Innovations

Nerfing and Navigating in the New Normal (N4): The Lived Experiences of Teachers Conducting Action Research During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Teody Lester V. Panela

Instructor I, Northwestern Samar State University

Abstract

This study used phenomenological approach in exploring the life and lived experiences of teachers across levels taught. This qualitative study is based on the following theories: Bosch's Blended with Pedagogical Purpose Model, Integrative Total Worker Model by Dennerlein, and Snyder's Hope Theory. Using purposive sampling, thirty-five (35) teachers participated in the study. Using the Colaizzi method, three major themes emerged: (1) Warrants of Sudden Changes; (2) Watering Down the Effects; and (3) Working and Thriving. The result showed that these teachers experienced a really difficult time adjusting to an out of the ordinary situation of unprecedented consequences yet they persevere to do what they can to conduct and complete action researches and instill light and hope not only to themselves but for the people they are serving. As it is a prelude study for future researches and extension projects, it is recommended that private as well as government agencies provide aside from protective and safety measures to teachers, but also flexible ways of gathering data and doing action researches in general.

Keywords: 1.Safety, 2.Teacher's Wellbeing, 3.Aspiration, 4.Teaching, 5.Learning, 6.Importance

I. Introduction

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic had recently changed the demographic, educational and health landscapes of any country (Fauci et al., 2020; Sohrabi et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Recent studies on the deadly disease focused on trends (Kannan et al., 2020), antiviral researches (Touret & de Lamballerie, 2020), patient characteristics (COVID-19 Surveillance Group, 2020), origin, transmission and characteristics (Chen et al., 2020; Shereen et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020; Yuki et al., 2020).

A study dwell on the immediate psychological responses and associated factors of those who were stricken and at the initial stage of the disease (Wang et al., 2020). But that is how close a certain study can get in terms of dealing with the disease on a personal level, let alone a study that can dwell into how COVID-19 affect their way of living and their source of incomes.

The transition to a new normal was such a direct hit to teachers who were forced to look for an alternative way of teaching and assessing the students (Akbulaev et al., 2020; ILO, 2020). For a pandemic of such magnitude to change what once were considered as normal, it can have ripple effects to different aspects of living and withstanding (Ryan et al., 2020).

With all the information given, it bounces back to the question, what was their initial reaction after the start of the pandemic? Do they have contingency plan for such situation? Are they fully aware of the extent of the pandemic to the performance of action researches? Have they fully grasped the magnitude of their situation with retrospect to conducting action researches?

The questions presented motivated the researcher to delve into exploring experiences of teachers in conducting action researches during the pandemic. There is a need to look closely into the experiences of such individuals with respect to their knowledge of the situation by assessing their perceptions and grasp of the possible potential solution to their challenges, hence the conduct of this study.

II. Objectives

With its main objective of reexploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges of teachers conducting action researches during pandemic, this study would like to answer the following questions;
1. What are experiences of the participants;
2. What is their perception about conducting action researches during pandemic; and
3. What are their aspirations.

III. Methodology

a. Research Design

This qualitative study utilized phenomenological approach that aimed to investigate the experience of teacher who adjust to the new normal in learning and an action researcher at the same time. A qualitative research study aimed to examine a phenomenon that impact on the lived reality of individuals or groups in a particular cultural or social context (Mills & Birks, 2014). A qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem (Creswell, 1998). The researcher builds a complex and holistic picture, analyze words, report detailed views of informants, and conduct the study in a natural setting. Phenomenology aimed to accurately describe the phenomenon without a pre-existing knowledge to a framework, but remaining truth to the facts (Groenewald, 2004). More so, using a qualitative research, the researcher would able to connect with their participants and to see the world from their viewpoints (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher found this method most suitable to the inquiry in order to provide a comprehensive analysis on the lived experiences of teachers conducting action researchers during the pandemic.

b. Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study were identified using purposive sampling from the previous study. Using purposive sampling, the researcher can choose their participants that will be fit for the study (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Tongco, 2007). Thirty-five (35) individuals participated in the study. Participants met the description of a career changer: 1) a person who is currently employed as a teacher; 2) required to conduct action researches; 3) a resident of Calbayog city; and 4) willing to participate in the study.

c. Data Collection

In gathering the appropriate data for the study, semi structured interview was used. Semi-structured interview is a type of interview that has become the most familiar strategy in collecting qualitative data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that merges a predetermined set of open questions with the privilege for the researchers to explore particular responses further; used to understand how interventions work and how they could be enhanced. It also allows to asked follow-up question for clarification. The content of the interview guide was validated by two professionals who were expert in the field of Psychology. The researcher also provided an agreement that included obtaining informed consent, ensured confidentiality, time and place commitments, permission to record, delineating the ethical principles of research. As to data storing methods, the researcher used note taking and dialogic form interview to each deeper response of the respondents.

d. Data Analysis

The following steps represent Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis (Speziale, Streubert, & Carpenter, 2010). (1) Each transcript should be read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content. (2) For each transcript, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under study should be extracted. These statements must be recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and line numbers. (3) Meaning should be formulated from these significant statements. (4) The formulated meanings should be sorted in categories, cluster of themes, and subthemes. (5) The findings of the study should be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study. (6) The fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described. (7) Finally, validation of the findings should be sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

e. Research Reflexivity

In the study, the researcher's approach is different in terms of other researchers' perspectives. As a person who knows the struggles of a teacher who conducts researches and their aspiration, the researcher understands his stand that might lead to a different development and an equally valid understanding of the particular situation under study.

The study has a preconception with a tone of positivity of eventually creating meaning during the entire process. The position and the background of the researcher will affect the choices made in the investigation, from an angle, with the methods that best judged the sole purpose of the study, framing, coming up with themes and the overall conclusion of it. With the intent of sharing the results to the participants of the

study. Furthermore, preconception is not equated in any form of bias unless the researcher fails to mention them (Malterud, 2012).

f. Ethical Considerations

The study focused on the lived experiences of teachers who conduct action researches during the pandemic, their self-regard and aspirations. Therefore, the ethical considerations centered around the situations depicted solely from participants' experiences, interactions and actions observed. The issues of theoretical, theological, situational, critical and covenantal situational approach to research ethics were irrelevant to the overall study (Tisdale, 2004). If literal transcriptions and summary were used in the narratives.

IV. Results and Discussion

Significant information on the current experience of teachers on the premise of conducting action researchers during the pandemic. Current knowledge on pandemic scenarios, potential of exploring other lines of work and aspiration for career expansion were noted. The generated information can help in establishing not only springboard for subsequent research but also a platform for the teachers to be heard and show the cacophony of their experiences.

From the data analyses, three themes emerged: (1) Warrants of Sudden Changes; (2) Watering Down the Effects; and (3) Working and Thriving. The three themes that emerged suggested that teachers are those who were forced to transition due to the ongoing pandemic yet they hold an undying positivity of overcoming such adversities and finding new ways of conducting researches.

a. Warrants of Sudden Changes

Episodes of unwanted events were reflected in the first theme. Teachers admitted that they were pressured to shift into a new way of conducting action researches. Despite such initial reaction, they are willing to take actions necessary to suffice such responsibility, explore new ways of collecting data during the pandemic and see difficulties encountered as an inspiration to evolve (Shalev & Shapiro, 2020).

Most of the participants find it hard to really conduct researches even prior the pandemic with accompanying restrictions making it more hard. When one is confronted with a life changing decision, they tend to develop a new perception of the situation and like any switch, it can turn to something positive or negative (Audet & Lefebvre, 2017; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010).It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

[1] Action researches is hard already because of teaching loads, too much seminars and trainings, and restrictions in place during the pandemic.
[2] Action researches during the pandemic is hell... I have too much in my plate already and not looking into another source of stress.
[3] I rather focus on modules making, action research is much more meaningful if it can be done face-to-face.
[4] I am not that confident collecting data as I am used to doing it physically.

[5] How can I study the subject I want to research on, I cannot measure it properly since everything is online and no actual interaction.

In like manner, most of the participants expressed that they were placed in a crossroad of whether to look for something old or start something new. To go back to a daily routine from a different place or carve a new path of living. Making choices in an unknown situation is a form of reestablishing a new reality and slowly sinking in the reality of the situation (Dekker, 2015; Hetschko, 2016; Young, 2012).

b. Watering Down the Effects

Moments of resourcefulness were reflected in the second theme. Teachers were positive that these problems shall pass and is a way for them to explore other aspects of their life. Introduction of new ideas can spark curiosity to individual which could lead to voluntary learning and discover some things that they already have but failed to recognized at the start(Mashavave et al., 2011). The learning process increases if ignorance is remedied same as to changing perspective from seeing the problem as an opportunity for something new(Livin, 2018). It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

[1] I just need to explore more ways of doing action researches during the pandemic, maybe I can do it online.
[2] Since restrictions are in place, I opted to focus on online strategies being implemented.
[3] I am trying to learn everything and working with other people like my students can make the conduct of action researches effective.
[4] Attending online trainings and seminars on action restriction is proving to be a good decision on my part.
[5] I am doing my part by studying and finding ways of doing researches amidst restrictions.

c. Working and Thriving

With their journey coming full circle, the desire among teacher-researcher to get back on the game and start doing action researches more. Trying to explore new ways of doing things and implementing as well as sharing the result of the study is looking positive. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

[1] I am slowly changing my old ways and looking into doing action researches in the new normal.
[2] I am not into rushing things but action researches need innovating to really do it properly during the pandemic.
[3] I can utilize more easy ways of doing it during the pandemic, it is only a matter of perspective.
[4] Slowly developing a new habit of researching and fully utilizing the convenience provided to complete it.
[5] It is a good avenue to learn something new and be innovative not only with my research but how I do it.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

Three themes emerged: (1) Warrants of Sudden Changes; (2) Watering Down the Effects; and (3) Working and Thriving.

This study provides a description of the lived experiences of teachers conducting action researches during the pandemic. It suggested that teachers are those who were forced to transition due to the ongoing pandemic yet they hold an undying positivity of overcoming such adversities and finding new ways of conducting researches.

Concerned agencies must be extensive with in terms of scope, thus involving varied contingency plans for such scenarios. The study could be comprehensive by combining with quantitative research methodology, extensive literature reviews and broader reach. To fully fathom teachers' experiences, an intensive interview with their family, their friends, and community members is recommended. Further studies and a more in-depth investigation of the lived experiences of teachers conducting action researches is recommended.

References

1. Akbulaev, N., Mammadov, I., & Aliyev, V. (2020). Economic impact of covid-19. In Sylwan.
2. Audet, J.-N., & Lefebvre, L. (2017). What's flexible in behavioral flexibility? Behavioral Ecology.
3. Chen, H., Guo, J., Wang, C., Luo, F., Yu, X., Zhang, W., Li, J., Zhao, D., Xu, D., Gong, Q., Liao, J., Yang, H., Hou, W., & Zhang, Y. (2020). Clinical characteristics and intrauterine vertical transmission potential of COVID-19 infection in nine pregnant women: a retrospective review of medical records. The Lancet.
4. Cherney, A., & Fitzgerald, R. (2016). Finding and keeping a job: The value and meaning of employment for parolees. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology.
5. Covid-19 Surveillance Group. (2020). Characteristics of COVID-19 patients dying in Italy Report based on available data on March 20 th , 2020. COVID-19 Surveillance Group.
6. Dekker, S. W. A. (2015). The danger of losing situation awareness. Cognition, Technology and Work.
7. Fauci, A. S., Lane, H. C., & Redfield, R. R. (2020). Covid-19 - Navigating the uncharted. In New England Journal of Medicine.
8. Fujita, S., & Moscarini, G. (2017). Recall and unemployment. American Economic Review.
9. Hetschko, C. (2016). On the misery of losing self-employment. Small Business Economics.
10. Hoye, G. Van, & Saks, A. M. (2008). Job search as goal-directed behavior: Objectives and methods. Journal of Vocational Behavior.
11. ILO, I. L. O. (2020). COVID-19 and the world of work: Impact and policy responses. ILO Monitor First Edition.
12. Kannan, S., Shaik Syed Ali, P., Sheeza, A., & Hemalatha, K. (2020). COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus 2019) - recent trends. European Review for Medical and Pharmacological Sciences.
13. Kashdan, T. B., & Rottenberg, J. (2010). Psychological flexibility as a fundamental aspect of health. In Clinical Psychology Review.
14. Livin, E. (2018). In praise of slow thinking and Socratic ignorance. Quartz.
15. Malterud, K. (2012). Systematic text condensation: A strategy for qualitative analysis. Scandinavian Journal of Public Health.
16. Mashavave, T., Mapfumo, P., Mtambanengwe, F., Chikowo, R., Gwandu, T., Nezomba, H., & Siziba, S. (2011). Factors influencing participation of smallholder farmers in knowledge sharing alliances around SOFECSA field-based learning centres. Volume 10 October 2011.
17. Restubog, S. L. D., Ocampo, A. C. G., & Wang, L. (2020). Taking control amidst the chaos: Emotion regulation during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Journal of Vocational Behavior.
18. Ryan, B. J., Coppola, D., Canyon, D. V., Brickhouse, M., & Swienton, R. (2020). COVID-19 Community Stabilization and Sustainability Framework: An Integration of the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs and

Social Determinants of Health. Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness.

19. Shalev, D., & Shapiro, P. A. (2020). Epidemic psychiatry: The opportunities and challenges of COVID-19. In General Hospital Psychiatry.

20. Shereen, M. A., Khan, S., Kazmi, A., Bashir, N., & Siddique, R. (2020). COVID-19 infection: Origin, transmission, and characteristics of human coronaviruses. In Journal of Advanced Research.

21. Sohrabi, C., Alsafi, Z., O'Neill, N., Khan, M., Kerwan, A., Al-Jabir, A., Iosifidis, C., & Agha, R. (2020). World Health Organization declares global emergency: A review of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). In International Journal of Surgery.

22. Spurk, D., & Straub, C. (2020). Flexible employment relationships and careers in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Journal of Vocational Behavior.

23. Sun, P., Lu, X., Xu, C., Sun, W., & Pan, B. (2020). Understanding of COVID-19 based on current evidence. In Journal of Medical Virology.

24. Touret, F., & de Lamballerie, X. (2020). Of chloroquine and COVID-19. In Antiviral Research.

25. Wang, C., Pan, R., Wan, X., Tan, Y., Xu, L., Ho, C. S., & Ho, R. C. (2020). Immediate psychological responses and associated factors during the initial stage of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic among the general population in China. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

26. Wu, Y. C., Chen, C. S., & Chan, Y. J. (2020). The outbreak of COVID-19: An overview. In Journal of the Chinese Medical Association.

27. Young, C. (2012). Losing a job: The nonpecuniary cost of unemployment in the United States. Social Forces.

28. Yuki, K., Fujiogi, M., & Koutsogiannaki, S. (2020). COVID-19 pathophysiology: A review. In Clinical Immunology.