

Management practices in the implementation of police curriculum through blended learning

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Abstract. Few studies were found to have focused on curriculum implementation and management in police education vis-à-vis utilization of blended learning. Thus, this study, utilizing the embedded mixed-method design, determined the commonly employed management practices of the police training centres in implementing their curriculum through the blended learning approach in the Philippines and further identified the challenges encountered during the implementation. This study revealed that training centres have commonly employed management practices in classroom instruction, examination administration, non-academic activities, and management. Likewise, they effectively achieve the curriculum goals, deliver the subject matter, and provide learning experiences. However, minor challenges such as technological concerns, financial constraints, and human resource concerns emerged. Henceforth, providing appropriate infrastructure, promoting personnel welfare, enhancing learning experiences, investigating the causes of challenges, and adopting adaptive ways were suggested.

Keywords: management practices, police curriculum, blended learning

1. Introduction

Curriculum is necessary in any school, particularly in order to achieve quality education. Anderson and Rogan [4] described that a curriculum's essential role in education does not stick simply to the syllabus. Various researchers identified curriculum components, and these include aims, vision, and objectives; subject matter or content; learning experiences; and assessment and evaluation [4, 34, 60, 95]. Aims pertain to statements intended to be achieved and are stated generally [81], while curriculum goals are usually classified based on Bloom's Taxonomy [66]. Further, the subject matter or content refers to the scope of discussion. Cumyn and Harris [26] explicated the necessity of defining the content by stating various outcomes in addition to ways of appropriately assisting and facilitating learning and improving testing and assessment, among other purposes.

Consequently, schools and institutions adopt varied approaches and practices in implementing school curricula and programs, hoping to add to the knowledge gained and achieve the planned objectives of the process [33]. These approaches and activities support the different curriculum components. They further contribute to behavioural changes such as improved communication [8, 18], student engagement [38], and increased self-confidence [15]. Examples of these activities and approaches include recognition of prior learning (RPL) [15], meaning attachment to what is being taught [33], interactive discussions, and oral narratives [37]. Other examples are problem-

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based learning [38], competency-based approach [61], apprenticeship [50], and integration of principles [52].

Relatively, the success of schools aligns with the curriculum components and the approaches embedded in the teaching and learning processes. It further comes with the management's approach toward implementation practices. De Smul et al. [27] found out in their study that schools labelled as successful had a shared vision, ensuring ample opportunities for the development of school employees and a participative community with shared responsibility within and among the employees. They further emphasized that the support given by the leaders of these schools made an impact. Such emphasis is an affirmation to Hockett [42], who revealed that the principal or school head has a significant role in the successful implementation of new school initiatives, as well as to Cobanoglu and Yurek [23], who emphasized the relationship between the achievement of school goals and how effective administrators are in curriculum implementation. Supervisors provide support emphasizing planning and presenting the lesson. Besides, support for human resources, particularly for teachers, would significantly contribute to the successful implementation of programs [87].

On another note, external factors, such as government standards and policies, are also considered in the curriculum design and implementation. Therefore, even in initiating innovations, institutions still need to consider the educational guidelines imposed by the government and ensure that none is violated [24, 77].

Consequently, the management of educational institutions could be very taxing and costly as managing curriculum implementation also poses challenges. These challenges include inadequate school resources, resulting in delayed and ineffective program implementation. Akar and Şen [2] specified financial constraints as a challenge. Institutions work on a yearly or periodic budget; hence, they must stretch out financial resource allotment for a given period to provide quality service. However, trying to achieve excellence while times are changing may result in additional costs being required or incurred during the implementation of programs. This would then imply the exhaustion of resource utilization and could test the managers and administrations. The challenge could push them to be dynamic, visionary, and pragmatic to address the concern while helping the institution reach its goal.

Hence, with the desire to address challenges and deliver unhampered services to learners, educational approaches continue to emerge through the years. One approach is blended learning, which has become popular in 21st-century education and the digital era [84]. It combines face-to-face and online instruction [13, 65]. Chen et al. [19] described blended learning as an integrated self-learning model that involves both online and in the classroom.

The utilization of blended learning is motivated by various factors. One factor is the COVID-19 pandemic [40], which abruptly accelerated the utilization of blended learning [93]. One solution schools utilize is to employ a blended learning approach, as face-to-face learning is limited and entails strict health protocols. Though this approach has been known and utilized by some educational institutions, its use has increased during the pandemic [3]. Since the worldwide outbreak forced schools to find options and alternatives to deliver learning using available tools and technological innovations [64], blended learning became popular, having to offer a wide range of models supporting flexibility, though dependent on technology availability [3].

Likewise, researchers pointed out various educational advantages of using blended learning.

Angelone, Warner and Zydney [5] mentioned that learning done synchronously through a blended approach could contribute to flexibility [56] as well as the accessibility of programs and could bring the potential to increase the presence of participants. Moreover, Prifti [69] revealed that online activities have enhanced students' critical thinking. Sefriani et al. [75] found that blended learning is effective, especially with applications like Edmodo. Hence, it could be used as a solution. Such findings are similar to Milad's recommendation [59], which highlights the utilization of blended learning in enhancing students' academic writing skills. Most significantly, if blended learning courses are designed well, learners could gain understanding and improve their learning efficiency [19].

Trends in online and blended learning approaches also penetrate police and military education. During the pandemic, police training was seriously affected; hence, police institutions sought online and blended learning approaches to continue providing training programs [12]. Scoppio and Covell [74] found out that the system within is not immune to the educational trends in the educational approaches and changes or integration of technology; hence, changes are occurring in the system as the police and military institutions embrace the learning technologies. It was further highlighted that considering a blended learning approach in delivering law enforcement training could be wise as the officers could be better trained while avoiding traditional training costs [51].

However, blended learning's popularity did not spare the approach from perceived struggles and identified challenges [90]. MacLeod, Swart and Paul [54] mentioned the comparison of face-to-face and online teaching-learning or instruction. Blicek et al. [14] explained that schools face challenges implementing, monitoring, assessing, and ensuring or levelling up a course or program quality through utilizing blended learning. Changes in technology pose a challenge to both staff and students of schools [74]. Not all teachers and learners are well-versed in using technology and learning management systems that are rapidly introduced to them to cope with the sudden change in teaching and learning approach due to the pandemic [7].

Moreover, other technology-related factors, such as poor internet connection, also arise as these impact learner experiences in their online programs [30]. Even in military schools, technological challenges are experienced; hence, preparedness should be ensured [74]. There have been difficulties in submitting examinations, participation issues, and online illiteracy in the shift to online learning [55]. O'Connor, Mortimer and Bond [62] pointed out the challenge of integrating online features with the face-to-face elements of a curriculum. Another identified challenge is the additional cost needed for other administrative support [62].

In the Philippine context, Chua and Archog [20] refuted some of the identified challenges. Their study revealed that participants in online classrooms are satisfied. The reported perceptions indicated satisfaction with using virtual classrooms in a Philippine Air Force (PAF) course. Respondents further reported comfortability in using such learning technology as they can learn wherever. The positive response is affirmed by a study conducted by Liashenko and Hnapovska [53], which found a positive response from the students who experienced blended learning. They also feel more motivated to learn, giving a clearer view of achieving efficiency in blended learning. The mentioned results affirmed the findings of Ebadi and Ghuchi [32] that concluded the attribution of a blended learning approach towards positive learning.

Though blended learning is generally encouraged, Zydney et al. [96] revealed that decisions to implement a blended approach should consider reasonable pedagogical principles as well as

the availability of technology, skills of teachers, and other considerations like the quality of service, system, information, and course [76]. Using information technology, if used extensively and appropriately, could also help address the challenges posed by employing such an approach [6]. Likewise, self-regulation skills correlated to learning effectiveness in blended classrooms [84] should also be considered. This is similar to a study by Cigdem and Ozturk [21], which revealed that self-direction, among other factors like self-efficacy, is the strongest predictor of the participants' course achievements. Thus, learners and teachers must take precautions and conduct self-assessments regarding their preparedness for utilizing blended learning.

1.1. Research gap

Blended learning has been a trending and highlighted approach used in teaching and learning [39, 74, 76]. Its popularity motivated studies to assess its implementation in educational institutions [44], especially during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Relatively, several studies focused on curriculum implementation, planning, and development. However, very few examined curriculum implementation management practices in military or police education [11, 17, 72], particularly with blended learning. Further, very few studies were found to have focused on the military environment or similar situations, especially in the Philippine setting [20]. Therefore, this paper helps fill the gap and contributes to existing studies or literature by focusing on the management practices in implementing a police education curriculum via blended learning in the Philippines.

1.2. Research objectives

This study aimed to assess or determine the management practices of the training centres for police non-commissioned officers in implementing its curriculum to the police students through the blended learning approach. Specifically, the research objectives are (1) identify the most commonly employed management practices in implementing the police curriculum via a blended learning approach, (2) determine effective management practices in implementing the curriculum or delivering training and education services through the blended learning approach, (3) identify the management challenges encountered in implementing the police curriculum via blended learning, and (4) recommend management practices that can help in enhancing the training and education of police officers in the new normal.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This research study used an embedded mixed methods design to explore more about management practices in implementing police curriculum via a blended learning approach, for little is known from the cited studies. Wardale, Cameron and Li [92] mentioned that the mixed methods approach provides a deeper understanding and appreciation of the topic intended to be explored. Specifically, this study utilized an embedded research design. Aggarwal et al. [1] further explained that embedded mixed methods design integrates the quantitative and

qualitative approaches. Having both approaches in one research gives a broader perspective and a comprehensive avenue for interpreting the study results. As Creswell and Creswell [25] described, an embedded approach in mixed method design involves a primary and secondary form of data. The secondary data supported the primary data, though neither integration nor connection was done across the phases during collection. Various educational researchers also utilized this approach as it provided results in both quantitative and qualitative approaches [91], which would help researchers yield a more expansive interpretation and further understand the study results. For this study, the quantitative data mainly dealt with achieving the first three objectives and served as the primary source. In contrast, the qualitative data supported the quantitative data as it helped affirm or refute quantitative results and answered the fourth problem.

2.2. Research participants

Research participants came from selected regional training centres (RTCs) of the National Police Training Institute (NPTI), a government-mandated agency that provides mandatory training courses for police non-commissioned officers in the Philippines. From these training centres, the research utilized 976 survey respondents who were either students or employees of the training centres. The number of respondents found sufficient as supported by the concept in Tchebysheff's theorem as explained by Sivo et al. [79] that for a worst-case scenario, researchers could come up with a standard deviation estimation for the population by getting a fourth of the given range, which depends on the scale used in the questionnaire.

Students were considered since they were the recipients of management practices; hence, their responses were vital in this study. Since they had direct experience with the blended learning implementation of the training centres, their responses also acted as feedback on the actual management practices and their effectiveness. Likewise, the employees, the training staff and the management were considered since their self- assessment and insights were also important. Jug, Jiang and Bean [45] explained the importance of feedback in learning and improving oneself. Feedback could be taken from colleagues as well as from the students. It was also meant to know the gaps between the planned or intended objectives and the actual results or outcomes.

Additionally, eight (8) participants joined the focus group discussions conducted after the survey. Tümen Akyıldız and Ahmed [86] presented that focus group participants usually range from six to twelve. Each participant for the FGD was selected randomly from those who vouched to participate in FGD willingly.

2.3. Instrumentation

Researcher-made questionnaires were primarily used to gather data. Survey questionnaires were utilized to assess the management practices and their effectiveness, and challenges were encountered through indicators with scales indicating the likelihood of the respondents' observations. Such questionnaires were designed based on the read literature and studies, which were also used or cited in this paper. The questionnaire indicators were taken from previous studies and then were grouped based on the categories established based on the focus of this

study. Such questionnaires were then subjected to validity and reliability testing. Teo and Fan [83] emphasized checking the reliability coefficient of a tool before its use. Results revealed that the questionnaires are valid (Aiken's Validity Coefficient of 0.95) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.95, 0.96, and 0.95 for the different questionnaire sections). The questionnaires were then used and presented in the succeeding sections (3.1 and 3.2 with tables 1 to 7).

As for collecting the qualitative data, a focus group discussion (FGD) script was initially prepared. This was to supplement the answers for the first three problems/objectives and to provide answers for the fourth problem. Guide questions also came from the previous studies and literature, though the questions are crafted generally. Moreover, the aide memoire for the FGD included preliminaries (introduction of the facilitator, purpose of the activity, and house rules), a list of open-ended questions with sub-questions to help extract more information deeper than the quantitative result itself, and a portion for the summary of the participants' answers.

2.4. Procedures

Utilization of embedded mixed methods research design guided this research. Before administering the valid and reliable survey questionnaires, the NPTI was informed, and approval was sought before the data gathering. The researchers then coordinated with the training centres and focal persons of the training centres for the data gathering via the online method. A link to the consent and survey form was then given. For the focus group discussion, participants were identified randomly. The researchers understood that not all pre-identified respondents via random selection were available or would want to be part of the discussion; hence, the respondents' availability and preference to join were considered. Online focus group discussions through the Zoom application were conducted. Note-taking and recording of the discussions were done. The aide memoire was used, and follow-up questions were asked. Likewise, the researchers summarized the key points noted and recorded during the discussion and verified them with the participants. The treatment and analysis of the gathered data followed through, as illustrated in 2.5.

2.5. Statistical tool and treatment of data

Descriptive statistics for quantitative analysis and thematic analysis for qualitative analysis was utilized. Descriptive statistics included mean and standard deviation for summarizing and analyzing the common management practices, the effectiveness of management practices, and the challenges encountered during the curriculum implementation via blended learning.

A qualitative thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the qualitative responses collected through FGD. Spiteri [80], in her study, explained thematic analysis as a means that explores the implicit and explicit meanings within the gathered data. With this, the researchers transcribed the FGD recording and reviewed the discussions for familiarization. They also referred to the notes and became familiar with the concepts, perspectives, or points discussed during the FGD. The researchers then identified and labelled the responses with codes representing different concepts or ideas. Initial coding schemes were used. According to Delice [28], coding is an approach to analyzing qualitative data to organize them through themes. After the

preliminary coding, the researchers then resorted to theme generation. The researchers grouped the responses according to common patterns. Related codes were clustered into potential themes. Likewise, at this stage, the codes were refined, those unclear were eliminated, and those similar were merged. Later on, the formulated themes were reviewed. The researchers re-examined the themes compared to the gathered responses and checked whether there was a need to reassign some responses to other themes or sub-themes vis-à-vis this study. Next, the themes were defined and named with finality. The results of the qualitative thematic analysis were used to support the quantitative findings and to reveal answers concerning the research objectives, as reflected in sections 3.3 and 3.4.

2.6. Ethical considerations

Before any data gathering, the researcher sought approval from the director of the National Police Training Institute (NPTI) to utilize selected training centres as the study's locale and gain access to the student information through the training centres' focal person. Moreover, the researchers honoured and acknowledged voluntary participation, which the respondents and participants could opt out of at any time. They were not forced to continue participating if they decided not to. Target respondents were informed first through an online form of the purpose, benefits or advantages, and possible risks they would have in joining the study. Further, personal identifiers were not collected to ensure the anonymity of the respondents.

Additionally, the confidentiality of participants was ensured. Their responses were kept and stored solely for the researcher's access and utilization for this specific research. No other personalities gained access to the data.

Moreover, the proposal for this study was reviewed and approved by Saint Louis University (Baguio City) – Review and Ethics Committee.

3. Results and discussions

The following sections present the results of the data gathering. These are presented based on the research problems.

3.1. Commonly employed management practices in implementing the police curriculum via blended learning approach

Table 1 presents the management practices commonly employed in implementing the police curriculum via a blended learning approach in teaching and classroom instruction. Overall, management practices in implementing the police curriculum via the blended learning approach in teaching and classroom instruction are always practised. Moreover, respondents provided the highest rating (mean=3.58) on the indicators "Classroom procedures, courtesy and decorum are still being enforced and followed" and "Communication and student engagement are promoted for learning as well as help increase self-confidence." On the other hand, the indicator "Intended course learning outcomes are observed and achieved with the blended learning approach of the training centre" is rated the lowest (mean=3.53).

Table 1

Commonly employed management practices in implementing the police curriculum via blended learning approach in terms of teaching and classroom instruction.

Indicators	Mean	SD	DR
1. Classroom procedures, courtesy and decorum are still being enforced and followed.	3.58	0.53	AP
2. Technology and learning platforms or applications are appropriately used to facilitate learning.	3.55	0.52	AP
3. Discussions, interactions and collaborative learning activities are well-planned and implemented.	3.57	0.51	AP
4. Communication and student engagement are promoted for learning and help increase self-confidence.	3.58	0.51	AP
5. Intended course learning outcomes are observed and achieved with the blended learning approach of the training centre.	3.53	0.52	AP
6. Approaches like blended learning enhance students' skills and improve learners' understanding and learning efficiency.	3.54	0.52	AP

Note: DR – Descriptive Rating; SD – Standard Deviation; 3.26-4.00 = Mostly/Always Practiced (AP); 2.51-3.25 = Sometimes Practiced (SoP); 1.76-2.50 = Seldom Practiced (SeP); 1.00-1.75 = Never/Not Practiced (NP).

Added to the survey results are the group discussions conducted with the participants. It was found that various practices were employed in classroom instruction. Student participants reported that their learning was facilitated through online interventions, and discussions were conducted through online platforms such as Zoom application and Viber. They mentioned that the management utilized various platforms to facilitate student training and instruction. They added new management practices, including assigning monitoring personnel or online learning managers and using online platforms for academic activities.

These findings, particularly on the management's constant communication and engagement, conceded to what Rusman [73] mentioned about sharing, one of the best practices in curriculum implementation. Whether the perspective is of the staff or the students, fostering sharing in the classroom is a good practice in the teaching and learning process. This is also consistent with the findings of Kohlström et al. [49] that communication is valuable and essential. It affirms Hallinger and Lu's findings [38] that interactive discussions and student engagement are necessary for curriculum implementation.

On the other hand, concerns relayed by the participants contradict what various researchers pointed out regarding the readiness to use blended learning as an approach. As Rahmat et al. [71] mentioned, technological knowledge is essential in online learning. Henceforth, if the management falls short in practices that promote readiness or technology knowledge of the staff and students, then the implementation of blended learning is affected.

Table 2 displays the management practices commonly employed in implementing the police curriculum via a blended learning approach in terms of the examination administration.

Generally, respondents indicated that management practices in administering examinations are mostly or always practised. This implies that though the training centres diverted from face-to-face to blended learning during the pandemic, the management has resorted to practices

Table 2

Commonly employed management practices in implementing the police curriculum via blended learning approach in terms of administration of the examination.

Indicators	Mean	SD	DR
1. Needs assessment is conducted in terms of the use of online platforms for the administration of examinations.	3.38	0.54	AP
2. Examinations conducted via the utilized learning management the system measures the course/modular learning outcomes.	3.44	0.52	AP
3. Technological support/available assistance is given to students and instructors in the use of technology for administering examination.	3.45	0.52	AP
4. Factors such as poor internet connection are taken into consideration in the programming of online examinations.	3.41	0.55	AP
5. Timing and other assessments of learning principles are observed in the administration of examinations via blended learning approach.	3.42	0.52	AP
6. Checking, revision and approval of modular questions are observed before the students were administered examinations.	3.42	0.53	AP

Note: DR – Descriptive Rating; SD – Standard Deviation; 3.26-4.00 = Mostly/Always Practiced (AP); 2.51-3.25 = Sometimes Practiced (SoP); 1.76-2.50 = Seldom Practiced (SeP); 1.00-1.75 = Never/Not Practiced (NP).

that would still ensure the facilitation and administration of the examination. Specifically, the indicator “Technological support or available assistance is given to students and instructors in the use of technology for administering examination” received the highest mean rating (3.45), reflecting strong agreement.

Though participants reported having limited technological resources, they still admitted that the training centre, through the concerned staff, has been trying to assist the students and instructors in using the chosen platforms. However, they also raised concerns about the use of technology during the administration of the examination. Technological support should help make examination administration through the chosen platforms effective. At the current state of administering online examinations, some participants admitted that the code of honesty seems to be questioned due to how the examination is given. Meanwhile, other participants argued that some platforms would provide a time limit for every question, reducing the time the students could cheat through Google or other forms.

On the other hand, the indicator “Needs assessment is conducted in terms of the use of online platforms for the administration of examination” received the lowest rating (3.38). Conducting a needs assessment should have helped choose the appropriate and suitable platform or develop coping mechanisms for the technologically challenged students. Besides, the management should have been aware that the technological awareness and knowledge of the students are different and would meddle with the implementation if not appropriately addressed. Scoppio and Covell [74] highlighted that users are technologically challenged, and not all are well-versed with online learning platforms.

On another note, the emerging theme in management practices is utilizing an online platform for modular examinations and a face-to-face mode for comprehensive examinations. Participants agreed with the cost-effectiveness of online examination, consistent with the statement of Hazen,

Weigel and Overstreet [39] that blended learning is cheaper for in-service military personnel in terms of the financial aspect; however, personnel participants unanimously agreed on the possibility of cheating during online examinations. On another note, Hill and LoPalo [40] found that students perform substantially better on online exams, though this performance tends to diminish when questions not seen before were used.

Table 3 shows the management practices commonly employed in implementing the police curriculum via a blended learning approach for conducting non-academic activities. It can be gleaned from the responses of all the respondents that the management practices in conducting non-academic activities are mostly or always practised. The indicator “All non-academic activities are implemented properly (firing proficiency; sports activity; physical fitness test and others)” received the highest rating (mean=3.52). Participants believed that most learning activities outside of the academic field are carried out properly. Since most non-academic activities were done face-to-face, students could perform, and the training staff could immediately check whether they were performing the activities properly.

Meanwhile, the indicator “Technological tools and online platforms are supported for the conduct of online non-academic activities” received the lowest (mean=3.42). The lowest rating is explained by the fact that most, if not all, of the non-academic activities are conducted face-to-face and, hence, do not require technological platforms. Focus group discussions with the participants revealed that the face-to-face approach was for non-academic activities. They further supported such practice by adding that due to the nature of the activities for the different courses, non-academic activities such as firing proficiency, defensive tactics, physical fitness tests, and endurance runs could not be done online. Accordingly, these should be done within the training centre to ensure the effective conduct of non-academic activities. One participant cited that they tried to conduct an aptitude test through Google Forms; however, it was observed that it was time-consuming and required more resources. The management and consolidation

Table 3

Commonly employed management practices in implementing the police curriculum via blended learning approach in terms of conducting non-academic activities.

	Indicators	Mean	SD	DR
1.	The desired conduct and behaviour of students and trainees as defined in the training guide is still enforced.	3.46	0.52	AP
2.	All non-academic activities are implemented properly (firing proficiency, sports activity, physical fitness test and others).	3.52	0.52	AP
3.	Non-academic activities administered online, such as aptitude tests, BMI reporting, accounting and moral upliftment are well-supervised.	3.45	0.54	AP
4.	Technological tools and online platforms are supported for the conduct of online non-academic activities.	3.42	0.53	AP
5.	Issues, complaints and problems the class raises are promptly addressed through online or face-to-face interaction.	3.47	0.52	AP

Note: DR – Descriptive Rating; SD – Standard Deviation; 3.26-4.00 = Mostly/Always Practiced (AP); 2.51-3.25 = Sometimes Practiced (SoP); 1.76-2.50 = Seldom Practiced (SeP); 1.00-1.75 = Never/Not Practiced (NP).

of the aptitude test were easier when it was done via a pen-and-pencil approach. Such results reveal problems with the support of technological means and online platforms for conducting non-academic activities, as most events occur in person and do not require technology platforms.

Likewise, they mentioned that for the other non-academic activities that entailed psychomotor activities, the medical conditions of the trainees and students should be checked before the activities were needed. Hence, conducting such activities within the training centres was best, especially since some activities require physical presence. The result of the focus group discussions further defies some of the research works that highlight the accessibility of programs [56] even if they are not physically present.

Relatively, the transactional distance in the learning environment, which Moore described in his transactional distance theory as the interaction space between the teacher and the students [36], is best reduced through face-to-face encounters. The notion of conducting distance learning for non-academic activities does not apply to the training centres. This implication is supported by the findings of Kara [47] that transactional distance between teachers and students significantly contributes to their perceived satisfaction towards learning. Hence, if the distance between the students and teachers is increased through blended learning and the proximity is not maintained, the quality of learning is compromised. The strong suggestion of a pure face-to-face approach contradicts Hodge et al. [43], who assumed that classroom proximity could be mimicked through technology integration and blended learning. Contrarily, these findings are consistent with how Dyer, Aroz and Larson [31] defined relative proximity, that the latter is not a mere juxtaposition of distance but instead includes timing and engagement. Indeed, conducting non-academic activities requires proximity, which is best achieved through a face-to-face approach only.

Table 4 presents the management practices commonly employed in implementing the police curriculum via a blended learning approach regarding management personnel. Respondents gave the highest mean rating (3.46) for the general indicators to “Helps translate the policies to ensure that the intention of these policies is achieved during the implementation,” which means that it is always practised. Further, its standard deviation of 0.51 indicates that the responses of each respondent do not vary significantly. The respondents closely perceived how often the statements are being practised. The discussion with the participants supports this result: the rules and regulations are observed. It affirms that the functions of the management about curriculum implementation are being observed.

Overall, management practices are constantly being practised. This shows that despite the sudden shift in teaching and learning approaches due to the pandemic, the training centres could still sustain their management practices relative to implementing the police curriculum. Such findings further reveal that relative to the open systems theory, training centres can adapt to the changes around them. Contrary to the notion that police and military institutions are closed, NPTI was affected by external factors, particularly COVID-19; hence, it was prompted to adjust its teaching-learning modality to ensure continuous implementation and conduct of mandatory courses.

The result is consistent with Jung and Vakharia [46], as the training centres could consider external matters to shift approaches to blended learning. The management’s practice and approach towards matters from the external environment further intensified the statements of Suter et al. [82] and O’Leary and Boland [63] about the open systems theory that external

Table 4

Commonly employed management practices in implementing the police curriculum via blended learning approach in terms of overall management.

Indicators	Mean	SD	DR
1. Utilizes systems and have their processes, procedures, resources, and aspects that help manage success.	3.45	0.51	AP
2. Observes participative community with shared responsibility within and among the employees.	3.45	0.51	AP
3. Supports learning approaches utilized by the school like blended learning to conquer the challenges and increase the benefits of the chosen approach.	3.45	0.51	AP
4. Helps translate the policies to ensure that the intention of these policies are achieved during the implementation.	3.46	0.51	AP

Note: DR – Descriptive Rating; SD – Standard Deviation; 3.26-4.00 = Mostly/Always Practiced (AP); 2.51-3.25 = Sometimes Practiced (SoP); 1.76-2.50 = Seldom Practiced (SeP); 1.00-1.75 = Never/Not Practiced (NP).

matters influence the organizations and that the parts of the organizations are interdependent. Henceforth, a change that happens externally could permeate a part of the training centres and affect their organizational parts.

Regarding the management, their strategic leadership is essential in scaling up the adoption of blended learning. How the management works towards leading the team, providing support, establishing governance structures, and ensuring the professional development of teachers are essential elements for implementing the approach [41].

3.2. Effectiveness of the management and implementation of blended learning in the areas of curriculum

Table 5 presents the effectiveness of the management and implementation of blended learning in achieving the curriculum goals and objectives. The respondents gave a high mean rating, implying that the management and implementation are very effective. Specifically, the “Instilling course competencies by supporting employees for shared responsibility” indicator received the highest rating (mean=3.50; SD=0.52). The Philippine National Police Training Institute Training Guide [68] stipulates the different functions of the management in the implementation, wherein it can be observed that such functions are interrelated and need collaboration among the management personnel. Academic and non-academic personnel are responsible for monitoring classroom instruction. With the blended learning approach, the assigned blended learning manager also shares responsibility.

Meanwhile, the indicator “Addressing issues that may hamper the on-time achievement of course implementation targets and objectives via the chosen approach” received the lowest rating (3.47), though it still denoted “very effective”. However, the fact that it received the lowest should not be dismissed. Issues that significantly affect the course should be addressed immediately so as not to affect the set targets and objectives for the course.

Relatively, the discussions revealed that management practices in cascading the mandate of

Table 5

Effectiveness of the management and implementation of blended learning in terms of achieving the curriculum goals and objectives.

Indicators	WM	SD	DR
1. Cascading and sharing clearly to the employees and stakeholders a common goal, the mandate, purpose, and objectives of the course	3.48	0.52	VE
2. Adopting varied approaches and practices in implementing school curricula and programs with the hope of adding to the gained learnings and achieving planned objectives of the process	3.48	0.52	VE
3. Crafting policies and guidelines on management, supervision and operations	3.48	0.53	VE
4. Instilling course competencies with the blended learning approach of the training center by			
a. developing the institution's human resources	3.49	0.52	VE
b. supporting employees for shared responsibility	3.50	0.52	VE
5. Addressing issues that may hamper the on-time achievement of course implementation targets and objectives via the chosen approach	3.47	0.53	VE
6. Sharing the management of classes and organizing groups concerning curriculum implementation	3.49	0.51	VE
7. Conducting evaluation of curriculum to address curricular issues and influencing factors in determining school's provision of quality education	3.49	0.52	VE

Note: WM – Weighted Mean; DR – Descriptive Rating; SD – Standard Deviation; 3.26-4.00 = Very Effective (VE); 2.51-3.25 = Effective (E); 1.76-2.50 = Slightly Effective (SE); 1.00-1.75 = Not Effective (NE).

the training centre were evident. However, some participants observed that some management personnel appeared to have a “different” focus. Some participants further expounded that some extra-curricular activities were prioritized at some point in training, which resulted in the cancellation of scheduled classroom discussions. Such results are consistent with the FGD discussions mentioned in the previous sections, which state that concerns and issues still affect how the management implements the curriculum. Participants revealed the necessity of getting the management act together, and such observations should be considered, mainly since their observations emanated from their experiences.

Henceforth, training centres should note the perspectives of the staff, especially since their perception makes a difference in their leadership behaviours [23], which could further affect how they perform their functions as part of the management. Moreover, training centres should ensure appropriate and sufficient teacher support, as Akar and Şen [2] recommended. As pointed out by the participants, the need to improve management practices in curriculum implementation demands providing adequate support to the teachers.

Table 6 shows the effectiveness of the management and implementation of blended learning in delivering the subject matter or learning content. It can be viewed that the indicators “Defining content by stating various outcomes and ways of learning and assessment”, “Providing opportunities for questions, clarifications and queries about the topics during the subject”, “Utilizing teaching-learning principles in delivering the subject matter regardless of whether the training phase is online or face-to-face”, and “Planning and presenting the lesson as well as

Table 6

Effectiveness of the management and implementation of blended learning in terms of delivering the subject matter or learning content.

Indicators	Mean	SD	DR
1. Defining content by stating various outcomes and ways of learning and assessment	3.48	0.51	VE
2. Ensuring high-value content in either of the blended learning settings	3.47	0.53	VE
3. Presenting the content in a manner that impacts the learning experiences and level of interaction of students inside the classroom			
a. Infusing subjects into other disciplines for an interdisciplinary discussion and learning	3.47	0.52	VE
b. Providing opportunities for questions, clarifications and queries about the topics during the subject	3.48	0.52	VE
4. Employing instructional technology as support and aid in the delivery of learning content via blended learning approach	3.47	0.52	VE
5. Discussing all learning content of the subject within the given time through the blended learning approach	3.47	0.52	VE
6. Utilizing teaching-learning principles in delivering the subject matter regardless of whether the training phase is online or face-to-face	3.48	0.52	VE
7. Planning and presenting the lesson as well as coming up with an assessment in addition to the whole classroom management	3.48	0.52	VE

Note: DR – Descriptive Rating; SD – Standard Deviation; 3.26-4.00 = Very Effective (VE); 2.51-3.25 = Effective (E); 1.76-2.50 = Slightly Effective (SE); 1.00-1.75 = Not Effective (NE).

coming up with an assessment in addition to the whole classroom management “ received the highest rating of 3.48, which indicated that such practices are very effective. It is positive news to know that the training centre effectively utilizes teaching-learning principles, especially since the classroom management practices directly influence their students’ success [35]. Such principles include question portions wherein students raise clarifications and the teachers try to respond productively. Doing so helps establish a positive relationship between the staff and students, which is needed in program/course implementation [57].

With the vital role of teachers and staff in implementing the curriculum in terms of the latter’s feasibility [61], the management has to ensure that what was planned is being delivered, and that the expected classroom management processes are realized. Teachers’ manner of managing teaching affects how students engage. Hence, training centres should ensure that the indicator is always practised and is effective.

However, gaining a high numerical rating is only one indicator of the management’s effectiveness. The FGD results revealed that though the management is effective at some point, the participants pointed out some areas that need management action in relation to course content offered by the training centres. Accordingly, some teachers were already teaching obsolete topics and delivering the subject matter ineffectively. They discussed that with the technological challenges and some issues concerning implementing courses through blended learning, they have resorted to employing pre-recorded videos from the instructors. However, watching pre-recorded videos as the sole manner of delivering the subject matter is ineffective. They

then suggested that a follow-through of watching the videos should be done. Such reported observations further support the idea that having the rating be imperfect implies an opportunity for the institute and training centres to strive for excellence and surpass its current effectiveness level.

Moreover, these findings are consistent with the discussions on management practices by the teachers. Indeed, teachers have to continuously employ interactive teaching styles or approaches to support learning, as numerous teachers from other societies do [22]. They could explore approaches that recognize prior learning and highlight process meaning attachment to what is being taught. Further, the use of recordings or other similar technologies is not a stand-alone process; instead, the management, especially the teachers, should help craft learning experiences that are meaningful to students.

Moreover, the institute and the training centres could explore utilizing stakeholders and establishing a partnership with police support units and agencies for a robust teaching group. They could build relationships with other agencies and organizations to exchange expertise and services to ensure that the expected output of training courses are targeted and achieved.

Table 7 displays the effectiveness of the management and implementation of blended learning in terms of the learning experience. Generally, the respondents accorded the highest rating (3.52) to the indicator “Promoting participative and collaborative management of class activities, programs, and social endeavours” and the lowest rating (3.46) to the indicator “apprenticeship concepts.” Such ratings indicated that the training centre is still very effective. However, they could still find opportunities to provide more effective training enhancements where they could manifest the becoming of police officers, particularly for new police recruits. One way is to ensure a responsive learning environment that helps promote collaboration, coaching, and apprenticeship. In their study, Beighton and Poma [11] suggested a partnership between training organizations for an expansive learning avenue.

Further, the management and teachers or professors should continue practising classroom management so that the students can engage in learning. This is consistent with what Phelan [67] explained that improving student achievement should be prioritized regardless of the delivery approach. Besides, online learning, for example, is designed to improve student access and flexibility, not to eliminate face-to-face learning. As mentioned, other factors besides distance delivery affect students’ success. Student engagement in learning and using meaningful activities [33] should also be considered since these aid in preparing students for work. Likewise, the teachers could employ strategies and tools that keep them motivated and aid in classroom activities and learning performance [10]. The institute and the training centres could review how to maximize other learning strategies and approaches.

Henceforth, enhancing the management of classroom engagement for a better learning experience should indeed be upheld due to the association of the two variables. As Gage et al. [35] found out, there was less classroom instruction engagement from the students who belong to classes with minimal classroom management practices. On the other hand, the burden of fostering high interaction and engagement in the classroom setting should be placed on more than just the management and the teachers. The students should also be motivated and inspired to learn.

Looking at the overall effectiveness of the management in managing the implementation of police curriculum through blended learning, it could be implied that the training centres are

Table 7

Effectiveness of the management and implementation of blended learning in terms of learning experience.

Indicators	Mean	SD	DR
1. Promoting participative and collaborative management of class activities, programs, and social endeavors	3.52	0.51	VE
2. Crafting meaningful and engaging learning experiences suitable via a blended learning approach	3.49	0.52	VE
3. Providing guidance and assistance in the utilization of technology and employment of learning platforms for the blended learning	3.48	0.53	VE
4. Engaging into practices and school change initiatives			
a. meaning attachment to what is being taught	3.48	0.53	VE
b. recognition of prior learning (RPL)	3.47	0.53	VE
c. interactive discussions	3.49	0.52	VE
d. recitations and oral narratives	3.48	0.52	VE
e. problem-based learning	3.46	0.52	VE
f. competency-based approach	3.48	0.53	VE
g. apprenticeship concepts	3.46	0.52	VE
h. integration of principles	3.47	0.52	VE
i. alignment of learning spaces with changes in curricula	3.47	0.53	VE
j. coupling of organizational structures with that of the activities for behavioural changes	3.47	0.52	VE
5. Practicing support between peers, teachers, and management in addressing blended learning problems and in having a meaningful and worthy learning engagement	3.48	0.52	VE
6. Supporting learning approaches utilized by the school like blended learning to conquer the challenges and increase the benefits of the chosen approach	3.47	0.52	VE
7. Giving technological support/available assistance in using technology to conduct classes, instruction or examinations.	3.48	0.52	VE

Note: DR – Descriptive Rating; SD – Standard Deviation; 3.26-4.00 = Very Effective (VE); 2.51-3.25 = Effective (E); 1.76-2.50 = Slightly Effective (SE); 1.00-1.75 = Not Effective (NE).

indeed effective in their practices. Such findings are supported by Belur and Bentall [12], who concluded that police training institutions can deliver training remotely. This study's findings show the adaptability of the training centres, which is emphasized in the open systems theory. The training centres were effective in their management practices, regardless of the abrupt changes in curriculum implementation. Even though the pandemic impacted all sectors and external factors also influenced the organization [46, 89], the training centres had management practices that ensured the seamless implementation of the curriculum. This study contradicts Ashraf et al. [9], who found the non-effectiveness of approaches, particularly blended learning.

Nevertheless, with the non-perfect ratings, the peak of effectiveness for NPTI and the training centres is not yet reached. Indeed, the management practices currently employed in promoting students' learning experiences have gained high numerical ratings, yet the numbers also reveal a range for further enhancing the management practices. Additionally, it could be posited that the institute has space to grow as a training provider. This implies that sustaining effectiveness

in training is a continuous process and that the institute must provide the best training so the graduates can be the best police officers they can be.

3.3. Management challenges encountered in implementing the police curriculum via blended learning

Overall, respondents reported that the challenges encountered during the implementation of the police curriculum via blended learning are minor and should be addressed. Technological challenges topped the list, followed by financial constraints. This challenge on the top list explains why utilizing technology and learning platforms to facilitate learning should be given attention.

During the discussions with the participants, the following themes were related to the challenges encountered during the curriculum implementation through blended learning. First was intermittent or no connection related to technological difficulties and concerns. All participants conceded that intermittent connection was a primary concern as it was necessary for blended learning, particularly online learning, to push through. Second was equipment insufficiency, which the concern about financial constraints could also justify. Since blended learning management entailed utilizing additional computer units or equipment, the training centres had a dilemma of procuring additional units solely for blended learning management. One participant cited his experience wherein the training centre had no computer for monitoring classes conducted through the Zoom application. He added that the person in charge had to use his cell phone to monitor the classes. However, it became very taxing and time-consuming. Though the shift to a blended learning approach was abrupt due to the pandemic, training centres should find ways of addressing the challenges imposed by such shifting.

Moreover, the relationship between the top two challenges could be inferred, as financial resources are needed to address additional technological infrastructure and the development of human resources in terms of technological skills and enhancement. Such a challenge affirms the findings of Kearney and Valadez [48], stating financial constraints as a concern of implementation. The unavailability of financial support and funding affects the implementation, justifying the statement of Akar and Şen [2] that a lack of adequate resources would delay the implementation of programs. When the resources needed to run courses through blended learning are insufficient, the time-bound would be extended and affected. Besides, infrastructure facilities with high-speed connectivity is necessary to implement blended learning successfully [70].

Third was human resource challenges. Revealing such a challenge agrees with the conclusion of Doja et al. [29] that curricular issues exist across the levels, encompassing both learners and faculty. Relative to the challenge, various sub-themes were generated. These were: (1) Lack of subject matter experts, (2) mismatch of competency level of staff to the subjects taught, (3) limited skills of training staff, and (4) lack of experience to teach.

Participants explained that though there are many tactical police officers assigned in the training centres, there needs to be more experts to teach some of the specialized subjects. Accordingly, most of the officers were only handling non-academic activities. As for the mismatch of competency level, some staff were teaching subjects where they had no training or their competency was not aligned with the requirements of the subject. This relates to the

third challenge, wherein the training staff needs more skills to meet the demands of the subjects taught. As for the lack of experience in teaching, participants admitted that not all police officers assigned as training staff finished education courses, with Instructor Development Course, or experience as teachers, which could have influenced their possessed competencies. Their skills and competencies, translated to how they manage teaching and learning engagements, contribute to how effective the training would be and how the students succeed, affirming the statements of Gage et al. [35].

Additionally, though the challenges were minor, the mere existence of such challenges, as revealed in the survey and focus group discussion, should serve as an avenue for further improving the management of police curriculum implementation through blended learning. Hence, training centres must look into the challenges, understand and determine the best way to address them, and make efforts. Doing so adheres to Mendenhall, Iachini and Anderson-Butcher [58] explanation that understanding the challenges would be necessary to know the barriers to implementing courses.

On another note, though the leading cause of shifting approaches in the training centre is the pandemic, this study also affirms Jung and Vakharia's [46] view on considering external matters in initiating organizational changes. This implies that police training institutions are also permeable, open, and subject to changes initiated outside the organization. Henceforth, police training institutions should constantly scan and review their environment to help them determine when changes happen and initiatives in the practices are needed.

On the other hand, challenges identified in the previous discussions intensify the weight of transactional distance or relative proximity in the teaching and learning process. The benefits of blended learning should be optimized; however, relative proximity is affected by the challenges on the human resources and the materials or infrastructure that support the implementation. The challenges could affect how the training centres realize the assumption of Hodge et al. [43] about mimicking proximity in classroom settings through integrating technology. If the needed support, technologically or financially, and the workforce are challenged, the practices of ensuring effective program implementation could be compromised.

3.4. Enhancement of management practices in the delivery or implementation of training and education of police officers in the new normal

Based on the FGD, the participants proposed the following as enhancement of the management practices in delivering training and education of police officers in the new normal. First was the provision of a stable or good internet connection. The training centres should be the first to have a stable connection supporting the required bandwidth for online applications such as Zoom and Edmodo. They added that as training centres, they should be the first to ensure internet capability to handle online classes. This was to ensure that no cancellation of classes would happen. Corollary to this, internet problem factors should not solely be the basis of ineffective curriculum implementation. Training centres also have options on how to address such challenges. As suggested by Dridi et al. [30], collaborative learning could be utilized to ensure high-value content while giving time for student interaction and opportunity for learning engagement done asynchronously.

Second was the provision of sufficient equipment. Since online classes require laptops and an

electricity generator in case blackouts happen, training centres should ensure the provision and availability of required equipment for monitoring and conducting classes. However, addressing this challenge entails funding and budget allotment. Yet, one of the identified challenges is financial constraints. Therefore, training centres could explore making their financial standing meet the demands of educational innovations and shifting. One participant shared their best practice for filling in the infrastructure gaps. Accordingly, they partner with other stakeholders, non-government organizations, and other agencies or entities that voluntarily provide financial assistance to meet students' needs. One entity even funded the construction of additional barracks for the students.

Third was the promotion of personnel welfare. Participants suggested that promoting the welfare of personnel included skills and competency development of training staff and provision of duty pay and allowances for the staff as tokens of gratitude. Participants said these programs would help address the challenges mentioned in the previous sections. Once the training staff is well equipped, competent, and possesses the required skills and knowledge to teach the different subjects, the challenge of human resources will be addressed. Their professional development would aid in creating enhanced delivery of online courses and using a blended learning approach [94]. Additionally, providing allowances would motivate the training staff to strive, improve, and dedicate themselves to training police officers. Participants admitted that additional financial remunerations would boost the personnel's morale, which will then reflect on how they handle the training and education of the police officers in the training centres.

Generally, training centres should consider the proposed actions for enhancing management practices in implementing police curricula, especially since blended learning will always be part of the post-COVID era [93]. Additionally, there is a need for training opportunities and development. As Byrne, Downey and Souza [16] recommended, educational institutions must ensure that faculty members and students have opportunities relative to the teaching-learning aspect and avenues to collaborate and raise concerns relative to implementing plans and programs. These proposals help improve management practices in implementing the curriculum through blended learning.

The institute and the training centres can review the processes and systems that constrain the adoption of blended learning and innovation [85]. They can revisit policies (or determine the absence thereof) that significantly contribute to breaches in teaching-learning management [88]. They can be geared towards providing coordinated institutional support to both the students and teachers to implement blended learning effectively [78].

4. Conclusion

This study posed significant contributions in giving light on the implementation and delivery of training courses in the police training centres through blended learning approach. It revealed the commonly employed management practices by the training centres, which include following and enforcing classroom procedures, courtesy and decorum; communication and student engagement; providing technological support and assistance when administering examination through the chosen platforms; proper implementation of non-academic activities through a face-to-face approach and utilization of online platforms for academic activities. It is clear that

police training institutions adopt management practices that help them implement police curricula even during challenging times. However, police institutions should continue to improve their management practices and remain open to the changes that could bring transformational training.

The management practices employed by the training centres to achieving the goals and objectives, delivering the subject matter, and learning experiences are very effective. Training centres are very effective in instilling course competencies in terms of supporting employees for shared responsibility, defining content through identifying outcomes and ways of learning, providing opportunities for collaboration as well as employing teaching-learning principles and promoting participative management in-class activities, programs, and social endeavours. Henceforth, police training institutions continue to sustain the management practices and promote management roles as necessary and relevant to ensure the seamless implementation of the curriculum.

Various challenges are encountered when managing and implementing police curriculum through blended learning. Top challenges include technological concerns, financial constraints, and human resource challenges. The emergence of challenges provides opportunities for training institutions to improve their management practices further and improve the implementation of police curricula. Therefore, regardless of the high effectiveness and regular practice of management functions, all educational and training institutions must strive to raise the bar of training by mitigating or addressing the challenges.

The courses of action addressing the challenges are necessary to ensure effective management practices and meaningful implementation of the police curriculum. These actions include providing stable internet connection and sufficient equipment and promoting personnel welfare through skills development, competency enhancement, and financial remunerations. Management practices can be seamlessly practised when the support of materials or funding and the development of human resources are ensured.

This study's practical significance lies in the fact that the results can serve as a the basis for further improvement of the management practices in the training centres, particularly in implementing training activities through blended learning. The results can be helpful for the administrators of educational institutions in improving training programs and providing adequate support to teachers for the successful implementation of educational activities.

5. Limitations and recommendations

This study has uncovered practices as well as challenges of police training centres in delivering training through the use of a blended learning approach. Hence, police training institutions should continue practising good and commonly employed management practices, as reported in the findings, in implementing the police curriculum via a blended learning approach while improving all the other management practices.

The police training institutions should sustain or exceed the existing effectiveness of management practices in implementing police curricula to continuously improve and develop more effective practices. They should continue identifying the challenges and ensure their capability, whether in terms of materials (i.e., equipment and internet connection) or human resources to

ensure the seamless implementation of a blended learning curriculum.

The conduct of training needs analysis and progressive human resource development program in the regional training centres of the NPTI to address the lapses or gaps between the training standards and the actual teaching activity are further recommended. Moreover, researchers and other interested parties can conduct similar studies on other training units for specialized police courses of the PNP to see whether there are variances or similar results since this research study limited its participants to the regional training centres of NPTI. The output could be corroborated by the result of this study to help craft a holistic police education and training approach in the new normal.

Though the results showed a good performance of the training centres, the metrics of this study had some limitations in terms of scope and participants. Since this study was limited to utilizing only the respondents of the identified training centres, focusing on a blended learning approach, and using mixed methods research, additional recommendations are made.

Further investigations are recommended on the specific causes of technological, financial and human resource challenges and adaptive ways for the training centres to manage the different career and leadership courses through various learning modes.

Another study could also be conducted for each region to determine whether there are different results and significant differences in the challenges encountered to help manage resource allocation and planning for how blended learning modality is utilized. Likewise, researchers could conduct a study focused on management practices in implementing police curricula in the different regional training centres of the NPTI using different research designs. This is to see whether aspects were not revealed in this study and to deepen understanding of the management practices through a different perspective.

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