

Innovations

Experiences of Students on the Resumption of Face-to-Face Classes

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Abstract: *This phenomenological study was conducted to determine the experiences of students in the resumption of face-to-face classes during the post-pandemic transition period. The investigation was anchored on the theories of wellness by Dunn, Smith's health and Dewey's learning experience. Using purposive sampling, thirteen (13) students from Northwest Samar State University participated in the study. Employing Moustakas' phenomenological qualitative research method, the following thematic findings emerged: (1) High Hopes for Normalcy, (2) Financial Burden, and (3) Improved Learning. The results revealed that students expressed high hopes for normalcy with the implementation of face-to-face classes despite experiencing financial burden, considering that most of their family's livelihoods were affected by the pandemic. Despite the various hindrances and difficulties encountered, students continued to strive hard since they believed that resumption of face-to-face classes would bring them improved learning opportunities. This study contributes valuable insights for educational institutions navigating post-pandemic transitions. It is recommended that schools take initiative in examining the different experiences of students in the resumption of face-to-face classes to guide them in overcoming problems encountered in this new educational landscape.*

Keywords: 1. Goal, 2. Change, 3. Future, 4. Effective, 5. Studies

I. Introduction

The resumption of face-to-face classes among students was critical, as this brought various reactions and challenges that affected their aspirations. With COVID-19 classified as no longer as deadly as it was during its height, resumption of face-to-face classes became imminent. The global pandemic had significantly disrupted educational systems worldwide, forcing educational institutions to rapidly transition to remote and online learning modalities with minimal preparation. This sudden shift exposed inherent inequalities in access to technology and learning resources, while simultaneously creating new pedagogical challenges for both educators and students.

Problems that commonly arose during online classes were poor or intermittent internet signal, lack of devices, and issues with system access, resulting in lack of

knowledge and skills among students. Many learners, particularly those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, found themselves unable to participate fully in virtual learning environments. The digital divide became starkly apparent as students without reliable internet connectivity or appropriate devices struggled to maintain academic progress. Additionally, the psychological toll of isolation and disrupted learning routines created further barriers to educational success.

Davis, Gough, and Taylor (2019) further stated that student barriers to online learning might include misinterpretation of expectations, time management, and interpersonal communication, while instructor barriers might be related to the identification of expectations, providing feedback, and interpersonal relations. The absence of direct, face-to-face interactions between teachers and students diminished opportunities for immediate clarification, nonverbal communication cues, and spontaneous classroom discussions that typically enhance understanding and knowledge retention. Furthermore, many students reported difficulties in maintaining focus and motivation in home environments not conducive to academic engagement.

Educational institutions worldwide recognized these limitations and began planning for safe returns to physical classrooms once pandemic conditions permitted. This transition, however, was not without its own set of challenges and considerations. Schools needed to implement appropriate health protocols, redesign physical spaces, and address accumulated learning gaps while supporting students and faculty through yet another significant educational adjustment. As such, it became imperative to understand students' experiences and help them make the necessary adjustments in achieving their expectations.

The transition back to traditional learning methods presented both opportunities and challenges that needed careful navigation. Panela (2022a) highlighted how the pandemic forced teachers to look for alternative ways of teaching and assessing students, creating ripple effects across different aspects of educational practices. This adaptation process required significant professional development and emotional resilience from educators who were simultaneously managing their own pandemic-related challenges. The technological competencies developed during remote instruction needed to be integrated with traditional pedagogical approaches to create more robust and flexible educational methodologies.

Similarly, Panela (2022b) emphasized that the sudden changes caused by COVID-19 required educational stakeholders to explore innovative approaches to conduct effective teaching and learning processes. The pandemic accelerated certain educational trends, such as blended learning and technology integration, while also reinforcing the irreplaceable value of in-person learning communities. Educational

leaders needed to balance competing priorities related to academic excellence, health safety, and social-emotional wellbeing as they planned for post-pandemic educational recovery.

Understanding how students navigated this transition offered valuable insights into developing appropriate support mechanisms for the educational community. Student perspectives were particularly crucial, as they were the primary recipients of educational services and experienced firsthand the impacts of both online learning and the return to face-to-face instruction. Their voices needed to be centered in discussions about educational recovery and future planning to ensure that interventions addressed their actual needs rather than perceived ones. This study therefore sought to capture the lived experiences of students during this pivotal educational transition to inform more responsive and effective educational practices.

II. Literature Review

The transition from online learning back to face-to-face instruction represented a critical juncture in educational systems worldwide. This section examines relevant literature addressing student and teacher experiences during this transition period, highlighting various dimensions of the resumption process across different countries and educational contexts.

In India, comprehensive research on the resumption of offline classes demonstrated significant student preference for returning to traditional educational environments. Chitra et al. (2021) conducted a large-scale survey using the College Reopening Survey Questionnaire to assess student attitudes toward face-to-face instruction resumption. Their findings revealed that 80% of students favored returning to physical classrooms, a preference that remained consistent across demographic variables including gender, year of education, and academic discipline. The study employed rigorous methodological standards, achieving a reliability and validity score of 0.803, which is classified as statistically excellent in educational research. This strong methodological foundation lends considerable weight to their conclusion that students had overwhelmingly favorable perceptions regarding the resumption of offline or face-to-face classes.

The researchers identified several factors contributing to this preference, including improved learning outcomes, enhanced peer interactions, better access to educational resources, and reduced technological barriers. Notably, students reported that face-to-face instruction provided more opportunities for clarification, immediate feedback, and collaborative learning experiences that were difficult to replicate in virtual environments. The consistency of this preference across different student populations suggested that the desire to return to traditional educational settings transcended individual differences and represented a broader recognition of the

inherent benefits of in-person learning interactions.

The impact of educational transitions extended beyond students to include teaching professionals, as exemplified in research from Tunisia. Hawani et al. (2020) examined the professional experiences of secondary school teachers during the pandemic-related disruptions and subsequent resumption of face-to-face instruction. Their study highlighted the extensive scale of educational disruption in Tunisia, where the COVID-19 crisis forced authorities to suspend classes, affecting more than 2 million pupils and approximately 90,000 teachers who were effectively deprived of their normal educational environments and practices.

After three months of confinement, on May 27, 2020, Tunisian authorities made the significant decision to resume classes. This transition period created a natural experiment for examining how teachers adapted to returning to physical classrooms after extended periods of remote instruction. The researchers found that teacher satisfaction during this period was influenced by multiple factors, including administrative support, availability of protective equipment, revised curriculum expectations, and opportunities for professional development. Teachers reported experiencing both relief at returning to familiar pedagogical practices and anxiety regarding health concerns and addressing learning losses experienced during the remote instruction period.

The study emphasized the importance of institutional support systems in facilitating successful transitions back to face-to-face instruction. Teachers who received adequate preparation, clear safety protocols, and flexibility in addressing curriculum backlogs reported higher levels of professional satisfaction and efficacy. These findings suggested that the quality of administrative planning and support during educational transitions significantly impacted teacher experiences and, by extension, the learning environments they created for returning students.

A recurring theme in pandemic-era educational research concerned the limitations of online learning environments, particularly regarding interpersonal dimensions of the educational experience. Azmat et al. (2022) conducted an in-depth investigation into this aspect, identifying social interaction deficits as a critical barrier to effective learning in virtual settings. While online learning became necessarily popular with students worldwide due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and helped maintain educational continuity on a global scale, it simultaneously imposed significant challenges that undermined optimal learning conditions.

The researchers specifically identified social interaction issues as one of the primary barriers preventing learners from becoming successful online learners. In their framework, social interaction encompassed multiple dimensions of

communication between students and teachers, including verbal exchanges, nonverbal cues, emotional connection, collaborative activities, and community building. The absence or diminishment of these interaction opportunities in online settings created barriers to student engagement, motivation, and conceptual understanding.

The study documented how students reported feelings of isolation, decreased motivation, and reduced academic accountability in online learning environments. Many expressed difficulties in developing meaningful relationships with instructors and peers, which negatively impacted their willingness to participate actively, seek clarification, or engage in collaborative learning activities. These findings provided important context for understanding why many students eagerly anticipated returning to face-to-face instruction, where social interaction opportunities could be more naturally integrated into the learning experience.

Research examining teacher experiences during pandemic-related educational transitions provided additional context for understanding student experiences during this period. Panela (2022a) conducted an action research study titled "Teachers Tackling the Trials of Techno dependence (T4): How College Teachers Find Balance During Pandemic Transition" that identified how teachers experienced significant difficulties in adapting to new teaching modalities during the pandemic transition, which directly impacted student learning experiences. The study explored various strategies for alleviating the effects of technology dependence among college teachers who were fully utilizing electronic media platforms in teaching.

Panela's research employed experimental interventions including online time reduction, forming faculty support groups, and committing to physical modules. The findings demonstrated that these adaptive strategies significantly improved teacher performance and wellbeing, suggesting that teacher adaption directly influenced the quality of educational experiences they could provide to students. The study highlighted the interconnected nature of teacher and student experiences during educational transitions, emphasizing that supporting teacher adaptation was an essential component of creating optimal learning environments during periods of significant educational change.

Additionally, Panela (2022b) conducted a phenomenological study titled "Nerfing and Navigating in the New Normal (N4): The Lived Experiences of Teachers Conducting Action Research During the Covid-19 Pandemic" that highlighted the significant challenges teachers faced in conducting action research during the pandemic period, further affecting their teaching effectiveness and educational delivery. The research explored how the pandemic created unprecedented obstacles to traditional research methods, requiring innovative adaptations to maintain academic

inquiry and evidence-based practice.

The study identified three major themes in teacher experiences: "Warrants of Sudden Changes," "Watering Down the Effects," and "Working and Thriving." These themes reflected the progression from initial disruption through adaptation to eventual innovation in research practices. Teachers reported difficulties in data collection, participant engagement, and implementation of interventions when traditional face-to-face methods were unavailable. These challenges not only affected research activities themselves but also limited the ability of educators to systematically improve their instructional practices based on evidence.

These research limitations had cascading effects on educational quality, as teachers had fewer opportunities to engage in the systematic inquiry that typically informs pedagogical improvement. This context helps explain why the return to face-to-face instruction was significant not only for direct teaching activities but also for restoring the conditions necessary for educational research and evidence-based practice development.

The literature surrounding educational transitions during the pandemic can be understood through several theoretical frameworks. Dunn's wellness theory provides a holistic perspective that encompasses physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions of wellbeing, all of which were affected by pandemic disruptions and subsequent transitions. Smith's health theory emphasizes the interrelationship between environmental factors and individual health outcomes, offering insights into how educational environments influence student wellbeing and learning capacity.

Dewey's learning experience theory is particularly relevant, as it emphasizes the importance of meaningful interactions and real-world contexts in facilitating effective learning. Dewey argued that genuine education comes through experience, and that the quality of educational experiences depends on both their immediate impact and their influence on future experiences. This theoretical lens helps explain why many students found online learning environments insufficient and eagerly anticipated returning to the richer experiential context of face-to-face instruction.

Collectively, these theoretical frameworks and empirical studies create a foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of educational transitions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. They highlight the multifaceted nature of these experiences, encompassing academic, social, emotional, and practical dimensions that all influence student perceptions and outcomes during such transitions.

III. Objectives

The main objective of this study was to understand the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of students upon the resumption of face-to-face classes. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What was the initial reaction of the students to the resumption of face-to-face classes?
2. What were the challenges faced by the students in the resumption of face-to-face classes?
3. What were the aspirations of the students regarding the resumption of face-to-face classes?

IV. Methodology

a. Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research approach using phenomenological method as described by Creswell (2014). This methodology involved collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text from interviews) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences related to students' perceptions during the resumption of face-to-face classes. Phenomenological research specifically seeks to describe the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This approach was selected because it allowed for an in-depth exploration of students' reactions, challenges, and aspirations regarding the return to traditional classroom settings.

b. Participants and Sampling

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher chose participants based on characteristics needed in the sample. As Adler and Clark (2008) explain, in purposive sampling, the researcher selects sampling units based on their judgment of what units will facilitate an investigation.

For this study, thirteen (13) individuals participated who met the following criteria: 1) currently enrolled students; 2) affected by the resumption of face-to-face classes; 3) students of Northwest Samar State University; and 4) willing to participate in the study.

c. Data Collection

In gathering data, this study used semi-structured interviews, which provided a blend of structured and unstructured approaches where some questions were predetermined while others emerged during the conversation. Semi-structured interviews in qualitative research allowed participants to share their views, experiences, and perspectives openly while ensuring that specific topics were covered. The interview content was validated by experts in the field.

The researcher provided participants with an agreement that included informed consent, confidentiality assurances, time and place commitments, permission to record, and an explanation of research ethical principles. For data storing methods, the researcher used note-taking and dialogic form interviews to capture detailed responses.

d. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this phenomenological research followed the rigorous process outlined by Moustakas (1990), which provided a systematic framework for deriving meaning from participants' lived experiences. The analysis began with gaining a sense of the whole, which involved reading the entire description several times in a contemplative manner to grasp the general sense of participants' statements and experiences. This holistic understanding created the necessary foundation for subsequent analytical steps. After establishing this comprehensive perspective, the researcher returned to the beginning of each transcript and carefully read through the text once more, deliberately delineating each transition in meaning to identify significant units within participants' narratives. These meaning units represented coherent segments of experience that carried distinct significance in relation to the phenomenon being studied. The third analytical phase involved the transformation of subjects' everyday expressions into psychological language, a process that required careful interpretation to preserve the authentic meaning while articulating it in more conceptually precise terms. Following this transformation, the researcher synthesized the transformed meaning units into a consistent statement that captured the structure of the experience, integrating the various elements into a coherent whole that revealed the essential patterns and relationships. The final analytical step consisted of a comprehensive synthesis of all statements regarding each participant's experience into one consistent statement that described and captured the essence of the experience being studied. This systematic and sequentially rigorous approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and allowed for the identification of meaningful themes and patterns while maintaining the integrity of their lived experiences.

e. Research Reflexivity

The researcher acknowledged having different perspectives compared to other researchers. As a teacher, the researcher understood the plight of students, especially upon the resumption of face-to-face classes. It was within the understanding of the researcher that this study might lead to assumptions and beliefs that were equally valid for situations under study. The researcher maintained awareness of potential biases and worked to ensure that data collection and analysis remained as objective as possible.

f. Ethical Considerations

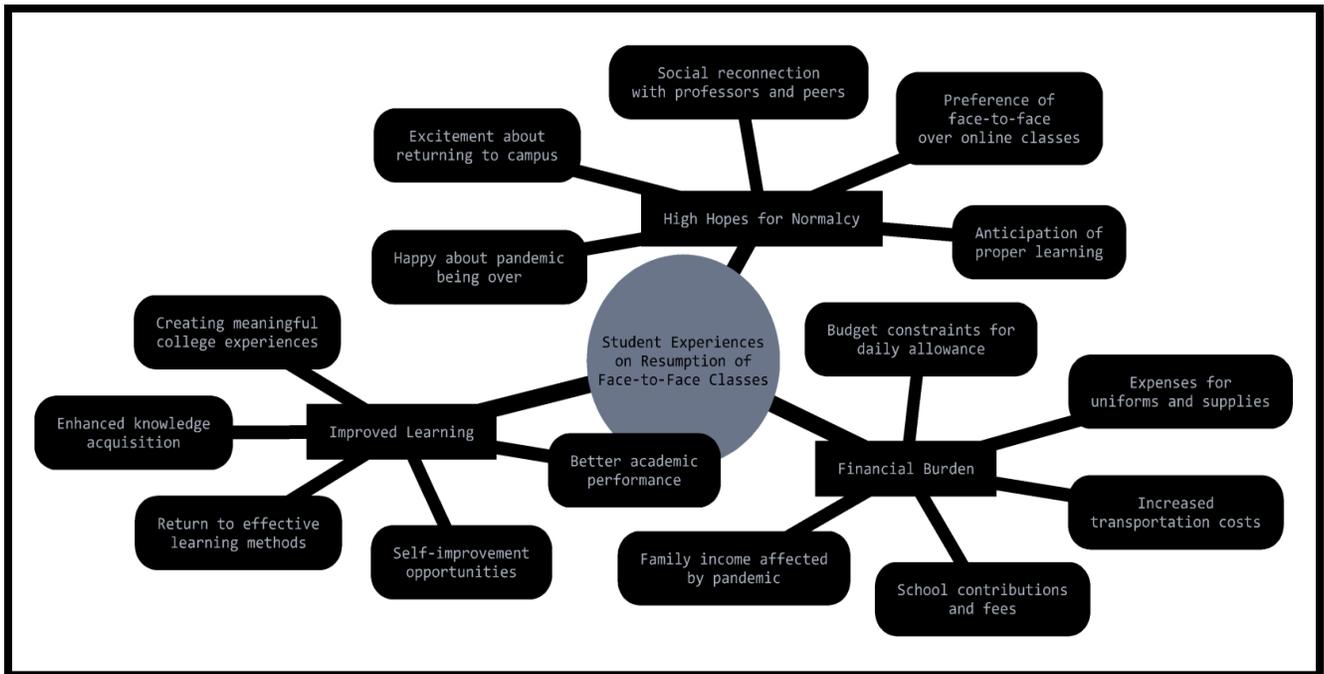
This study focused on the experiences of students upon resumption of face-to-face classes, their initial reactions, challenges, and aspirations. To strictly adhere to ethical considerations, the researcher observed the following: voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, minimization of potential for harm, and appropriate communication of results.

V. Results and Discussion

The analysis of data revealed important information on the experiences of students upon the resumption of face-to-face classes. From the detailed analysis using Moustakas' phenomenological approach, three primary themes emerged: (1) High Hopes for Normalcy, (2) Financial Burden, and (3) Improved Learning. These themes suggested that although students were among the sectors badly affected by the pandemic, they maintained high hopes of regaining normal life, and despite difficulties, they continued to aspire to improved learning through face-to-face classes. Each theme represents a distinct dimension of student experiences during this critical transition period and offers insights into both the challenges and opportunities presented by the return to traditional educational settings.

From data analysis, three major themes emerged: (1) Arduous Work; (2) Being Adaptable; and (3) Improving Content & Knowledge. These themes suggest that teachers who were assigned to teach mathematics despite it being outside their field of specialization exerted their best efforts to meet students' needs and impart knowledge, believing that their passion and willpower were sufficient to teach even the most challenging and feared subject.

Figure 1.
The matic Analysis Mind Map of Students' Experiences



High Hopes for Normalcy

An almost unified reaction constituted the first theme. Despite all the difficulties faced and the seemingly unending problems brought by the pandemic, students remained hopeful about returning to their normal life. Most participants showed eagerness to return to classrooms and considered the government mandate for face-to-face classes as an opportunity to regain some of their normal activities as students, as illustrated by the following statements:

- [1] "Happy because at last the pandemic is over and it's back to normal again, the classes will be back to what it was before like all students can go to school and do proper learning and can interact properly."
- [2] "It is good to be back and lots of memories of studying came flashing. Excitement becomes one of my initial reactions when I knew about the resumption of classes."
- [3] "I think it was good. We finally socialize and we are able to meet our professors."
- [4] "Happy because at last the pandemic is over and it's back to normal again, the classes will be back to what it was before like all students can go to school and do proper learning and can interact properly."
- [5] "It's better than taking online classes. We can learn more easily and we can enjoy our last year as college student."

This expressed desire for normalcy reflects the profound psychological impact that pandemic disruptions had on students' sense of educational stability and social

connection. The consistent emphasis on terms like "happy," "excitement," and "good" in participant responses suggests that the emotional dimension of returning to face-to-face instruction was particularly significant. Students appeared to associate physical classrooms with a sense of normalcy that extended beyond academic considerations to encompass broader aspects of their identities as learners and social beings.

The references to social interaction in multiple responses ("interact properly," "finally socialize," "meet our professors") highlight the centrality of interpersonal connection to students' educational experiences. This finding aligns with Dewey's learning experience theory, which emphasizes the social foundations of meaningful learning. As Dewey argued, education is fundamentally a social process, and the quality of educational experiences is significantly determined by the quality of social interactions they facilitate. The pandemic disrupted these essential social dimensions of education, creating a void that many students eagerly anticipated filling upon returning to face-to-face instruction.

This theme aligns with findings from Chitra et al. (2021), who reported that 80% of students in India favored the resumption of offline classes. The remarkable consistency of this preference across cultural contexts suggests that it represents a fundamental rather than culturally-specific aspect of student experience. The emotional aspects of returning to campus environments and face-to-face interactions appeared to be significant motivating factors for students across different educational systems and national contexts.

Panela (2022a) similarly found that teachers also sought balance and normalcy during the pandemic transition, highlighting a shared desire across educational stakeholders to return to familiar teaching and learning environments. This alignment between student and teacher preferences created potential for positive synergy during the resumption of face-to-face instruction, as both groups approached the transition with similar hopes and expectations. However, this mutual desire for normalcy also created the risk of overlooking important lessons and innovations from the remote learning period that might have enriched traditional educational approaches.

When viewed through the lens of Dunn's wellness theory, students' high hopes for normalcy can be understood as reflecting multiple dimensions of wellbeing. The social dimension is clearly evident in their desire for interpersonal connection, while the emotional dimension appears in their expressions of happiness and excitement. The intellectual dimension emerges in their anticipation of "proper learning," and even the physical dimension is implied in their return to campus environments. This multi-dimensional quality underscores the holistic impact of educational transitions on student wellbeing and the importance of addressing all these dimensions in supporting successful transitions.

Financial Burden

A burdensome situation reflected in the second theme. Students commonly cited financial problems upon the resumption of face-to-face classes. In general, residents among different communities experienced financial difficulties due to the effects of the pandemic on their economic activities, affecting family livelihood and income. This challenge was illustrated by the following statements:

- [1] "Commuting, the budget of everyday fare."
- [2] "The uniforms and the fare."
- [3] "The challenges I face in the resumption of face-to-face classes is about school contribution, budgeting of allowance, and travel expense."
- [4] "It's just that the fare now was so high."
- [5] "Fare and other expenses."

The predominant financial concern expressed by participants related to transportation costs, with four of the five quoted responses explicitly mentioning "fare" or commuting expenses. This consistent emphasis suggests that transportation represented a particularly significant financial burden for students returning to face-to-face instruction. Several factors likely contributed to this challenge, including potential reductions in family income during the pandemic, inflation and rising fuel costs, and the financial adjustments required after an extended period without regular commuting expenses.

The financial dimension of educational transitions has received relatively less attention in pandemic-era educational research compared to pedagogical and technological aspects. However, this study's findings suggest that economic considerations represented a significant barrier to successful educational re-entry for many students. Through the lens of Smith's health theory, these financial challenges can be understood as environmental factors that directly influenced students' capacity to engage fully with educational opportunities. Financial stress potentially limited students' cognitive resources, created attendance barriers, and introduced additional anxieties that competed with academic focus.

These financial concerns echo the broader economic impacts of the pandemic identified by Panela (2022b), who noted that many educational stakeholders faced resource limitations and economic challenges during the pandemic. The transition back to face-to-face learning introduced additional financial burdens for students already impacted by pandemic-related economic difficulties. This finding suggests that educational institutions needed to consider economic support mechanisms alongside pedagogical and health-related interventions when planning for successful transitions back to face-to-face instruction.

The financial burden theme also intersects with equity considerations in educational access and success. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds likely experienced these financial challenges more acutely, potentially creating or exacerbating educational disadvantages. While all students may have shared high hopes for normalcy and aspirations for improved learning, their ability to fully realize these hopes and aspirations was potentially constrained by economic factors beyond their control. This reality highlights the importance of institutional support systems that address financial barriers to educational participation during transitional periods.

Interestingly, while expenses related to technological resources (devices, internet connectivity) were frequently cited as barriers to online learning during the pandemic, the financial concerns associated with returning to face-to-face instruction centered more on traditional expenses like transportation and uniforms. This shift in the nature of financial barriers across different educational modalities suggests that educational institutions need flexible and adaptive approaches to economic support that respond to the specific challenges associated with different instructional contexts.

Improved Learning

With the resumption of face-to-face classes and gradually returning to normal classroom activities, students became more positive and began anticipating more effective and increased output from their school activities. They looked forward to acquiring improved learning, as illustrated by the following statements:

- [1] "To learn more like before the pandemic and online classes started."
- [2] "To learn more and make memorable moments and experience in our college life."
- [3] "To boost academic performance."
- [4] "To be able to learn more and enhance our knowledge in all academics."
- [5] "To get myself back on track for self-improvement."

This theme reflects students' perceptions that face-to-face instruction offered superior learning opportunities compared to online alternatives. The repeated emphasis on learning "more" (appearing in four of the five responses) suggests that students perceived quantitative differences in knowledge acquisition between online and face-to-face modalities. This perception could reflect actual differences in learning effectiveness or might represent students' subjective experiences of engagement and educational satisfaction across different instructional contexts.

The aspiration for improved learning corresponds with findings from Azmat et al. (2022), who identified lack of social interaction as a significant barrier to effective online learning. Students clearly recognized the educational benefits of face-to-face instruction and anticipated that resuming traditional classes would enhance their learning experiences and academic performance. This recognition aligns with

substantial educational research demonstrating the importance of social presence, immediate feedback, and collaborative learning opportunities in facilitating deep understanding and knowledge retention.

Panela (2022a) similarly observed that teachers recognized the importance of establishing new balances and approaches to optimize learning in changing educational environments. The alignment between student aspirations and teacher adaptations suggests potential for positive educational outcomes as face-to-face learning resumed. When both educational providers and recipients share similar goals and expectations, the likelihood of creating effective learning environments increases substantially.

Students' expressions of learning aspirations extended beyond narrow academic definitions to encompass broader developmental goals. References to "memorable moments," "college life," "academic performance," and "self-improvement" suggest that students conceptualized learning in holistic terms that integrated academic, social, and personal growth dimensions. This holistic perspective resonates with Dewey's learning experience theory, which emphasizes the continuous interaction between learners and their environments in shaping both immediate experiences and future growth potential.

The improved learning theme also revealed students' sense of educational agency and self-efficacy. Rather than passively accepting educational circumstances, participants actively anticipated opportunities to "boost," "enhance," and get "back on track" with their learning. This proactive orientation suggested that despite pandemic disruptions, many students maintained motivation and commitment to their educational goals. Educational institutions could potentially leverage this motivation by creating structured opportunities for students to reflect on their learning goals and develop specific strategies for achieving them during the transition back to face-to-face instruction.

The three identified themes—High Hopes for Normalcy, Financial Burden, and Improved Learning—operated in dynamic interaction rather than as isolated factors. Students' aspirations for improved learning were integrally connected to their hopes for normalcy, as they associated traditional educational environments with enhanced learning opportunities. However, financial burdens potentially constrained their ability to fully participate in these environments and realize their learning aspirations. This complex interplay of psychological, economic, and educational factors highlights the multidimensional nature of educational transitions and the need for similarly multidimensional support approaches.

Theoretical Integration and Implications

The three emergent themes can be meaningfully integrated through the theoretical frameworks that guided this study. Dunn's wellness theory provides a holistic perspective for understanding how students' experiences encompassed multiple dimensions of wellbeing. The high hopes for normalcy theme primarily reflected social and emotional wellness dimensions, while improved learning aspirations connected to intellectual wellness. Financial burdens, meanwhile, impacted the occupational and environmental dimensions of wellness by creating additional stressors and potential barriers to educational participation.

Smith's health theory, with its emphasis on environmental influences on health outcomes, offers particular insight into the financial burden theme. Economic challenges represented environmental factors that directly impacted students' capacity to engage fully with educational opportunities. This theoretical lens highlights the importance of addressing structural and environmental barriers alongside individual motivational factors when supporting educational transitions.

Dewey's learning experience theory provides perhaps the most comprehensive framework for integrating the study's findings. Dewey emphasized that the quality of educational experiences depends on both their immediate subjective impact and their influence on future growth and learning. The high hopes for normalcy theme reflected students' anticipation of more satisfying immediate experiences, while improved learning aspirations connected to long-term growth potential. Financial burdens, meanwhile, represented constraints on the continuity of experience that Dewey identified as essential for meaningful education.

These theoretical integrations suggest several important implications for educational practice. First, institutions should recognize and address the multidimensional nature of educational transitions, considering psychological, social, economic, and academic factors in planning support interventions. Second, particular attention should be given to economic barriers that may prevent students from fully participating in face-to-face learning opportunities despite their motivation and aspirations. Finally, the alignment between student hopes for normalcy and improved learning suggests that emphasizing the distinctive benefits of face-to-face instruction may help motivate student engagement during transitional periods.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study described the experiences of students upon the resumption of face-to-face classes after the height of the pandemic. The findings suggested that despite various problems encountered upon returning to traditional classroom settings, students demonstrated remarkable persistence in overcoming these challenges in their quest for improved learning.

The thematic analysis revealed that students maintained high hopes for normalcy despite financial burdens, and they were strongly motivated by the prospect of improved learning opportunities. These findings align with existing literature on post-pandemic educational transitions and add valuable insights into student perspectives during this critical period.

Schools should examine the different experiences of students upon the resumption of face-to-face classes to guide them in overcoming problems encountered. A more comprehensive understanding of student challenges and aspirations can inform the development of appropriate support systems and interventions. Educational institutions should consider implementing programs to address financial burdens, particularly related to transportation costs, which emerged as a significant concern for many students.

Further research is recommended to explore these experiences in greater depth, potentially combining quantitative methods with qualitative approaches and conducting more extensive literature reviews. Additional studies that investigate the long-term impacts of the transition back to face-to-face learning would provide valuable insights for educational planning and policy development.

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