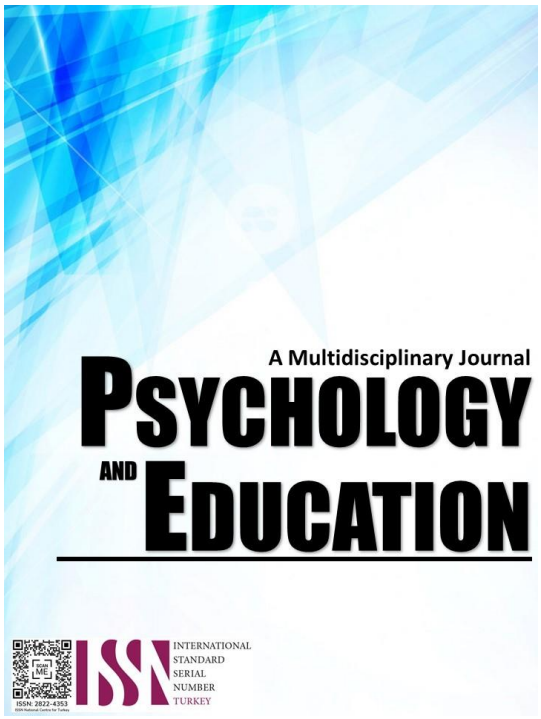
UNRAVELING THE NARRATIVES OF THE RECIPIENTS OF PROJECT DOORS OF THE DISTRICT OF KABANKALAN II: BASIS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



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Research Article

Unraveling the Narratives of the Recipients of Project DOORS of the District of Kabankalan II: Basis for Technical Assistance

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Abstract

This study investigated and analyzed the narratives of the recipients of Project Digitization of Online and Offline Resources for Sustainability (DOORS) in the District of Kabankalan II: Basis for the Technical Assistance Plan in the Schools Division Office of Kabankalan City. Using the purposive sampling method, the researchers selected twelve (12) participants based on the pre-identified criteria. The narratives gathered from the interview of the participants underwent rigorous analysis using Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Method. Based on the participants' narratives, the following themes were deduced: (1) Significant and Meaningful Experiences, (2) Challenges and Bottlenecks Encountered, and (3) Suggestions and Recommendations to Improve the Project Implementation. Moreover, it was found out from the narratives of the participants that despite the limited resources, and challenges encountered during the pandemic, they were very appreciative and immensely grateful to the division for making them part of Project DOORS Implementation.

Keywords: *narratives, project digitization of online and offline resources for sustainability, descriptive phenomenological method*

Introduction

At least some top-performing jurisdictions had plans for emergency distance learning in place prior to the coronavirus pandemic (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2020). In other countries like Singapore, for example, an emergency distance learning system in response to prior public health threats, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2005 had been developed (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2020). These countries have organized digital resources which are not limited to "add-on" enrichment resources, rather they also include specifically designed resources to support teaching and learning of the full range of subjects and grade levels in the jurisdiction-level curriculum (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2020).

During the pandemic, in the Philippines, face-to-face learning engagement of students and teachers within the school has been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic that it has paved the way to the implementation of Modular Distance Learning as an urgent response to ensure continuity in education (Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020). At present, the Philippines is still in the process of adapting to the new normal form of education, and continuous innovations of educators and active involvement of other stakeholders which served as its driving force for its success (Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

Department Order No. 12, series of 2020 had provided clear guidance to all offices, units, schools, and community learning centers (CLCs) of the Department of Education (DepEd), learners and their parents, partners, and stakeholders through the basic Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), a package of education interventions that would respond to basic education challenges brought about by COVID-19. Through the development of the BE-LCP, the DepEd engaged both the internal and external stakeholders for inputs in the design of a learning delivery strategy and operational direction that ensures the health, safety, and well-being of all learners, trenchers, and personnel of the Department (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020).

The BE-LCP of the Schools Division Office of Kabankalan City strictly adhered with the provisions stated in the DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020. That is, to ensure the smooth implementation of the different learning delivery modalities during the opening of classes, all public elementary and secondary schools conducted a Dry Run of the Different Learning Modalities based on their Learning Continuity Plan on August 17 – 20, 2020 (Division Memorandum No. 139, s. 2020). The Dry Run of the Learning Delivery Modalities aimed to test run the feasibility of the different learning delivery modalities to be implemented in schools; gather valuable feedback for the improvement and smooth implementation of these modalities; and engage parents, barangay officials, and other stakeholders to support learning and its delivery for SY 2020 – 2021.

To further strengthen the implementation of the BE-

LCP of the division, Project Digitization of Online and Offline Resources for Sustainability (Project DOORS) was implemented. The project was created in response to the scarcity of funds in the reproduction of printed Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) and Learning Activity Sheets (LASs) that was aligned with the educational technology program of the DepEd Central Office. It was implemented in the five (5) districts of Kabankalan City with the following schools as the first batch of recipients: Tan-awan NHS, Tampalon NHS, Tapi NHS, Inapoy ES, and Tabugon NHS.

However, despite the project's growing number of recipients, the district does not have any reliable data on the impact of Project DOORS in its 2-year implementation. In addition, teachers have not told their stories and experiences about the project implementation before, during and after. Thus, the researchers plan to gather the lived experiences of teachers, parents, and learners who have taken active part in this project. The purpose of this study is to unravel the lived experiences of Project DOORS recipients of the District of Kabankalan II. The data gathered will serve as bases in the crafting of technical assistance plan of the district as well as the possible expansion of the project to other schools in the future.

Research Question

This research investigated and analyzed the narratives of Project DOORS recipients of the District of Kabankalan II as basis for technical assistance. This research sought to answer the questions, (1) "What are the narratives of Project DOORS recipients of the District of Kabankalan II, and (2) What is the proposed Technical Assistance Plan to improve the implementation of the Project?"

Literature Review

Distance Learning

Burns (2011) described Distance Education as a planned learning experience or method of instruction characterized by quasi-permanent separation of the instructor and learner (s). Keegan (1980, as cited in Burns, 2011) stated that within a distance education system, information and communication exchanged through print or electronic communications media. In addition, distance education is also a broad approach characterized by a high degree or variation (Burns, 2011). UNESCO defined distance education as 'an educational process and system in which all or a significant proportion of the teaching is carried out by someone or something removed in space and time form the learner (Burns, 2011). According to UNESCO, distance education requires: (1) structured planning, (2) well-designed courses, (3) special instructional techniques, (4) methods of communication by electronic and other technologies.

Moreover, unlike other forms of training, instruction, and professional development, distance education is inexorably linked to its mode of delivery and because of the rapid evolution of delivery modes, distance education experts often speak of generations of distance education models, such as print, multimedia, and Web-based delivery systems (Commonwealth of Learning, 2008; Taylor, 1995, as cited in Burns, 2011). That is, 'generation' implies a linearity and heredity that do not necessarily exist between types of distance education technologies, for instance, print and IRI have been used simultaneously, not merely sequentially, as teacher training media (Burns, 2011). Furthermore, the proliferation of new electronic delivery methods, particularly the Internet, and the convergence of different types of media platforms blur the neat distinctions between generations, for example, a Web-based distance education system may employ print, audio, video, multimedia, and broadcast elements (Burns, 2011).

Use of Technology in the Classroom

The concept of modernizing education puts forward new social requirements for the school system and the main and secondary task is to improve the efficiency of the assimilation of educational material, aimed at improving the modern quality of education. (De Silva, 2021). Since education is evolving, it also goes with the industrial revolution. With the help of technology, intelligent information is translated into the language of practical solutions, and to make ordinary lessons unusual, the materials must be interesting to be able to adapt to the modern language of children in the 21st century (De Silva, 2021).

According to Orlando (2014, as cited in Vassallo and Warren, 2018), the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in schools has increased dramatically in recent years. Vassallo & Warren (2018) posited that the increase in the use of ICT has been driven by the recognition that students need to be skilled in the use of these technologies in order to participate effectively in an increasing digital world as well as a growing awareness of the benefits of digital technology for learning.

According to De Silva (2021), technology synthesizes

non-conflicting ideas from the concepts of developmental education of leader teachers and psychologists from the standpoint of continuity with traditional schools and the most effective use of the activity method, meta-subject results of education are formed, logical, and variable thinking develops, high efficiency of participation of school children in competitions and competitions at different levels is ensured.

Project DOORS

Project DOORS stands for Digitization of Online and Offline Resources for Sustainability. This is in response to the scarcity of funds in the reproduction of printed Self-Learning Modules (SLM) and Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) aligned with the educational technology program of the DepEd Central Office.

Project DOORS has different components namely: 1] Allocation of Funds for the Procurement of Tablets and On-the-Go USB Devices, 2] Capacity Building of Teachers, 3] Program Implementation, 4] Monitoring and Evaluation, 5] Stakeholders' Engagement, and 6] Program Closure.

Identified schools were provided with tablets and OTGs for the utilization of students. These tablets and OTGs contained the SLMs/LASs, TBI/RBI Episodes, and other educational videos that students could watch and make reactions/ reviews on.

The SDO, District and Schools monitored the implementation of the Program from March 2021 until July 2021. FGD results were gathered from program recipients – teachers, parents and learners which will be part of the program completion report. The best practices of each recipient school were highlighted and shared during the stakeholders' engagement for the expansion of the program.

Technical Assistance

Graham (2014) described technical assistance as a collaborative and coordinated approach to facilitating change, building the capacity of both organizations and individuals, developing improved ways of doing things and ultimately achieving agreed-upon outcomes. According to Graham (2014) some essential guiding principles of effective TA include: (1) offer multiple TA strategies and levels of support, (2) utilize effective adult learning strategies, (3) develop trusting personal relationships, (4) work collaboratively and build on existing strengths, (5) develop partnerships and integrate resources, (6) provide adoptive leadership and build consensus, (7) communicate openly and often, (8) gather meaningful process and outcomes data at regular intervals, (9) view TA through a system change lens, and (10) incorporate implementation science findings into all levels of TA.

Methodology

This study utilized Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenology data analysis strategy which used face-to- face interview using the prepared Individual Interview Form (IIF). According to Ghada (n.d.) the process of descriptive phenomenological data analysis used to provide assistance in extracting, organizing, and analyzing such narrative dataset. This means that the eventual outcome sought from applying Colaizzi's strategy in descriptive phenomenology was to elicit exhaustive description about the phenomenon (Ghada, n.d.).

In this study, after the interview transcripts were transcribed, the results were discussed by the researchers with the participants to validate the content and ensure their conformity with what they really wanted to say and express. Moreover, the transcripts were then checked by the independent researcher who had experienced qualitative research (Ghada, n.d.).. Below are the seven in analyzing the data using Colaizzi's Descriptive Phenomenological Method.

The Seven Steps in Colazzi's descriptive phenomenological method adopted from Morrow et al., 2015

Sampling Method

This research project employed purposive sampling method. Due to the limitations brought by the pandemic, the researchers utilized the criterion sampling method. According to Palinkas et al. (2016) Criterion- i is used to identify and select all cases that meet some pre-determined criterion of importance. Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011 as cited in Palinkas et al., 2016), purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. According to Bernard and Spradley (as cited in Palinkas et al., 2016) in addition to knowledge and experience, the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner are important in purposive sampling.

Thus, in this study, the criteria stated above are

incorporated and taken into consideration in the final selection of the participants. The participants should:

1. belong to the first batch implementing school of the Project DOORS;
2. active participant in the implementation of the project;
3. willing to be a participant in this study; and
4. grade 6 and 10 learners, teachers, and parents.

Participants

The participants of the study were four (4) learners, four (4) parents, and four (4) teachers of Tampalon NHS, Camansi NHS, and ERAMS-West who passed the pre-identified criteria set the researchers.

Instrument of the Study

The researcher used the Individual Interview Form (IIF) containing the question: "What are your experiences as a recipient of Project Digitization of Online and Offline Resources for Sustainability."

Ethical Issues

This study was beneficial to provide the school heads, teachers, and parents the impact of Project DOORS implementation in the SDO of Kabankalan City. Creswell (2013) underscored the importance of the benefits of this study is outweighing the risks. Ethical safeguards were employed to ensure that both the anticipated and unanticipated risks will be appropriately addressed (Cresswell, 2013).

Results and Discussion

Based on the analyses of the narratives, the researchers were able to deduce the following themes: (1) Significant and Meaningful Experiences, (2) Challenges and Bottlenecks Encountered, and (3) Suggestions and Recommendations to Improve the Implementation of the Program. Under the first theme, "Significant and Meaningful Experiences" the perspectives of the students, parents, and teachers were gathered.

Table 1. *Theme 1 – The Significant and Meaningful Experiences*

Theme 1: Significant and Meaningful Experiences		
Students' Perspectives	*Parents' Perspectives*	*Teachers' Perspectives*
Students can easily learn concepts throughvideos and stories Students have access toeducational games, stories, and books Technology is a great help in student's learning	Is a big help for children in their research and assignments Technology helps parents assist their children in accomplishing their assignments	It improves students'access to online and offline resources It facilitates efficiencyof access through a single click It helps students' record their performance tasks

As shown in the Table 1, the students stated that by using the gadgets, they could easily learn the concepts through the videos and stories. Also, students could access educational games, stories and books. These statements are substantiated by the statements of the parents saying that the gadgets were a great help for their children in their research and assignments since technology helped them accomplish their assignments. Moreover, the students' and parents' statements were further affirmed by the teachers saying that the availability of gadgets increase students' access to online and offline resources which facilitates their learning as well as their preparation for performance tasks that involve video making and other technology-related activities.

The perspectives of the three demographic groups were supported by the study conducted by Fauzi (2018) wherein it was found that 90% of students watching videos on their mobile phones believed in the positive impact of gadgets on their learning since it could help them enhance their English speaking and writing skills, and improve their vocabulary. In addition, in a study by Carstens et al. (2021) they found out that students took more interest in learning when it involves technology, and that it can be used by students for projects and creations, collaborations with peers or adults, reading applications to enhance learning such as math centers. Furthermore, De Silva (2021) underscored the importance of technology in making the lessons more interesting for students which results to more effective assimilation of knowledge, and the level of clarity in the lesson also improves. De Silva (2021) also pointed out the path to personalization of learning with the use of technology since it empowers the students by enabling them to engage thus, it adapts to the students' digital life in preparation for their future.

The statements of the research participants and the findings in the related studies simply prove the relevance of using technology to further enhance the teaching-learning process. Thus, in 21st-century teaching and learning, technology plays a vital role.

Table 2. *Theme 2 – The Challenges and Bottlenecks Encountered*

Theme 2: Challenges and Bottlenecks Encountered		
Students' Perspectives	*Parents' Perspectives*	*Teachers' Perspectives*
No internetconnection Intermittent internet connectivity Available load allowance	No internet connection Accessibility of materials due to theabsence of applications Sudden power outage	No internet connection Limited time to upload Learners focused on online gaming at home Parents' lack of knowledge to use the gadgets

Table 2 shows the triangulated responses of the students, parents, and teachers in connection to the bottlenecks and challenges they have encountered in the implementation of Project DOORS. As stated by the students, the absence of an internet connection, intermittent internet connectivity, and availability of data serve as threats to them. The absence of internet connectivity was echoed by the parents and teachers. In addition, parents mentioned that the materials could hardly be accessed due to the absence of applications and sometimes, the sudden power outage and longer power interruptions in remote areas have adversely affected the implementation of the project. Moreover, teachers have considered time constraints in the uploading of e- materials, parents' lack of knowledge on gadget utilization, and students' excessive interest in online games as bottlenecks in the implementation of Project DOORS.

These findings resonated with the study conducted by Shatri (2020), she posited that despite the fact that the positives outweigh the negatives, technology foster laziness and contribute to the instant gratification sensation. Moreover, Asio et al. (2021) deduced that although mobile phones are well-liked by students and became one of the best tools for an educational institution to adopt, in the local context, these devices are still unavailable to some students, and thus become burden or a challenge for them, especially in learning. In addition, the same findings from the study of Wickramanayake and Muhammad Jika (2018) indicating the unreliable internet connections are one of the barriers for students (as cited in Asio et al., 2021). This might incur some significant amount in the financial standings of the students since work is also shut down and most of the families rely on relief goods and other resources from the government (Asio et al., 2021). In addition, De Silva (2021) emphasized that technology would never replace the role of the teachers in the classroom, that is, the teacher's ability to present technology in classroom learning is vital in the success of the technology- driven classrooms.

The results of this study and the findings of related studies further imply that, although technology such as mobile devices, tablets, and computers among others have helped a lot in the improvement of the teaching and learning process, students cannot rely heavily on them, since external threats such as frequent power interruptions, damaging effects of gadgets to the eyes, low storage capacity, as well as the poor internet connectivity in the Philippines, in general, will adversely impact on technology utilization.

Table 3. *Theme 3 – Suggestions and Recommendations to Improve the Project Implementation*

Theme 3: Suggestions and Recommendations to Improve the ProjectImplementation		
1. Students' Perspectives	*2. Parents' Perspectives*	*3. Teachers' Perspectives*
Provision of SIM Card and free load Additional tablets for others to avail	Installation of applications for easy access to the materials Uploading of all modules in the tablets Additional tablets forothers to avail	Establishment of Parent-teacher partnership Orientation of all recipients on tabletutilization Coordination meetingwith all the recipients Bigger storage memoryto accommodate video files Additional tablets for others to avail

Table 3 shows the third theme which is the suggestions and recommendations to improve the project implementation. The narratives of the participants revealed that the students, parents, and teachers recommended additional tablets for others to avail. The students suggested for the provision of SIM card and free load for the tablets while the parents suggested for the installation of the application for easy access of the materials and the uploading of all the modules in the tablets. Moreover, teachers suggested the establishment of a strong partnership

between the parents and the teachers, orientation of the project recipients, coordination meetings with all the parents, and a bigger storage capacity or memory of the tablets. It could be deduced then, that the limited storage capacity of the gadgets hampers the project implementers to maximize the utilization of the gadgets since it limits their chance of storing heavy files considering the limited storage space or capacity of the gadgets.

These findings are supported in a study conducted by (2018) stating that one of the categories of parent involvement identified by Epstein was communication and this includes teacher invitations, first meetings with parents, conferences, and adapting communication to meet the diverse needs of parents (Keyes, n.d.). Since the implementation of Project DOORS requires the involvement of parents and teachers, it could be deduced then that with the suggestions and recommendations put in place, the project implementation will be enhanced, especially if all issues and concerns will be addressed, mitigated, or improved in the context of the school and community makeup.

Table 4. *Proposed Technical Assistance Plan*

Activity	*Objective*	*Persons Involved*	*Timeline*
1. Presentation of Research Findings on the Impact Evaluation of Project DOORS	To share findings on impact evaluation of Project DOORS	Researchers Project DOORS recipients	First Quarter
2. Re-orientation of Leaners, Parents,and Teachers on Project DOORS	To orient project recipients on ProjectDOORS 2.0 Implementation	Researchers Project DOORS recipients	First Quarter
3. Crafting of the Innovation Paper forProject DOORS 2.0 Implementation	To provide technical assistance to project DOORS 2.0 recipients	Researchers Project DOORS recipients	Second Quarter
4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Project DOORS 2.0Implementation	To monitor the project implementation	Researchers Project DOORS recipients	Third and Fourth Quarters
5. Awarding of ProjectDOORS Most Outstanding Recipient Schools	To recognize the innovative efforts of the Project DOORS implementers	Researchers Project DOORS recipients	Fourth Quarter

Technical Assistance Plan

Based on the analyses of the results of the study, the researchers were able to craft the proposed technical assistance plan, to ensure the sustainable implementation of the project, as well as its alignment to the expected goals of Project Digitization of Online and Offline Resources for Sustainability (DOORS).

Conclusion

Based on the analyzes of the data gathered following deductions are derived. Firstly, the use of technology such as gadgets both in the classroom and at home increases the level of students' engagement in doing their schoolwork and assignments. The presence of gadgets also improves the students' accessibility to online resources, thus facilitates completion of their schoolwork, and the quality of outputs they develop. Secondly, the slow internet connectivity affects the quality of learning through online sources. Although the presence of gadgets increases students' productivity, the slow internet access adversely affects students' maximum utilization of technology. Needless to say, some Project DOORS recipients such as in far-flung areas have internet connection issues, hence, accessibility to online sources is a bit problematic. The frequent power outage also adds up to the problem being encountered by project recipients in far-flung places. And

Lastly, proper management of the project at the school level will increase the positive impact on sustainable implementation of the program such as but not limited to regular conduct of coordination meetings, and provision of support to learners.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are formulated:

1. First, maximize the use of gadgets to further enhance the teaching-learning process based on the present educational context. As the Department of Education promotes face-to-face learning, Project DOORS recipients must also adapt the existing modalities recommended by the DepEd. Thus, the utilization of the gadgets should complement the existing policies of the Department to ensure quality in the delivery of the Basic Education Curriculum.

2. Second, upgrade the capacity of the tablets/ gadgets in order to ensure their full utilization and for smooth,

and easy access to all the materials uploaded to the device. Since the gadgets have low data storage capacity, it is recommended that Project DOORS recipients must provide additional storage devices for the learners to store available online and offline materials for learners' use. The provision of USB or OTG flash drives may increase the overall capacity of the tablets.

3. Third, strengthen the partnership between and among various stakeholders to address gaps, issues and concerns, and risks related to the implementation of Project DOORS. In order to maintain and further intensify the partnership between parents and teachers, and the school and the community, it is recommended that communication and collaboration must be established among the recipients to ensure responsibility, accountability, and ownership of the Project. This way, all stakeholders will see the value of their active participation in the overall success of the project implementation.

4. Lastly, expand the Project DOORS by maximizing the best practices, insights, and lessons learned to ensure the continuity of the program, alignment of the project goals and objectives, and school curriculum innovations. The project serves as an avenue for the schools to expand the implementation through innovation and research. Thus, it is highly recommended that Project implementers should use the opportunity to advance their educational agenda, particularly on quality teaching and learning through their available resources.

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