

Developing a New Instructional Model for Sustainable Education in MIMAROPA State Universities and Colleges during the New Normal

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 29 Dec 2024 Revised: 15 Feb 2025 Accepted: 24 Feb 2025	<p>The sustainability of quality instruction in higher education institutions remains achievable despite the challenges posed by the new normal setting. This study aimed to develop a framework for sustainable instruction to ensure the continuity of educational functions in higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic and in preparation for future disruptions to the educational landscape. Specifically, it sought to describe the experiences of student leaders regarding the sustainability of instructional practices in MIMAROPA State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) during the new normal and to design an instructional model based on the findings to enhance sustainable education in these institutions.</p> <p>The study employed a Qualitative Descriptive Design with a Phenomenological Approach, combined with a Design and Development Research (DDR) framework. Using purposive and convenience sampling, fifteen student leaders were selected as participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, revealing key themes related to the new normal practices, including instructors' consideration and sympathy, convenience and adequacy of learning modes, adjustments and distractions during implementation, teacher responsiveness, and feedback mechanisms as part of instructional evaluation.</p> <p>Based on these findings, the researcher developed a framework for sustainable quality instruction in the SUCs of MIMAROPA, emphasizing the importance of adapting to the challenges of the new normal. The proposed instructional model highlights flexible learning approaches, instructional innovations, diverse assessment strategies, curriculum reviews, new normal policies, multicultural programs, best practices, targeted interventions, enhanced research capabilities, and active community engagement. This framework addresses the needs for adaptability, empathy, and quality education, ensuring the resilience and sustainability of instructional practices in MIMAROPA SUCs during and beyond the new normal.</p> <p>Keywords: sustainable instruction, new normal practices, instructional model, higher education institutions, flexible learning.</p>

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a global crisis, significantly disrupting all facets of life, particularly the education sector. By October 6, 2020, the virus had infected over 36 million people and claimed more than a million lives worldwide. Governments responded with quarantine measures, leading to the temporary closure of educational institutions to limit the spread of the virus. This disruption impacted over a billion students globally, including 28 million in the Philippines who had to remain at home under government-mandated restrictions.

The pandemic compelled the Philippine education system to pivot rapidly to ensure the continuity of quality instruction through remote learning. Higher education institutions (HEIs) implemented strategies to maintain educational standards during this crisis. The pandemic highlighted existing limitations in higher education, especially the need for professors to enhance their digital competencies to navigate this new landscape [11]. Teachers

faced substantial challenges in keeping students engaged, as they quickly adapted their methods for preparing, delivering, and assessing instruction.

HEIs in the MIMAROPA region—Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan—faced particularly steep hurdles. Institutions like Western Philippines University (WPU), Mindoro State University (MinSU), and Marinduque State College adapted to alternative learning modalities that fit their unique needs. The shift to new instructional methods tested educators' resilience, as traditional practices were quickly modified or entirely replaced to meet the demands of remote education.

The educational system should address these unprecedented times with policy guidelines that are responsive to necessary adjustments in the education sector. The shift toward greater use of technology should be seen as a foundation for a sustainable approach to service delivery in education. The challenge for educators, instructional leaders, and teachers is to collaboratively harmonize and strategize initiatives related to service delivery observation to streamline tasks for the benefit of all stakeholders in the education sector. The relevance of quality instruction in higher education institutions can be achieved through effective preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

The aspiration of this researcher is that this study will contribute to advancing the functions of higher education in the face of disruptive events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's outcome is a framework for the sustainable delivery of quality instruction that connects the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum, drawing insights from faculty members and student leaders.

Therefore, the researcher undertook this study to assess the effectiveness of instructional methods implemented by HEIs in the MIMAROPA region. This research provides a framework for the sustainable delivery of quality instruction that links the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum from the perspectives of faculty members and student leaders. In doing so, it offers a model that teachers and administrators can adopt in the event of another disruptive crisis in academia.

Statement of Problem

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How do student leaders describe their experiences regarding the sustainability of instructional practices in MIMAROPA State Universities and Colleges during the new normal?
2. What instructional model can be proposed based on the findings to enhance sustainable education in MIMAROPA State Universities and Colleges during the new normal?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a Qualitative Descriptive Design with a Phenomenological Approach, combined with a Design and Development Research (DDR) framework. The qualitative descriptive design with a phenomenological approach aimed to explore and describe the lived experiences of student leaders regarding the sustainability of instructional practices in MIMAROPA State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) during the new normal. This approach effectively addressed the first research question by focusing on understanding and interpreting participants' perspectives, making phenomenology ideal for capturing their subjective experiences. Meanwhile, the Design and Development Research (DDR) framework was utilized to create and propose an instructional model based on the findings derived from the qualitative data. This approach aligned with the second research question, which focused on developing a framework or model through a systematic process involving needs assessment, model development, and evaluation. Together, these methodologies provided a comprehensive approach to understanding instructional sustainability and designing a model to enhance sustainable education practices in the region.

Population and Sampling

The study employed purposive sampling [1] and convenience sampling techniques to recruit participants. Google Forms and interactive platforms were utilized to disseminate forms and gather data from the selected respondents. The study focused on crafting a sustainable model for the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of instruction among SUCs in MIMAROPA. Five participants were selected from Western Philippines University (WPU) in Palawan, Mindoro State University in Mindoro, and Marinduque State College in Marinduque, with at least five

student leaders from each university. Data collection occurred between September 2021 and October 2022, covering proposal approval, implementation, and subsequent data analysis for presentation and conclusions.

Instrumentation

An interview guide was used to gather data from the student leaders, focusing on their perceptions of the instructional practices in their respective universities. The focus group discussions (FGDs) utilized open-ended questions designed to assess the perceptions and adaptations of student leaders regarding instructional delivery in the new normal.

In adherence to COVID-19 protocols and IATF guidelines, the data collection process was facilitated through technology. Interviews were recorded using audio recorders, and phone calls were used for follow-up questions.

Validation of Instruments

The research instruments underwent validation based on school protocols for validating research tools. Expert feedback and pilot testing ensured the reliability and effectiveness of the instruments.

Research Environment

A comfortable and supportive research environment was established, enabling participants to share their thoughts and experiences openly, without fear or pressure.

Research Participants

The study involved 15 student leaders from three SUCs in MIMAROPA—5 participants from Western Philippines University (WPU) in Palawan, 5 participants from Mindoro State University, and 5 participants from Marinduque State College. The selection process ensured the inclusion of diverse perspectives from various institutions. The data collection spanned September 2021 to October 2022, covering all stages from research proposal approval to implementation and data analysis.

Data Collection Techniques

Before data collection, the instruments were subjected to validity and reliability tests to ensure their effectiveness. Interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were scheduled, and data were gathered through the transcription of recorded narratives and observations.

The study utilized qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. In this phase, in-depth interviews and FGDs were conducted with student leaders to gain insights into instructional sustainability practices. The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis, which helped identify key patterns and emerging themes.

In the subsequent phase, the focus shifted to model development, specifically using the DDR (Design-Develop-Refine) approach. The insights gathered in Phase 1 served as the foundation for conceptualizing and designing an instructional model aimed at promoting sustainability. To ensure the model's validity and effectiveness, experts, including education specialists, were consulted for feedback and validation of the proposed design.

Trustworthiness of Data

To maintain rigor, the study followed four key criteria: suitability, practicality, significance, and adaptability [7]. The criterion of fit ensured that the identified themes and categories corresponded accurately with the data [5]. Additionally, these emerging themes and categories were evaluated against existing literature to confirm their relevance and applicability.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were strictly followed throughout the study. Participants were provided with complete information about the research purpose and their roles. Informed consent [12] was secured after explaining the study objectives. Participants retained the right to withdraw at any stage, and their questions were answered transparently.

Data Analysis

Thematic coding was employed for data analysis. Line-by-line and word-by-word coding techniques were applied to separate dissimilar ideas and cluster similar responses. Constant comparison methods enabled the formation of

concepts and categories, with saturation achieved through iterative data analysis. This approach ensured comprehensive interpretation and meaningful organization of the collected data.

RESULT

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the experiences and challenges faced by student leaders in state universities across MIMAROPA regarding newly implemented academic practices in the new normal. Their experiences with instructional practices during this period are presented in a descriptive narrative format.

Student leaders from various institutions voluntarily shared their perspectives on the changes in the education system brought about by the new normal. Their responses reflected a range of emotions and reactions, particularly concerning the instructional adjustments made by their instructors. To guide the discussion, the research utilized questions categorized into three areas: instructional preparation, implementation, and evaluation. From these categories, key themes emerged, highlighting the respondents' experiences, including consideration and empathy, convenience and sufficiency, adaptation and challenges, responsiveness, and instructor feedback.

Instructional Preparation

Student leaders were asked to share their experiences regarding how their instructors prepared for lessons in the new normal. The initial observation of instructional preparation took place in their classes. It is essential for instructors to be well-prepared, equipping themselves with relevant readings and research materials to enhance their lessons. However, instructional preparation in the new normal differed from previous practices. Instructors underwent a series of institutional training sessions focused on utilizing various online platforms and developing learning modules.

Through interviews and focus group discussions, student leaders described different ways their instructors adapted to this new mode of teaching. Data saturation was reached after interviewing eight out of fifteen student leaders. Four of them expressed the following insights:

P3: "Based on the survey conducted among students to determine the most suitable method of delivering instruction, we have only experienced two teaching approaches during the new normal learning setup."

P6: "Yes, a survey was conducted among vaccinated students to ensure a well-equipped and comfortable classroom environment."

P10: "Our instructors are highly skilled in technology and advanced in their teaching methods. I believe this is due to the intensive training they underwent before classes began."

P14: "On the first day of school, our professor took time to learn about our personal backgrounds. She asked us to introduce ourselves and share our experiences during the pandemic before proceeding with the lesson."

The participants' responses highlight that instructors took necessary steps to prepare for their classes. As part of this preparation, they conducted surveys to determine the most suitable teaching method for their students. Additionally, they gathered information about their students' backgrounds to design lessons and activities tailored to their needs while also gaining insight into their personal circumstances. One participant noted that instructors underwent extensive training in new technologies, allowing them to effectively adapt to various teaching approaches, including modular and blended learning, based on student preferences.

This instructional preparation aligns with research emphasizing the need for higher education institutions in the Philippines to transition courses to online platforms as a precaution against potential future epidemics [8]. Similarly, studies have stressed the importance of equipping instructors with online teaching competencies, including planning, implementation, and student assessment, through specialized training programs to enhance electronic course delivery [2].

Based on the participants' experiences, instructors should be well-prepared for their lessons throughout the semester. Regardless of the teaching method preferred by students, educators need to undergo training and seminars on emerging technologies to keep pace with the evolving education system.

Instructors also took the time to understand their students' backgrounds and current situations to assess their needs. This allowed them to design lesson objectives that aligned with both the students' circumstances and the intended

learning outcomes. Setting clear objectives is a key aspect of instructional preparation. Educators must ensure that these objectives are achieved by the end of each discussion. However, given the challenges of the new normal, instructors had to make adjustments and modify learning objectives to effectively reach their teaching goals despite the limitations.

Five participants shared similar insights regarding this practice. Some of their statements include:

P3: "We are well-informed about the lesson objectives. Before the first day of classes, our professor explained the goals of the lessons."

P11: "Before starting the lesson, our instructor always presents the learning objectives. These are consistently shown on the PowerPoint slides and discussed before moving on to the main lesson."

P15: "I understand that learning objectives should be stated before the discussion begins. They are also included in the lesson plan, serving as a guide to ensure structured and effective teaching."

The participants' responses indicate that instructors continue to prepare and present learning objectives in their classes, ensuring that students are aware of the goals they need to achieve. Understanding these objectives helps students better comprehend the activities assigned, even amid the challenges brought by the pandemic.

This aligns with the idea that instructional preparation requires educators to have a strong grasp of content and pedagogy, set clear learning outcomes, utilize available resources, design structured lessons, and develop appropriate student assessments [2]. Additionally, it has been emphasized that higher education institutions should implement activities that facilitate the direct application of acquired knowledge in society [13].

Careful planning of learning objectives is essential for instructors. Based on the participants' statements, they recognize the significance of clearly defined objectives in guiding their learning experience.

Instructional Implementation

A key aspect of the new normal in education was the implementation of instruction. Participants shared their experiences on how instructors managed to conduct classes despite the challenges posed by distance learning and the risks of COVID-19. Many expressed that they genuinely felt their instructors' concern and support during online classes.

The researcher identified *consideration* and *sympathy* as key elements in how instructors responded to students' diverse situations. Participants noted that their instructors demonstrated consideration by inquiring about their personal circumstances and preferences before the semester or classes began. Sympathy, on the other hand, was evident when students encountered difficulties such as poor internet connectivity or other barriers to completing their coursework. Instructors showed understanding by extending deadlines and providing supplementary activities to help students keep up with their lessons.

These sentiments regarding instructional implementation are reflected in the participants' statements:

P6: "Yes, most of our professors take our personal backgrounds into account. They show support and empathy, especially when we feel stressed or overwhelmed."

P13: "On a positive note, the new normal in education has effectively utilized technology in various ways, but it also requires careful consideration of factors such as internet stability and financial constraints."

Based on the participants' responses, four out of fifteen recognized that their instructors' consideration and empathy were among the best instructional practices. These qualities reflect how instructors adapted to the new normal and supported students despite the challenges of distance learning. Participants agreed that their instructors provided the necessary encouragement for them to continue their education during the pandemic. Beyond academic instruction, educators also played a crucial role in addressing students' emotional well-being, particularly during moments of stress and anxiety. Because of this sense of understanding and care, students felt valued, supported, and included.

This aligns with research emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the challenges in implementing learner-centered pedagogy and the need to consider instructors' concerns as they adapt their teaching methods [9]. Additionally, previous studies highlight that students often struggle to overcome difficulties on their own [14].

However, having an instructor who demonstrates empathy and guidance can make a significant impact on their learning experience. Instructors who show genuine concern and understanding become valuable sources of support, especially during challenging times.

It is recommended that educators continue to practice consideration and empathy when implementing new instructional approaches. By fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment, students will feel a stronger sense of belonging, increasing their motivation and overall academic success in the new normal setting.

Another notable practice in the new normal was the implementation of flexible learning modes. Participants shared that their instructors utilized various instructional methods, including e-learning, modular, and blended approaches. The majority preferred modular learning, which required instructors to develop well-structured learning materials. This method allowed students to experience flexibility in their study schedules, making it a convenient option for many. Participant 12 expressed:

P12: *"We use modules. Our teachers provide us with a complete set of materials for each subject, including activities and quizzes. It is convenient for us since we don't need to go to school for face-to-face lectures."*

However, while modular learning offered flexibility, some participants pointed out its limitations. Participant 13 highlighted one of the challenges:

P13: *"Modular learning is sometimes insufficient because there are instances when instructions are unclear."*

Five participants have similar statements. The participants' statements highlight the impact of instructors' new normal teaching methods on student learning. While most students preferred modular learning over e-learning, they faced challenges due to the lack of direct instructor interaction. With the distance between students and teachers, certain instructions were unclear, leading to difficulties in fully understanding the material. Some participants noted that despite the flexibility and convenience of modular learning, their learning outcomes were insufficient. This was primarily because instructors simply provided the materials without further explanation or engagement. As a result, students expected some level of discussion or clarification, which was missing due to the nature of the modular setup.

This reveals a significant limitation in modular learning. If instructors cannot ensure that students grasp the material effectively, the resources they prepare may not serve their intended purpose. Therefore, convenience and adequacy depend on the participants' experiences with different learning modes during the pandemic.

Beyond the availability of learning materials, factors such as adequacy, relevance, and usability play a crucial role in effective teaching and learning [10]. Instructional resources should not only be accessible but also sufficient and well-designed to support meaningful learning experiences [6].

On the other hand, despite the various challenges and drawbacks of the new normal learning system, modular learning offers a significant advantage—time flexibility. This approach allows students to set their own schedules for completing activity sheets and required submissions. Additionally, it provides flexibility in terms of location, enabling students to learn at their own pace and in their preferred environment. While modular learning may not be suitable for all types of learners, some students find it highly effective and beneficial [4].

Given these challenges, it is recommended that instructors and school administrators actively monitor student learning to ensure its effectiveness. Regular assessments should be conducted to evaluate whether students are truly grasping the material. Additionally, educators should explore alternative teaching strategies to enhance student engagement and comprehension.

One of the key experiences participants shared about the new normal was the need for continuous adjustment while managing various distractions. The sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, often described as an unpredictable crisis, led to school closures and disrupted traditional learning. This sudden shift created confusion, unpreparedness, and a significant cultural shock across all aspects of the educational process. As a response, instructors had to refine and upgrade their teaching methods to accommodate students' learning needs. Meanwhile, students were expected to adapt by attending online lectures, reading learning materials independently, and completing module-based activities.

While instructors were encouraged to modify their teaching approaches based on students' learning preferences, the transition was far from simple. Both students and educators constantly had to adjust while minimizing distractions. The concepts of *adjustment* and *distraction* were particularly emphasized by Participant 4, who stated:

P4: *"No. To be honest, the new normal education system was a cultural shock. We were used to classroom-based learning, where teachers and students actively interacted. However, in the new normal, this interaction was significantly limited, which created a gap in the teaching-learning process."*

The statements above highlight the significant learning adjustments students had to make during the transition to the new normal. Three participants shared similar experiences, emphasizing how they were accustomed to traditional face-to-face classes before the sudden shift to online and modular learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike their instructors, who received multiple training sessions on digital platforms, mental health awareness, and strategies for accommodating remote learning, students were left waiting for guidance. They faced this abrupt change without adequate preparation—physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and financially.

During the adjustment period, students had little time to adapt as they struggled with various teaching approaches introduced simultaneously by their instructors. The overwhelming nature of these changes resulted in confusion, exhaustion, and cultural shock. Participant 14 described this experience:

P14: *"We were not ready for the new normal learning setup. Personally, I found it difficult to adjust because, unlike teachers, we didn't receive any training. Imagine—our home became our classroom. There were too many distractions. For me, it was not an ideal environment for learning."*

Two other participants shared similar sentiments, stating that their home environment was not conducive to learning. While some students appreciated the opportunity to spend more time with their families and manage their schedules, distractions at home remained a challenge. The shift from a structured classroom setting to a home-based learning environment required significant adaptation.

P14: *"There are many children in our house—my nieces and nephews—and for me, it's not a suitable place for studying."*

P15: *"We, as students, were placed in an unfamiliar learning space. One advantage of the new normal classroom-based studies is that it somehow restores the essence of true schooling, where learning happens naturally. Still, I prefer the structured classroom environment."*

Beyond dealing with distractions, students also expressed feeling forced into an unfamiliar educational setup with no other choice but to comply. As a result, they had to make constant adjustments while striving to minimize distractions in this new mode of learning.

Assessment of Instruction

As previously discussed, participants shared their appreciation for the consideration and empathy shown by their instructors at the beginning of the semester. However, as the new normal learning setup progressed, students also encountered challenges, such as constant adjustments and distractions. The shift in instructional methods required commitment from everyone involved, especially instructors, who played a crucial role in guiding students through the transition. With these changes came new expectations for both educators and learners.

Despite the efforts of many instructors, some participants expressed disappointment with the way certain educators handled the evaluation of instruction. Below are some of their statements:

P5: *"Sometimes, they don't do anything at all. They just ignore us."*

P10: *"Honestly, it's frustrating. Most of my teachers don't even teach, and when we ask questions, they either don't respond or give unclear answers. Sometimes, they just like our messages or leave them on 'seen' in Messenger."*

Three other participants echoed similar concerns, stating that some instructors were unresponsive, failed to provide explanations, and were often unreachable. While many educators adapted to new forms of communication, there were still a few who remained absent and disconnected from their students. Participants described experiencing poor levels of engagement from certain instructors, leaving them feeling unsupported in their learning.

When instructors fail to respond, the transmission of knowledge becomes ineffective, ultimately leading to instructional failure. The role of educators as facilitators of learning is crucial, and when they do not fulfill this responsibility, students struggle to meet their academic goals. The findings align with studies highlighting the disruptions caused by the global lockdown of educational institutions, which led to challenges in internal assessments and the replacement or cancellation of public examinations [3].

Educators must ensure active communication with their students. If instructors remain unresponsive, it becomes the responsibility of school administrators to monitor and hold them accountable. Teachers are well aware of their duties, as these are emphasized during training and professional development sessions. They must not lose sight of their commitment to education and should consistently provide the guidance and support their students need.

Regarding the responsiveness of instructors, participants were asked about their experiences with the evaluative practices used in the new normal setup. Their responses varied, with some expressing dissatisfaction over the lack of feedback from their instructors. After interviewing five participants, a common theme emerged. Participant 3 openly stated:

P3: *"To be honest, we rarely receive feedback. It just depends on the teacher."*

This statement highlights the inconsistencies in how instructors evaluate student learning. Providing feedback is a crucial part of instruction, yet some students reported that their instructors either rarely offered it or completely neglected this responsibility. Some participants also struggled to reach their instructors, making it difficult to seek clarification or improvement. A particularly striking response came from one participant, who shared how dismissive some instructors had been:

P8: *"No feedback. They just said, 'Learn on your own' or 'It's up to you.'"*

Similar sentiments were echoed by five other participants. This aligns with survey results indicating that instructor implementation ranked fifth in effectiveness, which negatively impacted the quality of teaching. The lack of attention and engagement from some educators suggests that they may have lost sight of their core mission as instructors. Teaching should be approached holistically, not merely as a mechanical process. While external factors may have contributed to this lack of motivation, instructors must maintain their commitment to student learning, especially in challenging times.

On a positive note, the majority of participants acknowledged that their instructors made efforts to provide consistent feedback. Two participants shared their experiences:

P9: *"Our professor conducts assessments during instruction to measure our learning."*

P13: *"Yes, we receive feedback through assessments."*

Providing feedback is essential for student growth and motivation. Despite the rapid changes in education brought about by COVID-19, the World Bank (2020) emphasized the importance of giving feedback to students, maintaining open communication with caregivers, and reporting progress to local education authorities to ensure effective learning. In educational psychology, feedback is a critical factor in learning, as it directly influences student achievement.

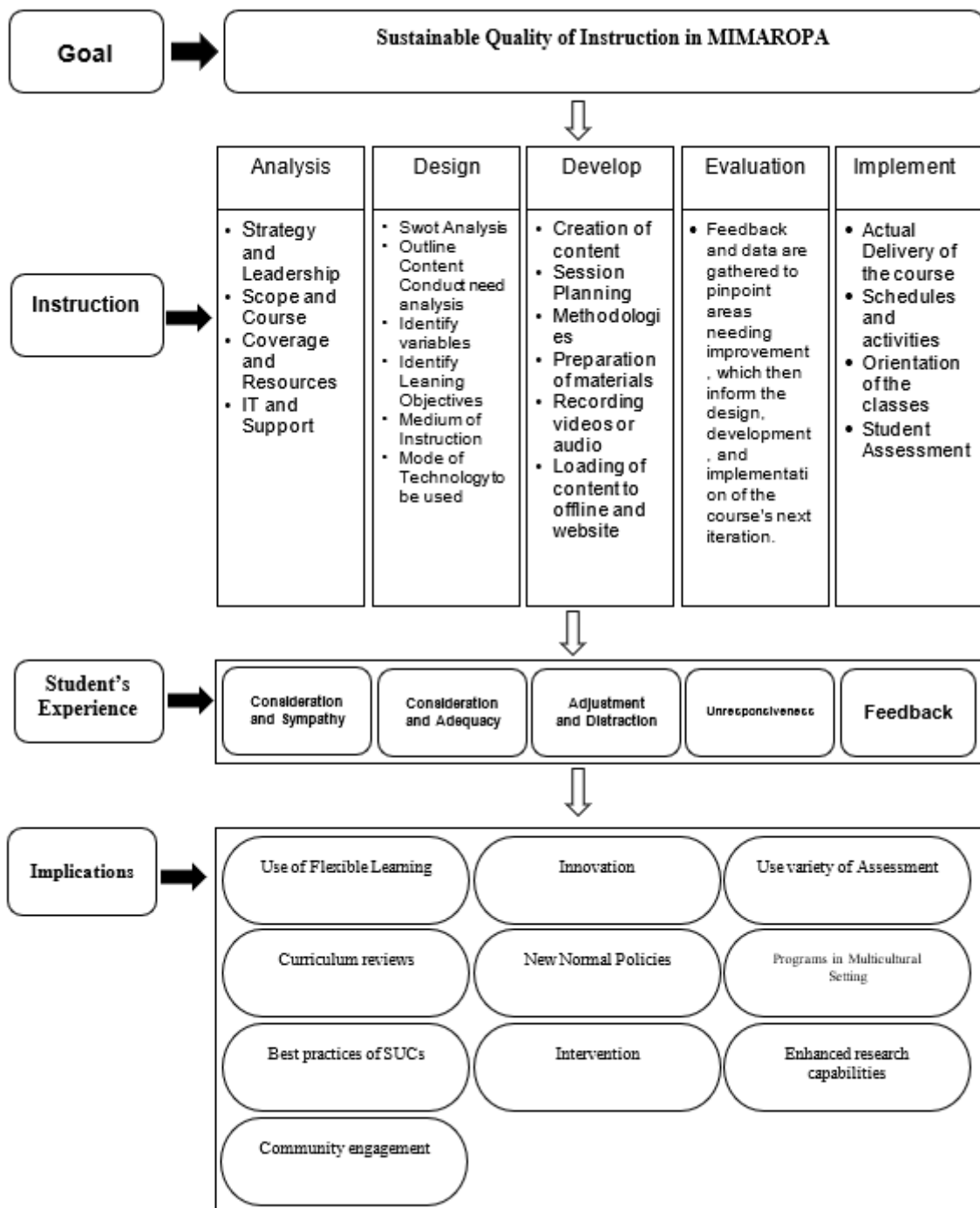
To improve instructional practices, educators must prioritize responsiveness and timely feedback. Effective instructors recognize the value of constructive feedback in guiding students toward success.

The sustainability of instruction in state universities across MIMAROPA under the new normal can be seen through the adjustments made by both instructors and students. While there have been notable efforts from educators, there are still instances where some have been unresponsive, inconsistent in their teaching methods, and insufficient in providing feedback.

From the perspectives of student leaders, their experiences with instructors throughout the pandemic can be summarized through key themes: consideration and empathy, convenience and adequacy, adjustment and distractions, unresponsiveness, and feedback. These aspects collectively shape the assessment of instructional practices in the new normal, highlighting both the challenges and areas for improvement in higher education.

SUSTAINABLE INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THREE STATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE NEW NORMAL

This framework explains the flow of the strategies in the pandemic to sustain quality education.



In considering the findings and recommendations of the sustainability on the planning, execution, and assessment of instruction in state universities in MIMAROPA, the researcher's key recommendation is the proposed framework.

The proposed framework starts off with five stages that determined the practices of three SUCs in order to sustain instruction in the new normal and highlighted those practices. It also revealed the challenges for the sustainability of instruction in SUCs in MIMAROPA in the new normal based on the information collected from students during the interview. The implications of the proposed framework, which addressed the instructors and students' experiences in the new standard of learning was discussed thoroughly in this chapter.

In the Philippines, state universities achieve excellence and quality education by setting goals. They promote holistic program of instruction with quality instructors and innovative pedagogy to achieve the sustainable quality of education. The instructors then have continuous professional development that promote the quality and excellence of their institutions. This had been the practice across the state universities in the country. However, due to abrupt changes brought by pandemic, the face-to-face arrangement inside the classroom and physical performances and outputs given by the instructors were challenged and needed to be adjusted according to the goals of the state university in the new normal. Students' learning needs became the priority for sustainable quality education. That is why, state universities prepared learning continuity plan to bridge the gap due to lockdown.

State universities identified and reviewed their teaching practices, pedagogy value, and instruction. They have strict assessment on their instruction focusing on its five dimensions such as analysis, design, preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

Based on the implementations of adjustment practices due to pandemic, the state universities became patient to see and test how effective are the new normal practices. Then, there emerged the students' experiences. They have different reaction towards the changes as well as the new normal practices. Student experiences are aspects: empathy and understanding, accessibility and sufficiency, adaptation and challenges, lack of responsiveness, and evaluation. Students are keen observant of the changes from the beginning of the online class of their instructors, to the middle period of distribution of modules, to the things that they observe if they have confusion or queries, up to the ways the instructors give feedback. The honest and frank reactions and experiences of the students to the new normal practices lead to the innovation of instruction and innovative assessment of the instructors.

This framework presents different suggestions for sustainability of instructions in the new normal based on the findings. The researcher recommended that instructors should utilize variety of technology options available and accessible to students at home. It is necessary that an instructor makes consideration on the economic-situation of the students. There were instances that students coming from far-flung places could not afford to purchase telco products of different networks. Instructors must connect with the students individually to show more consideration and empathy, provide collaboration, and socialization opportunities despite online or distance learning.

From the students' experiences, the new normal describes the students' educational involvement with their instructors. There, they experience considerations and sympathy. Instructors of the state universities were naturally teachers by heart since they help their students cope with the new normal situations. Being considerate is one of the characteristics of instructors dreamt by the students. Instructors need to sympathize to their students particularly during pandemic where most students experience difficulties in terms of financial, mental, social, and spiritual domains. Instructors should have positive vibes that are contagious for this kind of unexpected situation.

Students need convenience and adequacy in the teaching strategies inculcated by their instructors. The teaching strategies of the instructors should be suitable to the learning needs of the students and at the same appropriate in their level. Students need that their learning is accessible to assure development of their competence and skills. In the new normal, some of the strategies and activities are not convenient. To achieve this, the instructors should be equipped with trainings and workshops for them to be aware of the students' learning needs. On the other hand, the adjustment and distraction of the students were also emphasized in this framework. The students made adjustment as well as their instructors. Adjustment during the time of pandemic was necessary in order to cope with the situation. However, the students get easily distracted because of their learning environment. Students were learning in their homes or sometimes in a place where internet connectivity is available. The preparation they made to cope with the challenges in the new normal was not easy. That is why there were many factors that lead to the distractions. This included instructors who were not responsive to their queries. There were many questions arise in the students' mind that they thought their instructors could help but in the previous situations, there instructors set limitations and became responsive to their students. Instructors should know how to identify the learning needs of the students and should know how to address each need. Giving feedback is also one of the important experiences of the students. Instructors should give necessary feedback for the students improve their learning. One way of improving students' performance is through their instructors who made a reaction and comment on their outputs.

These students' experiences during the pandemic suggest that despite the changes and challenges in the new normal, state universities, teachers and students work hand in hand to sustain the quality education.

This study extracted the following implications to education:

1. Use of flexible learning. Teachers utilize different and new ways of reaching out the students and give their learning needs. Through the use of flexible learning, the students do not stop from learning. Flexible learning breaks the wall in the education system that brought by the pandemic. This introduces different opportunities to the learners as well as teachers, who should adopt teaching, methods for the modern world. This do not limit everyone from learning new things despite the pandemic.
2. Innovation. Since pandemic, instructors innovated their teaching strategies and approach to continue education despite the interruption of face-to-face classes. Instructors may focus on skills and process. The state colleges and universities made a learning continuity plan encouraging their instructors to innovate their teaching methods. There were series of seminars and workshops that helped their instructors cope with the new normal settings including innovations of the techniques and strategies that were appropriate to their students.
3. Use of variety of assessment. The new normal brought change in the educational system. This made the instructors to adopt to the new normal setting. Adaptation involved the use of variety of assessment. Since the arise of innovative strategies and teaching methods, instructors find opportunities to utilize different assessments for their students. This assessment evaluated the knowledge and performances of the students through online or modular setting. The utilization of variety of assessment is always applicable to whatever situation the students can have. Lesson should be preplanned and ready to teach.
4. Curriculum reviews. This serves as basis for reviewing the existing programs and curriculum. The pandemic leads to different realization that need to be addressed for all learners. It identified learning issues that instructors and students need to face to give them quality teaching despite the different challenges in the new normal. Curriculum review is necessary to align the activities for the students to learn despite their current situation.
5. New normal policies. Imposing policies in the new normal is important. The state colleges and universities essentially prepare policies that guided the instructors and students in the new normal. Without these new normal policies, the state universities and colleges could not be able to cope up with this challenging time. This is very helpful since it reflects the actions and strategies made by the SUCs in facing pandemic.
6. Programs in multicultural settings. Based on the pandemic experiences, it is essential that state universities and college design program that will not limit the potential of students. The pandemic reveals the diversity of learners on terms of social and economic status, by that, another program should be designed for students with diverse cultures and settings.
7. Best practices of SUCs. The state universities and colleges have their best practices in surviving the pandemic. These best practices made the SUCs stronger and sustained quality education. Other SUCs can conduct benchmarking to look for the best practices they can follow to combat the learning issues brought by pandemic.
8. Intervention. From the issues and problems identified in this study, the state universities and colleges should have interventions focusing on the learning needs of the students. Action plans, strategic plannings, and learning continuity plans are some of interventions of the SUCs. The SUCs survived without compensating the learning of their students.
9. Enhanced research capabilities. Instructors in this time are more exposed to research. The pandemic made them realized the importance of having research as bases for many innovations and interventions that should be implemented in the unexpected event like pandemic. Instructors should be more engaged in researches.
10. Active community engagement. Part of the professional growth is being active in the community. This activity laid low in time of pandemic due to lockdowns. But after it was lifted, the state universities find this opportunity to build up strong relationship with the community by extending help and support to those affected by the situation. State universities became more active by volunteering and building community pantries that believed to be extended to help families in the community.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the experiences of sustainability in instruction at State Universities in MIMAROPA during the new normal. Through the perspectives of student leaders, key factors such as empathy, convenience, adequacy, adjustments to distractions, responsiveness, and feedback were identified as central to how instructors navigated the challenges of delivering instruction in the pandemic context.

Based on these insights, an instructional model was developed to reflect the current state of the educational system and highlight the changes in practices and strategies implemented during the pandemic. This model is designed to sustain educational goals in the face of ongoing challenges and evolving circumstances.

The proposed instructional model emphasizes flexible learning, instructional innovation, diverse assessment strategies, curriculum reviews, multicultural programs, best practices, and targeted interventions. It also promotes enhanced research capabilities and active community engagement to ensure sustainable education in MIMAROPA State Universities and Colleges. This model addresses the needs of students, fostering adaptability, empathy, and quality education in an ever-changing educational landscape.

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