey, Egerton, & Flueggen, 2021). The participants are cognizant of the role of motivation in online learning. They used varied strategies to sustain learning like using inspirational quotes and taglines, playing music, or the daily news for the students to be motivated or inspired. T1 shared, *"I am actually happy because they say that the motivational quotes serve as a guide for them each day."* T2 plays music to inspire the students asserting that *"Songs that are thematic can be a source of inspiration to students. I do that almost every day, especially during the HRO module...."* Empathy, concern, and love for one's advisees also play an important role in motivating them. T1 explained, *"If you are a homeroom adviser, you are not just their subject teacher, but they should also feel that you also show concern to them."*

Empowering class leaders. The homeroom advisers recognize the help or assistance of the class officers in the sections they are handling. Sharing responsibility with the class officers is also a good practice, especially if they know their duties and responsibilities. This mechanism helped homeroom advisers to know their students well to establish rapport and foster effective collaboration in dealing with class-related plans and issues. T1 elucidated, *"They help me*

a lot since they personally know their classmates. It actually helped that they were also classmates in the last school year. That is why I can easily establish rapport with them”.

Mechanism for monitoring students’ cooperation.

When students complete learning activities, do performance tasks online, answer assessments, and comply with other requirements in the comfort of their own homes, the mechanism of monitoring is important. This brought various challenges to teachers and parents in terms of ensuring whether the required tasks were being done and submitted by the students. Therefore, the homeroom adviser must devise an effective mechanism to address this concern. T1 shared, *“I designated my PRO (Public Relations Officer) to give reminders on the tasks and assignments to be done. Actually, we have a daily update done by the PRO for our class reminders. Because of this practice, there are fewer students who are not able to submit outputs”.* The use of monitoring sheets is proven as an effective mechanism for following up and updating the students. T4 shared, *“I also use GSuite (GoogleSheets, GoogleDocs) for monitoring during HRO. I present it during HRO, especially during the due date. I ask my students to compute their own law-abiding grade and attendance and punctuality grade...”*

Homeroom Advisers' Perceived Professional Learning Needs: Space for Growth in Improving the Quality of Online Advising

Participants perceived professional development to be relevant in their growth as class advisers. Clausen, Bunte, and Robertson (2020) and Hartshorne, Baumgartner, Kaplan-Rakowski, Mouza, and Ferdig (2020) described that as teachers move beyond the survival phase of this new platform of teaching and learning, professional development can help teachers transition to a thriving phase that will conform to the demands and expectations of the new space of instructional delivery. Two categories emerged from this theme, practices for institutional improvement and critical areas of concern for professional learning.

Institutional improvement. Participants raised the need for creative means of collaboration among colleagues, such as sharing best practices and conduct of regular meetings and group discussions. T4 affirmed, *“...reiteration of the best practices per grade level, a team effort, and a collaborative sharing. It will help us a lot next school year. We need to help each other to become productive as class advisers. It will be a great learning experience for all of us.”* The provision of

mentoring was also perceived to be helpful. A personalized way of mentoring was suggested by T2, *“For me, if there is a possibility to give ways on how to empower the advisers. Can there be a possibility to have a strategy or scheme to mentor the class advisers? A more personal approach to mentoring. Have needs analysis then provide professional development.”* Communication was also deemed significant by the participants pointing out the need for efficient information dissemination. T5 had a query, *“If possible, a more friendly mechanism for providing details of the information that the school wishes to disseminate among parents must be provided. It helps lessen the unnecessary concerns of a class adviser addressing some details of things requested by parents where there is one place to access all essential information they want.”* Clausen, Bunte, and Robertson (2020) supports the idea that using technology communication tools can create bridges among stakeholders and engage families about their needs which will further help teachers develop strategies for students’ support mechanisms during remote learning.

Professional learning. Some aspects given premium priority by homeroom advisers were the introduction of strategies for becoming effective online advisers, stress management, and protocols on online privacy and ethics. For T3, *“Class advisers, in particular, must be provided with relevant talks or online seminars which focus on several techniques or strategies on how they could best handle their students.”* The need for information about mental health management was also raised by T1 emphasizing stress management as essential: *“We can also have a webinar on stress management for teachers. We are still able to help teachers cope with stress through this.”* Finally, the opportunity for the orientation on online privacy and ethics matters. Participants urged the need for this to be introduced to class advisers, which can help them manage their classes in the online environment.

In an intent to capture the dynamics of the homeroom advisers to the meaning that they ascribe to their experiences in the online platform during the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings from this phenomenological study concluded that becoming a homeroom adviser in the new normal involves situating themselves into these thriving spaces which redirect their personal and professional identity as advisers in the pursuit of resilient and undistruptive teaching and learning. This further defines homeroom advisers’ primary concerns amidst the difficult circumstances, and

that is placing learners as the topmost priority in whatever learning platforms.

Five spaces sum up these experiences illuminating the stories of how they thrive in the online platform of homeroom advising. These spaces enable them to perform their duties and migrate the usual practices they do in the face-to-face classroom. First, their positive and negative perceptions became a space for new opportunities. Second, their perceived challenges with technology, handling students, dealing with parents, and personal problems are attributed to the space for flexibility. Third, their exploration of effective practices in the class net management provided a space for teachers' creativity. Fourth, their coping strategies in dealing with the demands of the context manifested a space for their reflective way of teaching personally and professionally. Lastly, their perceived need for professional development and support offers room to improve the quality of their current practice.

From the narration shared by the participants, the core virtues of competence, commitment, and compassion are the driving forces that enabled them to work in these spaces amidst the perceived challenges. Competence in becoming effective and flexible advisers; commitment to the teaching profession; and compassion for the needs of the young learners. While this work documented the lived experiences of homeroom advisers, their perceptions, challenges, coping strategies, and practices in the online platform, it is important to consider that these experiences depend on the participants' context. It cannot be, therefore, generalized as accurate to all homeroom advisers employing the same mode of instructional delivery. In addition, the entire inquiry did not attempt to revisit existing policies and mandates of the research locale, and the shared stories were confined to the personal point of view of the participants.

Suggestions

In light of the findings of this phenomenological inquiry, the following points for future research are therefore recommended:

1. Extend the diversity of the participants by accounting for the differences in the lived experiences of homeroom advisers who are handling different levels of education, such as elementary or Senior High School;

2. For policy-related opportunities:

- 2.1 develop a professional development program that takes into consideration the welfare and

well-being of homeroom advisers vis-a-vis the emerging lived experiences in the current set-up of online instruction;

- 2.2 review the existing job descriptions of the homeroom advisers in the face-to-face platform and highlight its counterpart in flexible learning; and

- 2.3 evaluate the introduced practices concerning the roles and responsibilities of homeroom advisers.

References

- An, Y., Kaplan-Rakowski, R., Yang, J., Conan, J., Kinard, W., & Daugherty, L. (2021). Examining K-12 Teachers' Feelings, Experiences, and Perspectives Regarding Online Teaching During the Early Stage of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 69(5), 2589-2613.
- Belgica, C. C., Calugan, J. A., Dumo, J. U., & Simber, L. A. (2020). Online Distance Learning: Thematic Study on the Challenges Faced by Educare College Inc. Primary Pupils. *3rd International Conference on Advanced Research in Education, Teaching, and Learning*. Retrieved from <https://www.dpublication.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/30-10340.pdf>
- Bovermann, K., & Bastiaens, T. J. (2020). Towards a Motivational Design? Connecting Gamification User Types and Online Learning Activities. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 15(1), 1-18.
- Chiu, T. K. (2021). Applying the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to Explain Student Engagement in Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 1-17.
- Clausen, J. M., Bunte, B., & Robertson, E. T. (2020). Professional Development to Improve Communication and Reduce the Homework Gap in Grades 7-12 during COVID-19 Transition to Remote Learning. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 443-451.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. Retrieved from <https://stephenbarkley.com/2017/04/17/qualitative-inquiry-research-design-john-creswell-cheryl-poth/>
- Duraku, Z. H., & Hoxha, L. (2020). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Education and the Well-being of Teachers, Parents, and Students: Challenges Related to Remote (online) Learning and Opportunities for Advancing the Quality of Education*. Manuscript submitted for publication]. Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. Retrieved from <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8268-3962>

- Farooq, F., Rathore, F. A., & Mansoor, S. N. (2020). Challenges of Online Medical Education in Pakistan During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan*, 30(6), 67–69.
- Frederick, T. V., Dunbar, S., & Thai, Y. (2018). Burnout in Christian Perspective. *Pastoral Psychology*, 67(3), 267–276.
- Haras, C., Calhoun, A., Olson, A. P., & Rosenberg, M. (2021). Mindful Medical Education Online. *Medical Science Educator*, 31(2), 863–872.
- Hartshorne, R., Baumgartner, E., Kaplan-Rakowski, R., Mouza, C., & Ferdig, R. E. (2020). Special Issue Editorial: Preservice and In-service Professional Development During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 137–147.
- Hedenbro, M., & Rydelius, P. A. (2019). Children's Abilities to Communicate with both Parents in Infancy were Related to their Social Competence at the age of 15. *Acta Paediatrica*, 108(1), 118–123.
- Jakubowski, T. D., & Sitko-Dominik, M. M. (2021). Teachers' Mental Health During the First Two Waves of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Poland. *PLOS ONE*, 16(9), e0257252.
- Jensen, L., Price, L., & Roxa, T. (2020). Seeing Through the Eyes of a Teacher: Differences in Perceptions of HE Teaching in Face-to-face and Digital Contexts. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(6), 1149–1159.
- Kedra, K., & Kaltsidis, C. (2020). Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on University Pedagogy: Students' experiences and Considerations. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 7(8).
- Keller, M. M., & Becker, E. S. (2020). Teachers' Emotions and Emotional Authenticity: Do they Matter to Students' Emotional Responses in the Classroom? *Teachers and Teaching*, 1–19.
- König, J., Jäger-Biela, D. J., & Glutsch, N. (2020). Adapting to online teaching during COVID-19 school closure: teacher education and teacher competence effects among early career teachers in Germany. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 608–622.
- Lansangan, R. V. (2020). Teaching Junior High School Chemistry During the COVID-19 Community Quarantine Season: Lessons, Challenges, And Opportunities. *KIMIKA*, 31(1), 20–37.
- Lansangan, R. V., & Gonzales, K. P. J. (2020). Science teachers' voices in the new normal teaching: A phenomenological study. *IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 2(3), 124–132.
- Lowenthal, P., Borup, J., West, R., & Archambault, L. (2020). Thinking beyond Zoom: Using Asynchronous video to maintain Connection and Engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 28(2), 383–391.
- Martin, F., Sun, T., & Westine, C. (2020). A systematic review of research on online teaching and learning from 2009 to 2018. *Computers & Education*, 159, 104009.
- Newchurch, A. C. (2017). *The impact of parental involvement on student success: School and family partnership from the perspective of parents and teachers*. Doctoral Dissertation. Kennesaw State University. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/view-content.cgi?article=1022&context=teachleaddoc_etd
- Nordlöf, C., Hallström, J., & Höst, G. E. (2019). Self-efficacy or context dependency?: Exploring teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards technology education. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 29(1), 123–141.
- Oates, T. (2017). *Building effective parental involvement in middle schools: The Parents' Perceptions*. Doctoral Dissertation. Concordia University – Portland. Retrieved from <https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations/41/>
- Putri, A. F., Andringrum, H., Rofiah, S. K., & Gunawan, I. (2019, December). Teacher function in class: A literature review. In *5th International Conference on Education and Technology (ICET 2019)*, 5–9. Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icet-19.2019.2>
- Schultz, R. B., & DeMers, M. N. (2020). Transitioning from emergency remote learning to deep online learning experiences in geography education. *Journal of Geography*, 119(5), 142–146.
- Shi, X. (2021). Can a non-core subject teacher serve as a homeroom teacher? Discussion on the dispute between core and non-core subject teacher as homeroom teacher. *Science Insights Education Frontiers* 8, 989–1000.
- Trust, T., & Whalen, J. (2021). K-12 teachers' experiences and challenges with using technology for Emergency Remote Teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Italian Journal of Educational Technology*, 29(2), 10–25.
- Walton, L. (2020). Establishing Routines for Remote Learning. Edutopia. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/establishing-routines-remote-learning>
- Washington, L. V. (2016). *The effects of parent involvement on student outcomes in a minority-serving charter high school*. Doctoral Dissertation. Walden University. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3730&context=dissertations>
- Yates, A., Starkey, L., Egerton, B., & Flueggen, F. (2021). High school students' experience of online learning during Covid-19: the influence of technology and pedagogy. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 30(1), 59–73.

- Yehezkel, O. (2020). Traditional Organizations in a VUCA World. *Advancement in Management*, 4–22. (in Hebrew).
- Zeeb, H., Ostertag, J., & Renkl, A. (2020). Towards a growth mindset culture in the classroom: implementation of a lesson-integrated mindset training. *Education Research International*, 2020.