Distance Education: Lens View of College Students in Southern Philippines

Prof. Monsour Ali Pelmin

PhD, College of Business Administration and Accountancy, Mindanao State University, Philippines
monsour.pelmin@msugensan.edu.ph

Abstract— Education must continue. Many forms of e-learning (such as online courses with authentic tasks and computer-supported collaborative learning) have become essential in distance education. A descriptive survey was conducted on 125 college students to explore college students' profile and perception of distance education in the new normal. The study revealed that most of the respondents were 18-20 years old, 1st-year college, engineering and technology, and General Santos City. Respondents answered open schedule-asynchronous as the top option for the type of distance learning they want to enroll. They will be using smartphones as their device, accessing internet connection at home through prepaid plans. Respondents expect online enrolment as student support service under distance learning mode, time and money saved to commute and live away from home as the benefit of distance education and would like to enroll in the distance learning program. The majority of the respondents believed that traditional and conventional class is essential. They have a problem with the supply of electricity, internet connection, and financial and teacher-related problems.

Keywords— College Students, Distance Education, Perception, Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are affected by COVID-19. Without a doubt, Pestilence is not the last pandemic that will undermine school coherence, particularly given research on how environmental change will influence irresistible disease events. There is a scope of potential ways that HEIs could become more grounded in light of the COVID-19 emergency (Pelmin, 2020).

Distance Education provides a technological improvement effect on education. With the developments of high technology and globalization, social, cultural, and educational aspects of life become different and improve time, space, and communication. In the educational field, classical learning and teaching techniques cannot be effective without technology and time, space limitations. Distance Education provides fast, easy education opportunities for everyone without concentrating time, distance, and space limitations.

Students' perceptions of the primary concern to set the students' roles troubling the teachers' action. Distance Education requires interaction between teacher and student through their technical, academic, personal roles to implement technology-based communication and distance education. It offers educators an opportunity to extend their academic offerings to new students and address equal educational standards. Everyone also has the opportunity to consult the uses of this kind of education. Students become more self-realized, responsible for their training and learning.

Distance Education is an activity that embraces the whole of the student activity, responsibility, and willingness for getting, asking for the related questions, answers. Distance Learning or Education is both system and a process that connects learners with distributed resources. Educators' roles become only just as a facilitator while the student involves active learning in constructivism.

Distance Education allows the student to interact with the teacher as soon as he/she encounters the need for this interaction. There is a positive correlation between instructor immediacy of response and affective learning as a learning environment. Going distance education for active learners takes planning and understanding available interactive distance learning possibilities (Jones., 2002).

Today is there should be the challenge of being a traditional classroom and propose a virtual classroom. Distance Education uses telecommunicating, audio conferencing, and asynchronous learning networks. Learners use computers and communications technologies. Interaction among learners also supports the learning process (Rovia, 2002).

There is a lack of consistency among existing student readiness for distance education instruments and surveys from published and unpublished sources. In this study, the researcher aims to identify the college students' perception of distance education and traditional learning and determine the challenges and issues they have encountered in distance education delivery.

II. METHOD

This research employed a descriptive study. It is conducted in General Santos City, Philippines, with a total of 125 respondents. The respondents were selected randomly and purposively. The respondents of the study were university students. Data gathering was conducted from June to July 2020.

A self-made survey questionnaire was used as the Primary data in the study.

All data collected for this research were guarded to safeguard confidentiality at all times, most notably during the periods during which the data was transported. In any case, it was ensured that information such as names and addresses was retained as part of the research separately from other personal information obtained. The completed questionnaires were secured in a locked filing cabinet, while the soft copy of the data was stored on a computer protected by a password. The responses were tabulated and stored.

Finally, evaluating and interpreting the data in which the findings were analyzed and interpreted based on the study's intent. The researcher observes full ethical standards in the study's conduct and follows the study protocol assessments and standardized criteria, particularly managing the population and data.

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Profile	F	%
Age		
17- below	0	0
18-20 years' old	88	70.4
21- above	37	29.6
Year Level		
1ST Year	45	36
2nd Year	44	35.2
3rd Year	33	26.4
4th Year	2	1.6
5th Year	1	0.8
Program Cluster		
Maritime Program	34	27.2
Business and Management	28	22.4
Engineering and Technology	63	50.4
Province/City		
General Santos City	46	36.8
South Cotabato	30	24
North Cotabato	2	1.6
Cotabato City	2	1.6
Sarangani	21	13.6
Sultan Kudarat	17	13.6
Others	7	5.6

Table 2: Profile and Perception of Distance Education

Questions to Perception of Distance Education	F	%
Which type of distance learning would you like to be enrolled in?		
Video Conferencing	34	27.2
Open Schedule-Asynchronous Distance Education	65	52
Synchronous indicates	10	8
Hybrid distance education	16	12.8
What device own you will be going to use for distance education		
Smartphone	119	95.2
Laptop	23	18.4
Tablet computer	2	1.6
Webcam	1	0.8
Desktop computer	2	1.6
Where do you access internet service?		
HOME, acquired through Prepaid	63	50.5
HOME, acquired through Postpaid	13	1.4
Friend's home	9	7.2
Family member's home	27	21.6
Internet cafe	13	10.4
What student support service do you need most/ expect under distance learning mode?		
Online enrolment	69	54.4
online counseling	11	8.8
Scholarship program	43	34.4
Library online	13	10.4
on-site enrolment	21	16.8
career/job resource center	4	3.2
library walk-in	3	2.4
Financial support in terms of information on students' loans, aids, etc.	36	28.8
What do you think are the benefits of distance learning?		
Time and money saved to commute and live away from home	98	78.4
The flexibility of class time	26	20.8
Fetches more time for the students to concentrate on their work	16	12.8
Learning at own pace	34	27.2
Acquiring independence in tackling assignments and requirements	29	23.2
Do you intend to enroll in a distance learning program this academic year?		
YES	88	70.4
NO	37	29.6

Table 3. Perception of Traditional Learning

Perception of Traditional Learning	F	%
Feeling that I am part of a conventional/traditional class is…		
Not especially necessary for me.	13	10.4
Somewhat important to me.	48	38.4
Very important to me.	64	51.2

When I have an important job to do, I usually…		
Get it done ahead of time.	77	61.6
Need reminding to get it done on time.	32	25.6
Put it off until the last minute.	16	12.8
Classroom discussion is…		
Not usually too helpful to me.	2	1.6
Sometimes helpful.	31	24.8
Often very helpful to me.	92	73.6
When an instructor hands out instructions for an assignment, I usually prefer to…		
Figure out the instructions for me.		
Have the instructions explained to me.	9	7.2
Try to follow instructions on my own, and	43	34.4
ask for help when I need it.	74	92.5
I like to get an instructor's comments on my exams and assignments…		
Within a couple of weeks, so I can review what I did	73	58.4
Within a few days, or I forget what I did.	34	27.2
Right away, or I get frustrated.	18	14.4
When asked to use computers, electronic mail, voice-mail, or try other technologies new to me…		
I look forward to learning new skills, and usually, I master them quickly.	69	55.2
I am a little nervous, but I try them anyway.	50	40
I put them off or avoid them.	6	4.8
As a reader, I am…		
Very confident. I understand textbooks easily, with little or no help.	36	28.9
Average. Sometimes I need help. Sometimes I need a tutor.	89	71.2

Table 4: Distance Education Challenges

Challenges	Statements
Supply of Electricity	"I have an intermittent supply of electricity that hinders my online class."
Internet Connection	"Lack of internet connection and gadget. We do not have time to do our household chores because of many assignments. I enrolled because I thought that no gadget required. Unstable signal and weak data connection within our area."
Financial Problem	"Online class gives us more expenses, and we need money for load because I only use data in an online class. No changes in tuition collection."
Teacher Problem	"Many subject teachers are not teaching or discussing the topic, and they are always giving many assignments.
	Complying activities to the subject but not teaching. Some teachers are giving us bulk activities with all the same deadlines. Moreover, giving activities during weekends."

IV. DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents. In the present study, most of the respondents' majority of the respondents aged 18-20 years old, 1st-year college, engineering and technology, and from General Santos City.

Perception of Distance Education. The present study revealed that most of the respondents answered open schedule-asynchronous as the top option for the type of distance learning they want to enroll in, using smartphones as the most used device, accessing the internet connection at home through prepaid plans. It also has been found that the majority of the respondents expect online enrolment as student support service under distance learning mode, time and money saved to commute and live away from home as the benefit of distance education and would like to enroll in the distance learning program. Supported by Isman (1999) emphasize that Distance Education is a useful alternative to educational fields. It can eliminate time, distance, and obstacles for opportunities for everyone willing to be educated and develop themselves.

Perception of Traditional Learning. In the present study, it has been found that the majority of the respondents answered, "Feeling that I am part of a conventional/traditional class is very important," "When I have an important job to do, I usually get it done ahead of time," "Classroom discussion is often very helpful to me," When an instructor hands out instructions for an assignment, I usually prefer to try to follow instructions on my own and ask for help when I need it.", "I like to get an instructor's comments on my exams and assignments Within a couple of weeks, so I can review what I did." "When asked to use computers, electronic mail, voice-mail, or try other technologies new to me, I look forward to learning new skills, and usually I master them quickly.", "As a reader, I am average, and sometimes I need help and a tutor." Willis (1992) examined the particular strategies for teaching distance education to understand active participants' needs, wants, and expectations as students. There should be a willingness to change from classical learning to contemporary technology-based learning environments. To create positive tendencies toward distance education, teachers have role as facilitators like making students

aware and comfortable, learning students' background and experiences, being sensitive to different communication styles, remembering that students must take active role, and coping with technological developments.

Distance Education Challenges. In the present study, it has been found that respondents have a problem with the supply of electricity, internet connection, financial problem, and teacher problem. Borrowdale (2000) handled the online distance education perspectives with the aspects of technology.

With the development of high technology, distance education becomes the primary concern for the participants. Students can also experience social, face-to-face learning in distance education through different technology applications like e-mail, bulletin boards, and web pages. There can be variations of participants to distance education and have different perceptions in terms of demographic, gender, and physiological differences.

V. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents aged 18-20 years old, 1st-year college, in the field of engineering and technology, and from General Santos City. that majority of the respondents answered open schedule-asynchronous as the top option for the type of distance learning they want to enroll, using a smartphone as the most used device, accessing internet connection at home through prepaid plans. It also has been found that the majority of the respondents expect online enrolment as student support service under distance learning mode, time and money saved to commute and live away from home as the benefit of distance education and would like to enroll in the distance learning program. that majority of the respondents answered, "Feeling that I am part of a conventional/traditional class is very important," "When I have an important job to do, I usually get it done ahead of time," "Classroom discussion is often very helpful to me," When an instructor hands out instructions for an assignment, I usually prefer to try to follow instructions on my own and ask for help when I need it.", "I like to get an instructor's comments on my exams and assignments Within a couple of weeks, so I can review what I did." "When asked to use computers, electronic mail, voice-mail, or try other technologies new to me, I look forward to learning new skills, and usually I master them quickly.", "As a reader, I am average, and sometimes I need help and tutor." that respondents have a problem with the supply of electricity, internet connection, financial problem, and teacher problem.

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