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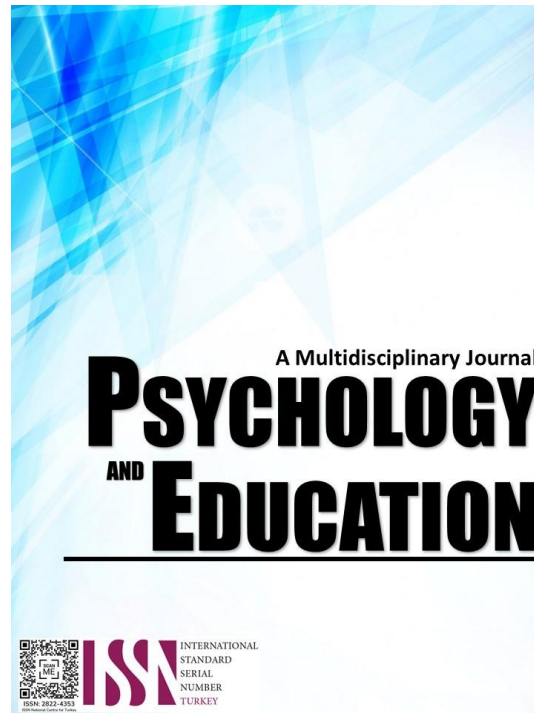
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Struggle Is Real: The Experiences and Challenges Faced by Filipino Tertiary Students on Lack of Gadgets Amidst the Online Learning

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Abstract

Education is essential to life, and the epidemic affected everything. Parents want to get their kids the most important teaching. However, since COVID-19 has affected schools and other institutions, providing education has become the most significant issue. Online learning pedagogy uses technology to provide high-quality learning environments for student-centered learning. Further, this study explores the experiences and challenges faced by Filipino tertiary students regarding the lack of gadgets amidst online learning. Employing the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the findings of this study were: Some college students still have difficulty with online learning. Attending online classes is difficult, especially for students with limited resources. Smartphones, other gadgets, and internet connections play a significant role in online classrooms because they are the ones that students utilize while learning online, which is essential for successful participation in online higher education as well as for solving a variety of other difficulties in the new normal. Further, College students face similar health challenges. Having an online learning setup is not just about students' struggles with learning resources but also about their health issues. When our respondents used their smartphones for an extended period, they reported eye aches and blurred vision. They also said that some of their body parts, such as their legs and back, are aching, and feel pressured because they tend to overthink things in their surroundings, which causes them incredible difficulty in performing their best in attending online classes. Even though college students continue to suffer from a lack of learning resources during online sessions, they do their best to manage their needs and the scarcity of learning resources. Students have unique coping methods for dealing with difficulties in online classes.

Keywords: *online learning, challenges, lived experiences, tertiary students, lack of gadgets*

Introduction

Education is an essential part of human existence; the pandemic, including education, impacted every aspect of life. Parents make every effort to give their kids the best educational resources. However, in the current situation, as COVID-19 has affected the education sector at the school and other institutional levels, it has become the greatest challenge to provide education. According to a United Nations Organization (2020) report, the sudden closure of educational institutions has affected 94% of the world's student population (Suri, 2021). Technology is used by online learning pedagogy to enable instructors to give students a high-quality learning environment to participate in student-centered learning (O'Neil et al., 2009).

Additionally, the psychological stress brought on by this new setup made it challenging for the students to concentrate on their studies. They described their sentiments of anxiety, fatigue, loneliness, longing for home, grief, and hopelessness. (Baticulon et al., 2021). The research revealed that Ghanaian students believed online education was unsuccessful because of their many difficulties. These included a lack of student social interaction, poor communication, a shortage of ICT resources, and subpar academic results. Lack of

proper technologies, poor home learning environments, student stress, and restricted access to laboratories and fieldwork are a few of the issues described (Barrot, 2021).

Lack of access to learning tools like computer devices and Internet connectivity is another social disadvantage that can exacerbate anxiety (Poudel & Subedi, 2020). In this generation of digitalization and distant learning, educational strategies that create programs and provide human and financial resources to strengthen the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in post-primary education have been highlighted (Alghamdi & Holland, 2020). The availability of these learning tools, especially among students, is essential for successful participation in online higher education and for overcoming many other problems in the new normal (Kapasia et al., 2020). According to Beng et al. (2020), increasing technology during the pandemic may have improved students' psychological and social health. In contrast, a lack of technology and connectivity for online learning has been associated with higher stress levels in students.

Additionally, college students have anticipated that they may have concerns about their academics, their future, their relationships, and their health (Negi,



Methodology

2019). They overcome challenges by managing their time, being open-minded, speaking clearly, and being creative with the students' learning techniques. College students can better balance their multiple tasks (Sumalinog, 2018). Students actively handled the circumstance by asking their teachers and family members for help and engaging in recreational activities to cope with these issues. These students' active-oriented coping strategies were in line with those of Carter et al. (2020), who looked at students' self-regulation strategies.

Furthermore, classroom and online teaching methods enhanced student engagement, academic achievement, and course evaluation. Hew et al. (2020) conducted a parallel study using a cloud-based video conferencing program to transform standard flipped classrooms into completely online flipped classrooms. According to their findings, these two categories of learning settings were reasonably practical. They also provided advice on implementing online successfully converted classes supported by videoconferencing. Suryaman et al. (2020), compared to the other two studies, investigated how learning took place at home throughout the pandemic. Their research revealed numerous challenges when studying at home, including a lack of technological proficiency, expensive Internet costs, and little student engagement and sociability.

The study will contribute to understanding Filipino tertiary students' lived experiences and aim to identify the challenges Filipino students face due to the lack of gadgets amidst online learning. The study will also contribute to knowing students' coping mechanisms without devices.

Research Questions

This study will explore the experiences and challenges faced by Filipino tertiary students regarding the lack of gadgets amidst online learning. Specifically, it sought to answer the following question:

1. What are the lived experiences of Filipino students regarding the lack of gadgets in online learning?
2. What are the challenges faced by Filipino students due to the lack of gadgets in online learning?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of Filipino students for the lack of gadgets in online learning?

This study employed Heideggerian phenomenology to explore the participant's lived experiences.

Participants of the Study

The participants in this study were college students who lacked gadgets for online learning. Fifteen (15) participants were current residents of Bulacan.

Instrument of the Study

The researchers interview the chosen respondents. For the study, the researchers made a semi-structured interview guide, a method for gathering qualitative data in which the researcher asks a sequence of prepared yet open-ended questions (Given, 2008). A panel of certified professional teachers, a registered guidance counselor, and a qualified psychometrician assess the semi-structured interview guide before it is used with the respondents. Based on the following codes, the interview will explore three approaches of the students: (1) experiences of the student who lacks gadgets amidst online learning; (2) challenges of the student who lacks gadgets; and (3) coping mechanisms of the students.

Data Collection Process

The importance of creating an emotional bond between the researchers and the participants can be shown in various situations. On the other hand, it was made by creating an environment of mutual reliance among participants and providing support regarding their settings and conditions. The consent form was sent to participants in advance to guarantee compliance with legal requirements. This information and a consent form authorizing the recording of the entire interview were provided to each participant. The interview would last an hour, the researchers decided.

The interview guide consists of thirty-nine (21) questions, As a result of any potential technological difficulties, the participants were invited to raise any clarifications, worries, or confusing questions they might have following the meeting's opening. A thorough transcription and analysis were done after a semi-structured online interview to make sense of the data gathered. To avoid any doubt regarding the nature of the data collection, the interview transcription includes each participant's actual verbatim responses.

Ethical Considerations

The previous researchers asked their research professors for approval of the data collection process and instruments. Ethics and morals must be followed very carefully to make sure permission is given.

Legalities should be considered in all studies and research. Everyone should respect other authors regardless of one's beliefs or methods (Chapman, 2010). The interview process must have no unfavorable effects on the respondents. The present study obtained written informed consent. It included all the information required for the study as well as a withdrawal provision. All respondent personal information will be kept private and used only for the purposes mentioned, in compliance with Republic Act 10173.

Data Analysis Procedure

This study employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore the participants' experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms.

Results and Discussion

These are categorized into two themes: (1) online struggle and (2) the motivated. The following sub-themes were identified from data gathering; most participants shared their experiences.

Online Struggle

Negi (2009) stated that college students have anticipated that they may have concerns about their academics, their future, their relationships, and their health. Students are having difficulty attending online classes, and respondents shared some of their experiences during online classes.

Difficulty to Stand-Up

As the interviewer asked about how respondents see themselves as online learners, Respondent 1 explained how difficult it is to face online classes as a new setup, especially since this student only uses smartphones to attend online classes.

"Nakikita ko po yung sarili kong nahihirapan ngayon sa online class, especially nasa bahay tayo nag-aral. So, lalo na po at tayo ay college ngayon at hindi naman po biro yung ginagawa." At the same time, smartphone lang po gamit ko ngayon. "At the end of the interview, she added, "Gusto ko pong mapabilang sa Dean's list." The family and friends who motivate her are the

reason why this student is still going.

Moreover, Kapasia et al. (2020) stated that "the availability of these learning tools, especially among students, is essential for successful participation in online higher education and for overcoming many other problems in the new normal." In support of the self-image of respondent 1, she is struggling.

Distracted with so many things

Respondent 9 stated, "during online classes, mabilis can distract, and during online classes, we can open social media, so kapag may clases mas distracted talaga sya, at hindi sya katulad ng dati kagaya ng wala pang online." This shows that Filipino students are still struggling to adapt to new modes of learning as a new source of education. Distraction is a challenge that students face during an online class. Some people call it "distracted learning," but it seems like a lot of students are doing more than one thing at a time while they are supposed to be learning.

In support of the study of Islam (2021), smartphones are part of digital technology to connect online learning, but smartphones have a bad reputation in the classroom, and students may use them in a bad area.

Lagging behind

It is essential when attending online classes that you have a gadget that suits your education, that you can participate well in class, and that you have clear access to the information that your teacher is presenting on screen.

"Yung cellphone ko po pag nag klase naghahang na po naglalag na kase ng po need narin po mag palit" R6 shared the experience of a lack of resources during an online class.

Based on the study by Barrot (2021), lack of proper technologies, poor home learning environments, student stress, and restricted access to laboratories and fieldwork are a few of the issues described. College students must have effective gadgets in virtual meetings for creating activities and video presentations and to create word files without experiencing lagging in resources for a better outcome and the best presentation.

Inefficiency of internet connection

Online learning necessitates a strong internet connection, which is essential for students to have. Most students struggle with their connections,

and the absence of or limited access to the internet and other technology resources was one of the main barriers to the new method of learning.

"Naka data kase ako, minsan yung connection mabagal."When you're done, you're done."There is no connection."R15 shares the experience of having unpredictable connections online.

Moreover, Bahinting (2022) stated that the Internet is now the foundation of online education; to make e-learning effective in these difficult times, students should focus on using technology more effectively. College students should prepare more effective connections to avoid missing out on learning opportunities.

Difficulty to perform my best

College students' life is quite difficult, especially now that students are still adopting an online learning setup. Having good health is a must for every student learner to have good and passing participation in class. But now, most students suffer from health conditions while attending class.

"Yung sakin yung panakit ng ulo saka sa mata pag nasobrahan ako ng gamit nag blurred sya talaga sobrang labo tapos hindi ko pa nakikita yung dinidiscuss sa sobrang babad saka yung pag babad sa online class." R4 struggling with some health issues in attending long hours of facing on screen. The students added, "Masakit sa mata literally di ko alam kung totoo radiation daw from the screen tapos parang nakafocus kalang and then walang externalize sa isip mo so we need to use headphone or earphones hangat kaya, tas regard sa mental health siguro pressured narin stress tas depende pa yun sa ano eh sa mga another external factor pero sa device talaga strain talaga strain sa katawan saka specifically samata then minsan pinupulikat nangangalay yung mga binte ganon although hindi sya ginagamit sa online class part padin sya sa online class part padin sya ng katawan mo and it will cause you stress narin talaga mentally."

Moreover, Baticulon et al. (2021) stated that the psychological stress brought on by this new setup made it challenging for students to concentrate on their studies. They described their sentiments of anxiety, fatigue, loneliness, longing for home, grief, and hopelessness. Additionally, Tus et al. (2021) suggest (1) programs that use one-on-one interviews with guidance counselors to conduct individual and group treatments of the school and sporadic initiatives that educate parents and kids about healthy mental

health; (2) Other experts teach teachers important coping skills, such as understanding the "Do's and Don'ts" negative mental health symptoms in students; (3) parents are encouraged to assist in the education of students who exhibit these symptoms school's programs to become acquainted with the educational system and learn more about their kids' conduct and academic standing.

The Motivated!

In every aspect of life, people need to be committed to doing things. College students should commit to attending online classes and waking up early, and commitment leads to the right pathway and a good outcome in the end. Education is an important part of life; committed students are most likely to have a successful life.

Ready to face the online world

Parents make every effort to give their kids access to the best educational resources, preparing for their needs. College students who lack gadgets must focus on preparing their resources in time before attending online classes.

"Unang una ko po talagang ginawa para makasabay sa online class, nagbura ako ng mga apps na hindi ko naman naman na need sa klase, mga files po na hindi ko na kailangan binura ko na din po para po makaabawas sa storage,"As stated by R4, here is the preparation for every online class she took. Good preparation is a way to attend class peacefully.

In support of the study by Dhawan (2020), it was stated that before using any e-learning tool or technology, the advantages and disadvantages should be thought about. Colleges should conduct thorough research before choosing the finest technology for diverse educational objectives. Understanding the purpose and environment of technology adoption is important.

Driven for Success

Attending school might be hard, but having good grades and having certificates in your hands are symbols that you did your best. Some students share that they want to be on the dean's list to prove that even though they lack resources, at least they made it.

"Kase po nasa isip ko kahit online parang face-to-face classes din po sya na may grades kailangan po yun para maka graduate para makuha yung degree na gusto ko yung ano nakakamotivate sakin para pag patuloy

yung pag aaral kahit online learning po."R10 shares the motivation and goals for attending online classes using a smartphone.

Moreover, online learning is fulfilling because of students' achievements or goals, student learning and measurement, learning tools and materials, learner interactions (instructors, students, content), and course technology (Aman, 2009).

In conclusion, college students are still struggling in many aspects of online learning but have not given up despite the lack of gadgets amidst online learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Some college students are still having difficulty with online learning. Attending online classes is difficult, especially for students with limited resources. Smartphones, other gadgets, and internet connections play a significant role in online classrooms because they are the ones that students utilize while learning online, which is essential for successful participation in online higher education as well as for solving a variety of other difficulties in the new normal.
2. College students face similar health challenges. Having an online learning setup is not just about students' struggles with learning resources but also about their health issues. When our respondents used their smartphones for an extended period, they reported eye aches and blurred vision. They also said that some of their body parts, such as their legs and back, are aching and feel pressured because they tend to overthink things in their surroundings, which causes them incredible difficulty in performing their best in attending online classes.
3. Even though college students continue to suffer from a lack of learning resources during online sessions, they do their best to manage their needs and the scarcity of learning resources. Students have unique coping methods for dealing with difficulties in online classes.

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