Modular Distance Learning to Limited Face to Face Classes: Teachers’ Perspective

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Abstract - The study focused on Teachers’ Perspective from Modular Distance Learning to Limited Face-to-Face Classes. This qualitative study made use of descriptive phenomenological research design in exploring the lived experiences of the teachers. The informants of the study were the eight public school teachers at San Roque National High School from the Division of Talisay City. The informant was selected using a purposive sampling procedure. In addition, the study was conducted in San Roque, Talisay City. The researchers used a one-on-one interview method to analyze the data. The study yielded seven themes from the distance learning to limited face-to-face classes which include (1) Flexibility, (2) Challenges, (3) Effectivity, (4) Tedious work, (5) Time Management, (6) Extended Working Hours, (7) Health Risks Posed by the Covid 19 Virus. Moreover, the study revealed that teachers experienced several challenges during the transition of Modular Distance Learning to the Limited Face-to-Face Classes yet those did not stop them from doing their organic function as teachers.

Keywords: Modular Distance Learning, Limited Face-to-face classes, and Phenomenology

I. Introduction

Students' lives are significantly shaped by their education. One of the key components in delivering high-quality learning is the teacher. However, numerous changes have occurred in the educational environment as COVID-19 hit in the Philippines. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the Philippine Department of Education to discontinue the face-to-face classes during the school year 2019–2020. As teachers play a vital role in the continuous delivery of quality education amid the pandemic, this abrupt shift led to the transition of continuous learning through Modular Distance Learning (MDL) to students in remote and far-flung areas in the absence of technology and internet access. However, most educators and administrators lacked readiness on this rapid transition.

Moreover, the shift of the teaching-learning delivery in schools to modular distance learning made it more challenging, on the part of the school personnel, the delivery of basic quality education. Because of this, DepEd officials were constantly looking for ways to address issues and equip their educators with the skills they need to be more productive in the field of modular distance learning. The Department of Education urged all public and private institutions to begin holding in-person classes for the 2021–2022 academic year. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. stated in his first State of the Nation Address on July 25, 2022, that if it is not possible, blended learning will be fully implemented again during the academic year 2022–2023. Teachers had to make yet another adjustment and face another obstacle because of the return of face-to-face instruction this school year.

Furthermore, distance learning made a significant promise regarding time and space convenience. Depending on the teaching style, students do not necessarily need to be in the same time zone as the instructor in space. For non-traditional students who could not attend during normal hours, this was a huge advantage. According to the study conducted by Lapada et al. (2020), teacher was highly aware of the presence and consequence cause by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the threats of the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher continues to serve by formulating modules as the learning guide of student. The teachers thus become a facilitator in the growth of the student, both as a member of their community and a member of their society (Martineau et al., 2020). However, Malipot (2020) stressed that teachers also air their problems on modular distance learning. Bagood (2020) highlighted that as front liners in the educational system, they have undergone various training and seminars to be more equipped in...
delivering better education amid the COVID-19 pandemic as it is a norm of the department to train teachers not just for professional growth but to become ready for unexpected circumstances.

In the study conducted by Lapada et al. (2020), it was said that teachers were quite aware of the COVID-19 pandemic's prevalence and implications. Despite the threats of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers continue to serve by formulating modules as the learning guide of students. As a result, the teacher takes on a new role as a catalyst for the student's growth as a member of their society and community (Martineau et al., 2020). Malipot (2020), however, emphasized the need of teachers discussing their issues with modular distant learning. As per Bagood (2020), it is standard practice for the department to train teachers not only for professional development but also to become prepared for unforeseen circumstances. As frontliners in the educational system, they have undergone various training and seminars to be better equipped to deliver better education amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers have partially transitioned to modular distance learning in terms of its nature and methods in which it may be incorporated into their regular teaching routines, and this transition would present difficulties for the teachers to overcome. Additionally, considering the Typhoon Odette-related damage to school buildings, the availability of classrooms for high numbers of learners, and the need to ensure the safety of both teachers and learners, teachers are not yet prepared.

Even while distant learning has many clear benefits, there are still issues that need to be fixed. These problems include the Students’ Performance, Module Distribution and Retrieval, Time Management, Insufficient Vacation, Pressure from School Administrators, Endless Paperwork and Extended Working Hours, Health Risks Posed by the Covid 19 Virus, and the recent Monkeypox. Each of these has an impact on the overall standard of distance learning. Each of these problems is connected to the others in a variety of ways. To understand the language teachers' experiences, issues, and solutions as they switch from modular distance learning to face-to-face lessons at San Roque National High School in DepEd Talisay City, the researcher believes there is a need to delve into their point of view.

II. Methods and Materials

This qualitative study used of descriptive phenomenological research design in exploring the lived experiences of the teachers. The informants of the study are the eight public school teachers at San Roque National High School from the Division of Talisay City. The informant was selected using a purposive sampling procedure. In addition, the study used a one-on-one interview method to analyze the data. Interviews were completed by the interviewer based on what the informants said. Interviews were immensely helpful for learning the background and experiences of the informants.

The Colaizzi Method was additionally employed by the researchers to evaluate the data. Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step procedure guarantees an in-depth analysis while staying faithful to the data. It provides a brief description of the phenomenon under examination and is supported by the individuals who created it. In-person interviews are one method, but they can also take the shape of written accounts or online interviews.

Ethical Consideration

The 1974 Belmont Report, which establishes three fundamental ethical standards for research involving humans as subjects, is the basis for the study's ethical considerations. These standards include respect for persons, beneficence, and fairness. The idea of respect for a person included two ethical principles. People with limited autonomy are qualified for protection in the first place, and individuals should be acknowledged as independent agents in the second. Depending on their preferences, informants may or may not respond to the questions posed in the study. Because of this, there are no restrictions on the number of questions they can answer; they are free to do so. Informants received informed consent that detailed the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, emergency contact information, the level of data confidentiality, and a statement confirming their voluntary participation in the study.
III. Results

The information acquired through interviews and observations is presented in this section. Data saturation was reached after a conclusion was established; the data gathered via coding were interpreted using theme analysis.

One of these themes reflected positive aspect of the modular distance learning. Informants’ statements are listed below:

Theme 1. It was flexible

The study’s first theme revealed benefits of modular distant learning for teachers. The adaptability of modular remote learning and its benefits were mentioned by three of the informants.

In modular distance learning, there is less to be prepared since there is already a prepared modules for the students which is convenient for me due to the less paperwork. Informant 5

Advantages of it is that teachers can be at peace because modules are already prepared. It will just be distributed; therefore, teachers’ voices are preserved. Informant 2

I think one of the advantages of modular distance learning is that students can freely answer/engage in activities in the comforts of their home, far from the danger of covid. Informant 1

Other themes indicated concerns or challenges teachers had during the transition from the modular distance learning to face-to-face classes:

Theme 2. It was challenging

The study’s second theme pointed out that teachers favored classroom instruction over modular distance learning because they find the latter to be more difficult and frustrating.

It is challenging and frustrating. As a teacher, we can feel the frustration if the attendance of the students in getting the modules are low/reduced, we gave all our time to print it then it happens. Challenging on the other hand, because patience will be evaluated just like when those submitted modules/answer sheets has no answer at all. Informant 4

Modular distance learning is undoubtedly challenging compared to the traditional teaching and learning process inside the classroom. Self-learning Kits do not guarantee quality learning; however, it somehow encourages the learners though not all can be independent in developing their study habits. Informant 7

Personally, the adjustment was difficult because I am very new to all of this, I must observe and learn everything from the education and school culture to how I should manage the classes. It was difficult at first. Informant 5

Theme 3. It was ineffective

The study’s third theme stressed out that distance learning in a modular format is unproductive. Informant 3 narrated how most of her learners didn't even bother reading the modules.

The modular distance learning environment has limited avenue for teachers and students to communicate. It restricts the teachers and parents from working together since internet connectivity play a vital role in making conference attainable. Informant 6
Theme 4. It was a tedious work

The fourth theme of the study identified the switch from modular distant learning to in-person classes as a tedious endeavor. The three informants described how tiresome the shift has been.

*From printing of modules and being an on-call teacher 24/7, the transition period has brought extra weight to the teachers’ tasks. In the present modality, the teachers continually print the modules between their hectic schedules at the same do the teaching job.* Informant 8

Theme 5. It was affected by time constraint

The fifth theme is about time management. Since modular and face-to-face classes have quite different organizational structures, the time constraint had an impact on it as well. There were many things to get ready, but not enough time.

*Since modular and face-to-face classes are entirely different set-ups, the adjustments were also entirely huge. Documents and schedules should be prepared days before. In my case, I was given the assigned room only a week before the start of the classes, so I had to clean and disinfect the room in just a week.* Informant 4

*Teachers lack the time for the preparation of classroom and the lesson discussions. The learning of the students for the past two years was quite different. This time is back to zero, so you must spoon feed everything and all the lessons just to make them learn.* Informant 1

Theme 6. It extended working hours

It lengthened the workday. Teachers must teach in their students the need to give their classes their all-out effort. According to the claims made by informants 3, 6, and 7, the sixth theme of longer working hours was present.

*It is the teachers’ duty to make the students feel they need to have an investment of their time not only in participating in class activities but also in performing their tasks at home. Teachers also constantly need to give reminders to students to have active participations and deeper connections with the lessons.* Informant 3

*Because students are still very passive, and their intellectual capabilities are not in line with their level due to the pandemic, I had to go extra mile to print those supplementary materials and enhancement exercises that they can work on at home. On top of that, I constantly monitored them online via our Facebook messenger group.* Informant 6

*I had students that still preferred to be told everything instead of working on their own. So, I made sure to be always cater them even when it means I had to stay up late to prepare instructional materials and give them instructions both online and in-class.* Informant 7

Theme 7. It was risky

This theme represented the potential risk that both teachers and pupils might face. Despite the danger of holding the class in-person for both the teachers and the students, it did not deter them from conducting their natural job as educators.

*Since teaching face to face posed risk to the teachers and students’ health, I made sure to vaccinate myself in the nearest vaccination site and I regularly take vitamins. In addition, I always*
wear a mask when I am around my co-teacher and students. I also make sure that alcohols and hand sanitizers are always available and easy to access especially by the students. Informant 2

IV. Discussion

The study yielded seven themes which include (1) Flexibility, (2) Challenges, (3) Effectivity, (4) Tedious work, (5) Time Management, (6) Extended Working Hours, (7) Health Risks Posed by the Covid 19 Virus.

Although modular distance learning offers flexible learning modes so that students can determine their learning path, pace, and contingencies of instruction, in contrast to traditional classroom instruction, which requires learners to follow a certain sequence constrained by time, subject, and place (Hannafin, 1984), the findings of the study suggested that the modular distance learning was ineffective, challenging, and frustrating since it has limited avenue for teachers and students to communicate. Students need facilitators to discuss lessons before assessments. It restricts the teachers and parents from working together since internet connectivity play a vital role in making conference attainable.

Moreover, the study demonstrated that the number of students in the classroom as well as the number of teaching load were factors that give huge adjustment to the teachers. There are two major challenges that the teachers experienced during the transition: lack of school preparedness and students’ academic preparedness. These major challenges had given difficulties for the teachers to adapt with the changes.

In addition, the increase of enrolment led teachers to have substantial number of teaching loads, lack of physical facilities such as classrooms affected class schedules, and teachers were not given enough time to prepare their classrooms. Students have academic gaps due to modular distance learning. Teachers considered “back to zero” teaching, which means they must spoon-feed everything so they can understand the basics in every lesson. It is also a challenge for teachers to encourage students to speak on their minds and express or elaborate their ideas.

Nonetheless, teachers protected their health by getting vaccinated against COVID-19, taking enough vitamins to strengthen immune system, following safety protocols such as wearing of facemasks and sanitizing with alcohol. Also, teachers make sure that the learning environment is safe and secured by sanitizing classrooms and other school areas, putting signages for social distancing, flow for entrance and exit and availability of facemasks and alcohol for students to use.

In the end, teachers cope the challenges of the transition by embracing and moving forward to solutions that would benefit the students. Teachers continually strive to look for better and best strategies to help students in any ways.

V. Conclusion

The study's conclusions showed that the eight teachers at San Roque National High School encountered a variety of issues when switching from modular distance learning to the school’s limited face-to-face classes. The teachers have embraced the shift nonetheless since it provides them with a means of facilitating an effective teaching-learning process.

Reference


