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# MAKING SENSE: PROMOTING HYBRID EDUCATION APPROACHES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Since the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and school managers understand and appreciate the volatility of education. It is highly dependent on the context of the community and subject to the availability of the prevailing technology. However, it was evident that teacher training and ICT infrastructure became the main points of the limitation as also seen in different literature. The main objective of this study is to review published literature to further understand and appreciate education and social justice an essential and integral part of social development. Data were gathered from the review of different published literature indexed in Web of Science and Scopus. They were analyzed using meta-synthesis. The analysis revealed that significant gaps are highly focused on in teachers' preparedness, particularly in terms of access to digital resources, technology, and the necessary pedagogical training. This has emphasized the urgent need for ongoing professional development, investment in infrastructure, and robust institutional support. The findings suggests that it is imperative to address these challenges by focusing on teacher capacity-building, expanding technological infrastructure, and fostering collaboration across all stakeholders—governments, schools, teachers, parents, and communities—to ensure equitable access to education and resources.

**Keywords**— Digital Transformation in Education, ICT Infrastructures, Social Justice, Teacher Training, Teaching Skills

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## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant flaws in systems worldwide, with education being among the hardest hit. On a global scale, most countries experienced either complete or partial school closures, resulting in profound disruptions to learners' education. In the Philippines, the pandemic posed a critical challenge to the nation's preparedness, particularly in the provision of social services such as healthcare and education. Human Rights Watch (2021) revealed that at the onset of the pandemic, schools were inadequately prepared to deliver equitable remote instruction. This lack of preparedness stemmed from systemic issues, including longstanding inequalities within the educational system and insufficient access to essential services such as reliable and affordable electricity and internet connectivity.

Historically, the Philippine education system was once regarded as one of the best in Asia, heavily influenced by colonial powers such as Spain and the United States [1], [2]. However, the transition to a republic led to a gradual decline in the quality of education. This deterioration affected internal processes, outcomes, and proficiency levels in critical areas such as language, science, mathematics, and technology [3]. Understanding this historical context highlights the ongoing challenges in achieving digital transformation and promoting social justice in the Philippine education system.

During the global health crisis, online teaching emerged as the primary medium for delivering education. The shift disrupted traditional education systems at both national and local levels, impacting rural and urban communities alike [4]. This disruption underscored the importance of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted in 2015 following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs aim to address global challenges across political, social, and economic dimensions [5]. Comprising 17 goals, the SDGs are designed to meet present needs without compromising the future. Among these, SDG 4—focused on inclusive and equitable quality education—aligns closely with the need for educational reform in the Philippines.

SDG 4 emphasizes ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development. This includes fostering global citizenship, human rights awareness, gender equality, and appreciation for cultural diversity. Furthermore, SDG 4 advocates for the development of inclusive, safe, and effective learning environments through upgraded educational facilities sensitive to the needs of children,

individuals with disabilities, and all genders. While efforts have been made to address these challenges through public finance, public-private partnerships, and policy changes, progress remains insufficient [6].

The pandemic further revealed the critical gaps in the Philippine education system, particularly in its readiness to implement hybrid or hyflex learning models. Although teachers demonstrated expertise in their respective fields [7], they lacked adequate training in online teaching and computer-aided instruction. Additionally, students and parents faced significant challenges in adapting to digital learning platforms. These shortcomings highlight the urgent need for teacher training and robust public information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. The researcher identifies a significant gap in the literature on hybrid learning in the Philippines, particularly in public schools. Most existing studies focus on the pre-pandemic decline in education quality due to insufficient facilities. Few, if any, have explored the potential of hybrid classrooms, which could bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive education. This research aims to address this gap by examining the intersection of digital transformation and social justice in education, particularly in the context of achieving SDG 4 by 2030.

## METHOD

### A. Search and Information Sources

To provide a comprehensive and systematic approach in identifying related literature to suffice the demands of the study, peer-reviewed journal articles from legitimate databases like Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus-indexed journals were collated substantially. Keywords were used to narrow down possible sources of information. These were ICT Infrastructures, Social Justice, Teacher Training, Teaching Skills, Digital Transformation in Education in Asia as locales.

### B. Data Collection Process and Meta-synthesis

Peer-reviewed journal articles were scrutinized in terms of its relevance and impact to the present developments about teaching and teacher quality, social justice, and digital transformation in Asian countries. These peer-reviewed articles were published no earlier than 2015.

Meta-synthesis was used by the author in order to extrapolate data from qualitative documents related to the research problems. Since its existence, meta-synthesis has been providing a promising methodology for a holistic understanding of any problem from a field of study [9]. Studies suggest that by interpreting a wide-range of perspectives about a topic, it can further inform policy-makers and developers, practitioners, and researchers about recent trends, developments, and even re-evaluation of common practices and policies [10]. In the most pragmatic sense, meta-synthesis has an interpretive nature of making sense of the gathered data instead of merely collation of results [8]. It allows interpretation and re-interpretation of validated qualitative studies in order to arrive at a more relevant and fresher understanding of the problem. The researcher deliberately chose this approach in order to examine the educational landscape, social justice, and digital transformation in Asian countries, and how it can be improved by sustainable education principles.

Throughout the years, researchers confided that there has been no standard or one-method-fits-all framework for meta-synthesis because it depends upon the nature of the inquiry [10]. In the pursuit of answers to the given research problems, the researcher created a framework that was strategic in the selection of journal articles. This framework merited the need for appraisal of relevant literature about educational landscape, social justice, and digital transformation in Asian countries. This framework served as a quality assessment tool in choosing relevant studies. Figure 1 shows how the author collected data from WoS-Scopus indexed open access journals and Sustainability Journal.

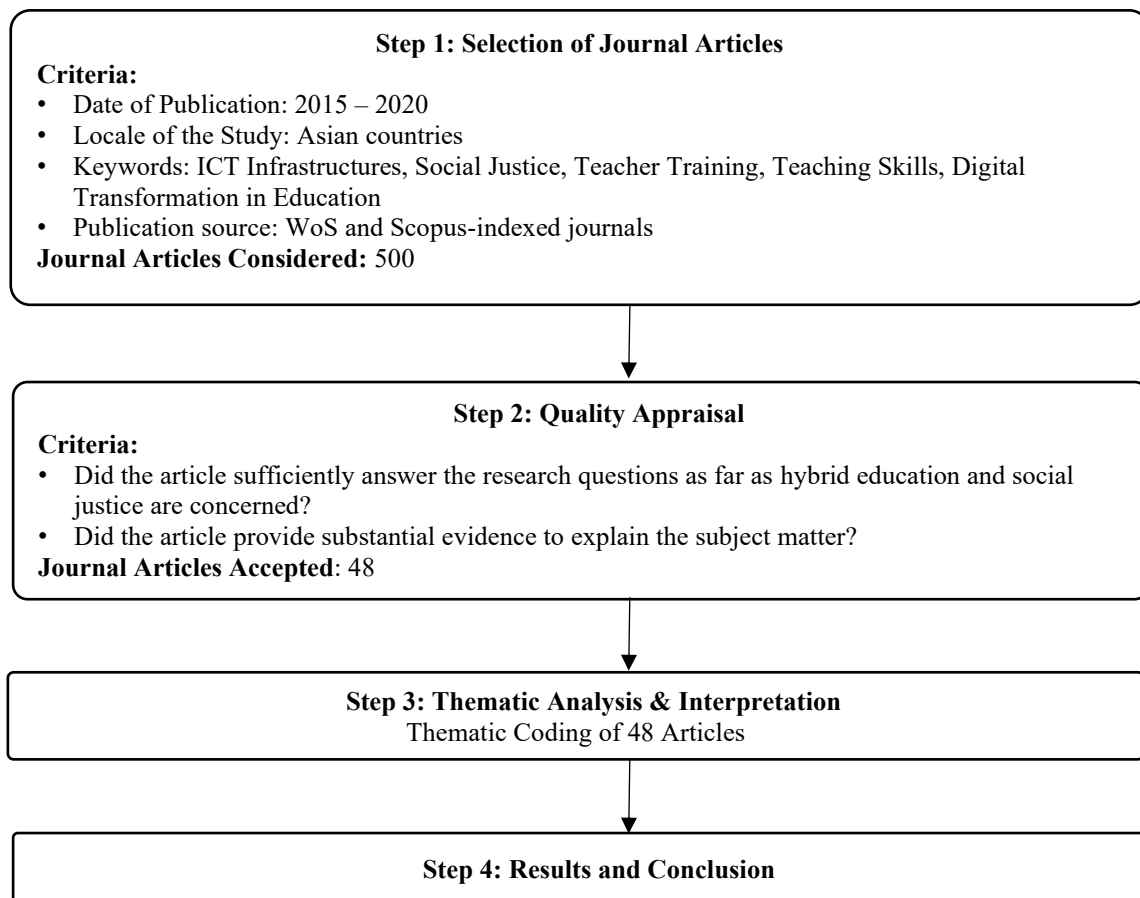


Fig. 1 Flow Diagram of the Research

In selecting journal articles, the researcher followed a rigorous document survey and analysis in order to evaluate relevant articles for the research study. Guided by the initial parameters, the researcher was able to identify 50 articles both from WoS and Scopus-indexed open journals which were all peer-reviewed. This gave the researcher an initial pool of related studies to be considered in the meta-synthesis.

To achieve the quality and breadth of the selected articles, the researcher appraised and re-appraised the relevance of these studies by continuously reflecting upon the main objectives of the study and by judiciously exercising professional judgment to remain faithful to the scientific inquiry as a rational and deliberative process [11]. In this process, it is ubiquitous to eliminate documents which the researcher deemed irrelevant since there is a deviation from the line of inquiry of the paper. Thirty peer-reviewed articles were disregarded from the review for the following bases: first, evidence suggested are not for educational practice; second, sustainable education is not included as one of the foci of the study; and, third, the scope of the study is not applicable for higher education institutions (i.e. secondary schools, middle schools, primary schools, etc.).

After narrowing down the number of articles, thematic analysis commenced. The practical sense of thematic analysis comes into interplay when meaning is extracted from any literature [12]. Constructing meaning and re-constructing it through data extrapolation requires coding of data. As the researcher analyzed each paper, codes were identified. These codes rendered a summary of salient points from the articles [13]. Coding of themes among reviewed journal articles were pieced out together in order to render a synthesis of the reviewed studies.

#### C. Data coding

The 20 selected journal articles underwent a rigorous analytical abstract reading. Keywords were further analyzed and grouped based on its level of significance to the objectives of the study. This grouping of words and formulation of summarized salient terms were considered to be under the coding stage. The figure below gives an operational model diagram of the coding synthesis for this study. Operational model diagram such as below offers a practical understanding of related concepts in the study, allowing readers to understand the qualitative analysis in hindsight [13]. Consequently, this operational model diagram allows the study to be replicated by future researchers.

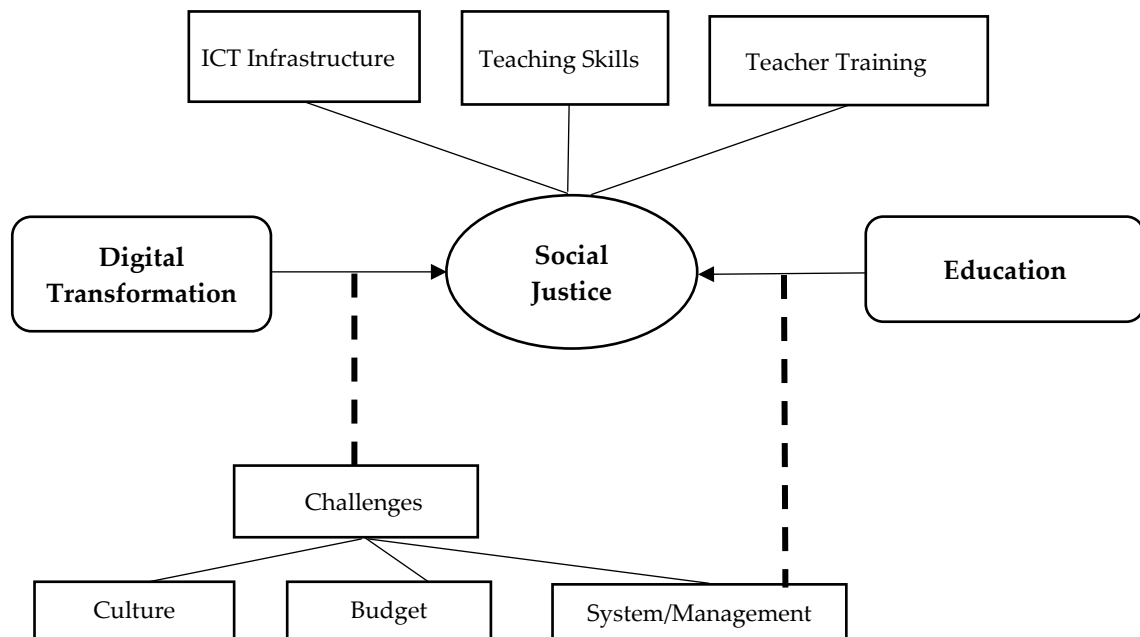


Fig. 2 Operational Model Diagram of Data Coding

#### D. Thematic Analysis

In order to make sense with the raw data, systematic thematic analysis was used by the researcher. Specifically, the researcher adopted the thematic analysis model of Creswell in conducting the qualitative studies [13]. Through this procedure, the researcher gives a rational and deliberate appraisal of related concepts which will suffice the research problems. By following Creswell's procedure, validating the accuracy of information which was rendered as interpretation in this study will be of utmost importance. After the quality appraisal of the articles considered for meta-synthesis, Figure 3 below gives a comprehensive look upon the thematic analysis procedure of the study.

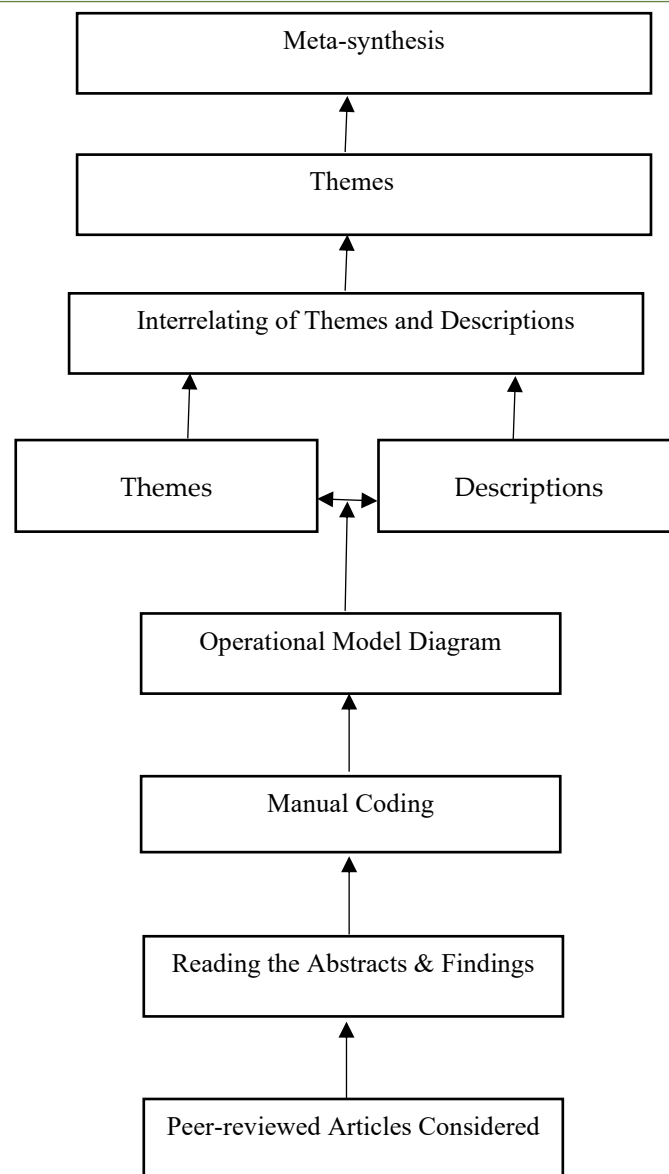


Fig. 3 Flow diagram of the thematic analysis and meta-synthesis of the study

After doing the manual coding and writing the operational framework of the related concepts, the researcher endeavored to use the coding process to generate a description and categories or themes for analysis. After coding, description about each theme together with its contextual evidence were considered to be a useful tool. Themes were the major results of the study which answered the research problems. In presenting the meta-synthesis of the study, these are used as headings in the results and discussion section of this review paper. A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation of the reviewed papers or the meta-synthesis per se. In this vein, the interpretation could be result of comparing and contrasting results from other literature. Further, the interpretation could also pose questions for researchers who wish delve further about the topic under study [12].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### E. Education in the Global and Local Community

All nations regardless of economic classification understand and push forward the significance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was highlighted. Immediately after the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted and released by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 [14]. Unlike MDGs, SDGs are goals designed to be prioritized and achieved by all countries regardless of political, societal, and economic achievements [5]. There are 17 SDGs that are aimed to meet the needs of the present

generation without compromising the capacity of the next generations to meet their own needs. The SDGs were derived from the three main pillars namely: environmental, social, and economic. The 17 SDGs are as follows: (1) no poverty; (2) zero hunger; (3) good health and well-being; (4) quality education; (5) gender quality; (6) clean water and sanitation; (7) affordable and clean energy; (8) decent work and economic growth; (9) industry, innovation, and infrastructure; (10) reduced inequalities; (11) sustainable cities and communities; (12) responsible consumption and production; (13) climate action; (14) life below water; (15) life on land; (16) peace, justice, and strong institutions; and (17) partnerships for the goals. Hence, the SDGs are preparatory steps for future generations [14], [5].

Even before the pandemic, the challenge of a better school environment and facilities has been the clamor of the communities, the very reason why SDG 4 was considered. SDG 4 refers to the following:

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. And, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.

While it is true that efforts in the Philippines towards change were made through public finance budgeting, public-private partnerships, donations, policy (specifically language use), etc., the situation is seeing to getting better each day [6]. The mobilizations seem insufficient. SDG 4 refers to quality education that is inclusive and equitable at the same time promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all anchored on the social sustainability pillar and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Education for All program together with childhood education and teacher education.

In 2030, SDGs are expected to be partially or fully achieved since its introduction in 2015, however, a pressing issue like (re)conceptualizing education for social justice in the time of hybridity is a faceted problem that SDGs, specifically SDG 4 Quality Education, necessitate research and collaboration to be achieved [14].

#### F. Preparedness of Teachers During the Pandemic

In 2020, an immediate disruption in all social services such as healthcare, education, etc. due to the pandemic began. The speedy transition to online teaching revealed that teachers, though they have a strong understanding and are well-trained in their area specialization [15], [16], and other stakeholders such as parents, communities, and learners themselves are not trained for online teaching and computer-aided teaching and learning. This is supported by Webb, Kohler, and Piper's [17] research wherein it was revealed that only 24% of teachers had finished the curriculum in their teacher preparation programs that addressed teaching in an online context. They concluded that due to the pandemic, teachers felt the need for additional professional development throughout the shift to online learning.

In a study involving Filipino public school teachers in the National Capital Region (NCR) by Pelayo and colleagues [18], it was discussed that there are several factors contributing to the teachers' preparedness for the future of education set-up. These are access to resources such as digital infrastructures and the promotion of a collaborative environment. This shows that preparedness does not solely rely on the teacher's knowledge and skills in teaching, it is also tied to the materials needed to execute teaching.

Moreover, the unpreparedness of teachers is also influenced by how immediately a specific institution acted on continuing education as the pandemic continues to spread. The unpreparedness of the teachers caused by the delayed response of the institutions resulted in a shortage of creativity in educational activities [19]. This is vital since the urge of the learners to learn in a new set-up is always related to how information is given to them.

Thus, one key element that must be settled during the pandemic is the preparedness of the stakeholders particularly the teachers in an online teaching set-up. It is imperative that risks and mistakes or lapses are possible while teaching online. And, to some, it could be true. However, issues like these were mitigated by a combination of factors that are effective such as humility, empathy, and optimism [20]. Preparation to transition from residential learning (face-to-face) to virtual learning (online learning) distorts the normality of traditional set-up and its underlying preparations and readiness.

#### G. Hybridity in Education

Hybridity in education has become the answer to the problem at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This ensures that all learners across levels in the country will get the quality of education that they deserve during the most challenging situation of our time.

Access to Virtual Learning. Since virtual teaching and learning is the only viable medium of delivery at the time of the pandemic, the disruption to the typical education setup has been very profound [4]. In a study conducted by [21], the lived experiences of some learners in the Philippines during remote learning shows that virtual

learning is inaccessible due to several factors including not having an internet connection, financial constraints, unavailability of the needed devices, and poor emotional support.

Further, in reality, teachers and learners have easier access to virtual learning in the Luzon area of the country. This is because the cities here are more developed with more stable internet connections. [22] contends that even while technology and the internet appear to be widely accessible from an intuitive standpoint, there are still regions with limited access to technology, which limits the potential for online learning in places like rural areas.

This issue with accessing virtual learning is quite heard and addressed by the Department of Education. The department has considered three learning modalities that would give options to both teachers and learners based on which materials they have access to. These three modes of instruction given as options are radio/TV-based instruction, online distance learning, and modular distance learning [23].

However, the implementation of this virtual learning process was not really refined and caused confusion to both parents and students. Teachers are affected as well given that they need to cater to the students in three different platforms for a single class. This is also a concern in terms of assessing whether the learners are actually learning something without the proper guidance from the teachers.

This new sense of normality in the next few years pictured the benefits of bringing teachers into partnership with other stakeholders, particularly teachers and students [20]. It is now a matter of ensuring that equitable access to virtual learning, dealing with the profound demands of scholarship, and availability of services provided by the university and academic community are the considerations necessitate to be given attention from school managers and policymakers as students remain to be ambivalent with the virtual setup due to issues on motivation, availability and comprehensibility of materials, communication with teachers, and feeling of isolation [24] [20].

The issue of teaching and learning readiness of teachers, students, and schools has long been a concern for discussion among policymakers and implementers since the clamor has long been resounding. This has been made more of a concern when a sudden shift in the delivery of lessons is required due to an unprecedented crisis: the pandemic.

Moreover, issues are no longer focused on readiness but include the motivation of students which was found to be negative during online classes due to limited contact with peers and teachers, comprehensibility of the learning materials since learning styles may vary from one learner to another, communication among learners and teachers for each cooperative and collaborative learning tasks, and the feeling of isolation because of community quarantine or community lockdowns [24].

However, to some extent, the exceptional crisis the world has been to give other institutions, particularly higher education institutions, to look into the possibility of maximizing virtual learning as most have learned to appreciate it and its merits, especially to adult learners who belong to the younger population [25]. As a result, an exploration of distance learning is seen to be made in the next few years.

A deeper look would show that little to none explored the possibility of a hybrid or hyflex classroom specifically for public schools that would require teacher training and public Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructures. The immediate transition to online teaching revealed that teachers, though they have a strong understanding and are well-trained in their area of specialization [15] [16], are not trained for online teaching and computer-aided instructions more so the students and parents themselves. These are also the very reasons why the researcher found the need to explore the field of digital transformation or hybridity.

#### D. Challenges (re)surfaced in school systems

It is moot and academic that our school systems are challenged by many factors such as Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, and Ethical. During the pandemic, some of these challenges resurfaced and became even more difficult due to financial limitations etc.

Countries with emerging economic statuses like the Philippines are very much affected by the overwhelming disruptions made by the pandemic since 2020. The challenges to education management, pedagogies and practices, availability of technologies, and other equipment, among others have resurfaced [25].

One specific challenge to education that was given focused during this time is the teachers' way of assessing, evaluating, monitoring, and feedbacking on their students' learning [26]. These difficulties in the teaching-learning process are important to be addressed as they show how well Filipino students are learning under the current system.

Aside from this, there are also great concerns on the learning materials provided by the institutions both to the teachers and learners. This is a part of the issue with the lack of infrastructure and resources in schools, which has an impact on the quality of education that kids receive, especially when learning virtually. The shortage of textbooks and instructional materials also makes it harder for pupils to understand the concepts covered in the curriculum since they might not have access to the information they need (Bai, 2023). The teachers themselves have backed up these claims. It was discovered that despite the teachers' expressed willingness to transition to



distant learning, they still felt constrained by a lack of facilities, tools, and ability for distance learning instruction [27].

As vital as it has been, education has definitely become an emergency situation which includes education software and hardware that have become a key emergency service during a crisis. Learning management platforms are not yet established since public schools are still mostly using the Facebook Messenger application to communicate with the students, which is not developed for educational purposes. The devices such as tablets and laptops provided by the government, although a big help, are found to be low-quality devices as well.

The demands from the stakeholders to rectify these issues and challenges have been profound. In the next few years, the need to revisit the factors such as medical, political, economic, and social factors that define the present situation in the education sector is definitely anticipated. This also ensures that, though education is disrupted, concerns in the education sector are controlled and mitigated [28]

The pandemic has compelled the government to postpone national exams, as well as forcing schools to temporarily close, stop teaching in-person, and carefully adhere to physical distance. These incidents have fueled higher education's digital transformation and tested its capacity for quick and effective responses [29]. This shows that politics plays a vital role in achieving a successful digital transformation especially during the pandemic. It is the government who creates the policies and ask the proper agencies to move. It was obviously a struggle for the schools and its stakeholders to have provide effective policies that will cover both teacher and student management. Politics also plays a great role on why there is great expectation from the education department. According to Toquero [30], because stakeholders want institutions to provide evidence to back up their claims of excellence and effectiveness, higher education must show efficacy and efficiency in educational administration. A lot more evidence is required to decide how higher education institutions should react to the educational, economic, and job issues because of the way that the world is evolving right now, including how the pandemic has altered how educational systems should operate.

Even before the pandemic, politics and leadership issues have been significant in the changing of the guards of a certain nation. During the pandemic, this has become the breaking point of communities since it concerns management and resolution in times of crises.

A move to strengthen learning, media, and technology resurfaced. This has been an issue years before the crisis to promote UNESCO's Education for All and UN's SDG 4. However, the world, regardless of its political, economic, and social progress or advantage, remained still, immovable, and unprepared [5][28].

Stakeholders' Demotivation. These problems that arose during the pandemic are also the existing problems before the pandemic that were not given attention. Consequently, stakeholders failed to adjust and remained to be demotivated [24].

The COVID-19 case is an extreme but effective illustration of the effects that a lockdown at a school, brought on by an environmental or health disaster, could have on students. The lockdown causes learning loss, which can eventually lead to higher dropout rates among the most disadvantaged pupils. Even the teachers are greatly affected and loss their motivation in teaching [31]. According to a study by Adara and colleagues [32], both types of students are mostly demotivated by poor school conditions, test results, and teachers' skill levels and methods of instruction. Although educational environments vary, it may be claimed that the same factors might demotivate students.

For teachers, additionally, as Kulikowski et. Al., [33] stated, they desire to offer the same educational opportunities to all of their students. They may face another obstacle due to the amplification of inequities that the pandemic has shown. The quick implementation and broad reach of forced COVID-19 e-learning as an emergency teaching strategy could also be detrimental to the motivation of teachers.

It is important to know how the major stakeholders such as the teachers and students are being demotivated since this is related to how motivated the school managers are as well in handling the concerns brought about by the pandemic. An important part in creating and carrying out proper program-wide policies is played by school managers. These headmasters can provide help by encouraging teachers, organizing all school supplies, ensuring that teachers are prepared, allocating funds, and taking other measures like making infrastructure and learning facilities available [34].

#### E. The Landscape of Education a Decade from Now

After the pandemic, the way people get involve and perceive education became at a very different level. Pitfalls became even more evident, and solutions turned to be more inadequate due to restrictions and limitations. Hence, the future turned to be irresolute.

A disruption of the education sector of all nations is very much evident during the pandemic. The nation's capacity to adapt and to be adept with the crisis is a story or question of politics, management, and leadership [28]. This now leads to remote learning and the promotion of learning, media, and technology across levels. The pressing



issue that needs an answer from the school managers, who are likewise education planners and policymakers, is how the landscape of education could be a decade from now.

In Vietnam, an ASEAN nation, the majority of its higher education institution adopted the concept of distance teaching and learning. The concern about teachers' readiness has been addressed by capacitating them in the use of modern technology (Pham & Ho, 2020). This situation can also be observed and related here in the Philippines and in other nations.

However, returning to "normal" is resisted by some educators and pupils. Some teachers wish to keep utilizing the digital tools they have mastered to properly adjust their lesson plans. Similar to how some pupils have learned, digital tools provide conveniences for flexible learning [35]. With this, the idea of "hybrid courses" has gained popularity and appears to have developed into a descriptive, albeit ambiguous phrase that opens up a number of options for organizing courses in a variety of activities both on campus and remotely [36].

Another idea that is being pursued is introduced by Kerres and Buchner [35]. They discussed that another perspective sees the adoption and widespread use of educational technology during the epidemic as a quick way to transition the educational system into the digital age rather than just a short-term "emergency tool" to bridge the gap between teachers and pupils.

The future of education after the pandemic is a rethinking of what stakeholders are used to deal with. School managers, teachers, students, parents, and the government must all be consulted as implementation of transforming traditional education to a more digital one will affect everyone. The experiences of each must be looked into and put into consideration in order to successfully reconceptualize education serving as much equality to everyone.

In a research article published in 2020 titled: Online Teaching-Learning in Higher Education during Lockdown Period of COVID-19 Pandemic, an emphasis on how educational institutions have adopted the "new normal" by strengthening their educational resources and addressing the present need of transforming the traditional education to virtual. This resulted in the effective use of online educational tools that continually shift the landscape of education [37].

Normalizing the use of online educational tools can be expected at all levels since the promotion of distance teaching and learning has become very promising and advantageous [28]. Three complex areas of change must be highly considered due to the changing of the time. These are changed environment, newly focused purposes, and 21st century learning (SDG 4). These have been identified since the pandemic has detoured us from the original direction. When the COVID-19 pandemic came into the picture, some teachers were teaching classes that were already supplemented by outstanding digital resources, and the students were introduced to submitting tasks online [38]. Even so, when these online resources replaced their classrooms, it resulted in demotivated students [4].

However, since the crisis, a new model for education emerged in the form of hybrid education in which new learning spaces (hybridized) can offer new modes of education [39]. Now, the challenge is not just to create a new learning space but a new learning space where participants are able to engage in collective activities through cooperation and collaboration that will spur critical examination of their material, sociocultural, linguistic, and cognitive resources as embedded in their relative social ecologies [40].

Remember, even before the pandemic, the Philippines is vulnerable to typhoons. And, in most cases, this would always result in disruption of classes due to unavailable facilities because of the damages caused by the typhoon. As it is becoming inevitable, the health of everyone and the education of children must be prioritized and be solved in solidarity [41]. Hence, the integration of technology resources in both classroom practices and the management of educational institutions is highly expected [42]. This further requires both students and teaching staff to attend training related to digital transformation to achieve hybridity in educational institutions [43] [44].

#### F. Social Justice in Education

Education is expected to serve as the equalizer of the society. It should limit the gaps between and among people and sectors of the society. However, in the past years, social justice has become a challenge most especially in the education sector: the equalizer of the society.

Emerging Perspectives on Social Justice in Education. The context of social justice in education has not changed. However, it thrives to further explain that instead of making education a neutral ground regardless of social class. It becomes a platform to exemplify that education strengthens the picture of social inequality.

Social inequality in education has been established [45]. This was through the same lens of Bourdieuan methodology that happened five years before the UN's release of the SDGs in 2015. According to the research work, a significant level of awareness of the mechanisms at work in the production of disadvantage in education can help improve marginalized and disenfranchised groups' access and participation in education and its outcomes. This theory's claims that schools are not institutions of equal opportunity but rather instruments for maintaining social inequities are the only parts of it that fall under the scope of this study.

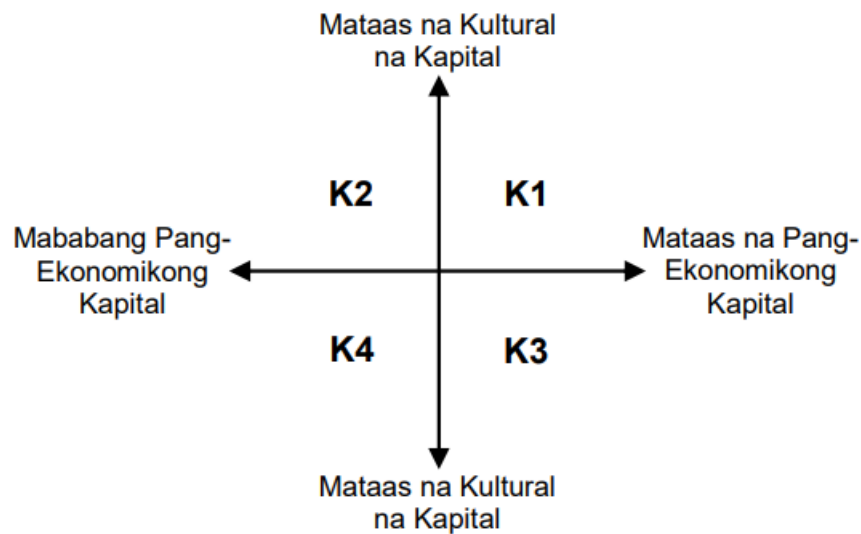


Fig. 4 Alternatibong Konseptwalisasyon ni Bourdieu tungkol sa mga Panlipunang Uri

Additionally, in a 2014 research article titled *Ang Pilosopiya ni Pierre Bourdieu bilang Batayang Teoretikal sa Araling Pilipino* [46], it was mentioned that Bourdieu's theories such as CRT and SRT can be seen in a hierarchy. Emphasizing that Cultural Capital and Economic Capital can be placed on a continuum with positive and negative characteristics. It is called the Alternatibong Konseptwalisasyon ni Bourdieu tungkol sa mga Panlipunang Uri. In this alternative model, the unequal opportunities most especially in education can happen if a child is located at Quadrant 4 (K4). It is where low Economic Capital coincides with Highest Cultural Capital that dreams and expectations are low or to some extent are lowest. Further, it is the reality that children who come from the most economically challenging families have the low to lowest expectations and dreams.

Rodela and Bertrand [47] argued that leaders and leadership roles are critical in instituting a school and society that highly observes social justice. School managers were created leaders with the assumption that they are social justice-oriented and can create systemic change.

In the same year (2018), a research work authored by Caroline Sarojini Hart [48] came up with the same observation of the nature of inequalities in relation to education and the pursuit of social justice. It argues that assessment of educational resources and measures are examples of injustices learners may experience. These injustices can be mitigated provided that the school managers are social justice oriented.

As this topic, social justice in education, resurgence, the dilemma has been acknowledged and constructed. According to Francis et. al [49], it has been the same problem as it was several years ago because of the lack of vision of social justice that is shared to everyone. This shared vision of justice is some sort of an invitation to all to participate in making sure that every learning experience is worthwhile [49].

Likewise, a research work titled *Working in Solidarity: An Intersectional Self-Study Methodology as a Means to Inform Social Justice Teacher Education* [50] identified three (3) key domains in which social justice must be embedded. These are curriculum, teaching method, and collaboration. Every time social justice is embedded in these domains, the staff (teaching and non-teaching) invigorates the practice of social justice orientation. These can only be achieved once a culture is established and the leader engaged everyone in the process. Thus, associating social justice to "common good" and how to achieve it [51].

**Classical Perspectives on Social Justice in Education.** Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist who made significant contributions to the field of sociology specifically the sociology of education came up with two theories namely Cultural Reproduction Theory and Social Reproduction Theory [45]. These two theories further explain the prevailing situation in the education system.

In the case of Cultural Reproduction Theory (CRT), he argued that familiarity with the high-status culture, which refers to individuals with advantaged socioeconomic positions transmits what he calls cultural capital to their children. This cultural capital is tantamount to economic capital (resources) and social capital (networks). As a result, this cultural capital is converted into educational and socioeconomic success [52]. The application of this theory is limited, much like Bourdieu's, to the specific ways that social institutions, particularly schools, are

utilized to spread cultural notions that support and underpin the dominant or upper class's privileged position. This is a story that is very much evident during the surges of the pandemic when the dichotomy of accessibility to technology – hardware and software – defined the inequality and inequity in the opportunities in education.

Social Reproduction Theory (SRT), on the other hand, discusses a structure that determines the relation of force between and among social classes. To maintain the social class of an individual, cultural capital must be established and sustained. Yet, someone's social space position or social capital remains a key to ensuring social class despite a strong cultural capital [53]. Economic capital likewise determines the equity of resources and opportunities which includes education. This can be observed during crises like the pandemic.

Thus, Bourdieu emphasized that people in privileged socioeconomic situations pass on cultural capital—that is, acquaintance with high-status cultural signals—to their offspring, who then use this capital to achieve socioeconomic and educational success. Consequently, it is believed that cultural capital plays a crucial role in maintaining educational disparity. In this regard, Jæger and Karlson [52]. further stated that Bourdieu's claims can hold water since several research already found that cultural capital indeed contributes to educational inequality.

In a larger picture, it can be deemed that CRT is a subset of a much bigger concept of SRT which conveys to cultural, structural, and ecological characteristics of the society.

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored both the opportunities and challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The shift to online and hybrid learning models exposed significant gaps in teachers' preparedness, particularly in terms of access to digital resources, technology, and the necessary pedagogical training. This has emphasized the urgent need for ongoing professional development, investment in infrastructure, and robust institutional support. For SDG 4 to be fully realized by 2030, it is imperative to address these challenges by focusing on teacher capacity-building, expanding technological infrastructure, and fostering collaboration across all stakeholders—governments, schools, teachers, parents, and communities—to ensure equitable access to education and resources. The transition to hybrid education models accelerated during the pandemic, especially in regions with limited access to technology. While hybrid learning presents a valuable opportunity for flexibility and continued education, it also reveals deep-rooted inequalities in access to digital tools, reliable internet, and adequate training for both educators and students. This discrepancy highlights the critical need for comprehensive policies, improved technological infrastructure, and systematic support for educators, particularly in emerging economies like the Philippines. The pandemic has exposed the systemic weaknesses in education systems globally, and these lessons must be used to strengthen education frameworks, making them more resilient, inclusive, and adaptable to future crises.

The issue of social justice in education remains a persistent challenge, exacerbated by the pandemic's impact on vulnerable communities. Access to technology and educational resources continues to be uneven, and social inequalities are deeply embedded within the education system. Pierre Bourdieu's theories on cultural and social capital highlight how socioeconomic status influences access to educational opportunities, reinforcing disparities in learning outcomes. To address these inequalities, a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach is needed—one that includes inclusive curricula, equitable teaching methods, and strong collaboration among stakeholders at every level. School leadership plays a vital role in ensuring that the values of social justice are embedded within the education system, guiding the efforts to create environments where all students, regardless of their background, can thrive.

Looking toward the future, the evolution of education will depend on the integration of technology, innovative pedagogy, and human connection to create systems that are not only resilient but also equitable and adaptable to changing circumstances. This transformation will require a collective effort from educators, policymakers, and communities to reimagine and rebuild education systems that promote true equality, focusing on access, quality, and inclusivity. For education to be truly transformative and equitable in the future, it must address the technological, socio-economic, and structural barriers that persist, ensuring that all learners—regardless of their social or economic background—are equipped with the tools and opportunities to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world.

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