



Learners' needs and challenges in modular distance learning approach

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Abstract

The Philippine educational system is now adapting the new blended learning because face-to-face classes are not allowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This descriptive-correlation research aimed to determine the Learners' Needs and Challenges on Modular Distance Learning Approach at Parara National High School, Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines for School Year 2020-2021. The respondents of this study were chosen using the stratified sampling technique to determine the sample size out of the total population. The researcher used Slovin's formula. This study used a researcher-modified questionnaire validated by the panel of experts and subjected to reliability testing. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency count, percentage and mean. For inferential statistics, the researcher used Rank, t-test, Analysis of Variance and Pearson's *r*. The result showed that Parara National High School and other schools offering modular distance learning should improve their distance learning delivery especially in terms of assistance from the teacher via email, text-messaging, etc., support from parents and relatives, learning resources to augment the modules, use of smartphones to communicate with teachers and ample of time to answer the modules so that they can meet the learner's needs. It was also found out that learners' needs have no significant correlation with the challenges they met in their modular distance learning. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that to further improve the modular distance learning, a simplified self-learning module should be prepared to cater the learners' varied needs. If possible, a differentiated instruction should be prepared in order to cater both the struggling and fast learners. By means of simplifying the modules, learners would be able to answer this by themselves and adjust to the new scheme of Teaching and learning process.

Keywords: learners' needs, challenges, modular distance learning approach

Introduction

The Department of Education ordered that all public elementary and secondary schools should adapt the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan in the Light of COVID-19 pandemic (Llego, 2020). This BE-LCP is the Department of Education's major response and commitment in protecting the health, safety, and well-being of learners, teachers, and personnel (Montemayor, 2020). With it are the plans which seek to ensure that students' learning progresses even amidst disasters such as natural calamities, storms, fires, and pandemics (Nuadu Education, 2020).

Furthermore, within this framework come the distance learning modalities which have replaced the face-to-face classes. Among these modalities is the modular distance learning approach. According to Manlangit *et al.*, (2020), modular learning is a form of distance learning which uses self-learning modules (SLM) based on the most essential learning competencies (MELCS) provided by DepEd.

In addition to this, the Department of Education will be the one to provide and distribute the self-learning modules to every learner every week through their respective schools. Hence, learners will have ample time to study and assess the modules before the start of weekly class. Learners are expected to complete the task and submit their outputs at the end of the week.

However, with the on-going modular distance learning approach implemented in the Philippines today, notable observations were recorded. Dangle and Sumaoang (2020) stated that students struggle with self-studying, and parents' lack the knowledge to academically guide their children. Likewise, the researcher has also noticed that her learners

have difficulty in modular distance learning.

Given that modular distance learning is a new learning scheme in the public schools here in the Philippines, the researcher pre-supposes that there is a vast gap in the knowledge on the specific challenges and needs of learners in modular distance learning approach.

Hence, the present study aimed to determine the Learners' Needs and Challenges in Modular Distance Learning Approach among the learners of Parara National High School, Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines for School Year 2020-2021. In this light, the researcher makes certain adjustments with the lesson, for certain considerations to be made and possible solutions to these problems.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the Learners' Needs and Challenges on Modular Distance Learning Approach at Parara National High School, Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines for School Year 2020-2021. Specifically, it sought to answers the following; (1) What are the needs of the learners on modular distance learning approach when taken as a whole and when they are classified according to sex, age, grade level, distance from home to school and parents' educational attainment? (2) What are the challenges met by learners on modular distance learning approach when taken as a whole and when classified according to sex, age, grade level, distance from home to school and parents' educational attainment? (3) Are there significant differences in the needs of the learners in modular distance learning approach when they are classified according to sex, age, grade level, distance from home to school and parents' educational

attainment? (4) Are there significant differences in the challenges met by the learners on modular distance learning approach when they are classified according to sex, age, grade level, distance from home to school and parents' educational attainment? (5) Is there significant relationship between learners' needs and challenges in the modular distance learning approach?

Theoretical Underpinning

This study was anchored on two educational learning theories, namely: the theory of behavior and the theory of humanistic needs. Likewise, this research endeavor was also legally based from the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) in the light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. First off, BE-LCP is a mandate of the Department of Education that all Elementary and Secondary Public Schools in the Philippines should continue its mission to foster learning among Filipino Learners despite not having face-to-face classes. This is stipulated in DepEd Order No. 12 series of 2020. According to Llego (2020), BE-LCP stands on the principle of ensuring learning continuity through K-12 curriculum adjustments, alignment of learning materials, Deployment of multiple learning delivery modalities, Provision of corresponding training for teachers and school leaders, and proper orientation of parents or guardians of learners. It further cites the use of distance learning modalities such as the modular distance learning approach for School Year 2020-2021.

Meanwhile, the humanistic learning theory, founded from Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that students by nature are good and have good decision-makings when all their needs are met. Moreover, it focuses on the idea that learners bring out the best in themselves, and that humans are driven by their feelings more than rewards and punishments (Hare, 2019).

With this, the researcher believes that feelings and knowledge are both significant to the learning process and should not be separated from one another. Hence, in this modular distance learning approach, the lessons and activities should give emphasis on the whole student as well as their intellect and feelings, not one or the other.

In addition to this, the researcher also posits that the theory of behaviorism which is a percept of Ivan Pavlov can be linked to the challenges meet by the learners in the distance learning approach this School Year 2020-2021. According to Cherry (2021), all behaviors are acquired through conditioning. Thus, conditioning occurs through interaction with the environment.

Henceforth, the researcher concluded that the challenges met by the learners in Parara National High School during this modular distance learning are dependent upon the system implemented and how these affect their usual habits. Naturally, as they were not used to the modular distance learning approach since this is a new scheme, the number the challenges they encounter in terms of the learning process are vast.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlation research design. According to Borro (2020), descriptive studies are of large value providing facts on which professional judgment maybe used. It involves some types of comparison and contrast and attempts to discover relationship among

existing non manipulative variables. Since the study focused on the Learners' Needs and Challenges in Modular Distance Learning Approach among the learners of Parara National High School, the researcher believed that descriptive-correlation research design is an appropriate choice.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were the learners of Parara National High School, Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines who are enrolled for School Year 2020-2021. The researcher used the stratified sampling technique. In order to determine the sample size out of the population, the researcher used the Slovin's formula. The actual distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Grade Level	N	n	%
7	45	25	14.29
8	63	35	20.00
9	68	38	21.71
10	58	33	18.86
11	41	23	13.14
12	36	21	12.00
	311	175	100.00

Data Gathering Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a researcher-modified questionnaire. It is based from the study of Dangle and Sumaoang (2020).

The research instrument was divided into two parts. Part 1 included the personal profile of the respondents which consisted of their sex, age, grade level, distance from home to school and parents' educational attainment. Meanwhile, Part 2 is the questionnaire proper composed of learners' needs and challenges on modular distance learning approach. The questionnaire is a dichotomous type of questionnaire wherein learners will have to check items Yes or No depending on how they feel it is suited to their personal needs and challenges met in the modular distance learning approach.

Research Procedure

Prior to validation and reliability testing, the researcher first inquired at the Office of the Graduate School to ask permission and approval to conduct the study.

Written letters were given to Schools Division of Iloilo Superintendent and Public Schools District Supervisor in the District of Tigbauan informing the possible respondents of the study. Then, another communication letter was sent to the School Head of Parara National High School asking permission to conduct the study. Upon the approval of the permit, the researcher conducted the study proper to the respondents of the study.

Data Analysis

For the statistical analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were used: Frequency Count. This was used to determine the distribution of the respondent as to variables and their distribution in terms of needs and

challenges. Percentage was used to determine the proportion of the respondents as to the different variables. Mean was used to determine the needs and challenges met by the learners in the modular distance learning approach at Parara National High School. Rank was used to determine the least and highest rated items in the needs and challenges met by the learners in the modular distance learning approach at Parara National High School based from the mean values. t-test was used by the researcher in order to examine the differences in the needs and challenges met by the learners in the modular distance learning approach when respondents were classified according to sex, age, and distance from home to school. Analysis of Variance was used in order to examine the differences in the needs and challenges met by the learners in modular distance learning approach when respondents were classified according to grade level and parents' educational attainment. Pearson's r was used by the researcher in order to determine if there is significant relationship of learners in the modular distance learning approach.

Conclusions

This study, "Learners' Needs and Challenges in Modular Distance Learning Approach" concludes that; Parara National High School and other schools offering modular distance learning should improve their distance learning delivery especially in terms of assistance from the teacher via email, telephone, text messaging, etc., support from parents and relatives, learning resources to augment the modules, use of smartphones to communicate with teachers and ample of time to answer the modules so that they can meet the learners' needs.

The ability of the public secondary schools to address the learners' difficulty in using the modular learning approach, inability to apply and answer modular learning approach in this time academic pandemic, difficulty checking their academic progress, and apprehensions upon seeing too much papers mixed with fear that modules should not be submitted on time should be intensified so that the challenges felt by the learners in the course of modular distance learning approach would be alleviated.

The learners' needs in modular distance learning when they are classified in terms of age, grade level, parents' educational attainment and distance from home to school do not differ. However, there was a slight variation in the learners' needs when they were classified according to sex.

The challenges met by the learners in modular distance learning approach when they are classified in terms of age, sex, parents' educational attainment and distance from home to school did not differ. However, there was a slight variation in the learners' challenges when they were classified according to grade level.

Learners' needs have no significant correlation with the challenges they met in this modular distance learning approach.

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