STUDENT'S ONLINE LEARNING CHALLENGES AND PERCEIVED SOLUTIONS: BASIS FOR STRATEGY ENHANCEMENT

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ABSTRACT: The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way students learn in higher education. Face-to-face teaching and learning sessions have been transformed into virtual meetings in a variety of online learning platforms. Online learning offers a variety of instructions led by a lecturer which can either be synchronous (communication in which participants participate at the same time, such as video conferencing, Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams) or asynchronous (communication in which participants interact at different times with the use of tools such as e-mail, Google form, streaming video content, posting lecture notes and social media platforms). The descriptive research design was employed in this study. 182 students from Cagayan State University – Andrews Campus participated in the study. This paper has elicited numerous responses regarding the challenges encountered by students while studying online, including their perceived solutions to them. Utilizing statistical treatment, the findings of the study revealed that that the students most critical concerns are poor internet connectivity, little to no funds available to purchase load, scarcity of loading stations, unrealistic time given for the submission of requirements, online activities are boring, and difficulty assimilating the lessons. The students' perceived solutions, particularly on the last three challenges, include instructors being more considerate on the time given to complete their requirements, giving a schedule for consultation, giving challenging yet enjoyable online activities, posting lessons in advance, giving clear and precise instructions on the requirements and creating more downloadable contents that they can use even when they are offline. Institutions should take these findings into account when developing online course content, and faculty should consider ways to encourage student engagement across a variety of delivery modes.

Keywords: online learning, e-learning, distance learning, challenges, strategy

INTRODUCTION

On December 31, 2019, COVID-19 was detected in Wuhan City, China. It spread worldwide within a few months, and on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic. This compelled university worldwide to indefinitely close their campuses and relocate their educational activities to online platforms. Universities were unprepared for such a shift from traditional classroom instruction to entirely online instruction. The majority of universities lacked infrastructure and plans at the outset (Zhang, Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2020).

The term "online learning" refers to education that occurs over the internet. For some the term they use are distance learning, e-learning and even virtual learning environment. According to www.weforum.org, there is evidence that online learning can be more effective in a number of ways for those who have access to the right technology. Some studies show that in online learning, students receive an average of 25-60% more material, compared with 8-10% in classrooms. This is mainly because students are able to learn more quickly online. E-learning needs between 40% to 60% less time than in a normal classroom because students can learn at their own pace, go back and read, skipping or speeding up concepts.

In the Philippines, Cagayan State University introduced the use of the CSU Learning Environment Network System(LENS) using an open source learning management system (LMS). It is a platform that allows students to engage in independent, guided study of mostly text-based course packages, conduct asynchronous computer-mediated discussion and collaborative learning activities through a Moodle-based VLE, complete assignments and take quizzes and examinations. This study of the students' challenges and perceived solutions can provide insights that are useful to other universities in similar situations.
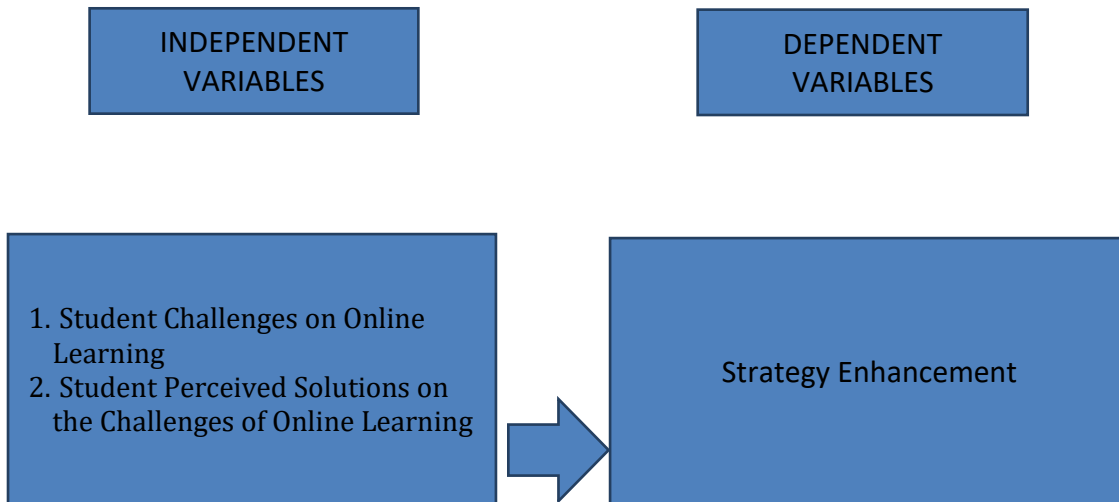
OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of the study:

A. To determine the students' online learning challenges

B. To determine the students' perceived solutions on the challenges they encountered online.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES		DEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. Student Challenges on Online Learning
2. Student Perceived Solutions on the Challenges of Online Learning

Strategy Enhancement

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since the study aims to identify the student's online learning challenges and perceived solutions, the results will be useful to the following:

CBEA Faculty Members - This will be useful information for teachers to have access to, as it will assist them in understanding how learners respond to online learning. As a result, they'll become more conscious of the challenges students face when going online and may adjust their teaching methods and strategies to help students better learn.

College and University Designated Officials – The findings of the study will be useful for developing course content for online courses.

Parents and Guardians - This study has the potential to radically alter parents' and guardians' perceptions of online learning.

CBEA Students - As direct recipients of the study, this will assist them in gaining a better understanding of the concerns and possible solutions that others have regarding online learning in the new normal.

Future Researchers - A study such as this would be a helpful reference for other studies to follow, as they could cover a larger scope of subjects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the descriptive research design. The participants were CSU students enrolled in the College of Business, Entrepreneurship, and Accountancy for the academic year 2020-2021. Because of intermittent to non-existent internet connectivity, only 182 students responded. Because of the large number of respondents who participated in the survey, the researcher was able to gather sufficient information for use in the study.The survey questionnaire was used as the primary source of data in this study. This first section described the difficulties that the students faced while utilizing online learning. The students' perceived solutions on the challenges they identified are presented in Part 2.The following steps were taken by the researcher to determine the students' online challenges and perceived solutions: To begin, the researcher created a questionnaire for the students to fill out in order to collect information about their online learning challenges and perceived solutions. After completing it, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents via Google Forms. As a result, their answers were automatically retrieved and tallied.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT AND ANALYSIS

The following statistical tools were used in analyzing and interpreting the data.

To interpret the online learning challenges and perceived solutions of the respondents, the frequency count and percentage was used.

Formula: $\% = (F/N) \times 100$

Where: F   =   frequency

N   =   total population

% =   percent

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

A. Challenges encountered by students while using online learning

It was found out that the challenges encountered by the students with online learning are the following:

- poor internet connectivity;
- little to no funds available to purchase load;
- scarcity of loading stations;
- unrealistic time is given for the submission of requirements;
- online activities are boring; and
- difficulty assimilating the lessons.

B. Perceived solutions of the students on the identified challenges

Because the students believe they are unable to control the first three challenges, the students did not provide their perceived solutions on them. However, their perceived solutions for the other challenges include:

- instructors being more considerate on the time given to complete their requirements;
- allotting time for consultation;
- giving challenging yet enjoyable online activities;
- posting lessons in advance;
- giving clear and precise instructions on the requirements; and
- creating more downloadable contents that they can use even when they are offline.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the findings of the study, the students identified poor internet connectivity as their primary concern on the use of online learning. While students think they don't have any control on some of the challenges, majority of the students find it very helpful to them if instructors will be more considerate on the time given to complete their requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- ➢ A seminar should be conducted for the faculty members on ways they may adjust their teaching methods and strategies to help students better learn.
- ➢ Consultation hours should be given by faculty members to address the concerns of their students.
- ➢ Parents should serve as a coach and support their child throughout their learning process, regardless of age.
- ➢ Future researches should consider having a wider scope in relation to students' online learning challenges and perceived solutions.
- ➢ Trainings on the use of other online platforms should be conducted so that the faculty members can be more equipped with tools they can use if another platform is unavailable.

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