Thematic Study on the Challenges Faced by Melchora Aquino Elementary School: Basis for Face-To-Face Learning Continuity Instructional Supervision

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to identify the challenges faced by the learners and parents of Melchora Aquino Elementary School during the implementation of online distance learning.

Methodology: A qualitative type of research using a thematic analysis design was used among one hundred three (103) participants in the study at Melchora Aquino Elementary School.

Results: The results of the study led to the following conclusions: The common challenges when implementing online distance learning for grades 1-6 is "poor internet connection/signal," whereas "health" was the major challenge for kindergarten. The most commonly used gadgets for online learning were tablets and cellphones, which they used for 20 minutes of online class for kindergarten and 2 hours for grades 1-6 and ALS. The internet providers used were Globe for grades 4-6 and ALS, while Kindergarten and grades 1-3 used Converge. The benefits of face-to-face instruction received positive feedback from respondents as *"walang distractions"* for kindergartens, and *"mas natututo ang bata nang maayos"* for students in grades 1-3, *"mas natututo ang bata nang maayos"* was answered by ALS, and "walang distractions" was responded for grades 4-6. However, it was perceived that the disadvantages of face-to-face instruction were health and transportation for all levels of students, respectively. Online distance education advantages are referred to as *"matipid sa pamasahe"* for kindergarten and grades 1-3, respectively. For ALS are "wala" and "safe at home," while for grades 4-6, there are *"bonding as a family,"*; *"secured at home,"* ,*"Natutunan kung paano gamitin ang mga online platform o mga makabagong teknolohiya"* and "parents are also learning." Meanwhile, the commonly perceived disadvantages were "limited/walang natutunan ang mga bata" and "poor signal" are the perceived difficulties of online distance learning, for all grades respectively. In terms of physical and advanced interruptions, the majority of the respondents commonly interruption was "*trabaho*," and "*maingay*". There are no personal or psychological obstacles for Kinder, while noise and *"nahirapang intindihin ang leksyon"* were problems encountered by Grades 1-3. The most common hindrance for ALS is *"load/data,"* whereas grades 4-6 refer to it as "gadget," and "laziness". Students were able to manage their online or modular distance learning by *"helping/helping them noting their tasks and so on."* for Kinder and Grades 1-3, "*naghahanap ng ibang mga paraan para mas madagdagan pa ang aking kaalaman"* for grades 4-6, and *"time management"* for ALS.

Conclusion: The outcomes demonstrated the difficulties Melchora Aquino Elementary School faces. The device, internet provider, time allocation, attitudes toward online distance learning, technological and technical difficulties, physical and digital distractions, and personal barriers all hampered the implementation of modular and online distance learning. Online/modular distance learning and face-to-face instruction both have advantages despite their drawbacks.

Keywords: Online, Modular, and Face-to-Face Learning, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, the Philippine school system faced unprecedented obstacles brought on by Corona Virus-19. The event resulted in a significant change from traditional face-to-face classroom contact to non-face-to-face virtual classroom interaction. Unexpectedly, the school's teachers are unprepared for the circumstance. As a result, Melchora Aquino Elementary School must undergo learning and development through pieces of training and webinars to meet the challenges of pedagogical approaches in teaching-learning processes that aim to deliver different learning modalities such as online digital, modular, and blended learning.

Melchora Aquino Elementary School relies on educational technology and development to meet the recognized needs of teaching professionals for ICT-based instruction and open education resources by implementing programs for organizational growth, faculty welfare, workflows, and performance management. The organization's diversity has been used to develop ICT skills so that members of the organization may contribute to the fulfillment of

the school's vision and goal. Parents' webinars on synchronous and asynchronous online learning, parents' orientations on the use of learning devices, students' webinars on mental health, and the establishment of education platforms for distance learning modalities such as Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Messenger Room for the opening of modular-distance and online learning are among the learning and development initiatives initiated for teachers, students, and parents.

For this reason, the researcher identified the challenges faced by Melchora Aquino Elementary School as a basis for face-to-face learning continuity instructional supervision.

Objectives

This study determined the challenges faced by Melchora Aquino Elementary School. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties in implementing Online Distance Learning?
2. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of student gadgets, internet providers, time allocation, student sentiments, technology and technical challenges, physical and digital distractions, and personal and psychological hurdles to online distance learning?
3. What are the advantages of face-to-face learning?
4. What are the disadvantages of face-to-face learning?
5. What are the advantages of online distance learning?
6. What are the disadvantages of online distance learning?
7. What methods do students use to manage their online/modular distance learning?

METHODS
Research Design

Bhandari (2022) described qualitative research as collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem. While Caulfiled (2022) described thematic analysis as a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly.

A qualitative analysis was conducted through the responses of the participants from the researcher-made open-ended questionnaire among one hundred and three (103) parents and students at Melchora Aquino Elementary School participated in this study, which used a thematic analysis design and qualitative research methods

Population and Sampling

The Melchora Aquino Elementary School in Gagalangin, Tondo, Manila, Philippines, served as the setting for the study.

This study's participants include ALS students and their parents from kindergarten through sixth grade. 113 people, or 12.70 percent, participated in the study for the 2021–2022 school year.

The students and parents of Melchora Aquino Elementary School were the subjects of the study for the 2021–2022 school year. The study used online and modular distance learning, and face-to-face interaction was not allowed. The thematic questionnaires were filled out by volunteers using a Google form.

Instrumentation

All the 800 eleven (811) understudies and guardians from Kinder, Grade 1 to Grade 6 and ALS understudies are approached to answer the google structure topical review on the difficulties looked by Melchora Aquino Primary School, one hundred three (103) or 12.70% all out understudy and parent members in the review.

To qualitatively analyze the students' learning experiences and challenges with online distance learning, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to them.

The following instruments are used in the study:

1. Challenges in the Implementation of Online Distance Learning

This was used as a thematic response to the difficulties that parents and students in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) faced when implementing online distance learning.

2. Profile of the Respondents

The respondent's gadgets, internet service providers used for online learning, time allotted for online learning, students' attitudes toward online distance learning, technological and technical difficulties, physical and digital distractions, and Personal and psychological barriers were used for the thematic response.

3. Benefits of Face-to-Face Learning

Using a thematic approach was used to determine the advantages of face-to-face learning for students.

4. Hardship of Face-to-Face Learning

Using a thematic approach, this was used to determine how students perceived the difficulty of face-to-face learning.

5. Benefits of Online Distance Learning

Using a thematic approach was used to determine the advantages of online distance learning for students.

6. Hardship of Online Distance Learning

Using a thematic approach was used to determine the students' perceptions of the difficulties associated with online distance learning.

7. Managing Online / Modular Distance Learning

This was used to find out how well students managed online distance learning and modular distance learning using a thematic approach.

Ethical Consideration

The respondents of the concentrate deliberately addressed the google structure. The researcher requested permission to carry out the study from the Superintendent of Schools Division. The specialist developed the instrument that was utilized in the review and approved by the teachers. The researcher distributed the survey questionnaire to respondents via Google Forms in collaboration with the school principal, teachers, and Parent-Teacher Association.

Data Collection

In the data-gathering procedure for the study, the researcher conducted a series of research forums to undertake the research proposal. The researcher administered, collected, and examined the results of survey questionnaires for the challenges in the implementation of online distance learning. The data had been sorted and tabulated the challenges and problems encountered. The thematic approach was validated using Word Clouds among responses. Questionnaires were retrieved through a google form. The collection of data is followed by tallying and tabulating into the standard forms. The data were sorted, and presentation of the data based on the sub-problems of the study. Analyzed, interpreted, and statistically treated the data collected and tabulated.

Data Analysis

The qualitative-descriptive method was used in this study. The responses were tallied, analyzed, and grouped into themes. The students' most frequently used words were coded using a Word Cloud. The largest number of times a word was used to answer open-ended questions is reflected in the cloud's word sizes.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION
Challenges in the Implementation of Online Distance Learning

The obstacles that Melchora Aquino Elementary School faces during the during the implementation of online distance learning according to the responses, "Health" ranks highest for Kinder, followed by "*walang load ang gadget*" and " namely, "*mas mahirap makafocus ang mga bata sa pag-aral sa tahanan at sang-ayon ang karamihan na mas maganda ang turo sa paaralan at mas madaling matuto ang mga bata/hindi masyadong natututukan ang pag-aral ng mga bata*"; Mahirap matuto at makapag aral*"; and "*Pag-unawa*" each have a rank of 3.5. For grades 1-3 and 4-6, rank one is "poor internet connection/signal," while rank two is "*mas mahirap makafocus ang mga bata sa pag-aaral sa tahanan at sang-ayon ang karamihan na mas magandang ang turo sa paaralan at mas madaling matuto ang mga bata/hindi masyadong na natututukan ang pag-aaral ng mga bata*"*Wala po akong sapat na kaalaman kung paano ang wastong pagtuturo sa bata*" and "*Walang load ang gadget*"; "*mahirap dahil sa financial problem*"; *mas mahirap maka focus, maganda ang turo sa paaralan at mas madaling matuto ang mga bata/hindi masyadong natututukan ang pag-aaral ng mga bata*" and "*Mahirap po para sa akin lalo na tatlo anak ko ang nag aaral*".

The finding of the study is affirmed by Amadora (2020) that students encountered common problems during online classes such as internet disconnection, audio drawbacks, technical, outdated device & software, system glitch and short attention span. Jacob (2016) supported the finding of the current study by implying that students had good basic skills but were struggling with the critical analysis.

Profile of the Respondents
Gadgets used by students in online learning

Tablet is ranked first for children in kindergarten, followed by cellphone in grades 1-3 and 4-6 (Rank 1). ALS is ranked No. 1 is cellphone.
Internet providers used in online learning

Globe is the first rank for Kinder, while converge (Rank 2) is the first rank for Grades 1-3 and 4-6. ALS is ranked No. 1 is Globe.
Time allotment for online learning

The first rank for Kinder is 20 minutes, while the ranks for Grades 1-3 and 4-6 are 2 hours each (Rank1). For ALS, some respondents consumed more than 8 hours, while others only consumed 30 minutes.

Students' feelings toward online distance learning

The Position 1 for Kinder is *"mahirap";* No. Rank 2 "stressed" and rank number 3 means "*ligtas."* While "stressful" is Rank No. 1 for Grades 1-3, Rank No. 1 and Grades 4-6 "*mahirap*" 1. ALS is ranked No. 1 is "*mahirap.*"

Technological and technical difficulties

Kinder has "none" as Rank No. 1, "internet connection" as Rank No. 2, and "no gadget" as Rank No. 3. "none" is ranked first for Grades 4-6, with "internet connection" and "*walang wifi*" ranking second and third, respectively. ALS has a rank of "none" as its first. whereas "brownout" and "*walang wifi*" are ranked second and third, respectively.

Physical and digital distractions

Kinder has "*trabaho*" as Rank 1 and "*maingay*" as Rank 2; whereas Grades 1-3 has "none" as Rank 1, "*trabaho*" and "*maingay*" as Rank 2.5. "*maingay*" is ranked first in Grades 4-6. And "*trabaho*" is Rank No. 1 for ALS.

Personal and psychological barriers

Parents' and kids' replies are "none" as Rank 1 for Kinder and "lack of time" as Rank 2 for Grades 1-3, "none" as Rank 1, "*nahirapang intindihin ang leksyon*" as Rank 2 and "noise" as Rank 3. "laziness" is ranked first in Grades 4-6. And for ALS, popular answer of the responders includes "load/data"; "*walang natutunan*"; "gadget" and "laziness".

The findings of the study are similar to the study of Colorado & Eberle (2010) to address the diverse needs of the learners, it is important to assess the learners at the early stage and determine their demographic profile, socio-economic status, parents' work, and educational background. Such information is effective for planning and logistic capability of the learners for online classes and activities. This is also the similar point as recommended by Sanchez, et al. (2022) in their study on extending the ultimate efforts for the service of the learners.

Benefits of Face-to-Face Learning

Table 1: Benefits of Face-to-Face (F2F) Learning

Grade Level	Theme	Quotations
Kinder		
Primary (Grade 1-3)	Benefits of Face-to-Face Learning	
Intermediate (Grade 4-6)		
ALS		

As indicated by the respondents, the Rank 1 for Kinder is "*walang distractions*" whereas for Grade 1-3 "*mas natutoto ang bata nang maayos*" as Rank No. 1. "*walang distractions*" is ranked first in Grades 4-6. "*Mas natutoto ang bata nang maayos*" and "*walang distractions*" are Rank No. 1.5 for ALS, respectively.

The researchers (Stoian et al., 2022) supported the study that face-to-face learning provided more time for learning, better assessment and accessibility, more practical/technical aspects, better interaction, lessons are better seen and heard, teachers are more attentive to students' problems, and that the learning process is stress-free. Additionally, having an immersion face-to-face promotes better relationships among people which in turn leads to productivity (Sanchez, 2022; Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020).

Hardships of Face-to-Face Learning

Table 2: Hardships of Face-to-Face Learning

Grade Level	Theme	Quotations
Kinder		
Primary (Grade 1-3)	Hardship of Face-to-Face Learning	
Intermediate (Grade 4-6)		
ALS		

The first, second, and third grade of respondents' reported difficulties with face-to-face learning are Kinder, 1-3, and 4-6. In grades 4-6, "Health" is ranked first. Additionally, "health" comes in first for ALS. Thus, majority of the students considered health as a hardship for face-to-face learning.

This is in line with DepEd Order 12, s. 2020 in light of Covid-19 Public Health Emergency as a guideline of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan.

Benefits of Online Distance Learning

Table 3: Benefits of Online Distance Learning

Grade Level	Theme	Quotations
Kinder	Benefits of Online Distance Learning	
Primary (Grade 1-3)		
Intermediate (Grade 4-6)		
ALS		

For Kindergarten, "*matipid sa pamasahe*" is ranked first, whereas for Grades 1-3, "*wala*" is ranked first and "*matipid sa pamasahe*" is ranked second. For Grades 4-6, "*wala*" comes in at Number One, followed by "safe at home," and for ALS, "*wala*," "family bonding," "safe at home," "parents are also learning," and "*natutunan kung paano gamitin ang mga internet platform o mga makabagong teknolohiya*" are often given replies.

The study of Appana (2008) affirmed the findings of the current study, concluding that there are benefits of online learning such as accessibility, learning despite pandemic, distance-based learning opportunity.

Hardship of Online Distance Learning

Table 4: Hardship of Online Distance Learning

Grade Level	Theme	Quotations
Kinder	Hardship of Online Distance Learning	
Primary (Grade 1-3)		
Intermediate (Grade 4-6)		
ALS		

Limited/*walang natutunan ang mga bata* is the Rank 1 for kindergarten, while "poor signal" is the Rank 1 and "limited/*walang natutunan ang mga bata*" is the Rank 1 for Grades 1-3. Internet connection and attention span are ranked Nos. 1 and 2 for Grades 4-6 and ALS, respectively. For Grades 4-6, "limited/*walang natutunan ang mga bata*" is ranked No. 1 and "internet connection" is ranked No. 2.

The study conducted by Veletsianos et all., (2020) found that online distance learning can also create a significant burden for teachers, as they must adapt to new teaching methods and technologies, and often struggle to provide adequate support and feedback to students. Overall, while online distance learning may provide some benefits, such as flexibility and convenience, it also presents a number of difficulties that must be carefully considered and addressed. In addition, Al-Bahrani (2019) found that online distance learning can exacerbate existing disparities in educational access and opportunities, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds and those with disabilities. However, Dizon and Sanchez (2020) argued that challenges in the teaching process shall not prohibit educators from further improvement in their profession.

Managing Online / Modular Distance Learning

Table 5: Managing Online / Modular Distance Learning

Grade Level	Theme	Quotations
Kinder	Managing online / modular distance	
Primary (Grade 1-3)		
Intermediate (Grade 4-6)		
ALS		

      For Grades K–3, "limited/*walang natutunan ang mga bata*" is ranked No. 1 and "poor signal" is ranked No. 2. For Kindergarten, "helping/ supporting them doing their assignments etc." is ranked No. 1. 2. "none" and "*naghahanap ng ibang mga paraan para mas madagdagan pa ang aking kaalaman*" are ranked No. 1.5 and No. 2. respectively for Grades 4-6. The top two rankings for ALS are "none" and "time management."

      This conforms to the study of Chen and Liang (2015), students who were able to effectively manage their time spent on coursework had better academic performance than those who struggled with time management. They found that students who set clear goals, established a schedule, and broke down tasks into manageable chunks were more successful in completing coursework on time. Additionally, students who used technology to manage their time, such as calendar and task management apps, were found to be more successful than those who did not. Likewise, a recent study by Huang et al., (2019) focused on the use of modular learning in online courses. The authors found that students who were taught using a modular approach in an online course had higher levels of satisfaction with the course and were more likely to complete the course than students who were taught using a traditional approach. They also found that students who were taught using a modular approach had better learning outcomes than students who were taught using a traditional approach.

Conclusions

    Based on the findings of this investigation, the following conclusions were drawn:

      The data showed that most of the problems encountered by students Melchora Aquino Elementary School faces during the during the implementation of online distance learning were health, poor internet connection, lack of ability to focus due to different distraction encountered at home. This was further supported by the responses towards the advantages of face-to-face classes in comparison with the online classes. The most commonly used gadgets for online learning were tablets and cellphones, which they used for 20 minutes of online class for kindergarten and 2 hours for grades 1-6 and ALS. The internet providers used were Globe for grades 4-6 and ALS, while Kindergarten and grades 1-3 used Converge. The device, internet provider, time allocation, attitudes toward online distance learning, technological and technical difficulties, physical and digital distractions, and personal barriers all hampered the implementation of modular and online distance learning. Online/modular distance learning and face-to-face instruction both have advantages despite their drawbacks.

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