

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF ONLINE TEACHING AS AN ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODE (ADM)

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Abstract: This study explores the lived experiences of students and teachers at Santa Fe National High School in Cebu, Philippines, during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically focusing on the implementation of online modular learning. The study aims to identify the technological platforms used, their role in the current learning modality, and the challenges teachers and students encounter. Employing a transcendental phenomenological design and using Key Informant Interviews (KII) for data collection, the study utilized qualitative data analysis frameworks by Moustakas (1994) and a deductive thematic analysis approach for data interpretation and coding. The findings suggest that technology played a significant role in teaching and learning, providing students with the ability to mitigate struggles and enhance human and social capabilities, positively impacting their well-being. Teachers perceived the alternative delivery mode (ADM) as significantly impacting the current educational setting, indicating that education is a two-way process that requires readiness and satisfaction. Based on the results, students and teachers believe that online teaching is a viable framework that enhances learning continuity, aligning with the Department of Education's vision to continue the teaching and learning process despite the pandemic.

Keywords: Online modular modality, technological platforms, alternative delivery mode (ADM), Covid-19 Pandemic, transcendental phenomenological design

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions worldwide to rapidly shift to online teaching as an alternative delivery mode (ADM) to maintain academic continuity (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Parveen et al., 2022; Chatzipanagiotou & Katsarou, 2023). The once-familiar chalk-and-talk paradigm gave way to virtual interfaces and digital platforms, fostering a new way of learning that extended beyond the confines of physical campuses. Amid this profound shift, a host of questions emerged, echoing the skepticism of seasoned educators and curious students alike. While the concept of online education had been brewing for years, its sudden, wide-scale implementation underscored the need to probe its efficacy and acceptance within the academic community (Moskal et al., 2013; Aguilera-Hermida, 2020; Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021). Notably, the perceptions of both teachers and students emerged as focal points, carrying the potential to shape the trajectory of education in an increasingly digital age (Roslin et al., 2022).

As time went on, many studies looked at these ideas, but there's still a lot more to learn. In this realm of evolving education, the nuances of students' and teachers' perceptions of online teaching have yet

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to be fully unveiled. This research endeavors to navigate this uncharted terrain, unveiling the perceptions that weave the intricate fabric of the online education narrative. At its core, this study aims to unveil the multifaceted tapestry of perceptions held by students and teachers toward the utilization of online instruction as an ADM within higher education institutions in the Philippines.

Existing literature has illuminated the significance of unraveling these perceptions, exposing insights that hold the promise of enhancing the quality of online courses (Querol & Camiciottoli, 2019; Mishra et al., 2020; Selvaraj et al., 2021; Roslin et al., 2022). Yet, these studies have often peered through a narrow lens, delving into specific facets of online instruction—ranging from course content quality to the efficacy of digital communication tools and overall student satisfaction. In this intricate puzzle, a noticeable gap emerges a comprehensive exploration of the perceptions harbored by both students and teachers toward the utilization of online teaching as an ADM amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

With all of this in mind, this study looks closely at what both students and teachers experienced while using online learning during these unusual times. The study shows how important technology is for learning nowadays and also talks about the problems faced and ideas given by teachers and students. By looking at all of this, we can better understand how people think about online learning, and this can help make education better during this time of big changes.

The rapid global shift to online teaching, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, has ushered in an era of uncharted educational transformation. This sudden transition, however, has given rise to a critical gap in the existing research landscape. While numerous studies have investigated various aspects of online education, they often focus on isolated elements such as course content quality, communication tools, and student satisfaction. Regrettably, this piecemeal approach fails to comprehensively grasp the combined perceptions of students and teachers towards the utilization of online teaching as an Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) during the pandemic.

The gap is that no one looked at how both students and teachers understand this big change together. This study ventures into this unexplored realm, seeking to address this gap by unraveling the intricate tapestry of perceptions held by students and teachers alike. By capturing their lived experiences, technological engagements, challenges, viewpoints, and recommendations, this research aspires to present a unified perspective on the utilization of online teaching as an ADM during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this comprehensive approach, this study endeavors to provide a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dynamics within the realm of online education, thus bridging a crucial gap in the existing literature.

The primary aim of this study is to make a significant contribution to the existing academic literature by conducting an in-depth examination of the perceptions held by both students and teachers regarding the use of online instruction as an Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) within the context of higher education in the Philippines. Through a comprehensive exploration of their experiences, viewpoints, and challenges, this research seeks to shed light on the intricate dynamics surrounding the adoption of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. By filling this knowledge gap, the study aspires to provide valuable insights that enhance our understanding of the effectiveness and acceptance of online education, thereby shaping the future direction of educational practices in this unprecedented era.

Materials and Methods

In this study, a phenomenological approach by Husserl was used to explore the lived experience of the selected teachers and students from Santa Fe National High School, Bantayan Island, Cebu, Philippines.

The choice of employing a phenomenological approach in this study is rooted in its aptitude for delving into the rich tapestry of lived experiences, thereby capturing the essence of individuals' perceptions and perspectives (Husserl, 2012; Arslanian-Engoren & Scott, 2003). Particularly suited for uncovering the underlying meanings and emotions within participants' encounters, the phenomenological approach aligns seamlessly with our endeavor to explore the nuanced perceptions of both teachers and students concerning the utilization of online instruction as an Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM).

For the selection of participants, specific criteria were thoughtfully established to ensure their relevance to the study's objectives. These criteria encompassed enrollment for the current academic year, the availability of necessary resources, parental consent via a waiver form, alignment with the preferred mode of learning, and the geographical proximity of the respondents to Santa Fe National High School on Bantayan Island, Cebu. These criteria were meticulously chosen to ensure that the chosen participants represent a comprehensive range of experiences and viewpoints, contributing to a holistic understanding of the perceptions surrounding online teaching.

Santa Fe National High School is a public secondary school in Cebu that caters to Grade 7 to Grade 12 students, most of whom come from below-average families. The six selected Grade 10 students and two teacher-advisers were chosen as respondents based on specific selection criteria, including enrollment for the current school year, availability of resources, unsigned parents' waiver/consent form, the preferred mode of learning of students, and the location of the respondents.

To gather the necessary data for a comprehensive phenomenological analysis, a qualitative survey method questionnaire was employed. This questionnaire was designed to holistically capture participants' perspectives, with an interview guide specifically tailored for Key Informant Interviews (KII) with both learners and teachers. Additionally, observation notes were utilized to enhance the validation process. The research instrument underwent a rigorous validation process, both internally and externally, ensuring its reliability, appropriateness, and alignment with the study's objectives.

The collected data were subjected to meticulous processing. Through tabulation, analysis, and interpretation, a content analysis framework, inspired by Moustakas (1994), was employed. This methodology enabled the extraction of meaningful insights from the responses and facilitated a deep

exploration of the perceptions held by both teachers and students. Notably, this approach goes beyond mere textual analysis; it harmonizes analysis results with behavioral data, unveiling a more profound understanding of the emotions, motivations, and implications inherent in their perceptions. Through this multifaceted analysis process, the study uncovers the intricate layers of meaning within the participants' experiences, enriching the overarching narrative of online instruction as an ADM during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results and Discussion

Results and quotations from the participants' responses strengthened the themes revealed by utilizing the Analytical Framework of Edmund Husserl and made sure to answer the different research questions.

1. Utilization of Technological Platforms for Online Modular Learning

In the context of Santa Fe National High School, Cebu, Philippines, the exploration of technological platforms employed for online modular learning during the COVID-19 pandemic unveiled a nuanced landscape. The ensuing data analysis brought forth two prominent themes: **Asynchronous Platforms** and **Synchronous Platforms**. These themes serve as pivotal facets, each contributing distinct attributes to the online learning milieu.

Table 1. Technological Platforms Used for Online Modular Learning

Themes	Categories
Asynchronous Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FB messenger • YouTube • Google forms • Google classroom • Email • Fb groups
Synchronous Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoom • Google Meet

Theme 1a: Asynchronous Platforms

Within the realm of asynchronous platforms, six distinctive categories of technological tools were discerned: FB Messenger, YouTube, Google Forms, Google Classroom, email, and FB groups. These platforms, characterized by their flexibility, empower students to engage with learning materials and assignments at their pace and convenience. For instance, Google Forms serves as a conduit for assignment submissions, while platforms like Google Classroom and FB groups foster collaborative learning environments, facilitating resource sharing. Email emerges as an efficacious mode of communication, enabling students to liaise with both peers and instructors seamlessly.

Theme 1b: Synchronous Platforms

Transitioning to the domain of synchronous platforms, two discernible categories emerged: Zoom and Google Meet. These platforms engender real-time interaction, allowing both teachers and students to engage in dynamic, immediate communication and collaboration. This synchronous engagement enables students to seek clarifications and raise inquiries on the spot, while educators can offer timely feedback and support to address challenges as they arise. As elucidated by participants:

“The technological platforms used for online modular learning are the following applications: Facebook/ Messenger, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.” **Clyde**

“As a teacher, I utilized Google apps such as google drive, google form, google classroom, etc. Since most of the learners find them convenient to use.” **Kristyl**

In summation, the cautious employment of both asynchronous and synchronous technological platforms has proven efficacious in ensuring uninterrupted learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Azlan et al., 2020; Moser et al., 2021). The inherent flexibility of asynchronous platforms and the immediacy of interaction facilitated by synchronous platforms have emerged as pivotal factors augmenting the teaching and learning experiences for both educators and students (Lapitan Jr et al., 2021). It is worth noting that these platforms offer students the liberty to engage with learning materials at their own pace while concurrently fostering real-time interaction with teachers, thus embodying a symbiotic convergence of convenience and engagement.

2. Reasons for Utilization of Technological Platforms

Within the context of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, a salient exploration has surfaced—illuminating the underlying motivations behind the utilization of technological platforms. The ensuing analysis has unveiled two pivotal themes that crystallize these motivations: **Technology Access** and **Adaptability**. Each theme encapsulates distinct attributes that shed light on the multifaceted rationale behind the integration of technological platforms in the pedagogical landscape.

Table 2. Reasons Why Technological Platforms Were Utilized in Learning

Themes	Categories
Technology Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient and Easy to Use • Accessible Anywhere
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize offline features • Provide offline videos, and SLHTs as a supplement for a live discussion

Theme 2a: Technology Access

Technology Access serves as a foundational theme, within which lie two defining categories: *Convenient and Easy to Use* and *Accessible Anywhere*. This theme underscores how students and educators alike recognized the inherent ease and user-friendliness of the technological platforms employed in online modular learning. This accessibility empowered them to seamlessly navigate and engage with the learning materials and activities provided by their instructors. Moreover, the platforms' omnipresence, accessible from any location, proved instrumental in enabling uninterrupted education despite the formidable challenges posed by the pandemic. As persuasively expressed by respondents:

“Because these technological platforms/ applications are capable of socializing online and sending or delivering digital SLHTs for the students to continue their studies or learning. And this is the easiest way for teachers to inform or contact their students. These technological platforms facilitate learners in conducting online modular modality by communicating or having a discussion through online call/video calls. In short terms “online class”.” **Clyde**

“ *These technological platforms are used in online modular modality to assist the students and for them to continue learning amidst the pandemic and to communicate with their teachers. These are used to communicate with their teachers, to answer exams, and to attend their teachers' lectures.”* **Marjorie**

“It is accessible, easy to use, and frequently used by both teachers and students. Despite the limitation imposed by the pandemic, communication is becoming instant and information can be delivered and shared effortlessly.” **Victor**

In tandem with these findings, the research findings resonate harmoniously with earlier studies (Azlan et al., 2020; Moser et al., 2021), attesting to the ingenuity exhibited by educational stakeholders in embracing the tenets of adaptability. Furthermore, these results extend the existing research, highlighting the importance of innovative approaches in shaping remote learning experiences, which not only accommodate but also elevate the educational journey.

In summary, the themes of *Technology Access* and *Adaptability* emerge as beacons of insight into the motivations underpinning the integration of technological platforms in the context of pandemic-driven online learning. These findings not only align with previous studies but also deepen our understanding, shedding light on the nuanced strategies that underlie the successful implementation of online education. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, these insights stand poised to guide future endeavors, fostering educational resilience and efficacy in the face of unforeseen challenges.

Theme 2b: Adaptability

In the part about Adaptability, this study looks at how people found smart ways to deal with the challenges of online learning. This theme gives us a lot of information about how using things offline and extra stuff helped students in different ways. It made learning better and helped students remember things better too.

Under the Ambit of Adaptability, the employment of offline features emerged as a pivotal strategy. This approach facilitated learning continuity for students even in scenarios where internet connectivity wavered, proving particularly invaluable for those grappling with limited access to stable online networks. Moreover, the provision of offline videos and Self-Learning Help Tools (SLHTs) emerged as an ingenious augmentation to live discussions. This dual-pronged approach not only afforded learners the liberty to revisit lessons at their cadence but also bestowed an enriched comprehension of the subject matter, bolstering their grasp and retention of concepts.

Scholarly context fortifies these findings, resonating with the works of Darling-Aduana and Heinrich (2018) as well as Castro (2019). These studies underscored the transformative potential of technological tools in bridging the chasm between traditional classroom pedagogy and remote learning environments. Furthermore, the resonance continues with the elucidation of Alghamdi et al. (2020), acknowledging the substantial role technology plays in bequeathing adaptable avenues for higher education.

Participant voices corroborate these insights:

“Because this is the easiest way to help the student to learn and gain more knowledge. This way is more effective rather than the plain modular learning modality. Technology-enhanced the students’ capacity to provide quality education and it also made it possible to allow students to learn even at the height of the pandemic.” **Reizel**

“We used these technological platforms to communicate with the student and teacher and it is easier to learn in this time of pandemic through SLHTs sent online or modules given by the teachers. Video call through Google Meet, giving some announcement through Facebook messenger, and giving some activities through Google form.” **Marianne**

So, to sum up, the ease, reach, and changeability that technology brought to online learning during COVID-19 were really helpful for students and teachers. This finding tells schools they need to make sure everyone can use these tools and give them good training and help. Such endeavors stand to empower educators and learners alike, fostering mastery of these tools and mitigating potential challenges, thereby ensuring the enduring potency of technologically-mediated education.

Usability of Technology for Online Learning

In the complex mix of using technology for online learning, Table 3 is like a big collection of ideas. It shows what people think about how technology and education worked together during the pandemic. When we look closely at this collection, we see two main things that show what the people felt: **"Opportunities to Hold on"** and **"Acceptance of the Role."** These themes, while distinct, collectively convey the transformative potential of technological platforms as enablers of continuity and empowerment within the realm of remote learning.

Table 3. How Technological Platforms Assist Them Through Online Learning

Themes	Categories
Opportunities to Hold on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inability of learners to access the lesson • Providing activities for learners
Acceptance of the Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced students' self-reliance • The right set of circumstances to be more resourceful

Theme 3a: Opportunities to Hold on

In the part called "Opportunities to Hold on," there are two important dimensions: *The inability of learners to access the lesson* and *Providing activities for learners*. This theme unveils the pivotal role played by technological platforms in surmounting challenges, offering a lifeline to learners facing hurdles in accessing educational resources. These platforms, participants observed, bridged disparities, facilitating continued learning in the face of adversity.

Furthermore, the platforms seamlessly accommodated educators' aspirations to keep learners engaged and motivated through diverse activities—an observation supported by the research of Alghamdi et al. (2020). The platforms' dynamic nature engendered meaningful interactive experiences, fostering engagement and comprehension within the virtual learning milieu, as substantiated by Mishra et al. (2020).

Participant voices poignantly align with these insights:

“It is used to provide activities for students through online forms. We used these online platforms because it allows learners to communicate with their teachers and other students for online or distance learning.” **Mary Joyce**

“These platforms enable the learners to receive or access lessons in real-time regardless of their whereabouts. Some platforms can be accessed offline or have free data only. I can also

organize my lessons and even try to be creative. Lastly, having access to more resources would be an advantage during online modular modality.” Kristyl

So, to sum up, the " Opportunities to Hold on " theme shows that students become more independent and smart learners because of technology. Technology isn't just for online stuff – it helps students learn skills that work in the real world too, which is important in our changing digital world.

In the end, all these ideas together show that technology helps learning keep going, makes students feel stronger, and changes things for the better in online learning. As education keeps changing, these findings tell us something important: schools should help students learn how to use technology, so they can learn better and stay connected.

Theme 3b: Acceptance of the Role

Under the theme "Acceptance of the Role," the categories identified were "Enhanced students' self-reliance" and "Right set of circumstances to be more resourceful." Participants noted that using technological platforms during the pandemic enhanced students' self-reliance in their learning. Moreover, the right set of circumstances, such as proper training and access to technology, allowed learners to be more resourceful in their knowledge (Luckin, 2008).

As observed, user satisfaction is closely related to the users' attitude toward the intention to use technology. As uttered by the following participants:

“It can deliver and share information easily, communication is becoming instant despite the restrictions brought by the pandemic. It's user-friendly, accessible, and commonly used both by teachers and students.” Joel

“It is accessible, easy to use, and frequently used by both teachers and students. Despite the limitation imposed by the pandemic, communication is becoming instant and information can be delivered and shared effortlessly.” Victor

Overall, the findings suggest that using technological platforms during the pandemic has provided opportunities for learners to continue their education and enhanced their self-reliance in learning. Additionally, the use of online teaching tools provided teachers provided with viable online activities and helped learners stay engaged and motivated in their learning (Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

As observed, the utilization of offline features in the technological platforms used for learning can help students continue their learning even without a stable internet connection, especially for those with limited access to the internet. Providing offline videos and self-learning help tools (SLHTs) as

supplements for live discussions can also enhance students' comprehension and retention of the subject matter.

4. Challenges with the Use of Technology

Table 4 presents the encountered challenges of the learners in using technological platforms for online modular learning. The data gathered were grouped into two main themes: "Challenges of Times" and "Unfavorable Learning Environment."

Amid the tapestry of technological integration in online modular learning, *Table 4* reflects the challenges learners grapple with in their pursuit of virtual education. A comprehensive analysis of the collated data reveals two overarching themes that encapsulate the multifaceted hurdles: "**Challenges of Times**" and "**Unfavorable Learning Environment.**" These themes collectively unravel the intricate landscape wherein learners navigate the confluence of technology and education, underscoring the frictions that necessitate resolution for a seamless educational journey.

Table 4. Challenges of Learners' with the Use of Technological Platforms

Themes	Categories
Challenges of Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstable data connection • Lack of funds • Lack of Parents/Guardians' Academic Knowledge
Unfavorable Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noisy background • Power interruption

Theme 4a: Challenges of Times

Within the thematic embrace of the *Challenges of Times*, a triad of categories unfurls: *Unstable data connection*, *Lack of funds*, and *Lack of Parents/Guardians' Academic Knowledge*. These categories crystallize the spectrum of challenges learners encounter within the digital landscape, evoking a poignantly complex narrative of obstacles.

Unstable data connection casts a glaring spotlight on a predicament familiar to many—precarious internet connectivity. As resonated by participants, this impediment disrupts the fluidity of online engagement, hindering learners from participating effectively in virtual classes (Saha et al., 2022). This resonates with the broader scholarship, wherein the works of Saha et al. (2022) echo the persistent challenges posed by an unreliable data connection, thereby amplifying the gravity of this issue.

In parallel, the challenge of *Lack of funds* reverberates as an entrenched issue, throttling learners' access to the virtual realm. This financial constraint, as mirrored by the literature encompassing

Mishra et al. (2020), Shim & Lee (2020), and Gaidelys et al. (2022), not only deprives learners of essential gadgets but also bars them from procuring a stable internet connection—marring equitable access.

Moreover, the *Lack of Parents/Guardians' Academic Knowledge* emerges as a unique challenge, underscoring learners' dependence on parental support. This dimension is illuminated by the poignant voice of participants:

“The problems encountered by the participants are lagging. One of the most or main issues of online modular modality is having an unstable network/ transmission. That’s why we should secure our internet connection if it is stable before using these platforms/ applications plus my parents don’t have enough knowledge to teach me in my lessons because they only reached elementary.” **Clyde**

“There are times when it happens in my class that I can’t hear what my students are saying on the other end, I thought they suddenly leave the class but it was me who lost internet connection especially when the weather condition is not so good. So, one of the problems is the unstable network connection.” **Kristyl**

To sum up, "Challenges of Times" shows the real problems students face in their online learning journey. These challenges match what others have found, stressing the need for fair access to the internet and technology, along with strong support systems.

These findings all connect, showing how education, technology, and money are all linked. These challenges tell us we need to do something. Schools and people in charge should make sure everyone can use online education, no matter how much money they have. As we move forward, the message for fair and strong digital education gets louder.

Theme 4b: Unfavorable Learning Environment

Under the "Unfavorable Learning Environment" theme, two categories were identified, namely "Noisy background" and "Power interruption." The learners experienced difficulties in focusing on their online classes due to background noise in their homes. Power interruptions were also common, hindering their participation in live discussions and making it difficult for them to submit their requirements on time.

The use of mobile technologies allows the learner to learn in an environment or context that is most appropriate and controls the learning process (Frohberg et al., 2009). As they mentioned:

“The problems encountered just like slow internet connection, no loads, brownout, some of the classmates have the noisy background and some of them have echoes in their audio.” Joel

“When there is a need for me to reschedule the class meeting since all of a sudden BANELCO announced that there will be a power interruption in our area. It is a big problem for me because I still have more topics and discussions to catch up on.” Reizel

Overall, the data suggest that despite the benefits of using technological platforms for online modular learning, learners still encounter challenges that affect their participation in online classes (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020); Azionya & Nhedzi, 2021).

These challenges, which are mainly related to external factors such as internet connectivity, financial constraints, and unfavorable learning environment, highlight the need for educators and policymakers to provide the necessary support to ensure that learners have access to online education regardless of their circumstances.

Based on the results, the role of technology in creating flexible educational opportunities that allow students to learn remotely must be considered with utmost importance. As technology continues to advance, educational institutions must continue to explore innovative ways to use technological platforms in enhancing the quality of education and providing accessible and flexible learning opportunities. Moreover, educational institutions must consider the potential impact of online modular learning on students' social and emotional well-being. While online modular learning can provide flexibility, it may also cause feelings of isolation and disconnection among students. Hence, educational institutions must provide support to students in addressing these challenges and creating a sense of community and belonging in the online learning environment.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on how online teaching as an alternative delivery mode (ADM) during the COVID-19 pandemic has a big impact on education. The harmonious chorus of voices, teachers, and students alike, resonates to underscore technology's pivotal role in shaping the contours of education. Beyond methodological confines, this investigation delves into the human experience, offering a multifaceted perspective on the symbiotic relationship between education and technology.

The study found that technology isn't just a tool, it's a powerful force for change. Even during tough times like the pandemic, students felt better using online platforms to learn. These platforms aren't just tools – they help students become more independent and feel better about learning. Teachers also see the power of online teaching. They believe education is a two-way street, where both teachers and students need to be ready and happy. Technology makes this possible, creating a dynamic way of teaching and learning.

And this isn't just for now. The study shows that technology can keep changing education in the future. It's not just about the pandemic, but about making education better for everyone. This study is like a guide for people who make decisions about education. It tells them that using technology can make education flexible, effective, and exciting. This way, everyone can learn and grow together.

In the end, this study proves that technology can change education in a big way. It's not just for today's problems – it's for a future where learning is creative, everyone can join in, and students feel confident. The study's findings show us a path to a brighter future in education.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interests

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