

The Experiences of Students in the Modular and Online Learning: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the specific experiences of university students in terms of cognitive, social, emotional, and adversity skills in an online or modular mode of learning. The study utilized a phenomenology research design, and a semi-structured interview was conducted. Participants in the study were composed of students enrolled in online and modular learning who were asked to share their experiences elaborately. The analysis revealed that despite the differences in the learning modalities, the students similarly experienced the same significant adjustments and academic challenges. These experiences include the lack or limited access to information, concerns about the accessibility of the learning opportunities, lack of economic resources, time management concerns, communication with professors and classmates, and self-motivation and coping mechanisms. As an intended outcome, a feasible distance learning blueprint composed of possible courses of action that can be taken to achieve a more effective and feasible distance learning setup is made.

Keywords—Distance Learning, online learning, module learning, phenomenology, learning experiences.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a significant worldwide shift in norms and practices in different fields and industries, including the education sector. The unprecedented situation demanded an immediate course of action; that is, the shift of the learning mode to distance learning (Donnelly, Patrinos, & Gresham, 2021). The World Bank in 2020 revealed that during the pandemic's peak, 45 countries in Europe and Central Asia closed their schools, affecting about 185 million students. Several studies have also been conducted at an institutional level and use the lens of educators. The case prompted the researchers to explore students' experiences in distance learning.

In the Philippines, to address the educational crisis due to the limitation of face-to-face interaction for the adherence to health protocols, the Department of Education (DepED) released DepED Order (DO) no. 12, s.2020. The

department order release promoted an alternative learning mode—distance learning (DepED, 2020). Delute & Ada (2021) highlighted how the transition to distance learning influences student learning due to unfamiliarity with the new medium of education. Furthermore, there is still a preference for traditional face-to-face learning because of the immediate human interaction and the principle of learning by doing (Delute & Ada, 2021). Lastly, Delute & Ada (2021) emphasized how resources, or the lack thereof, can impact their whole learning experience in the distance learning setup.

With different concerns surrounding the unfamiliar learning mode, the study aimed to explore the experiences of state university students in modular and online learning and gain a perspective on their learning experiences.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

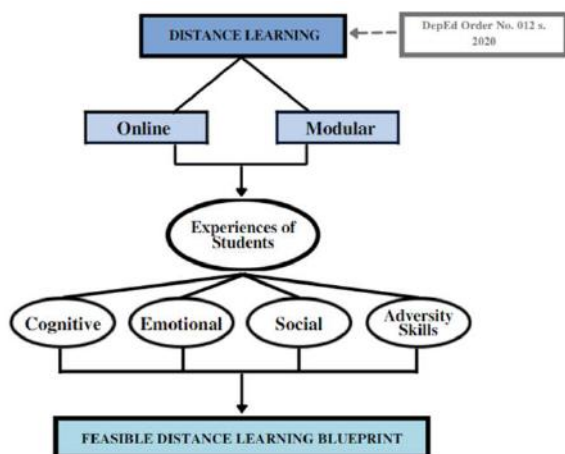


Fig.1. Conceptual Framework

The schematic diagram shown in Figure 1 illustrated the conceptual flow of the study, highlighting the relevant variables: distance learning and the two commonly used online and modular learning. The researchers considered the students' learning experiences from the two learning modes to improve distance learning instruction, specifically, the student's learning experiences in the cognitive, emotional, social, and adversity skills. The data was obtained through a semi-structured interview of the respondents by the researchers to elicit their learning experiences. With that, a feasible distance learning blueprint was constructed considering the thematic experiences of the students.

The Department of Education (DepEd) Order no. 012, s. 2020 was also visible in the diagram because the preference for distance learning set up in these times of pandemic is anchored in this DepEd Order (DO), in lieu of face-to-face learning, to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the learners, teachers, staffs, and other stakeholders in education, and prevent further transmission of the Covid-19 virus (DepEd, 2020).

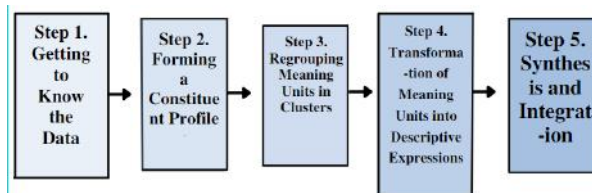
III. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the Descriptive Phenomenology of Husserl, which dissects experiences described by consciousness, suspending the biases—reducing the normative insinuations into a group of meanings (Maboloc, Fernandez & Tuvida, 2016). This will effectively delineate the opportunities and challenges encountered by university students in distance learning.

Furthermore, the study employed Giorgi's five steps of phenomenological analysis to analyze the lived experiences of the state university students in an online

and modular learning setup. The five steps are as follows (Giorgi, 2009 as cited by Isabirye & Makoe, 2018):

Figure 2. Giorgi's Five-Step Phenomenological Analysis



The unit of analysis of the study was the experiences of the participants who were randomly chosen based on the following criteria: (a) must be a student of Cebu Normal University; (b) must be either a third-year or second-year undergraduate student; (c) must have enrolled in either an online or modular learning modality, and lastly, (d) must be willing to participate in a semi-structured interview.

Research guide questions were prepared for the semi-structured interview accomplished in Google meet and Facebook Messenger, whichever preference and convenient for the participants, to elicit their experiences. As a token of gratitude for taking the time to participate in the study, the participants will be given a 50-peso load credit after the interview.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers have accounted for ethical considerations in the data collection and fulfilled to keep the privacy and safety of the research participants. The researchers inquired about the approval of participation in the study and presented consent letters through an electronic messaging application for the participants' convenience.

Rest assured that the personal information of the participants was kept confidential. The personal information provided by the participants remains exclusive to the researchers and participants alone. After the interview, the gathered narratives and information were secured with utmost confidentiality, and the names of the participants were anonymous and will never be disclosed. Thus, the participants are provided with pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Limitations of the Study

The study was about the cognitive, social, adversity skills, and emotional experiences of university students enrolled in online and modular learning. The participants are limited to ten (10) students enrolled in the College of Teacher Education in a particular state university in Cebu City. The study only examined online and modular learning.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following Giorgi's phenomenological data analysis, the narratives from the participants were explored and analyzed to form a thematic index, which comprises the common themes of their experiences in a distance learning setup.

As seen in Table 1 below, there are eight (8) themes elicited from the accounts of the participants. The classification of themes was according to the specific domain of learning experiences. The categorization is as follows:

Table 1. Thematic Index

Thematic Index			
Cognitive	Social	Adversity	Emotional
Learning Issues in the Learning Modality	Communication with Professors	Lack of Economic Resources	Self-Motivation & Coping Mechanism
Lack / Limited Access of Information	Communication with Classmates	Time Management Concerns	
Concerns on the Accessibility of Learning Opportunities			

Cognitive Experience

Learning Issues in the Learning Modality

As the education system transitioned to distance learning, students encountered numerous academic challenges. These challenges pertain to the workload, environment, and cognitive state of the students. First and foremost is the environment, since flexible learning takes place in an electronic environment and printed modules. Issues in the environment include distractions in their house and social media.

"Kato first and foremost kanang unstable connection and then sometimes kanang distractions sa house... Ingana... Kanang distractions sa social media, nya gamit mga gadgets," (Nin:P7).

English Translation: "First and foremost, there is an unstable connection, as well as occasional distractions in the house, and distractions from social media via gadgets."

Since online learning took place in a virtual environment, utilizing an internet connection was a substantial factor. Participants faced trouble in joining synchronous classes due to uncontrollable external factors such as power interruption and storms that may

affect the stability of the internet connection, which consequently hamper their learning.

"You cannot attend the classes because may brown out ba sa inyo or may bagyo or unsa ba kay naay gyuy kanang murag maka disturb sa imohang kanang flow of learning gyud. So online ka, mao gyud tong kuan ay mao gyud na ang major problems sa online learning," (Nin:P7).

English Translation: "[There are instances that] you are unable to attend classes due to a brownout in your area, a typhoon, or other factors that may disturb your flow of learning. So if you're learning online, these are some of the most common problems you encounter."

Aside from the environmental disruptions, participants in both learning modalities had confusion about their learning materials, doubt of the acquired knowledge, and uncertainties about their school performances. Two participants said,

"It feels like you're learning without...murag nag answer-answer ra ka but dili mahibaw-an if sakto ba or wrong ba. Murag kag clueless bitaw. Clueless...helpless, something like that. Confusing siya most of the time, and murag ma-feel nimo nga sige mag-answer nalang ko ani bahala'g wala siya'y sure. Naa siya'y daghang doubts and uncertainties when dealing with the printed modules," (Artsy: P1).

English Translation: "It feels like you're learning without knowing...it feels like you're just answering the questions without knowing if they're correct or incorrect. It's as if you don't know what you're doing. Something along those lines, like clueless or helpless. Most of the time, it's confusing, and you feel obligated to answer, even if you're not sure. When it comes to printed modules, there are many doubts and uncertainties."

and,

"Doubtful in terms of how learning works... Pressure on submitting the task on time because you will have confusion between how to improve your output and finish it before the due date," (Sam: P6).

Additionally, due to confusion brought by their learning materials and increased difficulties in the new education setup, participants revealed that they were only complying rather than learning. These are

supported by two verbatim statements from the participants,

“It's not easy to go from one media to another from a pedagogical standpoint. For a student like me, the pandemic's quick shift creates a challenge since there isn't enough time to prepare for a new medium. I enrolled because I don't want to be left behind, not because I want to study. I respond to the modules since I must comply with the requirements,” (Prettyugly: P9).

and,

“The number of activities increased compared to the face-to-face setup and it's all about compliance rather than learning,” (Dom: P5).

Furthermore, participants in both learning modalities expressed self-distrust in the acquired knowledge, experiences, and skills for practice for their future profession.

“Dili, kung online learning kay I think dili gyud siya [enough], kay kanang even though ni-try gyud ang mga teachers nga mohatag ug activities nga maka-improve namo kay naa gyu'y kanang murag lack, maka-ingon gyud kog kanang lack of experience ba kay ikaw ra man gud usa sa imohang room or kung asa ka nag-learn ka, dayon wala kay peers nga maka-kuan, dayon dili sad ka ka-communicate sa mga teachers ug kanang personal. Ingana lack of experience gyud,” (Nin:P7).

English Translation: “No, I do not believe that online learning is sufficient. Even though the teachers try to provide activities to help us improve, it still feels lacking. I can say that it is lacking in experience because you are learning at home or any of your designated locations for your learning. At the same time, you are unable to communicate with the teachers in person. That's it, there's a lack of experience.”

and,

“No, kay wala pajud naay juy mga topics nga wala gani nako nasabtan niya need jud siya sa future nako nga internship ug sa future nako nga teaching,” (Cheonsa:P8).

English Translation: “No, because there are topics that I fully don't understand, those are which will be essential in my future internship and teaching career.”

Lack/Limited Access to Information

Regardless of the learning modality, most participants faced challenges in accomplishing their classwork due to lack or limited access to information. Participants in modular learning had difficulties with their self-learning materials, most especially without the guidance of their professor.

“For the modular it is hard especially wala kay guide sa imong mga teacher kuan ra sha self learning and also behind ka sa learnings.” (Don:P10)

English Translation: “For the modular, it is hard, especially if you don't have a teacher to guide you; it's all self-study, and you're falling behind.”

Additionally, the magnitude of difficulty increased due to the delayed distribution of their printed modules, which resulted in an accumulated and heavier workload to accomplish.

“Difficult. Kay aside sa kanang daghan...wala juy modules nga muabot.. Ug naabot man gani ang modules, ni-reachout sila namo after na sa sem. Daghan na noon kaayo mi'g pendings. Ang nahitabo, wala mi grades. No Grades mi kasagara until now, unya wala pa nausab among grades. Kay naa pa sad daghan na wala pa nahuman so lisud jud kaayo ang printed modular,” (Sky:P2).

English Translation: “Difficult. Apart from the fact that there are many, no modules have arrived, and if they have, it means they will reach you after the semester has ended. As a result, we have a lot of pending activities. It just so happens that we don't have a grade. We don't have a grade, and it hasn't changed because there are still things to complete, making printed modular extremely difficult.”

Evidently, participants in modular learning faced difficulties with their self-learning modules without the guidance of their professors. The delayed distribution of printed modules caused the accumulated and heavier workload, which added to the magnitude of difficulties in modular learning.

On the other hand, participants in the online learning modality had their reading materials. However, participants had difficulty accomplishing their tasks due to the limited reading materials.

“As for the inconsistency, I just study and read what they (professors) upload,” (Dom: P10).

Concerns on the Accessibility of Learning Opportunities

Regardless of the learning modality, there was the inadequacy of learning opportunities in respective learning modalities as it restrained their prospect of acquiring knowledge effectively. Either online and modular learning modalities affected the learning process in performing and completing assigned activities and school performances.

“I’ve realized how much I missed the face-to-face and how it was much more interactive and more informative than now,” (Dom: P5).

and,

“Pwede 50-50. I can’t yes and I can’t say no because I feel like there are some aspects that I think I can do well, and also some aspects that I think I could be better at if there was another opportunity to learn, aside from online learning or modular learning. So, generally, not yet,” (Artsy: P1).

English Translation: “Can it be 50-50? I can’t yes and I can’t say no because I feel like there are some aspects that I think I can do well, and also some aspects that I think I could be better at if there was another opportunity to learn, aside from online learning or modular learning. So, generally, not yet.”

With the limited access to information, participants resolved this issue by exploring more of their topic on the internet.

“Being a teacher baya, you need to make lesson plan but the thing is, you also need to know how to do it properly. Naay times na pahimuon mi ug lesson plan, mag research rami unsaon,”(Cottonball: P4).

English Translation: “Being a teacher, you need to make lesson plans but the thing is, you also need to know how to do it properly. There will be times when we need to create a lesson plan, and we just simply research how to do it.”

Social Experience

Communication with Professors

In distance learning, constant communication became indispensable since the delivery of education drastically changed to an electronic environment and printed modules. Communication with professors guides and aids the participants with encountering difficulties concerning their activities. One of the participants voiced,

“At first kay nakulbaan mi, kay abi namo ug ignan mi nga, “maka-online man lagi mo” but

okay ra diay, kay pag-meet niya, kay iya ra mi gi-follow up ug naa ba mi mga challenges, ug unsa iyang ma-help. Unya nag-explain sad siya na nganong important na maka-pass mi within that reasonable deadline. So ni-guide ra pod siya namo, wala ra mi niya gi-pressure ug maayo. So, it feels alright,” (Artsy: P1).

English Translation: “At first, we felt nervous because we were initially concerned that they would point out and say, “why were you able to go online?” But it turned out to be okay because when we met in through video conference, they simply followed up to see how we were doing, if we were having any difficulties and if there was anything they could do to help us, as well as explain why it is important to submit within that reasonable deadline. So, she guided us and we did not feel pressured. So, it feels alright.”

In contradiction to the response above, while tasks can be challenging, some participants received insufficient instruction from their professors, which leaves the participants of their own accord.

“Halos tanan imong answeran plus wala paju’y proper instruction teachers kay you’re left at your own accord baya,” (Cottonball:P4),

English Translation: “It appears that you should complete all of the tasks, and there is no proper instruction from the teachers because you are left to your own accord.”

and,

“Then naa pu’y mga activities nga dili jud dali answeran nga kailangan jud sha’g further instruction or explanation sa inyong professor,” (Cheonsa: P8).

English Translation: “Then there are also activities that are difficult to answer and require further instruction or explanation from your professor.”

Additionally, participants experienced a lack of constant communication and the inconsistency of their professor in teaching.

“Hmm, ug kanang kuan kanang.. ay latest man lacking kay ko’g sa interpersonal relationship pud within my block mates ang teachers and then considering nga education man akong major, kanang importante baya kaayo na like--” (Nin:P7).

English Translation: “I lack interpersonal relationship within my block mates and

teachers. Considering that education is my major, I recognize how important it is.”

and,

“No, most of my professors are inconsistent and only meet us whenever they want to,” (Cheonsa: P8).

Communication with Classmates

Opposite to the inadequacy of communication with the professors, most participants from both learning modalities maintained communication with their classmates, which aided them throughout the academic challenges. Participants utilized messenger group chats for raising concerns and clarifications.

“We created a group chat wherein we can communicate and raise our concerns,” Jern: P3, a participant stating how they interact with their classmates.

Additionally, communication with classmates via group chats helped emerge a sense of camaraderie among them as they helped each other and experienced the same challenges in a distance learning setup.

“As for my block mates, I still interact with them... Because they are the people I’ll be with until I graduate. I’d like us to help each other out,” (Dom: P5),

and,

“Yes, by helping each other because we're all in the same boat,” (PrettyUgly: P9).

Furthermore, using group chats was crucial for the dissemination of school announcements.

“Yes. Actually, naay ubang online students na mu-help jud sila, specifically, ang among president...among mayor ato na time. Helpful kaayo siya kay concern jud siya sa mga modulars, and she tries to help as much as she can sa mga modular students. So that was very huge factor that has helped all of us. Kami tanan modulars, generally, and of course myself as a modular student,” (Artsy: P1).

English Translation: “Yes. Actually, there are certain online learning students, especially our president...our mayor at the time, who were glad to help. She is quite helpful because she is concerned about modular students and tries to help them as much as she can. So that was a very huge factor that has helped all of us. All modular students, generally, and of course

myself as a modular student, [is grateful for the help].”

Overall, communication manifests an integral role in the successful acquisition of knowledge and meaningful learning experiences.

Adversity Skills

Lack of Economic Resources

In a distance learning setup, students are required to have enough resources to continue their education. However, participants faced learning difficulties from the scarcity of gadgets and internet connectivity to the lack of economic resources. The participant’s choice for a distance learning modality was solely contingent on the availability of their resources.

“Isa sad na sa naka-influence nako, kay smartphone ray akong gamit. Wala koy laing gadget ba unya wala koy laing kahulman dinhi. So, before labina ug mga lisud kaayo nga mga task, mu-visit jud kog mga computer shops. Unya kadto kay nag-lockdown balik adto, unya gipasirado ang tanang computer shops ba. So, mao to naglisud jud mi ato. Pero karon kay naa naman,” (Sky: P2).

English Translation: “One factor that influenced me is that I only use my smartphone. I have no other gadgets at my disposal, and no one to borrow from. So before, especially if the task is challenging, I make a point of visiting computer shops to rent one. Then it goes into lockdown mode again, and all computer shops are supposed to be closed during that time. As a result, we had a rough time. However, as of the moment, the situation was elevated.”

Other participants, who experienced this issue, resolved it by borrowing gadgets.

“Naa mi laptop pero share rami sa akong igsoon then also akong cellphone ato na time kay guba na,” (Cheonsa: P8).

English Translation: “We have a laptop, but it is shared with my sibling, and my cellphone is already broken at the time.”

Aside from the scarcity of gadgets, another resource was internet connectivity. The instability of their internet connection, again, influenced the choice of participants.

“Pag first year kay ni choose kog Category B kay intermittent pa among connection ato, dili pako sure maka-attend ko sa tanang online classes,” (Nin: P7).

English Translation: “During first year, I chose Category B since we have intermittent connectivity in our internet connection, and I’m not sure if I’ll be able to attend all of my classes.”

Consequently, participants dealt with the issue by staying in a place where the internet connection was stable and sparing a data load.

“Sometimes ang internet connection, ang signal. Sometimes sa balay, ang kusog jud signal sa terrace... If mu adto sad ko sa other parts sa among balay, hinay sad kayo. If adto ko sa akong kwarto, I need to stand up like use a mic stand para makakuha ug proper signal akong phone,” (Cottonball:P4),

English Translation: “Sometimes, the signal for our internet connection in our house varies. It is most especially stable in our terrace. If I go to other parts of our house, it is slow. If I go inside my room, I have to stand up and use a mic stand to just for my phone to have a proper signal.”

and,

“Sa connection other than Wi-Fi kay mo-ready lang gyud ug kanang load or data even those close siya at least maka follow gihapon ka sa imong mga activities,” (Nin: P7).

English Translation: “For other means other means of connecting the internet aside from the Wi-Fi, we just have to prepare a load or mobile data just so we can follow up on our activities.”

Overall, The lack of learning resources limited the opportunities for the students to learn effectively in a distance learning setup.

“I realized na grabe jud ang impact sa lack of resources and socio-economic standing sa imohang learning. So kadto mga disadvantaged kay grabe jud sila ka disadvantaged sad sa atong flexible learning. Mag-matter jud ang imoang gadget, therefore, mag-matter jud imong kwarta,” (Artsy: P1).

English Translation: “I realized that a lack of resources and socioeconomic status had a significant impact on your learning. As a result, those who were socioeconomically disadvantaged are also negatively affected by this flexible learning. So, having gadgets do matter, therefore, having money does matter.”

Time Management Concerns

Participants from online and modular learning modalities expressed their positive reception of the deadline extension. Participants had the freedom to control their time and enable them to explore employment opportunities.

“Kanang sa online learning gyud ka naa ra man ka sa home, maka-manage ra ka sa imong time, kanag pwede ra ka maka-excuse sa teacher kung naa kay importante kung working baka or unsa ba. Oo, maka-multitask ra,” (Nin:P7).

English Translation: “In online learning, you are in the comfort of your own home, and you can manage your time better, and has the privilege to excuse yourself from class, which is vital if you are a working student or anything. You can multitask, yes.”

However, it also posed concerns to some students. Even though participants expressed their gratitude for the extension of submission dates, the students struggled to balance their time due to the heavy workload.

“Kung opportunity ang time management, nahimo pud shag challenging labaw na usahay kay makapoy naka, ma drain naka sa mga activities. Mao na challenging pud ang time management,” (Cheonsa:P8).

English Translation: “If time management is an opportunity, it may also be a challenge, especially when you are fatigued or exhausted from your activities. That’s why time management is also challenging.”

This emerged to compromise their physical, emotional, and other health-related issues due to lack of rest.

“When I use earphones maglabad akong ulo if dugayan. If sige kag stare sa screen sometimes niya paminaw, mulabad ang ulo niya and attention span mugamay ba,” (Cottonball:P4).

English Translation: “When I use earphones, I get a headache due to continued use. If you always stare at the screen while listening, you’ll get a headache and your attention span shortens.”

Besides the inadequate rest, participants also expressed unclear personal and academic boundaries. They struggle to balance their responsibilities as a student and duties in their homes.

“Ma-conflict pud akong responsibilities sa balay ug as a student kay since naa raman jud ta sa balay, so wala jud kay takas sa imong responsibilities. Naa ju’y time na kapoy kayo labaw na magtudlo paka sa imong manghud, sa ilang module niya naa pud kay imuha,” (Cheonsa: P8).

English Translation: “There is a conflict between my responsibilities in our home and my responsibilities as a student because we live in our own home and cannot avoid our responsibilities. It's exhausting at times, especially if you're teaching your sibling's module while simultaneously having your own.”

Emotional Experience

Self-Motivation & Coping Mechanism

Emotional responses to the situation's internal and external demands are self-motivation and coping. In a distance learning setup, be it online or modular learning modality, participants face difficulties and challenges which adversely affect their school performances. Due to this, participants use a variety of coping mechanisms to cope with a stressful situation, including seeking social support, crying, and their hobbies.

“Though challenges affect me negatively, I still have the mindset to get back on track and calm. Sometimes I cry it all out, talk to a friend, or sing while doing the task to keep moving forward,” (Sam: P6).

Additionally, other participants cope with challenges through self-regulation. Participants in both distance learning modalities saw their circumstances as an opportunity to grow.

“Kanang maka-confident nuon siya sa imong growth gud na as a college student, kailangan independent naka, kailangan kanang kahibaw ka mo adjust sa imohang unsay mga situations nga naingin ato to nimo, mao to kay kanang nindot to siya nga na ma comfortable ra ko sa akong kaugalingon ron ay sa akong kaugalingon self,” (Nin:P7).

English Translation: “It gives you confidence in your growth as a college student; it requires you to be independent; it requires you to understand and adjust in the situations of why you did what you did; that is why it is good; it makes you feel at ease.”

and,

“Naa pud kay patience sa imo self na musabot sa module,” (Cheonsa: P8).

English Translation: “You also [need] have patience in order to fully understand the module.”

Furthermore, participants emphasized developing independence in their learning and recognized their role as students, which improved their metacognition process.

“I try to accept the situation's reality; once we accept reality, we may try to modify and better it. While we attempt to avoid it, wish it away, or lament the unfairness of things being unknown, we are powerless to change circumstances. Additionally, I pay attention to my feelings and concerns, assuring myself that it's normal to face these challenges because every student is going through a difficult time,” (PrettyUgly: P9),

and,

“My realization is that even if you are in a set-up of modular learning still you need to do your job as a student, be grateful nalang nga naka-eskwela paka make your challenges as your way nga magtarong ka'g eskwela,” (Don: P10).

English Translation: “My realization is that even if you are in a set-up of modular learning, still you need to do your job as a student. Be grateful that you are studying, and make your challenges your way to study harder.”

The accounts of the participants manifested the role and significance of education. It was evident that despite the challenges they faced, they looked for coping mechanisms to express their concerns and carry on with their education.

V. DISCUSSION

Following Giorgi's phenomenological analysis technique, the following themes were identified and concluded:

Cognitive Experience

The transition of the education system to distance learning has brought challenges and doubts in cognitive learning experiences and learning opportunities to the students. Unveiled learning issues in online and modular learning modalities comprise the increased workload, home/electronic environment, and cognitive state of the students. Likewise, the prevalence of uncontrollable factors, such as storms and power interruption, that may affect the internet stability revealed the leak/limited access to information and disrupted learning opportunities for the future profession.

The findings revealed the insufficiency of cognitive experience of the students in the current setup that will determine their acquisition of skills as future professionals in their respective fields. Consequently, factors affecting learning experiences contribute to the overall performance of the students both in online and modular learning. Despite the salient differences in their modalities, the experiences shared by the participants are similar, particularly in the challenges and doubts of learning in the current setup.

Social Experience

Although social media and other platforms are not new to most students, relying solely on virtual communication to connect to people in a distance learning setup is an entirely different social experience. Communication with professors and classmates was the vital social contact and interaction in this distance learning. The data revealed that communication with classmates is consistent, whereas communication with professors is inconsistent. Constant communication with classmates allows clarification of instructions and dissemination of information about activities or tasks. Part of the students' shared experiences was the inconsistency and lack of clear instructions dissemination from the professors.

Constant communication with professors and classmates is an integral part of the overall learning process of the students. Consistent and clear instructions or objectives provided by professors can positively contribute to the student's performance. Similarly, constant communication with classmates fabricates support to manage distance learning.

Adversity Skills Experience

The challenges brought by the unprecedented global pandemic led to the adaptation of the distance learning setup, which every student needs to overcome. Although the drive to continue their education is evident among students, difficulty pointing to socio-economic factors was prevalent among students. Students identified the lack of resources such as gadgets and unstable internet connectivity.

Distance learning requires resources such as gadgets and internet connections to be more effective and adaptive in the distance learning setup. This particular requirement puts students who are underprivileged and under-resourced at a disadvantage. In conclusion, considering the demands of distance learning that students fail to meet is the ineffectiveness of the current setup.

Emotional Experience

Distance learning presents students' struggles in different areas that constitute their learning experience. The students' time management concerns, self-motivations, and coping mechanisms are experiences that come unnoticed and can be wearing them. Although modular learning has its merits, as it offers students employment opportunities and freedom in time management, it also comes as a disadvantage. Since there are a lot of activities to accomplish and delays in the delivery of the modules, it is hard to keep track of the schedule initially prepared. In the face of these challenges, the participants expressed their realizations of how the experience affected them positively.

Regardless of the difficulties of the current educational setup, the same intensity and drive to complete their degree can be seen in their efforts to overcome the challenges. It indicates the importance of education to the lives of the students. Additionally, aside from the established themes, the following challenges and opportunities are part of the overall learning experiences of the participants. The following are the challenges regardless of the learning modality: unstable/ lack of internet connectivity, time management concerns, and struggle for efficient self-study. Furthermore, the following are the opportunities in both learning modalities: flexible time, developmental consistency, and self-paced learning.

From the participants' accounts, it can be inferred that some opportunities can become part of the challenges in distance learning. Although some participants claimed to have time management as an opportunity, the amount of workload, delayed delivery of modules,

and other intrinsic or extrinsic factors affect their schedule.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the participants' narratives, the researchers determined specific experiences in distance learning. Regardless of the learning modality, the participants share similar challenges. In terms of their cognitive experience, participants perceived that distance learning instilled insufficient knowledge and skills for their future professions, which determined the ineffectiveness of the current setup. On the other hand, the social experience of the participants revealed the integral role of communication in learning both in modular and online modalities - primarily in acquiring information and building camaraderie. On the topic of adversity skills experiences, the participants deemed the influence of their socio-economic status in their accessibility to distance learning setup. Finally, the participants' emotional experiences involve balancing their responsibilities at home and as a student, which they overcome through self-motivation and self-determined coping mechanisms. Altogether, the experiences of the participants are not entirely negative. Each facet of experiences contributes to the effectiveness of the distance learning modalities and is dependent on how the learning modality is managed.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the results gathered, the researchers propose a *Feasible Distance Learning Blueprint* that describes what aspects need to be improved and discusses the possible courses of action that can be taken to achieve a more effective and feasible distance learning setup.

To address the lapses of the current educational distance learning setup, the blueprint will be divided into three categories: institutional efforts and initiatives, the channels of communication, and students' efforts, which discuss particular roles and actions—from broad to specific audience—to be taken.

A comprehensive explanation of the recommendation can be read in the annex of the study.

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ANNEX A: RECOMMENDATION

FEASIBLE DISTANCE LEARNING BLUEPRINT

As an intended outcome, the blueprint below discusses possible courses of action that can be taken to achieve a more effective and feasible distance learning setup. The institution, professors/ instructors, and students will embody the objectives, to address the lapses in the current educational setup.

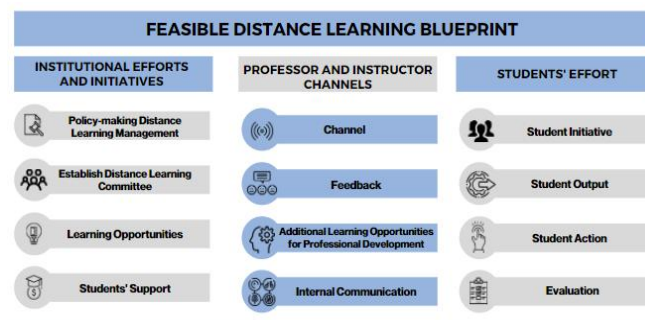


Fig.3. Feasible Distance Learning Blueprint

Institutional Efforts and Initiatives

Policy-Making for Distance Learning Management: Draw up policies that visibly distinguish available opportunities for students. Clear structure and guidelines for offered learning modalities.

Establish Distance Learning Committee: Create a separate committee that will supervise operations of distance learning: delivery of modules, implementation of policies, quality control, communication, feedback, etc. Ensure that the committee solely works for this particular department to avoid overlap of responsibilities of the administrators.

Learning Opportunities: Although it is difficult to provide an array of learning opportunities with the current setup, make sure to provide opportunities for learning outside course objectives such as facilitating lectures or webinar series.

Students' Support: Create initiative for student support not just through existing scholarship programs but that is founded by the institution itself. It can be part of the duties of the separate committee.

Channels of Communication: Professors and Instructors

Channel: Acts as a link between the institution and the students. Exhibit a clear understanding of the implementation of the policies for the benefit of the students.

Feedback: Provide feedback to students regarding their performance. Allow students evaluation of their tasks. Since the setup hinders close monitoring, monthly or quarterly initiatives for communication and feedback can make a great difference.

Additional Learning Opportunities for Professional Development: In line with the institutional efforts and initiatives, professors and instructors are responsible for providing learning opportunities to students observing course objectives or goals.

Focus on Adversity Quotient: Incorporate adversity skills in activities. The unprecedented events proved the importance of strengthening the adversity quotient of students.

Students' Effort

Student Initiative: As part of members of the institution, students should have the awareness of their roles and responsibilities. Part of that is their awareness of the school's guidelines and initiatives. This way, they are provided with updates, guidance, and possible support they need in order to cater to their needs and difficulties.

Student Output: Accomplishing the required tasks can be difficult and draining. Regardless, students exert their best to comply with all of them but this time, it should be without compromising learning. Moreover, students should learn to evaluate the relevance of the tasks given in their course objectives.

Student Action: Aside from the tasks or modules that need completion, students should equal the institution's efforts for facilitating learning opportunities amidst the pandemic. Students should support and participate in the events provided for them, despite constraints in time for those who are working.

Student Feedback through Evaluation: One-way institutions can improve and deliver effective service to their people is through listening and evaluation provided by the members of their organization.