E-Learning Amidst the Pandemic: Teachers' Perspective in the Philippines

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A B S T R A C T S

The purpose of this study is to explain in detail the perspectives of teachers and the challenges that the stakeholders of the E-learning process may face in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents of this study were 5 teachers at the ACCESS campus of the Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU), the Philippines. This study used a semi-structured interview method to obtain the necessary data which was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that teachers recognized this new mode of learning as a more comfortable and convenient way to use; however, assessing student learning and interacting with them was in general difficult. Thus, operational and psychological challenges are experienced by teachers in adapting to the new learning model. The results of the analysis revealed that SKSU administrators must provide broad assistance to all teachers, especially regarding the challenges they face at this time, besides that, teachers and students must be trained and ready to use sophisticated e-learning technology.

A R T I C L E   I N F O

1. INTRODUCTION

The impact brought about by the pandemic paved the way for schools to suspend and declare a state of emergency for public health (Razon, 2020). Specifically, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) released a COVID advisory stating the cancellation of classes and school activities (Abel, 2020).

Looking forward to the decision to cancel face-to-face meetings, most universities and schools in the country have used online learning to face this challenge to ensure that students continue to receive academic input remotely as in (Putri *et al.,* 2020)

A certain study conducted by Rohman *et al.,* (2020) - "Online Learning in higher Education during Covid-19 Pandemic: Students' Perceptions" showed that most of the students had negative perceptions to online learning. However, there are no studies concerning about the perspective of teachers to this new mode of learning.

The rationale behind the implementation of the E-learning process is to have better, more convenient, and effective ways to deliver instructions and learning (Jizat & Sulong, 2021). With the effort that the educators spending on this process, it is essential to explore the journey of the teachers who were prematurely immersed in a remote sense of teaching. The purpose of this study is to determine the perspectives of teachers and recognize the challenges that are likely faced by the stakeholders of the E-learning process to propose a concept that ensures if such a process is effectively implemented (Robinson *et al.,* 2012). Specifically, it sought answers to the following research questions.
1. What are teachers' perceptions on online learning?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the teachers on online learning?
3. How do the teachers cope up with the new platform of teaching-leaning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?.

2. METHODS

This study aims to explore the experiences of teachers' teaching trips during this pandemic crisis. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological research design. Basically, it facilitates a deeper understanding of the particular phenomenon that is being experienced as described by the participants (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 2012).

The convenience sampling technique (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011), was used in selecting the participants as it is appropriate to be used in this case, Specifically, five (5) participants were purposively chosen and were contacted via online messaging.

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed for this research by the researchers. The conversation of the participants was transcribed for data interpretation and analysis after the interviews. For coding the recorded audio, the data was transcribed into stanzas. The data gathered from the interview had undergone thematic analysis in which the data coded was classified according to different themes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Case a - Teachers' perceptions on online learning

Theme 1: Online Teaching Experience
Teachers expressed a variety of views regarding their experiences on teaching online. Online teaching exhibit varied characteristics, which are useful in elucidating how its mode of didactic content delivery affected teachers' perceptions of online learning. The teachers did acknowledge that this type of teaching is complicated for them when it comes on assessing students' learning and checking outputs. (Mulyanti *et al.,* 2020).

Additionally, P4's statement below states that online learning is hard when it comes to interaction which prevents students from gaining more insights from their teacher.

P4 "Basically, it's hard to interact with students online, and [uh] the activities that are suited for physical interaction which is better, could no longer be applied in online classes".

3.2. Case b - Challenges encountered by the teachers on online learning

Theme 2: Challenges Encountered

The second theme that emerged from the transcripts encompassed with challenges (Hein & Austin, 2001). There are two topics: Operational and Psychological challenges as experienced by the teachers.

3.2.1. Operational Challenges

Poor internet connectivity of teachers hinders online teaching and the delivery of lessons. Consequently, the participants also voice out electric power interruptions as another challenge in online teaching. Furthermore, students' attendance was also mentioned by a participant since some students also experience technological challenges.

Finally, participants also exemplify that teachers' mastery on operating a computer can affect how a teacher facilitate a class. Conducting of assessment, monitoring of students' attendance and generating examinations were also issues when it comes in online teaching.

3.2.2. Psychological Challenges

Online teaching has induced changes in teachers eating patterns and could be a problem in maintaining their healthy diet. Participants are experiencing frustrating glitches, making technological issues a source of anxiety and stress for them.

3.3. Case c - coping mechanisms in the new platform

For a new platform, there is a need for adding online leaning. (Sangsawang, 2020). Thus, the topic can be described in the following:

Theme 3: Adaption to Online Learning

P2, below, postulated that teachers should embrace the new normal way of teaching.

P2 "We don't have any choice but to embrace the new normal way of learning"

Some participants also indicated that their students motivate them to adapt to this new mode of learning.

Theme 4: Issues and Concerns

Teachers revealed these concerns in order to inform the design of teacher education programs that can help prospective and current online educators meet the demands and challenges inherent in online teaching.

Participants exemplifies that they need to invest more for the modernization of the University to improve the internet connectivity. Although, participants were also aware that internet connectivity is something that they cannot control.

P2 "Boost of internet connectivity in all areas"

P5 "Improve internet connectivity"

P1 suggests to device a specific learning to system to easily allows teachers to understand the behavior of students for different online activities.

Furthermore, teachers' psychological challenges need to be addressedP2 suggested that:

P2 "For Teacher's load, it should be minimized into 3 preparation to avoid stress".

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study were to determine the perceptions of teachers from the ACCESS Campus of Sultan Kudarat State University on E-Learning in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, some teachers have different perceptions of online teaching and learning methods. Minority of the teachers acknowledge this new mode of learning as convenient and more comfortable to use. However, it is hard for them to asses students' learning or interact with their students in general. Other challenges that emerged were focused on adapting to online teaching that offers different challenges for them as a teacher; it is mainly about internet connectivity, attendance of students, and psychological challenges like lack of connection to their students. There is a great need for the management of SKSU to give support to all the teachers particularly on the challenges that they are facing that was mentioned above; additionally, teachers and students should be well-trained in using advance E-Learning technologies.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

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