Lived Experiences of Pre-Service English Teachers in Online Teaching Internship during COVID 19 Pandemic

Cailvin D. Reyes

[1]Don Honorio Ventura State University, Philippines

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Don Honorio Ventura State University, Philippines

Email:calvinreyes@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the researcher described the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers in a state University in Pampanga, Philippines, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher used a qualitative-phenomenological approach to unveil pre-service English teachers' experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in their teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic. A researcher-made validated interview guide served as the primary data collection tool. The study had 10 English pre-service teachers as participants who were chosen purposively using criteria set by the researcher. The findings of this study revealed that the participants experienced difficulties in their online teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges hinder them from performing their duties well. Among the challenges they encountered were time management, technological issues, and students' concerns. However, despite these challenges, the participants remained consistent in performing their duties as practice teachers by resorting to solutions like a positive outlook in their teaching practicum, proper time management, and open communication for consultation between their peers and cooperating teachers. Despite their challenges, the participants still see and realize how important and beneficial teaching practicum is in their lives as future educators.

Keywords: English, Teaching Practicum, Teacher Education, Online Education

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the highlights of the academic journey of a would-be teacher is the teaching practicum. It is the phase where an aspiring teacher will wear practice teaching uniform, which signifies the start of immersion to the world of teaching. This is also a phase where pre-service teachers could reflect and make decisions regarding the profession that they are about to enter. However, teaching practicum is not just a piece of cake for these pre-service teachers. As it has been considered one of the most crucial and influential stages in teacher education (Trent, 2013).

The teaching internship is an essential career development opportunity for new teachers who want to improve their skills to use pedagogical methods in the classroom. Student teaching, also known as pre-service teaching in the Philippines, is the final phase of an education degree program that allows students to practice teaching, experiment, and reflect on the complexities of the teaching-learning environment, including the ethical and procedural dimensions of teaching. The Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) obliged the pre-service teachers to make the most of their teaching-learning experiences. Its main goal is the preparation of potential teachers who will satisfy professional and social norms that will help them advance in the classroom, on campus, and in the community where they will eventually work or live (Reganit & Osea, 2004).

Although practice teaching in education is still a challenge, Haigh, Pinder, and McDonald (2006) contend that it falls short of adequately preparing student teachers for actual classroom instruction. According to Starkey and Rawlins (2012), in order for these student teachers to be adequately prepared, their supervising teachers should closely monitor, oversee, and advise them through "online dialogues" and classroom teaching observation.

Pre-service teacher training, according to Barrios et al. (2018), is one of the most crucial components of every teacher's education curriculum since it trains student instructors to become qualified teachers in the future.

Although the views of different authors mentioned above vary from one another, they still have a common ground regarding the importance of teaching practicum in the academic journey of pre-service teachers, that is it exposes them to the world that they are entering and will prepare them for real-life teaching once they finish their degrees.

In this study, the researcher focused on the pre-service English teachers experiences in their teaching practicum during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, an exploration of others' views was also conducted.

According to Fajardo & Miranda (2015), the teaching practicum exposes pre-service teachers to the realities of teaching English to students of other languages and provides insight into the complexities of current classroom

practices, all of which help to improve pre-service teachers' motivations, attitudes, and engagement with the profession.

However, for some, the teaching practicum may be one of the BA degree's most difficult, perplexing, difficult, and unpleasant experiences (Farrell, 2001; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Trent, 2013). Whatever effects the teaching practicum may have on pre-service teachers, these can influence their learning experiences, confirming or changing their perceptions about the teaching practicum prior to enrolling in the BA program (Calderhead, 1988 as quoted by Castaeda-Trujillo, et al 2018).

Related studies were also visited to gain additional insights that could guide the researcher for this study.

Through the practicum experience of 21 junior and senior BSEd and BA English student-teachers from a private institution in Mindanao, Philippines, Barrios et al (2018) investigated pre-service teacher training programs in the Philippines. Classroom observations, a group interview, and a modified questionnaire were used to collect data. The data demonstrated that pre-service teacher preparation programs for BSEd and BA English had a varied standard policy. While BSEd-English focused on training professional secondary school teachers, BA-English focused on developing professionals with great communication abilities, not simply teachers. Classroom management, teaching confidence, and a lack of teaching materials were all mentioned as obstacles by the student-teachers during practical teaching.

Choosing the teaching environment to which student-teachers will be exposed is a crucial part of learning during practice teaching, according to Starkey and Rawlins' (2012) research. As a result, student teachers were fully aware of both their obligations and the reasons behind them. They were able to apply the ideas and theories they had in their heads in a real classroom setting, so they did not lose them. The importance of practicum in teacher education was commented upon by Cheng (2013). According to his research, teaching practicum is a tool that helps teacher educators develop their teaching skills.

In light of what it means to be in a practicum teaching setting, Coskun (2013) investigated the sources of stress on numerous stakeholders in English language teaching practicum, including mentor teachers, supervisors, teacher trainees, school administrators, and students. In his study, it was discovered that factors that led to stress among mentor teachers, teacher trainees, supervisors, administrators, and students included a high volume of paper work, a lack of motivation and interest in the practicum, poor classroom management by student-teachers, unfamiliarity with students' English proficiency levels, classroom observation, a lack of support from supervisors, and mentor-student misunderstanding. Despite its thoroughness, his research does not address the issues and challenges that instructors encounter in the classroom. Stressors were the only thing he dealt with in the English language school.

Noticeably, the studies of Starkey and Rawlins (2012), Barios, et al (2018) and Coskun (2013) display that they were conducted prior the COVID 19 pandemic which began in the onset of 2020 in the Philippines. The researcher's contention was that these challenges could be similar or could be worse as compared with the challenges of the pre-service English teachers during the COVID 19 pandemic which was a time of academic disruptions and schools shifted to distance learning.

Recent related studies were found by the researcher. Pre-service teachers' impressions of their teaching practice experiences during the epidemic were revealed by Rahmani (2021). 114 seventh-semester English Education Department students from FKIP Pontianak participated in this study. A mixed-method approach was used in the methodology, with the quantitative procedure being finished before the qualitative phase. Information was gathered through interviews and questionnaires. The research revealed that the online teaching practice program offered a range of experiences that led to both "pleasant" and "unsatisfactory" views. More than half of the participants thought the online teaching practice program was effective, especially in terms of giving a wide range of teaching ideas and experience, despite the challenging situations they encountered throughout the practice. The teaching practice program consequently tends to have an impact on pre-service teachers' positive teaching mindsets and attitudes, despite its implementational constraints.

Aguilar-Cruz and Medina (2021), who focus on issues like technology, materials creation, and gamification, also explored pre-service English teachers' perceptions of their online teaching practice during pandemic periods. Data from pre-service English instructors were collected through interviews and a qualitative-narrative research methodology. Pre-service English teachers were still able to comprehend and reflect on their roles as teachers, and they used technology and gamified activities to address their concerns. Despite dealing with a variety of issues related to their online teaching practice, such as students' lack of commitment, low motivation, and connectivity problems as a result of the pandemic.

In a similar vein, Subekti (2021) looked at the opinions of nine English language education department pre-service teachers regarding the use of online learning in response to the Covid-19 epidemic. The study relied on secondary data in the form of participating participants' written views on how online learning was implemented as seen from their perspectives as students and future English teachers. Thematic Analysis, a qualitative document analysis method, was used to further analyze the material. Three problems were highlighted as hindering effective online learning: inadequate supporting infrastructures or resources; teachers' poor pedagogical skills in effectively managing online learning; and a lack of teacher-student and student-student social relationships during the learning process. The study also uncovered two well-known best practices: the use of a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning modes, which could lighten the load on learners

and improve learning effectiveness, and teachers' awareness of their students' difficulties as demonstrated in their facilitation activities. Based on the results, the study's possible contributions and limits are examined, along with some ideas for future research directions.

In summary of the related literature and studies, pre-service teachers, including English majors encounter challenges in teaching practicum regardless of academic condition whether disrupted by the pandemic or not. The gap that the researcher aimed to address in this study is the condition of Filipino pre-service teachers major in English in their teaching practicum during the COVID 19 pandemic. The researcher aimed to describe their experience, challenges, and coping strategies in a glimpse at English language teaching through their teaching internship. Significantly, the researcher wished to explore solutions to improve the the condition of Filipino pre-service teachers major in English in their teaching practicum.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this paper, the researcher aimed to describe the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers in a state University in Pampanga, Philippines during the COVID 19 pandemic. Specifically, the researcher unveiled the experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of pre-service English teachers in their teaching practicum during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. How may the pre-service English teachers describe their experience in practice teaching during pandemic?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the pre-service English teachers in their practice teaching during pandemic?
3. How did pre-service English teachers cope with their challenges in practice teaching during pandemic?

2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed a qualitative phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach emphasizes the commonality of a group's shared lived experiences (Dela Fuente, 2021). Moreover, obtaining a description of the nature of the specific phenomenon is the approach's primary goal (Creswell, 2012).The researcher used this design because the challenges and coping strategies of the pre-service English teahers are rooted in their lived experiences in teaching practicum during the COVID 19 pandemic. Through the phenomenological research design, the researcher was able to explore the lived experiences of the participants considering English Language Teaching as teaching practicum as the phenomenon.

2.1 Participants

The researcher used purposive sampling, where he utilized the following inclusion criteria:

First, a bonafide student of the University and enrolled in the Bachelor in Secondary Education major in English program. Second, a pre-service teacher which means, the participant is taking teaching internship during the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022, still in the time of COVID 19 pandemic. Third, they should be practice teaching in an ESL class. Fourth, they should be willing to participate in the study.

2.2 Instruments

To gather the information required for this study, the researcher used an interviewing guide. The interview questions in the interview guide were all centered on the teaching practicum experiences of preservice teachers. It was a self-made interview guide that three research experts validated. The first validator is a specialist in the English language and has a Master's degree in English. The two validators are experts in the field of qualitative research and each holds a Doctoral degree.

2.3 Data Collection

Permission was sought by the researcher to conduct the study from the concerned administrators, faculty, and students. After that, the researcher set an interview scheduled with the participants. They were first enlightened on the nature of the study and they were informed that the data coming from them will be treated confidentially.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

The researcher conducted this research in accordance with ethical principles. Prior to the study's execution, the participant's full consent was gained, the research data's confidentiality was ensured, biases and other misleading information were avoided, and other works and studies that were used in this study were correctly cited (Karakose, Yirci, and Kobacas, 2014).

2.5 Data Analysis

Terry et al. (2017) Thematic Analysis (TA) procedures were adopted to identify concepts, categories, and themes from the gathered data. The thematic analysis conducted in this study used the following steps:
Stage I: Familiarizing with the Data

This process which can begin during the data collection involves transcription of data and reading and re-reading through the data to obtain initial ideas. The researcher was sensitive to different data elements which implied any meaning patterns.

Stage II: Generating Codes

In this step, the researcher systematically generates initial codes from the data which can act as building blocks of the analysis. Along with coding, the researcher also seeks for similarities and patterns across the data. In this study, the researchers developed codes and stayed focused on coding the whole dataset before constructing themes.

Stage III. Searching for Themes

The themes developed at this stage are not fixed and they are open to change. In fact, the codes developed in the previous stage construct the initial themes and the relevant data for each will be gathered. Therefore, the researchers examined the codes to develop themes in the data.

Stage IV. Reviewing Potential Themes

Here the themes developed in the previous stage are further refined. The researcher read the data extracts supporting each of the themes and reviewed and refined the individual themes and the initial thematic map.

Stage V. Defining, Naming and Analyzing Themes

In this stage, the researcher has clearly defined and named themes and the sub-themes.

Stage VI. Producing the Report

In this final stage, the researcher uses the narratives, data extracts and the arguments to further support the direct and indirect relation among the themes

Transferability, conformability, and credibility established the rigor of the study. Transferability was reflected as the participants described their experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in their teaching practicum during the COVID 19 pandemic, which then enabled clusters of meaning and grouping as to the essential themes conveyed. Rechecking technique built the conformability of the findings transcribed during the semi-structured interviews. The researcher presented the transcripts to the participants to verify data for its truthfulness and accuracy, to achieve holistic credibility.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This presents analyses and interprets the data collected in light of the study's specific problems.

Experiences of pre-service English teachers in teaching practicum during COVID 19 pandemic
Difficult

The participants regard their experience in teaching practicum to be difficult because they were confronted with hindrances and they needed to adapt to the new learning modality which is online class. This is not how they imagined their teaching practice experience during their first few years as an education student. They had no idea that this pandemic would strike and harm individuals, especially students like themselves. Everything is not as easy as they thought it would be when they started their observation as pre-service teachers. The following passages from the interview revealed this theme:

"My situation these pandemic is hard and also frustrating something because of the problems and barries that I am experiencing." PT1

"I must say it's difficult, because we need to adapt the new learning modality which is online class. As a student teacher, I would describe my experiences during this Pandemic with a phrase "struggle is real." PT2

"Being a student teacher is really not easy, especially in this time of pandemic." PT4

"To be honest, this is not how I visualized my practice teaching during the first few years of my journey as an education student, I did not even think that this pandemic would come and affect people, particularly students like me. As I started my observation as a student-teacher, everything is not easy as I thought it would be." PT5

"My situation as a student-teacher during pandemic is very hard but I can still manage to overcome it. Being a student-teacher is already hard, but being a student-teacher during pandemic is also a different kind of matter to deal with." PT6

"My situation as a student-teacher during the pandemic is difficult since I want to attend a face-to-face class yet the quarantine prevents us from doing so." PT7

Challenging

They also described their situation as challenging because of the fact that they must not only concentrate on what they need to teach, but also on their surroundings and environment. Teaching practicum during pandemic is a challenge for them because there are so many variables to consider, such as maintaining their level of focus while teaching despite the background noise in their environment, which is similar to teaching in a classroom. This theme was revealed in the following excerpts from the interview:

"It is quite challenging given that the learning modality is blended and class is done at home" PT3

"It is challenging, especially when I am having trouble with my internet connection." PT4

"I would describe my situation as a student-teacher during pandemic as a big challenge because not only you have to focus with what you need to teach but also deal with your surrounding/environment. Big challenge because there are lot of things to consider like you have to maintain the level of focus when teaching despite the background noise in your area not unlike when teaching face to face in school." PT8

Requires Patience
Due to their observations of the many things that could hinder them to perform their duties as pre-service teachers, they also recognize the need to be patient in their teaching practicum. The following extracts from the interview reveal this theme:
"It tests my patience." PT4
"As a student-teacher teaching English during pandemic, I need to have very long patience. I noticed that it was hard to teach English to the students especially some of them were unable to understand some basic English. Even though I'm already repeating my questions over and over again to the students (mostly 1st year) they are not able to understand it." PT6

Requires Technology
Since their teaching practicum was conducted through online platform, it was not a surprise that they recognize that the presence and utility of technology is vital in their lives as pre-service teachers. Technology is needed in almost all aspects of their duties as pre-service teachers such as during the planning, execution, monitoring and assessing students' learning. This theme was unveiled from these excerpts of the interview:
"I am not computer literate which gives me difficulties in some areas like doing my things in the fastest way I could. My situation is far from my vision way back then, this pandemic has a huge effect and this I think allows me to do beyond my limit." PT5
"it's difficult to monitor or observe your students using digital technology." PT6
"My situation as a student-teacher during pandemic is a bit difficult. As a student who only uses data, I always have a hard time especially during a discussion and my internet connection is really weak. I could not understand my students and vice versa. If only I have a strong internet connection at home, I might not experience such thing." PT10

Beneficial
Despite the unpleasant observations in their teaching practicum, the participants did not fail to recognize the vital and beneficial contributions of this phase in their academic journey as future teachers. They see their experience as a student teacher teaching English during the pandemic as a training ground since it allowed them to identify what areas they needed to improve in order to better both teaching and learning in English. There are times when they realize that teaching English was not all that difficult if they allowed themselves to participate in discussions and listen to and learn from students students' ideas. This theme was revealed in the following excerpts from the interview:
"As I started teaching and facing these students whom I do not know personally even though virtually has helped me become an improved student-teacher. I've realized that when you know your lesson by heart, you would not feel any pressure or be unconfident. With that, my experience in teaching English may be considered one of my best experiences in life." PT5
"Because I specialized in English, it will be easier for me to teach English during the pandemic, as we will only be able to attend virtual classrooms. As a result, I will gain confidence and will no longer be hesitant to teach English. Most of my teaching experience has been with first-year college students who have a natural ability to communicate effectively in English, which has increased my confidence in communicating to them in English." PT7
"I would describe my experience in teaching English as a student teacher during pandemic as a training ground because I was able to see what are the things I need to focus on to improve both teaching and learning in English. There are some instances where I realize that it wasn't that hard teaching English as long as I let myself engage with the discussion and listen and learn with the brilliant ideas of my students." PT8
"I guess that I am doing the best that I could so that I can be of help to my cooperating teacher, and that I am experiencing a lot of first time during my internship which motivates me to do my best." PT9
Relative to the findings of this study, Shinta et al (2020) examined how EFL pre-service teachers felt about the practicum's execution and the progress they saw during the time period. This study employed a survey design with a questionnaire and a follow-up interview as the instruments. The findings revealed a number of issues, including classroom management, evaluation, and insufficient practicum orientation. The issues that arose were also due to a lack of supporting infrastructure and access to the internet. Despite the difficulties, pre-service teachers reported an increase in their teaching abilities, knowledge, methodologies, new ideas, and enthusiasm for the profession. Their impressions of online teaching-practicum also influenced their assessment of whether the program adequately prepared them for a future career as English instructors.

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Difficulty in Time Management

The participants disclosed that they find it difficult to manage their time in their teaching practicum because of their multiple duties as a student, pre-service teachers and their other personal responsibilities. They narrated that they are not only a student-teacher; I have responsibilities as well, and sometimes multitasking is not enough. Due to the pandemic, they are unable to achieve what they want. To balance schoolwork and other personal obligations, makes it difficult for them to perform their duties effectively. The following passages from the interview revealed this theme:

"The things that hinders me during pandemic while performing my duties as a student teacher is the internet issues, technical issues and also the house chores." PT1

"Since I am not just a student-teacher, I still have my obligations, and sometimes even if I do multitask, it's still not enough. Due to the pandemic, my ability is limited, and I am not able to do what I want to do to balance my school work and other personal matters, and this somewhat hinders me to perform well." PT5

"Other hindrances such as part-time jobs and household chores are still manageable for me, I can still fulfill my duties as a student-teacher even though I'm doing these works." PT6

Technological Issues

In terms of the technological issues, it covers poor internet connection and their gadgets such as laptops and mobile phones. For them, , it is hard to use a phone only especially during teaching demonstration. This theme was revealed in the following excerpts from the interview:

"The difficulties that i have experience in teaching are internet connection lost, and also the gadgets that I am using. Sometimes during my discussion the connection will go slow and sometimes my gadgets will turn off accidentally." PT1

"Internet signal and noise barriers. There are times that the internet signal is not stable, I need to refresh several times to be able to enter into the meeting. " PT3

"One of the main hindrances to performing my duties as a student teacher is the slow internet connection in our area." PT4

"I know this is very common but one of the things that hinder me in performing my duties would be the technical issues, this was actually my problem with my first demonstration." PT5

"The thing that hinders me from performing my duties as a student-teacher during a pandemic is only my internet connection. We all know that the Philippines has a slow internet connection." PT6

"It's the internet connection for me. This is why sometimes, I was unable to fulfill my responsibilities as a student-teacher." PT7

"it is the weak internet connection. Well in this situation, which is the blended learning, it is very important to have a strong internet connection because it will be easier for the student-teacher to perform the duties assigned to him/her." PT10

Knowledge on the subject

The participants also shared that it was difficult for them to teach a subject that they lack knowledge about or little knowledge about. They admitted that even though they are English majors, some topics that were assigned to them were new to them, and there were terminologies that they need to research to gain ideas. They were also bounded by the limitations to ask questions to their cooperating teachers because of the non physical interaction. The following extracts from the interview reveal this theme:

"Dealing with unfamiliar words, proper grammar and proper pronunciation of words." PT2

"The subjects I was handling are somehow the things that gave me difficulties even if they would fall under English, although I am an English major, those subjects are unfamiliar to me and there are terminologies I needed to focus on. Since there is no physical conversation with my cooperating teacher, I have no time to ask since everything is limited. It is also prohibited to visit the library and that is why I was having a hard time." PT5

Students' Concerns

Accoding to the participants, the majority of our students are really not taking part in the discussion. Because it is virtual, it is quite difficult to grab their attention. They said that even if they did all the possible ways to make sure they understood the instruction, some students would still not participate.

"Other difficulties include dealing with the activities of students. Because students are free to search for answers online, there was a time that some students have the same answers in a given activity. I am not sure with the authenticity of their answers." PT3

"Based on my own experience, most of our students are not participating in the discussion. It is really hard to get their attention since it is virtual." PT4

"I think it is how the students behave while I'm teaching English. Since we are not having face-to-face class, it's hard to catch their attention since they are only watching me on the screen. I think I'm still having difficulty catching their attention." PT6

"The lack of student participation was one of the challenges I faced. Even if you did everything you could to ensure that they understood the lesson, some students refused to engage." PT7

Lack of face to face interaction

As per the participants, one challenge would most likely be not being able to communicate face to face with their students, cooperating teacher, and co-student teachers, as communication is essential, particularly during practice teaching. Because they only communicate through emails, there were moments when students and including them misunderstood instructions due to a lack of time to explain them. This theme was revealed in the following excerpts from the interview:

"One thing that hinders me is the lack of face to face interaction with the students, I feel like I can do more if the situation is not like this." PT9

"One difficulty would probably not being able to communicate face to face with my students, cooperating teacher and with my co-student teachers because communication is a must especially during practice teaching. Since communication was through online there are times that students and even us have experienced miscommunication due to lack of time explaining the instruction given." PT8

Similar with the findings of this study, Al Abiky (2021) identified the obstacles that pre-service English teachers faced when teaching online classes during the spring 2020 school closure due to Covid-19, as well as the lessons learnt for teacher education. Five English pre-service teachers were interviewed using a variety of methods, including semi-structured interviews. Following inductive and deductive research, the study discovered the following: 1) There are six major obstacles that pre-service English teachers face: a) remote instruction's nature, b) material delivery and constraints, c) teaching styles, d) online evaluation methods, and e) students' interests and differences; 2) Pre-service teachers felt bewildered, anxious, and went into survival mode; 3) focusing on successful technology integration and developing more elements of teachers' competency are only a few of the teacher education lessons learnt.

Coping Strategies of pre-service English teachers in teaching practicum during COVID 19 pandemic
Positive Outlook

Pre-service teachers understand that problems are an inevitable aspect of their teaching practicum. They maintain themselves motivated to finish what they have begun and to be able to handle everything. They see these difficulties as stepping stones on their path to become a teacher. They find motivation and encouragement to keep going. The following extracts from the interview reveal this theme:

"I manage to perform my duties with the dedication and commitment to persue my passion and teaching and also with the prayers and help of God." PT1

"I am always trying my best to be a help and not a burden to my CT. I think even it's Pandemic there's no reason for me not to learn and of course those challenges that comes to me I take them as a challenge. As well as I take these challenges as a stepping stone on my teaching profession. By mediating and using some relaxation techniques." PT2

"I encourage myself and find motivations to continue. Sometimes, I seek help from the people around me." PT3

"Challenges are part of all my duties. I just keep myself motivated to continue what I started, and be able to manage everything and re-mind myself. Why am I doing this. By understanding the situation and living with it." PT4

"I cope by leveling my sense of responsibility, being responsible now that we are experiencing a pandemic is also a good thing. As a student-teacher, I need to be flexible enough so that I can overcome all the challenges I experienced and I can still experience in the next months" PT6

"Understanding your student can assist you in resolving your conflict with them." PT7

"I managed by trying to work under pressure making sure that I physically and mentally prepared to cover some of the possible outcomes during my internship." PT9

"I always try to be resourceful in order to cope up with the problems I am facing in my practice-teaching because I believe it is one of the most needed attitude for a student-teacher since we are still in pandemic and we perform our class sessions online." PT10

Set aside Personal Problems

When the participants do their teaching obligations, they put their other concerns aside because they believe that it will affect what they are doing if they integrate their own difficulties in their duties. They must remain hopeful throughout their teaching practicum in order to teach effectively. They are able to focus on more important things in order to avoid being affected emotionally and mentally by these difficulties. The following passages from the interview revealed this theme:

"I set aside my other peoblems whenever I perform my duties in teaching because it will have an impact on what I am doing if I will include my personal problems in my duties. Being optimistic in this journey is what I need to perform well." PT1

"I extend my patience and manage to focus on more important things to avoid being emotionally and mentally affected by these challenges. I try to find alternative solutions as much as possible. -" PT3

Proper Time Management

They manage to complete their tasks despite the obstacles by using time management and planning. They may not have to travel from home to school because their teaching practicum takes place online. They assigned deadlines to the projects they needed to complete in a week so that they could spend more time asking questions of their students. This theme was revealed in the following excerpts from the interview:

"I made sure that I allotted more time whenever I have duties to do. I convinced myself to focus and prohibit myself as well to expose in any social media platforms to avoid distractions. I managed also to finish those duties before anything else." PT5

"I manage to perform my duties despite these challenges by managing my time and being patient. For me having a timetable or notepad can really help me to finish my duties as a student-teacher. I always make sure that once something is assigned to me, I'm doing it as early as I can." PT6

"Because of my responsibility, time management, and commitment, I am able to fulfill my duties as a student teacher" PT7

"I manage to perform my duties despite the challnges by having time management and time plan. Since it's online class you study and work at home so you have a lot of time to work since you do not have to travel from house to school. I gave my self deadlines with the works that I need to finish in a week so that I would have time inquiring questions from my students." PT8

Consult Mentor and Peers

They cope by seeking assistance from their co pre-service teachers. They also request assistance from their cooperating teacher with a task they are unsure about. The following passages from the interview revealed this theme:

"I always ask my cooperating teacher for a task I am not sure of. Since I have more things to do, there are times that even though I was instructed clearly, I often forgot and ask. This pandemic is definitely a barrier and made everything complicated for me. Since my cooperating teacher and I do not have any physical conversation, we only have a talk virtually." PT5

"I cope up by seeking help with my co student teachers and as much as possible I take some small breaks to keep my mind relax and after that finish the works that needs to be done." PT9

Rest

They make it a point to take breaks and rest. When they are fatigued, they always take a break. They schedule time for themselves to relax. They will solve the challenges they have met once they have previously reflected on them. The following extracts from the interview reveal this theme:

"I give myself a time to take a break. After I already reflect, then that's the time that I will solve the problems I have encountered." PT2

"I made sure as well to rest and give myself a break. I always rest whenever I am tired." PT5

Similarly, Mahmoudi, et al (2016) looked into the sources of stress among 16 preservice language instructors and the ways they used to cope with it during practicum. Classroom observation and face-to-face interviews were used to collect data for the study. The sources of stress and coping mechanisms were examined under four categories: supervisors and mentors, classroom management, school-related concerns, and emotional aspects. The qualitative data was evaluated using content analysis. Supervisors and mentors were found to be the most stressful people. The participants generally used Web.2 technologies in an ELT environment to deal with practicum stress. Stress-inducing elements and pre-service language teacher practices should be explored and commented upon in pre-service language teacher education programs, according to the authors.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The researcher aimed to describe the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers in a state University in Pampanga, Philippines during the COVID 19 pandemic. The researcher confirms that the English pre-service teachers experienced difficulties in their online teaching practicum during the COVID 19 pandemic. These challenges hinder them to perform their duties well as practice teachers. Time management, technological issues, students' concerns were among the challenges that they encountered. However, despite these challenges, the participants remained consistent in performing their duties as practice teachers by resorting to solutions like having a positive outlook in their teaching practicum, proper time management, and open communication for consulation between their peers and cooperating teachers. In summary, despite the challenges that they encountered, the participants still see and realize how important and beneficial teaching practicum is in their lives as future educators.

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