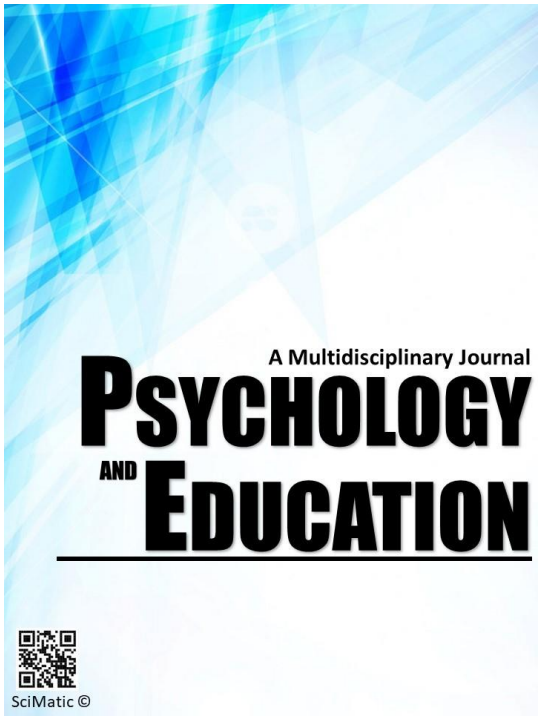
PERSPECTIVE AND CHALLENGES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE ONLINE LEARNING



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Research Article

Perspective and Challenges of College Students in the Online Learning

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the perspectives and challenges of college students in online learning. The data was collected using an adopted and modified survey questionnaire in which convenient non-random sampling technique was done in selecting 50 college students who consented to participate in the study. A descriptive – correlational research design was used to obtain data needed on the variables. The study's major finding allow us to draw the conclusion that students believed online learning to be a very advantageous method of delivering education. The respondents agreed that online learning is an effective method of education because of its flexibility, availability of educational materials, saves time, convenience and enhances knowledge acquisition. In contrast, the results revealed that the efficiency of online learning can be greatly affected by unreliable internet connection. In addition, the data also revealed that there is no significant difference in the challenges faced by the respondents in online learning when grouped according to location and year level while there is a significant difference when grouped according to sex. Finally, the data showed that there is a significant relationship between the perspectives and challenges of the respondents in online learning.

Keywords: *online learning, challenges, perspectives*

Introduction

Academic institutions are becoming increasingly concerned about the diversity of their present and prospective students. This is demonstrated by the fact that they provide a number of engagement options. University students have more flexible delivery methods available to them, which provide new pathways and opportunities for individuals seeking higher education (Boling, Hough, Krinsky, Saleem, & Stevens, 2012; Napier, Dekhane, & Smith, 2011; Schmidt, Tschida, & Hodge, 2016). Schmidt et al. (2016) stated that this might be performed via an online enrollment platform (external), the "conventional" face-to-face delivery method (internal), or a combination of both (blended). Even with these enrollment options, students frequently choose to take certain units (subjects) in a variety of ways.

As more schools shift toward entirely online and blended learning environments, there is substantial dispute over what this means for teaching (Gregory & Salmon, 2013; Jaques & Salmon, 2007; Kirkwood & Price, 2014; Salmon, 2011, 2014). Although many face-to-face communication techniques can be adapted and used in an online setting, it is not as simple as utilizing a "one size fits all strategy," contrary to what instructional professionals who are less familiar with the online environment commonly wrongly think. It is referred to as content or delivery transformation when material that has been used in previous, primarily face-to-face contexts is supposedly changed to a suitable online format and then declared suitable for all learners and groups across each mode. To effectively discriminate between different learners and distinct educational contexts using online and live forms, the strategy should instead use adaptation and differentiation scales.

Orlando and Attard (2015) claim that "technology-assisted instruction is not a one-size-fits-all approach because it depends on the kind of technology in use at the moment as well as the curriculum being taught." This implies that pedagogy in instruction and learning experience design must take into account new issues brought on by the incorporation of technology. Even so, "it is generally assumed that technology can 'enhance learning'" (Kirkwood & Price, 2014). The common belief is that student engagement, learning enhancement, and technological inclusion are all mutually exclusive.

The creation of individually tailored differentiated instruction for each learner within and across each group, however, can result in increased workload pressures on those wishing to engage with the online environment because teachers must respond to the unique learning and engagement needs of each group, often in a reactive manner. The difficulties with a "one size fits all" approach are particularly highlighted in collaborative learning activities (group work), where individual distinctions within and between groups can be highlighted.

According to Graham and Misanchuk (2004), generalized instructional assumptions related to collaborative learning activities are widely applied in

the online setting, where there may be less emphasis on delivery and more focus on the task/content. On the other hand, Komalasari et al. (2020) demonstrated how technology is being used in education in a new way. However, there are a number of obstacles in the way of this online classroom system, including the uneven experience of students with technology ownership and mastery, the infrastructure and support facilities that seem pressured or perhaps not ready at all, and the variable motivation of both teachers and students as a result of this distance learning system. According to studies by Prasasti et al. (2019) and Ediyani et al. (2020), instructors in Indonesia are under increasing pressure to be able to use the internet as a source of useful learning materials to support teaching and learning processes. This is because as technology, communication, and information have advanced, particularly the internet.

Llego (2020) contends that the instructor functions as a facilitator in online distance learning by encouraging active engagement through the use of various technologies accessed over the internet, even when students are geographically separated from one another during teaching. Through remote learning, Santos (2020) also identified a digital divide among Filipino pupils in this Philippine environment. In its current state, remote learning has the potential to widen already-present gaps and erect obstacles to online learning. Furthermore, a statewide cross-sectional study conducted by Baticulon et al. (2020) revealed that of the 3, 670 Filipino medical students surveyed, 32 percent and 22 percent, respectively, have trouble switching to new learning methods and do not have a dependable internet connection. According to Santos et al. (2020), students can now easily access online classrooms and submit homework over the web system due of the learning device. Filipino students who pursue distance education still encounter a variety of difficulties despite efforts to make education accessible to everyone.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the perspectives and challenges of students in online learning. Thus, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents?
2. What are the perspectives of the college students in online learning?
3. What are the challenges faced by the college students in online learning?
4. Is there a significant difference in the challenges in online learning when the respondents are grouped by the demographic profile?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the perspectives and challenges in online learning of the respondents?

Literature Review

Online Learning (E-learning)

Usher and Barak (2020) defined Online learning as a learning environment that uses the internet and other technology tools and resources to manage academic programs and deliver synchronous and asynchronous education. Singh and Thurman (2019) added that online learning has also been described as a technology that can improve, innovate, and change the teaching-learning process. Through online learning, which is defined as "learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous situations using various devices with an internet connection (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.), students can be located anywhere (independently) in these spaces to learn and connect with teachers and other students.

In addition, Basilaia et al. (2020) listed the various chances for synchronous learning-based social engagement amid the spread of this deadly virus. These online platforms are required in environments where (a) video conferencing with at least 40–50 students is feasible, (b) discussion with students is feasible to maintain organic classes, (c) internet connections are strong, (d) lectures are accessible on both mobile devices and laptops, (e) lectures can be viewed on previous recordings, and (f) internet connections are strong.

According to Singh and Thurman (2019), in the COVID-19 Pandemic setting, synchronous online learning involves real-time interactions between teachers and students, whereas asynchronous online learning occurs without a predetermined timetable for different students. Furthermore, Cojocariu et al. (2020) talked about the synchronous learning environment, where students attend live lectures, where there are real-time interactions between educators and learners, and where there is the potential for quick feedback, whereas in an asynchronous learning environment, the learning content is poorly organized. In such a learning environment, Littlefield (2018) said, learning content is distributed through a variety of learning platforms and forums rather than through live lectures or courses. Additionally, immediate input and rapid response are not imaginable in the COVID-19 Pandemic scenario.

Students' Perspectives in Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to Van Wart et al. (2020), when new teaching methods and technologies are used, the student perspective is very crucial. With a growing interest in "active" education and the flipped classroom method, as well as unprecedented technological breakthroughs, the student perspective on online education is critical. Furthermore, Dawson et al. (2019) said that the students' perspectives provide critical, first-hand insights into their experiences and aspirations. However, for at least two reasons, students' perceptions of quality online education have not been as evident as they could be.

Artino (2010) discovered that non-teaching aspects play a role in the overall online learning experience for students, which we shall discuss briefly. There are three types of factors to consider: (1) convenience, (2) learner traits and readiness, and (3) preceding circumstances that may foster but are not directly responsible for teaching excellence. Convenience is a significant non-quality consideration for students, which has led to an increase in global online demand. This is critical since satisfaction with online classes is often lower than happiness with face-to-face classes (Macon, 2011). In a recent research of business students, Harjoto (2017) showed disparities in which online students adopting a flipped-classroom method outperformed their face-to-face classmates despite rating instructor performance lower.

Learner characteristics such as self-regulation in an active learning approach, comfort with technology, and age, among others, influence both receptiveness and readiness for online education. Finally, antecedent factors such as teacher training (Brinkley-Etzkorn, 2018) and faculty incentive sources (e.g., rewards, recognition, social influence, and voluntariness) may contribute to improved instruction but are not immediately obvious to students (Wingo, Ivankova & Moss, 2017). While these factors are important, when combined with quality judgments, they tend to obscure the quality variables that students directly notice.

Challenges Associated with Online Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID - 19 Pandemic has forced the suspension of many physical activities, including educational ones, all around the world. This situation forces educational institutions to adapt to online learning. Despite the fact that online learning is not a new phenomenon, the abrupt transition to online learning has posed significant challenges for educational activities worldwide, particularly in resource-constrained environments such as Cambodia, where educational institutions, teachers, and students are generally unprepared for this unexpected disruption to traditional teaching and learning methods.

Adedoyin et al. (2020) reported in their recent study that the rapid digital transfer of instructional activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic caused a number of distinctive hurdles. The biggest issues are to technological infrastructure and digital competency, socioeconomic reasons (educational disparity), evaluation and supervision, hard labor, and compatibility (some subjects such as sports sciences require physical interactions). It is evident that technology is the most important problem with online learning if people participating in the teaching and learning process are not technologically proficient owing to inexperience or poor training as online learning is entirely dependent on technical gadgets and the internet. Two common issues are a lack of application knowledge and a shaky/slow internet connection.

Ahmed (2021) claimed in his study that during the lockdown period, around 70% of the learners were engaged in e-learning. The majority of the students participated in online learning using Android phones. Students have been struggling with a range of challenges at home, including melancholy, anxiety, poor internet connectivity, and an uneasy learning environment. Students from rural areas and marginalized groups have significant challenges in their studies during this pandemic.

The Challenges in Online Learning by the Students

The UNESCO handbook (2020) places a strong emphasis on online education, especially in secondary and higher education. Universities have decided to keep offering regular classes on online platforms with credit transfer assurance. Although digital technologies can offer a wide range of capabilities for distance learning, most education systems in low- and middle-income countries lack access to high-speed broadband or digital devices necessary to fully implement online learning options, according to the World Bank. This includes schools, students, and teachers (2020). Furthermore, Huang et al. (2020) a researcher and international expert claimed that various obstacles were reported during the use of online learning globally. For instance, if thousands of students are taking courses at once, an internet connection could be inconsistent. Additionally, because there are so many

online resources available, some teachers might find it challenging to choose the ones that are most suited to their students' learning needs.

On the other hand, educational institutions must continue to address a number of short-term concerns and challenges in online learning, like those linked to pedagogical practice, as well as long-term consequences, like budget cuts, failing to meet students' basic requirements, and mental health issues (Ajlouni & Almahaireh, 2020; Arajo et al., 2020; & Yang et al., 2020).

However, according to Novikov (2020), a number of psychological and technological elements, including a student's learning capacity, determine how quickly they adapt to online learning. The efficacy of online learning varies by educational institution around the world. A number of factors influence the efficiency of an online learning environment. Among these include distractions and family duties, time management skills, motivation, and resource accessibility (Kalman et al., 2020). The creation of learner-centered environments also faces a number of challenges, such as those involving academic staff members who are increasingly expected to possess higher levels of technical readiness and expertise in addition to their regular academic responsibilities (Gillett-Swan, 2017). Furthermore, according to Rasheed et al. (2020), the students' responses show that their online learning challenges and strategies were influenced by the resources they had at their disposal, their interactions with their professors and peers, and the institution's current online learning policies and rules.

Xhelili et al. (2021) evaluated Albanian students' opinions of their online learning and the issues they encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic. The biggest issues that students encountered, according to the findings, were a lack of an internet connection and a lack of technological equipment. Additionally, Copeland et al (2021) showed that the pandemic had a detrimental effect on students' behavioral and emotional functioning, specifically attention and externalizing issues (i.e., mood and wellness behavior) brought on by isolation, economic/health impacts, and uncertainty.

According to Adnan and Anwar (2020), many Pakistani higher education students are unable to use the internet due to a variety of obstacles, preventing them from engaging with their professors. In contrast, Owusu-Fordjour et al. (2020) did quantitative research with 214 Ghanaian students and discovered that they were unable to learn successfully because e-learning presented difficulties for the majority of them due to weak internet connections and a lack of technological know-how.

Demuyakor (2020) discovered that the most significant challenges faced by Ghanaian students learning online were high internet costs, learner isolation, time zone changes, and slow internet speed. Nambiar (2020) explored how Indian university students encounter difficulties such as technical concerns, a lack of structure, problems with the flow of their lessons, and a lack of enthusiasm and motivation in India.

Authors Rajab, Gazal, and Alkattan (2020) described some of the difficulties faced by medical students at Saudi Arabia's Alfaisal University's College of Medicine, such as communication issues, assessments, the use of ICT tools, online experiences, mental health influences such as anxiety or stress, time management, and technophobia.

Researchers in several countries have looked into the obstacles and challenges that students have when engaging in online learning in an effort to raise the standard of the medium. For instance, a study carried out in Pakistan by Farooq et al. (2020) identified the challenges faced by medical students during the epidemic. These difficulties included not being able to understand the dynamics of online learning, not having access to the internet, not being engaged in their studies, not being prepared for assessments, and not having institutional or faculty support. Furthermore, Ramachandran and Rodriguez (2020) identified challenges among undergraduate chemistry students as lack of desire and focus as well as distractions.

Sex Differences in Online Participation

According to Yoo and Huang (2013) Female students are more intrinsically motivated to enroll in online courses than male student. Furthermore, Caspi, Chajut, and Saporta (2008) argued that men and women engaged in online courses differently; men desired to interact with knowledge, whereas women were more personal, task-oriented, and sought to interact with others. They noticed that women posted more messages than men.

In a review of the research on patterns of online learner engagement, Yaghmour (2012) found that women were more likely than males to cooperate, contributed more to online discourse than men, and were more likely to be online due to communication-related motivations. Additionally, he discovered that women gave themselves lower technical skill ratings than men, which led him to believe that they were less

self-assured users.

Distance Learning and Rural-Urban Divide

According to Zhang, Li, and Xue, the education gap between rural and urban areas persists in developing countries (2015). Many institutional barriers, parenting ideologies, and income disparities are all thought to be possible causes of educational inequality. It will be more effective in countries with developed digital infrastructure and less effective in rural areas with underserved populations and countries where academic and administrative business is conducted face-to-face (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Salam et al., 2017; Wains & Mahmood, 2008).

Wang (2013), on the other hand, noted that there is a digital divide in terms of access to technology and opportunity between rural and urban pupils. In addition, the frequency with which students and teachers use technology in the classroom varies. Rural-urban infrastructure disparities demonstrate that, whereas urbanized areas have access to energy and telecommunications, rural areas are isolated and hence at a disadvantage. He also noted that children from urban schools outperform their rural counterparts on all the diverse measures (digital access, autonomy of use, social support, internet use, and self-efficacy) and hence have a higher internet usage status.

Methodology

A descriptive-correlational research design was used for this study. Using quantitative survey-based research, the information derived from the adopted and modified questionnaire based on Jaradat and Ajlouni's (2019) work was assessed. It is descriptive since it describes the demographic profile of the respondents, their perspectives on online learning, and the challenges they face. It is a correlational study since it looked for a statistically significant difference between students' perspectives and challenges in online learning when they were grouped by demographic profile. Additionally, it looked for a significant relationship between students' perspectives and challenges in online learning.

Participants

The respondents of the study were 50 students enrolled at NDMC for the second semester of the school year 2021-2022.

Research Instrument

The modified and adapted previous study by Jaradat and Ajlouni (2019) instrument was made initially presented to expert researchers for them to determine, among others, its clarity and completeness of language, specificity of content, singleness of purpose, freedom of assumption, suggestion, eventually, to achieve its validity. The instrument of the study was divided into three parts. Part 1 includes the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, location and year level. Part 2 is about the Students' perspective in online learning. Part 3 consists of challenges faced by students in online learning. The items were answered through a Likert Scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Moderately Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). A pilot test of the questionnaire was done on a sample of 15 randomly selected college students (8 females and 7 males) from the study population, who were the non-respondents, before the data gathering process began. This was done to assure internal consistency and dependability. Using Cronbach's alpha to determine reliability, the sample obtained a value of 0.80, indicating a reliable instrument.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study was made possible through the approval letter submitted to the subject teacher and the Dean of the College of Education of Notre Dame of Midsayap College. After the approval will be the administration of the instrument to the target respondents began. The researchers personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents. To ensure understanding and objectivity of the survey, the researcher made an effort to explain first the content of the questionnaire and allowed the respondents clarification along the way. The respondents were given ample time to finish the survey forms before they were retrieved. The data gathering lasted only for one day from sending of the letter for approval to gather data to the time of retrieval of survey questionnaires.

Data Analysis Procedure

The researchers used the appropriate statistical tools for each problem statement. The sex, location and year level of respondents were determined using frequency count and percentage distribution. To determine the perspective and challenges of the students in online learning, weighted mean and standard deviation were computed. Furthermore, the t-test was used to determine whether there is a significant difference in the challenges faced in online learning when respondents were grouped by sex and location, whereas ANOVA or analysis of variance was used to

determine whether there is a significant difference in the challenges faced in online learning when respondents were grouped by year level. Lastly, Pearson r correlation was used to examine the significant relationship between students' perspectives and challenges in online learning.

Results

This section presents the result of the statistical treatment of data and its interpretation based on the research pursued. The discussion covers the demographic profile of the respondents, perspectives and challenges of the students in online learning, the significant differences when the respondents were grouped by sex, location, and year level; and the significant relationship between the perspectives and challenges of the students in online learning.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of fifty respondents according to sex, location, and year level.

Table 1. *Profile of the Respondents*

Items	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Sex		
Male	26	52.0
Female	24	48.0
Total	50	100.0
Location		
Urban	6	12.0
Rural	44	88.0
Total	50	100.0
Year Level		
First	8	16.0
Second	14	28.0
Third	28	56.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 2. *Perspectives of the students in Online Learning*

Item	*Mean*	*Sd*	*Description*
1. Online learning outperforms face-to-face instruction.	3.10	1.18	Moderately Agree
2. Online learning is preferred to in-person instruction.	3.40	1.21	Agree
3. Online learning is flexible.	3.86	0.83	Agree
4. Online learning is engaging.	3.68	0.84	Agree
5. Online learning is convenient.	3.80	0.81	Agree
6. Online learning is comfortable.	3.72	0.86	Agree
7. Online learning is suitable for many times of learners.	3.74	0.92	Agree
8. In NDMC, Online learning is considered as a very useful mode of delivery.	3.76	0.87	Agree
9. Online learning allows for a more efficient evaluation of instructional content.	3.82	0.72	Agree
10. Online learning enables comfortable electronic communication.	3.78	0.84	Agree
11. Online learning facilitates the completion of group projects and tasks.	3.60	1.01	Agree
12. Online learning saves time for students.	3.82	0.90	Agree
13. Online learning enhances knowledge acquisition.	3.80	0.90	Agree
Overall	3.68	0.92	Agree

Table 3. *Challenges faced by students in Online Learning*

Item	*Mean*	*Sd*	*Description*
1. Face-to-face learning is less expensive than online learning.	3.48	1.07	Agree
2. The internet connection is unreliable.	3.88	0.96	Agree
3. E-learning systems and services are inefficient.	3.72	0.93	Agree
4. In my home, there is no adequate technology or software for online learning.	3.44	1.15	Agree
5. I have mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, and stress that affect my online learning).	3.46	1.11	Agree
6. I am not interested in learning online.	3.36	1.03	Moderately Agree
7. In an online learning environment, I find it difficult to concentrate and control distractions.	3.44	1.13	Agree
8. I struggle with time management, which limits my capacity to learn online.	3.50	1.06	Agree
9. My lack of ICT abilities hinders my online learning.	3.24	1.06	Moderately Agree
10. The technical assistance provided is insufficient.	3.28	0.83	Moderately Agree
11. My online learning is hampered by my technophobia (fear or distrust of advanced technology).	2.92	1.12	Moderately Agree
12. Students' separation in online education has an impact on my learning.	3.42	1.11	Moderately Agree
13. The engagement and feedback provided by the instructor are insufficient.	3.36	1.05	Moderately Agree
14. The instructional strategies employed are ineffective.	3.14	1.03	Moderately Agree
15. The learning material is of poor quality.	3.06	0.96	Moderately Agree
16. The procedures of assessment and evaluation are ineffective.	3.04	0.95	Moderately Agree
Overall	3.36	1.03	Moderately Agree

Table 4. *Challenges faced by students in Online Learning*

Sex	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*P-value*	*Indication*	*Decision*
Male	26	3.596	0.733	0.010	S	Reject H_{01}
Female	24	3.102	0.542			

Table 5. *Significant Difference in the Challenges in Online Learning between Urban and Rural*

Location	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*P-value*	*Indication*	*Decision*
Urban	6	2.958	0.493	0.130	NS	Accept H_{01}
Rural	44	3.413	0.698			

Table 6. *Significant Difference in the Challenges in Online Learning when grouped according to Year Level*

Year Level	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*P-value*	*Indication*	*Decision*
First	8	3.391	0.653			
Second	14	3.143	0.630	0.382	NS	Accept H_{01}
Third	28	3.458	0.723			

Table 7. *Correlation between Perspectives and Challenges in Online Learning of the Respondents*

Variables	*N*	*Correlation Coefficient*	*p-value*	*r-value*	*Indication*	*Decision*
Challenges	50	0. 547	0.0002	0.501	S	Reject H_{02}

Discussion

This section summarizes the investigation's most recent results as they relate to the study's problem statements. The majority of respondents are women who are in their third year of college and are from rural areas. According to the perspectives of the students in online learning they agreed that online learning is an effective method of education because of its flexibility, availability of educational materials, saves time, convenience and enhances knowledge acquisition. However, the majority of the challenges that students had when learning online were caused by unreliable internet connections, meaning that the number of people who use the internet at the same time influences the reliability of the internet connection. Furthermore, results showed that when respondents were grouped according to location and year level, there was no statistically significant difference; indicating that the challenges faced in online learning had no association on students' year level or to their location, while being female or male has a significant difference in the challenges faced in online learning. Finally, students' perspectives have a significant relationship to the challenges they have faced; in other words, if respondents met their perspectives, challenges in online learning would be less likely; conversely, if students' perspectives were not met, online learning would be more challenging.

Conclusion

According to the study's findings, the following conclusion is given: Students' perspective in online learning serve as an effective method of education because of its flexibility, availability of educational materials, saves time, convenience and enhances knowledge acquisition. However the efficiency of online learning could be greatly affected by the unreliable internet connection. Furthermore, respondents' year level and location had no association with the challenges in online learning, while respondents' sex had a correlation with the challenges in online learning. Finally, the more students met their perspective, the less likely there would be challenges in online learning; conversely, if the students' perspective was not met, online learning would be more challenging.

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