



Views of Academic Deans, Faculty Members, and Students on Online Learning: A Multiple Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the preparations of academic deans, teachers, and students (of the Mindanao State University-Buug) as to online learning, as well as, their perspective on the advantages and disadvantages of the said learning modality. Using a qualitative design, with particular use of a case study, the study yielded the following summarized findings: On academic deans' preparations, there were two themes developed: 1) "Attended Seminar-Workshop"; and, 2) "Readying of Gadgets." As to the advantages, deans' responses developed one theme: "Online Teaching Means Learning at Home." As to the disadvantages, deans' responses led to developing two themes: "Poor Signal A Problem"; and, "Students' Attendance not 100%". On teachers' preparations, there were three themes that emerged such as 1) "Attendance to Trainings and Workshops" 2) "Preparing of Lessons"; and, 3) "Readying Gadgets". As to the advantages of online learning, the following themes were arrived at: 1) "Knowledge is Gained on Online Teaching"; and, 2) "Learning is delivered at the Students' Doors". As to the disadvantages of online learning only one theme was developed, "Online Learning is Defeated with Poor, Weak Internet Connection". As to students' preparations, only one theme emerged: "Preparing the Gadgets for Online-learning." As to disadvantages, there was one theme developed, "Education Still Happens at Home." As to disadvantages, student responses led to developing three themes: 1) "Difficulty of Lessons"; 2) "Poor Signal A Problem"; and, 3) "Online Learning Cannot Compare Face-to-face classes". Based on the findings, it is concluded that preparations common to students is on gadgets – laptops and phones. For deans' and teachers, trainings and gadgets. As to advantages it can be concluded based on the common responses among deans, teachers, and students that online learning is education and learning at home. As to students it can be concluded that difficulty of lessons is a problem. For deans and teachers, weak internet connection is a great disadvantage. Further with the disadvantages that outnumbered advantages of online learning, the learning modality is not effective compared to face-to-face classes.

Keywords: views, online learning, academic deans, faculty members, students

I. INTRODUCTION

The present experience of the pandemic brought about by COVID-19 virus has shrouded the whole world because of death toll in millions. It too has affected not only economic activities and many others but also educational services (Simons, 2020). Pinpointing on the pandemic affecting educational services, it has caused education bureaus to come up with new modes of learning to sustain education among learners since teaching and learning in the physical classroom is suspended to at least minimize transmission of the virus.

In the local scenario, specifically, in Zamboanga Peninsula, online learning has been adopted by some public elementary and

secondary schools and even by private colleges to continue delivering educational services to student clientele. In the whole archipelago, the Philippine Government through the Department of Education (DepEd) has come up with LDMs – Learning Delivery Modalities, so as to reach out every learner even in the remotest area. Other countries have also adopted new learning modalities in replacement of face-to-face instruction in the classroom. According to Tenesse (2020), there is a global change in the learning delivery among students. Online learning has its rise because of the pandemic and most countries, if not, all have given favor to online classes. As such, the global trending phenomenon of online learning which is also true to the country and the municipi-

pality of Buug has inspired the researcher to bring to light this study on online learning.

Focusing on the research locale, which is the Mindanao State University -Buug (in the municipality of Buug, province of Zamboanga Sibugay) that has adopted online learning, the researcher had to explore attempts to solicit perspective of the academic deans, faculty members and students in the area on online learning. Their perspective or view as to the newly-implemented learning modality unleashed their feedbacks that helped the researcher visualize possible advantages or disadvantages of online learning as one mode of distance learning. This study therefore is believed to fill the research gap as there are no studies in the local scenario on online learning much more on the perspective of academic deans, faculty members and students on the said learning modality. This paper, as well, is considered a contribution to existing literature. The researcher is bent to adopting interpretivism as her research paradigm since her study led her to understanding why or how somebody feels or behaves – for example, in the study with how academic deans, faculty members and students view online learning could not be achieved through the analysis of numbers. Instead, it requires in-depth assessment of words, actions or behaviors. As an interpretivist researcher concentrating on the meanings that people bring to situations helped her realize this study through qualitative design with major utilization of a case study.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study made use of qualitative research design with particular use of a case study. The researcher opted to utilize this design as case study is a research strategy and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. Case studies are based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group or event to explore the causes of underlying principles. According to Stake (1995) a case study has to look for patterns that recur and that can answer the research problems.

This study was conducted at the Mindanao State University, Buug, Zamboanga Sibugay. The Mindanao State University-Buug is the eight autonomous campus of the MSU System. It has six colleges namely, College of Arts and Sciences; College of Education; College of Forestry and Environmental Studies; College of Agriculture; College of Information Technology; College of Fisheries and College of Hospitality Management. The research participants of the study were the academic deans, faculty members from and students of the College of Education, College of Public Administration, College of Agriculture, College of Arts and Sciences and College of Forestry, College of Information Technology; of the Mindanao State University. This study made of purposive sampling since the researcher had to choose the respondents purposively. The deans, faculty members and students had the same or homogenous characteristic – having been experiencing the implementation of online learning. The main instrument used in this study was an interview guide with the researcher as interviewer to generate data based on the responses of the

participants. The solicited oral responses from the participants which answered the specific questions in the Statement of the Problem were audio-taped by the researcher for documentation purposes. Interview responses were used as major data for analysis. The data were analyzed using the approach of Stake (1995) as cited by Yazan (2004). From Stake's point of view analysis is the deconstruction of data and impressions; it then entails giving meaning to the part. As such, Stake's categorical aggregation (clustering data into categories or classes to ease the search for meaning) was utilized in the analysis of data by establishing patterns and even themes based on the interview. This was realized through content analysis.

Thus, the data analyzed through content analysis led the researcher to identifying patterns and connections. Once the data were coded, the researcher started identifying themes, looking for the most common responses and recurring ideas from the responses.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first question this study sought to answer was, "What preparations did you have before implementing online learning in the university – the Mindanao State University-Buug? Based on the question, the responses of academic deans led to developing the following themes: 1) "Attended Seminar-Workshop"; and, 2) "Readying of Gadgets".

Attended Seminar-Workshop. This theme developed means that faculty members consider their attendance to trainings as one of the important preparations as their act redounds to learning the online platform which can help them brace for online-teaching for students' learning. **Readying of Gadgets.** The theme means that as part of the deans' preparations, gadgets such as laptops and mobile phones were necessary for online learning implementation.

The second question this study sought to answer was, "As you now implement online learning, can you share your perspective or view on online learning much more on its advantages and disadvantages?"

On the Advantages. As to the advantages, deans' responses are only developing one theme: "Online Teaching Means Learning at Home." **Online Teaching Means Learning at Home.** The come-up theme means that online learning is an advantage because faculty members still can teach which means learning and education still happens right at the home of the students.

On the Disadvantages. As to the disadvantages, deans' responses led to developing two themes: "Poor Signal A Problem"; and, "Students' Attendance not 100%". **Poor Signal A Problem.** This theme means that poor signal of the Internet is a problem as it can mean disruption of classes or inability of the faculty member and students to experience teaching and learning.

Faculty Members' Case

Based on the question, there are themes that emerged such as 1) “Attendance to Trainings and Workshops” 2) “Preparing of Lessons”; and, 3) “Readying Gadgets”.

Attendance to Training and Workshops. This major theme means that faculty members did attend trainings and workshops so that they could familiarize the online platform prior to having online classes. **Preparing of Lessons.** This second theme means that faculty members really had to prepare lessons and even their timeline so that they would be ready on what to teach for the semester. **Readying Gadgets.** This theme means that prior to online classes faculty members really had to prepare their gadgets such as laptops and mobile phones to be able to conduct online classes.

On the Advantages. As to the advantages of online learning, the following themes are arrived at: 1) “Knowledge is Gained on Online Teaching”; and, 2) “Learning is delivered at the Students’ Doors”. **Knowledge is Gained on Online Teaching.** This theme means that faculty members are able to gain know-how as to the conduct of online classes. **Learning is delivered at the Students’ Doors.** This theme means that faculty members consider online learning to be advantageous as they believe that education despite no face-to-face classes is still delivered at learners’ home.

On Disadvantages. As to the disadvantages of online learning a lone theme is developed, “Online Learning is Defeated with Poor, Weak Internet Connection”. This theme means that faculty members believe that learning is not effective as it is deterred by poor signal, weak or slow Internet connection.

Students’ Case

Based on the question there is lone theme that emerged as to preparations undertaken by students – “**Preparing the Gadgets for Online-learning.**” The established theme means that students really had to ready themselves by preparing their laptops and mobile phones.

Based on the second question there is one theme developed as to the advantages of online learning: “**Education Still Happens at Home.**” The theme means that students are still happy that education is still their experience despite at home.

On Disadvantages. As to disadvantages, student responses led to developing the following themes: 1) “Difficulty of Lessons”; 2) “Poor Signal A Problem”; and, 3) “Online Learning Cannot Compare Face-to-face classes”. **Difficulty of Lessons.** This theme means that students find online learning giving them difficulty to understand lessons since they are not thoroughly discussed unlike in face-to-face classes. **Poor Signal A Problem.** This theme is a disadvantage since students find connection slow, poor or weak which to them a hassle and an interruption to classes. **Online Learning Cannot Compare Face-to-face classes.** This developed theme means that students find that online learning is not effective as they find face-to-face classes to be better with lessons well-discussed and students can always ask for further discussion, explanations from teachers.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that preparations common to students is on gadgets – laptops and phones. For deans’ and faculty members, trainings and gadgets. As to advantages it can be concluded based on the common responses among deans, faculty members and students that online learning is education and learning at home. As to students it can be concluded that difficulty of lessons is a problem. For deans and faculty members, weak internet connection is a great disadvantage.

Further with the disadvantages that outnumbered advantages of online learning, the learning modality is not effective compared to face-to-face classes.

This study with its findings and conclusions has its important implication. To students, online learning means education/learning still at home. However, with lots of disadvantages much more difficult lessons experienced with limited discussions and explanations unlike in face-to-face classes, learning is not truly attained. Hence, face-to-face classes has been a longing among students. To the academic deans and faculty members, this study implies that they are happy because they still can deliver education right at the home doors of the students yet major problem on internet connectivity and poor attendance in online classes, thus, there is really an urgent need to have face-to-face classes resume. May God help us in easing the spread of Covid -19 virus to have the traditional learning classroom to start again.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, the researchers advanced the following recommendations:

1. Faculty members need to depend on online learning but continue to implement blended learning.
2. Faculty Members need to strengthen student connection via other means – mobile phones, Facebook messenger and other ways to constantly follow up learning problems and possible intervention can be done.
3. School administrators need to collaborate with faculty members for other practical means to enhance student learning through the use of other tools.
4. Future researchers may replicate this study to verify findings. Or future researchers may conduct parallel study yet to be done in other colleges or universities in Zamboanga Sibugay province.

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