

Understanding Difficulties and Adaptability: A Qualitative Analysis of Psychology Students Perception Towards Effective Online Education in Our Lady of Fatima University – Pampanga

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Abstract

This phenomenological research was conducted to study the lived experiences of BS Psychology students of Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga to understand their difficulties and adaptability during online learning and to examine their perception towards online education. This study facilitated both purposive and convenience sampling from the 3rd Year BS Psychology students that participated in the online interview. This study also utilized an in-depth interview for data collection that was conducted through online, semi-structured interview in a focus-group discussion to capture the students' perception and their experiences with regards to online learning. The data collected were analyzed through thematic analysis, specifically analysing it through transcription, coding, categorizing and theme identification. Results showed that students had a pre-existing knowledge towards online learning, specifically its definition and how it was utilized. Due to the shift from face-to-face learning to online learning, the students perceived this new platform of learning as an alternative of the traditional one. Students also experienced difficulties during online learning such as psychological difficulties, difficulties in requirements, technical difficulties and distractions. With regards to this, students had to adjust from the challenges in order to adapt. Furthermore, students used their own applicable ways that would help them to deal with these by practicing time management, doing their daily routine before attending classes, note-taking, psychological coping and looking for available alternative resources.

Keywords: Online Learning, Adaptability, Difficulties, Tertiary Students, Qualitative Study

Introduction

Non-Traditional Learning or Online Learning is a type of education that uses various means of technology. Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga (OLFU) decided to implement a non-traditional learning when COVID-19 pandemic strikes in 2020. This Corona virus which became a pandemic, and the incident of this disease brought various consequences on a person's mental health that can worsen everyone's situation, many students may experience stress in the virtual classroom during the outbreak of COVID-19 (AlAteeq, D. A. et al. 2020).

Shifting from the traditional face-to-face way to virtual classroom has been a huge adjustment, hence, problem started to arise. Studies stated that with online learning, difficulties with online technologies and the challenges of developing procedures and strategies that might assist students maximize their engagement in online learning (Ali, I. et al. 2020) and the major issues and challenges faced by students in e-learning were psychological, technical and financial difficulties (Ohiwerei, F. O., et al. 2013). Students must have a positive attitude towards e-learning courses and strong self-motivation. The university should provide

seminars about time management, and to make teaching delivery better, the university must also provide the academic lecturers with appropriate qualifications (Sheng, E. L. & Basaruddin, F. 2014).

The objective of the study is to understand the difficulties and adaptability of the respondents during online learning education and examine the perception towards effective online education. This study also will determine the perceived effectiveness of online education of the respondents. This will also help to understand the lived experiences of the students, to examine the difficulties and challenges they faced, how those challenges affected their adaptability and to understand on how the respondents dealt with those during online education.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of the respondents during the online learning education?
2. What is the perception of the respondents towards online education?
3. What are the perceived difficulties and challenges of online education among the respondents?
4. How do the respondents deal with difficulties and challenges during the online education?

Literature Review

As stated by Barrot et al (2021), the greatest challenge of students towards online learning are the distractions in their learning environment at home. The other challenges were technical literacy and competency. Hence, the strategies that were most frequently used were resource management and utilization, help-seeking, technical aptitude enhancement, time management, and learning environment control.

Barzani (2021) stated that the quick change from on-campus to online learning was not just a simple one, but it also brought with it dozens of new difficulties. The vast majority of respondents have an unfavorable view of online education and also revealed that the vast majority of students believe that online education does not satisfy their learning needs.

According to Rotas and Cahapay (2021), students employed several coping strategies in their attempt to succeed in remote learning amid the current crisis. The categories of coping strategies that emerged were: looking for good space and time; borrowing learning resources, seeking support from peers; approaching the teachers; practicing time management; doing learning tasks ahead; extending the time for learning tasks; diverting attention; regulating one's self; taking extra jobs; crying; and praying. These strategies aim not only to cope with stress and frustrations but also to improve the students' academic performance.

The study conducted by Aboagye et al. (2020), it aimed to look at the difficulties that students in tertiary institutions have identified in online learning during the coronavirus pandemic. The following eight classes emerged; social issues, lecturer issues, accessibility issues, learner inspiration, academic issues, generic issues, learner intentions, and demographics. They were not prepared for an online learning environment in this pandemic period knowing that studying online will present them with numerous problems, or they believe that the pandemic age is a time for family deliberations on how to obtain basic necessities rather than academics.

Avila and Genio (2020) explained that the motivational level to learn by the college students was affected by the sudden implementation of online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When the students unexpectedly shifts their learning modality to respond to the community lockdowns introduced by the pandemic, in the unforeseen paradigm shift, policies and resources for online classes were considered significant. This might be due to their

level of enthusiasm and exposure and their capacity to use different learning methods for online learning, some students have lost interest in enrolling in this academic year. Necessities needed by learners were mobile devices and mobile networks for online learning and the home environment or climate which will make learners improve their interest on their learning courses.

Being more confident and having higher self-efficacy can lead to positive results that can surpass all the pessimism, hurdles, anxieties, hesitations, and struggles that the students face in adjusting to the new normal way of learning (Blanco et al., 2020).

Methodology

Research Design

This paper was mainly carried out as qualitative research. The researchers gathered data by collecting, analyzing and interpreting the perception of the participants, together with the difficulties and adaptability they use, about online learning.

In addition, this study took a phenomenological approach to qualitative research. It focused on the shared characteristics of a group's lived experience. This design was appropriate to this study as it attempted to describe the difficulties and adaptability of students in online education.

Research Locale

The locale of this study was in Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga wherein the participants were studying but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the researchers cannot conduct the interview in a face-to-face manner. The researchers decided to utilize the use of Google Meet as a medium in gathering the data. **3.3 Population and Sampling** The participants of this study were the 3rd Year BS Psychology students of Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga. The researchers required eight (8) participants, four (4) participants from both sections in 3rd Year Level.

In selecting samples from this population, the researchers used both purposive and convenience sampling, wherein members of the population who fit the criterion, were available, had the means to participate online, and were willing to contribute, had been chosen to participate in the study.

Research Ethics

The study was conducted following the research ethical standards imposed by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) and was approved by the Institutional Ethics Review Committee of the Our Lady of Fatima University.

The participation of all participants should be voluntary, the participants had the freedom to choose whether they will continue or withdraw in the study. Once the participants agreed to continue with the study, the researchers provided a consent form that stated the purpose of the study, description of the study, potential risks and discomforts that might arise during and after the interview, potential benefits of joining the study, terms about confidentiality, compensation, terms of withdrawal from the study and costs. During or after the interview, if the participant suddenly decided to withdraw, he/she could at any time, given that he/she notified the researcher hence, the data at hand would be destroyed immediately and would not be used for the study. Any withdrawal from the study would not affect the participant's relationship with the researchers.

Research Instruments

The researchers utilized a semi-structured interview wherein this type of interview only had few predetermined questions while the rest were asked based on how and what the respondent answered. The questionnaire was validated by 2 psychometricians and 1 Faculty of the Department of Psychology of Our Lady of Fatima University. This study aimed to understand the experiences of the participants through gathering a qualitative, open-ended data to explore their perception, thoughts and ways about the topic. The interview was done in Focus Group Discussion via Google Meet and its questionnaire consisted of 4 main questions with follow-up questions that focused on the students' perception, difficulties and adaptability in online learning.

Data Collection

The researchers used focus group discussion wherein it involved a group of individuals to obtain the perception of the participants about the topic. The researchers conducted Focus Group Discussion via Google Meet wherein the researchers asked questions and the participants had freely shared their thoughts and perception about the topic.

Results

Theme 1: Lived Experiences of Psychology Students in Online Education

Sub-Theme 1: Internal Stressors That Affect the Students' Performance

One of the participants shared one of his experiences wherein he encountered a problem within himself that affected his academic performance in online education.

"...nag-aaral na lang po ako para mag-pass po ng assignment or requirement, lahat ng mga kailangang i-pass, but at the end of the day, tatanungin ko yung sarili ko "May natutunan ba ako? (...I'm just studying so that I can submit the assignments and other requirements that are needed to be passed, but at the end of the day, I will ask myself, "Am I still learning?")".- Participant 5

The participant has mentioned that "just studying to submit assignments and requirements" meant learning in online education made it difficult. Due to having the same thoughts of attending classes for the sake of passing the requirements, students became doubtful and feeling unmotivated to pursue their studies. Noam Chomsky (1959) raised the creative mental processes that are not observable and cannot be seen in our naked eyes just like motivation and other things that can give way to some environmental stimuli and student's responses.

Sub-Theme 2: External Stressors That Affect The Students' Performance

The participants also gave their experiences in regards to different technical issues they had encountered that can affect their performances in online education, this was stated by the participants:

"...nage-exam po ako bigla akong nawalan ng connection. Grabe po no'n and sakto wala akong load. (...I was taking the exam but suddenly I lost my internet connection, it also happen that I don't have load at that time.) . - Participant 1

"Last prelim po, hindi po internet ang problema, yung mismong canvas. Parang mas nakaka-tense kasi mismong canvas po ang may problema, nakakapressure po. (We encountered a problem last prelim (exam), not the internet connection but the application that we use, the CANVAS. That made me felt more tensed and more pressured because that's where we were taking the exam.)". - Participant 2

“...minsan habang nagdidiscuss yung professor, yung hindi ko maiwasan mag-Facebook, tumingin sa cellphone. (...there are scenarios when even the professor was discussing, I can't avoid using Facebook and use my phone.)”. - Participant 4

Harasim, L. (2012) stated that online learning focuses on the facilities of the Internet to provide learning environments. Due to having technical issues, students who are experiencing these are expected that online education would be difficult. Students had trouble getting consistent internet access and the students have limited options because most of them are only using data. That difficulties they experienced can cause stress, panic and pressure because of the struggle disconnecting to CANVAS while examination. The absence and presence of technology both have its advantages and disadvantages that can be applied to the students. Just what the participants have mentioned, technical difficulties had challenged them and affected them negatively.

Implication:

The students had shared their experienced by mentioning specific scenarios that they had during online learning. Students had answered on how they experienced being affected on the intangible and unobservable mental processes, and also the unexpected technical issues during online learning.

Theme 2: Perceptions Of Psychology Students Regarding Online Education

Sub-Theme 1: Definition Of Online Education

Based on the gathered data, one of the participants gave definition of online education.

“...online learning is something we conduct through online or virtually...” - Participant 1

As stated by Anderson, T. (2011), online learning has always been concerned with provision of access to educational experiences and using Internet's capacity that is most compatible with the human knowledge. Therefore, with the respondent successfully defining the concept, Psychology students of Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga seem to be familiar or well-versed in online learning.

One of the participants also stated that online education is a “substitution” from face-to-face education.

“...substitution lang siya sa normal nating

nakasanayang face-to-face para magpatuloy... (...an alternative to the normal face-to-face that we were used to in order for our studies to be continued and won't be stopped...)”. - Participant 2

Students had started to experience the traditional face-to-face education since several years ago and based from one of the participants, online education is only a substitution from the traditional way in order for the students to continue their studies.

“Na-aattain naman niya yung mastery, knowledge, and competency. (Online learning attains its objectives in terms of mastery, knowledge, and competencies.)”. - Participant 3

“Okay naman siya, effective naman siya, somehow. (Online learning is effective, somehow.)”. - Participant 4

In terms of the efficiency in online education, students have mentioned that their instructors/professors had taught them with the best that they can be.

“Magaling yung mga prof, magaling magturo, lahat natuturo niya... (The professors are great in teaching, every lesson were taught well...)”. - Participant 5

“I think yung mga prof naman namin/natin are able to provide a better teaching and ginagawa nila yung best nila. (I think our professors are able to provide a better learning education and doing their best.)”. -Participant 1

Online education is effective and has managed to attain its objectives in terms of the education received by the students. This would not be effective if not for the efforts of both the students and the instructors/professors. Harasim, L. (2012), developed a theory entitled Online Collaborative Learning wherein students are encouraged to collaboratively participate where the teacher plays the role of facilitator as well as learning community member.

The participants also gave their perceptions towards online education during the times of COVID-19 pandemic.

“...it gives us education that we needed especially in this tough times, in this trying times”. - Participant 1

“...naco-continue pa din po natin ang pag-aaral natin. (...our studies will be continued.)”. - Participant 6

“...okay lang din naman yung online kasi through online, mas convenient siya in this time of pandemic.

(... online learning is still effective and convenient during this pandemic.)”. -Participant 7

Studying in this times of pandemic had consumed the resources of the students in whichever aspects, physical, mental and may be financial aspect. Online education may be the best means in order for the students to still pursue their studies despite of this pandemic. It is a way on giving the students an education and convenience, at the same time.

Implication:

This study gives an opportunity for the students to give their perception about online learning. Hence, students had reflected and made them aware on what online learning was about by stating their own definition and statements in this new platform of education.

Theme 3: Challenges And Difficulties Experienced By Psychology Students In Online Education

Sub-Theme 1: Psychological Difficulties

Participants have shared the psychological difficulties they had encountered in online education.

“...natututo pa po ba talaga ang mga estudyante? (...are the students still learning?)”. - Participant 8

“...nawawalan na ng gana yung mga estudyante na mag-aral (...the students are losing their interest)”. - Participant 5

“Kasi nga nawawalan ka na ng ganang pumasok kasi nga papasok ka na lang para sa attendance. (Losing of interest because you have this thought that you’re only attending the class for the sake of attendance)”. - Participant 7

Students expressed how they were slowly losing their interest in learning and started to question themselves if they were still learning. These new emotions and perceptions of students had made the students difficult to learn and even to attend their own classes. Chomsky, N. (1959), stated that mental processes that are not observable and cannot be seen in our naked eyes just like doubt, motivation and losing of interest and other things can affect the student’s responses.

Sub-Theme 2: Difficulties In Requirements

The students also stated that they are having difficulties in online learning due to several requirements. There are daily and weekly activities or assignments per courses. This difficulty sometimes

loses the learning value of the lesson.

“...puro pass na lang ng requirements, wala ng pahinga. (...we are all just submitting requirements and being restless.)”. - Participant 4

“...dalawang araw na walang pahinga kasi gagawa ka ng research, mga assignments tsaka yung ipa-pass next week, bukas o mamayang gabi. (...experiencing being restless for 2 days because of doing research and other assignments that are needed to be submitted next week, tomorrow or that same night.)”. - Participant 5

“...nahihirapan na kasi bombarded na ng mga activities na binibigay sa amin, so medyo hassle sa amin. (...it’s difficult especially when we were bombarded with so much activities.)”. - Participant 6

Students had expressed their frustrations towards the pile of requirements given to them. There seems to have a limited time to prepare for the online delivery session due to these. Also, they felt that they were bombarded with school activities which left them exhausted mentally and physically. Bruner, J. (1996), stated on the his theory of social constructivism wherein the experts are responsible for the learning of students by assessing and arranging the experiences of the learners to make it easy for them and safe to gain knowledge and skills by organizing the content in manageable parts.

Sub-Theme 3: Technical Difficulties

The following participants mentioned some technical issues that they have encountered like the loss of internet connection.

“Nabibigla kami sa mga issue like walang connection. (We were surprised from the issues like having no internet connection)”. - Participant 7

“...we all experience difficulties especially when it comes to internet connection, kapag nawawalan po ng connection gano’n.... (...the loss of internet connection that we experience.)”. - Participant 1

“...isang negative side or parang pangit sa online, yung unexpected loss of connection po gano’n. (...one of the negative sides of online (learning), the unexpected loss of (internet) connection.)”. - Participant 8

Studying through online education means that students have to use the technology. In this modern era, technology is very much available and in just one click, knowledge may be gained. Harasim, L. (2012)

stated that online learning focuses on the facilities of the Internet to provide learning environments. But the loss of internet connection due to poor signal, unexpected or not, will affect greatly on how the students learn.

Sub-Theme 4: Other Difficulties

Some of the participants had shared other factors that they have encountered, the following were listed as what also made their studying in online education difficult:

“...minsan meron ka nalang hindi naiintindihan sa class lesson... (...sometimes, you just can’t understand the lesson...)”. - Participant 3

“...maraming harang gaya ng maingay...madaming salik o factor na kaya po hindi makapag-focus. (...There are lots of barriers such as noise... and other factors that will make us unable to focus.)”. - Participant 2

“...limited po yung mga natutunan kong mga learnings. (...I think what I’m learning is limited)”. - Participant 6

Students in online classes may experience other factors that made online learning difficult. As stated by Barrot, J.S. et al (2021), the greatest challenge of students towards online learning are the distractions in their learning environment at home. Students have struggled to focus in virtual discussions because of the different noise in their surroundings and unable to understand the lesson easily. Students had also perceived that learning in online classes is limited in terms of knowledge.

Implication:

The participants shared various difficulties that they faced during online learning. With regards to these, students had been aware on the challenges that are inclined with this platform of education. This would also serve as awareness, not only for the instructors/professors, but also the administration.

Theme 4: Ways On How To Deal With The Challenges And Difficulties Of Online Education

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) in Coping Theory, individual’s efforts in attempt to solve specific external and internal stressors “that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person”, actually involves both cognitive and behavioural efforts. Coping is the conscious and unconscious

efforts we put in to solve problems and reduce stress. In order to prevent physical and mental burnout, we use various strategies to adapt. The following coping strategies shared and used by the participants include time-management, daily routine of the students, note-taking, psychological coping and looking for alternatives.

Sub-Theme 1: Time Management

Based on the gathered data, participants have mentioned about time management and how it is important in coping the challenges in online education.

“... nakapag-manage na kami ng time... (...we were able to learn in managing our time...)”. - Participant 7

“Time management po talaga, (What I do to overcome those (difficulties) is time management.)”. - Participant 3

“Mine-make sure ko na may time pa rin ako sa mga family and friends. Parang gano’n po nawawala ang stress ko or yung nakakalimutan ko po yung mga challenges ng online leaning. (I also make sure that I have time with my family and friends and by that, the stress that I felt will disappear, eventually and I can move forward from the challenges that are brought by online learning.)”. - Participant 6

Students are struggling with the new normal type of learning so they come up to their own ways and learned how to manage their time in order for them to do their tasks one at a time and activities won’t pile up and get out of hand. With the help of time management, students might also come up with the different strategies, such as the 80/20 rule, which can allow the students to work smarter by determining and concentrating on the important things from which they derive the most benefit by finding the ideal 20% of your tasks to spend 80% of your energy on, you can avoid wasting time or effort (Pareto, V., 1906).

Sub-Theme 2: Daily Routine Of The Psychology Students

Participants have shared their daily routines and how these helped them throughout their experiences in online education.

“...every time na pag-gising mo, lalabanan mo yung sariling mong katamaman para pumasok sa klase. (...the moment you wake up, you have to overcome your own laziness in order for you to attend classes.)”. - Participant 5

“...madalas akong mag exercise, pampagising. Pagkatapos ko pong mag-exercise, uupo na sa harap ng computer at makikinig muna ng mga music, or minsan naman nag-lalaro muna ako. (I always do exercise to liven up my body. After that, I will sit in front of my computer and listen to music or I will play games.)”. - Participant 2

“Nag-exercise din bago mag klase... naglilinis muna ng kwarto para magkaroon ng energy ang katawan ko po para ready na sa class. (I also do exercise before class and also cleaning my room so that my body has energy to be ready for my classes.)”. - Participant 8

“...usually, po maliligo muna ako or kakain para po magka-energy somehow. (...usually, I will take a bath, first or eat my breakfast so that I will gain energy.)”. - Participant 1

“...inom numa ng coffee dahil yun po ang pinaka-nagbibigay ng energy sa’kin na makinig at mag absorb po ng mga knowledge. (...I will drink my coffee because that’s what gives me energy the most in order for me to listen and absorb knowledge.)”. - Participant 3

“Kakain muna po then after po no’n ay ime-make sure ko po yung lahat ng mga kinakailangan ko po sa online class. (I will eat my breakfast, after that, I will make sure everything that is needed for online class are settled.)”. - Participant 7

“...sinisigurado ko ang mga bagay-bagay like my routine para po talaga magma-match ngayong online learning. (...I make sure of everything, just like my routine. It should be matched on what I should do and applicable with today’s online learning.)”. - Participant 3

Students have different daily routines before they attend their classes. Some do exercises, cleaning, eating and bathing themselves to have their body energized and conditioned however, some also seemed to have internal battles in deciding to attend their classes. Also, students had to make sure that all the necessities needed in their classes were all ready and set-up beforehand. Regardless of what the students chose to do on their daily routines, these routines should be applicable and matched to the situation. In online learning systems, learners must arrange the sequence in terms of learning, if unarranged, learners will find it hard to learn about certain objects (Muhammad, A. et al. 2016).

Sub-Theme 3: Note-Taking

One of the participants stated the essence of taking down notes and how it has affected on dealing with the pile of activities.

“...nagno-notes po ako per day so para hindi po sabay-sabay ang ginagawa ko tsaka para ma-sure ko po talaga ang mga dapat ko pong gawin. (...I always take down notes per day so that things won’t be out of hand and they are assured to be done.)”. - Participant 4

Boyle, J. R., & Forchelli, G. A. (2014), stated that note-taking aids students’ learning by allowing individuals to process and retain large amounts of information. This has also influences learning by helping students to attend to information and allows them to personalize the information they learn. Also, note-taking during lectures increases students’ attention and facilitates encoding of information to long-term memory. This has also helped the students to not forget of the tasks assigned before the time of its submission.

Sub-Theme 4: Psychological Coping

One of the participants used psychological coping wherein he just accepted in himself the challenges and difficulties of online education as a result, it made him easier to cope up with these.

“I’m just accepting the fact na lang po, parang tinatanggap ko na lang po na, gano’n talaga, maraming gingawa at kailangan gawin lahat. (I’m just accepting the fact that there are many requirements that are needed to be done.)”. - Participant 1

Students, particularly in college, regardless of the program, knew that there were lots of requirements that were needed to be submitted. Accepting this situation may be hard for the students but doing so, might be the way on exploring their own strategies in dealing with the requirements. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was introduced by Ajzen, with “perceived behaviour control (PBC)” wherein PBC is made up of those perceptions held by an individual that a certain behaviour can be carried out. Intentions, like accepting the situation, are considered to be motivational factors, which thus provide an indication of the endeavours required in order to carry out a behaviour (Ajzen, I. 1991).

Sub-Theme 5: Looking For Alternatives

The following participants had answered about looking for other resources that can help them in with their lessons in online education:

“Nagse-search po ako o kaya naman po nagbabasa ng mga books. (I look for other alternative sources like doing research or reading books.)”. - Participant 7

“...read other power points or other sources through Google and with books din po. (...read other power point presentations or other sources from Google and I also read books.)”. - Participant 1

“...may mga nakikita ako sa Facebook na mga nagbebenta ng mga e-books about psychology books then, nagbasa ako ng mga pdf do’n then, sa Youtube naman kasi, marami naman po akong alam na parang mga prof po na may Youtube channel po na ginagawa po ng mga psychology kaya nanonood po ako. (...there are people who sell e-books about psychology in Facebook, so I decided to read those books. While on YouTube, I watch some psychology professors that I know who have their own channel.)”. - Participant 5

According to Rotas, E. & Cahapay M. (2021), students employed several coping strategies in their zoattemp to succeed in remote learning amid the current crisis. Searching for learning resources wherein students can gain education anywhere at their most convenient time because of technology, more so with the help of smartphones that made online resources available to users’ fingertips. Students had decided to be more resourceful and took advantage with the technology by researching the possible books that are available about Psychology and by exploring some social media platforms wherein people had shared their knowledge in Psychology. Some also decided to read a hard-copy books in order to gain more information about their lessons. These alternatives were very helpful to the students if they want to receive more learnings especially if the knowledge that has gave were limited.

Implication:

The students shared their coping strategies in order to adapt from the difficulties and challenges that they had experienced during online learning. This would help the students by giving tips on what are the possible ways to use that may be applicable on the situation in online education.

Discussion

This study was conducted to understand the difficulties and adaptability of Psychology students during online learning education in Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga. In this regard, it was also focused on the perceptions of students toward online learning.

The researchers have found the definition of students regarding online education as a type of learning set-up that takes place virtually wherein it facilitates the use of Internet and technology devices. This implies that Psychology students in Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga were acquainted on how it works. Moreover, the students also perceived that online education was just an alternative from the traditional learning set-up and was only implemented due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. Nevertheless, this learning platform has still given the educational quality that students needed by attaining its objectives in terms of mastery, knowledge and competencies with the help of the contribution of the instructors/professors.

The researchers also obtained the experiences of the students with regards to the difficulties brought by online education. The students had experienced psychological difficulties wherein they question themselves in terms of actually “learning”. To reiterate, this might be because students are not used to this new platform given to them. Students also mentioned that they felt that they were only studying just for the sake of submitting the needed activities and assignments. Hence, students had lost interest and felt unmotivated to pursue their studies. Unobservable things like the loss of interest and motivation should be given attention and not only the things that can be seen by the naked eye. Also, the students had experienced difficulties on the pile of requirements that were given to them. They became frustrated not only on the several activities but also the limited time given to them. This suggests that simpler high-quality activities should be promoted rather than the numerous ones. In addition, students also mentioned some technical issues that they had encountered, not to mention that online learning requires technology, and experiencing poor signal and loss of internet learning connection will greatly affect the students. Moreover, the loss of focus of the students, the noise, and the perception of the quality of learning had also been found as limitations of online education.

Due to the difficulties brought by online education, for the first time, students were unable to adapt easily. In addition, students had to make adjustments and accepted that there were various challenges. Nevertheless, students had explored and found their own applicable ways that can help themselves to overcome these difficulties.

For the adaptabilities to solve the above-mentioned difficulties, the study found that time management, having their own daily routine, note-taking,

psychological coping and looking for alternatives were some of the effective ways for the students. Going back to one of the difficulties, about the several activities given to the students, learning to manage their time, helped them in organizing the list of requirements to be submitted. This also suggests that students can work smarter by prioritizing the activities that were harder to be done and had nearer deadlines. In addition, doing their daily routines before their classes also helped them to be ready, physically and mentally. They had their mind and body conditioned before attending their classes. Note-taking had also helped the students to remind the tasks that were assigned before their submission dates. Moreover, taking notes would allow the students to increase the retention of information during lectures. On the other hand, psychological coping gave aid to the students in a sense that students would be easier to cope up with the difficulties if they accepted that “there were really difficulties”. In addition, it can be suggested that accepting the situation would provide an indication to carry out a certain behavior, such as coping. Lastly, students looked for other resources rather than sticking to online classes, only. This recommends that researching for available electronic books about Psychology, exploring social media platforms to learn from experts in Psychology and buying hard-copy books, gives aid on the “limited” information brought by online classes.

Conclusion

Online class is currently the new normal learning set-up due to COVID-19 pandemic. Learning comes in a new mode wherein it is more on virtual interaction of the teacher and their students, as long as you have good internet access and computer gadget needed in online learning set up. The synchronous classes were delivered by online virtual discussions via Google Meet and Zoom and other online platforms thus, the asynchronous were taken place in CANVAS. This created a dynamic way of learning for the students. Online format has taken all over the place in educational system, however, due to the sudden shift of platform of learning, students faced challenges and decided to use various strategies to adapt. This study was conducted to know and understand the difficulties and perceptions in online learning set up for adapting in a new educational set up. Upon further analysis, the 3rd Year Psychology students of Our Lady of Fatima University-Pampanga just knew how online education was utilized and perceived it as an alternative from the traditional face-to-face education. Students were confused when the difficulties of online learning

started to show, thus, they had to adjust from these. Following the said findings, students faced psychological difficulties, difficulties in requirements, technical difficulties and other difficulties such as sudden loss of focus due to disturbances and physical noise. Students made a step-by-step adjustment when it comes to online class as this is a crucial part of being a student. Students became more flexible on their daily routines and decided to use various adaptabilities such as time management, note-taking, psychological coping and looking for alternatives. 3rd Year Psychology students also mentioned that their professors/instructors have been a huge part of their learning and has given them an excellent vast of knowledge in online education.

This study would still recommend further improvements on some aspects that associates online education and its difficulties and adaptabilities for the students, in spite of gathering enough data that supports the objectives. (1) Future Researchers may use a wider sample that would represent the whole population. (2) Future Researchers may also use a larger population and may not stick to one (1) program only. (3) If ever the future study would be conducted in a face-to-face manner, the future researchers may do so, as virtual interview may limit the flow of information that was given by the participants and they would be more comfortable in answering. (4) Future researchers may conduct a 2-session for the interview, as the first one would be the rapport part so the character of the participants will not be reserved and will not hinder the possible quality of information. (5) Future researchers may also explore to other approaches if they perceived it as more suited in conducting the study. (6) The researchers recommend the instructors/professors to use a more interactive way of teaching and must limit the activities to a few simpler and high-quality ones. (7) Academic institutions should be sensitive on the thoughts and experiences of the students that may seem difficult to them and must cater their needs in order to lessen the stress and the academic pressure that they may feel. This would prevent the mental health cases of the students from worsening.

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