

Challenges in Facilitating Modular Instruction in Sulu AMIDST Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstracts: The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unheard-of effect on the educational system. One of the projects used as a type of distant learning that makes use of self-learning modules is modular learning. This descriptive-correlational study compared the blended instructional strategy in Sulu to online and modular methods to determine the number of implementation issues. While the t-Test for Independent Samples determined the significant differences as to the Gender, One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined the significant differences when data were grouped according to age, civil status, length of service, and education. Frequency counts and percentages determined the respondent's profile; mean and standard deviation determined the extent of subsumed categories, such as technological, individual, domestic, institutional, and community barriers. A high positive correlation was found between the challenges affecting the delivery of the blended instructional approach and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r). As a result, difficulties with delivering the mixed educational approach in Sulu became apparent. The results of this study tend to support the Baticulon, Ronie E. et al. (2020) Model of Barriers (Technological, Individual, Domestic, Institutional, and Community barriers) to blended learning in the COVID-19 period, which was based on Howlett D. et al. (2009) Integration of a case-based online module.

Keywords: Modular Instruction, COVID-19 Pandemic, Sulu.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 epidemic has profoundly affected the educational system. To support students' learning in the face of this pandemic, governments and academic institutions worldwide have started several legislative measures. The World Health Organization has proclaimed the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) a global public health emergency. Millions of students around the Philippines have been impacted by this pandemic, making education one of the crucial industries caught in the crossfire. As a result, it is vital to protect the education industry by implementing policies that ensure the ongoing flow of knowledge by fusing online and offline methods (Lindog, 2021). The Department of Education (DepEd), which restarted classes in October 2020 despite the widespread coronavirus pandemic, determined that modular learning was a helpful teaching strategy in this context. Self-paced modules are used in modular learning, a type of distance education. These self-learning modules are based on the DepEd's MELCS (most essential learning competencies) (Estrada, 2021).

Mobile phones that can access FB Messenger, group chat, and Google Meet for online classrooms are the devices that will be utilized for modular distance learning. The learners understood the topics offered in the module as they became more responsible for their own learning and completing the activities assigned. With little help from the teacher, these learners advanced on their own. These SLMs for Modular Distance Learning were the most practical and appropriate to employ for our learners to continue learning during the COVID-19 epidemic today since the nation is in a state of emergency health crisis (Lindog, 2021). The modules should contain parts on assessment and incentive that act as a comprehensive roadmap for both the teacher's and the student's desired skills. Under the condition that they adhere to the same minimum health routine, use feedback mechanisms, and assist those students who require extra guidance, the teachers will monitor the learners' progress through home visits.

This is not a big deal in most middle-class houses where at least one person has access to data or an internet connection. In addition, middle-class families tend to have at least one college graduate. This indicates that they have access to resources and education. However, this might be different for lower-income households, particularly in the province of Sulu. Modular learning may only be effective in households when both parents are present, struggling to make ends meet, and neither has attended college due to poverty. Lessons are only as suitable as what is written down. The learner will undoubtedly have trouble understanding their teachings if no more knowledgeable person can clarify these challenging ideas.

Although these are the most common, modular learning has many more difficulties. Teachers and students are both in a disadvantageous position. Despite how difficult it may be to admit, education quality may have declined. However, it is not their fault because we are still in the thick of the pandemic's recovery. Learning on your own is challenging. Since the COVID-19 pandemic breakout, the Ministry of Basic, Higher, Technical and Education (MBHTE) - Sulu has adopted a blended learning approach that includes online and modular teaching-learning modes, particularly in the Pangutaran District. This study was conducted among elementary school teachers in the Pangutaran District to ascertain their perceptions of the barriers to implementing blended instruction. It was done to recognize the inevitable existence of barriers in implementing the blended method.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The study's primary goal is to identify any obstacles to using a blended instructional approach in Sulu, particularly in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu.

2. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design method was used in this study. In the Pangutaran District of the MBHTE-Sulu, 100 representative samples were randomly selected from at least ten (10) primary schools. This will guarantee that each respondent has an equal probability of being included. The Pangutaran District Supervisor, the Superintendent of the Office of the Schools Division, and the principals of the elementary schools were asked for permission to administer the questionnaire and conduct the retrieval. Frequency counts and percentages were employed; mean and standard deviation determined the extent of the categories encompassed within the context of technological, individual, domestic, institutional, and community barriers; t-test for independent samples determined the significant differences as to gender; one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) determined the significant differences; and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) determined high positive correlations.

The Howlett D. et al. (2009) Integration of a Case-based Online Module was used as the basis for Baticulon, Ronie, et al. (2020)'s research instrument on barriers to blended learning during COVID-19. There are two sections to the research tool. The first section of the questionnaire sought information on the gender, age, civil status, length of service, and educational background of the elementary school instructors. In Part II, information was gathered on the degree to which technological barriers (6 things), individual barriers (5 items), domestic barriers (9 items), institutional barriers (10 items), and community barriers were preventing the implementation of blended teaching in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu (5 items). The 4-point modified Likert scale, which has the values 4=Strongly Agree (SD), 3=Agree (A), 2=Disagree (D), and 1=Strongly Disagree was used to analyze the data received from this questionnaire (SD).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic profile of 100 teacher respondents shows that there are significantly more female teacher respondents than male teacher respondents. Nearly half of them fall into the 31–40 age range, considered the middle age group. Since the majority are married, it is a given that they juggle multiple responsibilities, including their teaching job, housework, family responsibilities, and other social commitments. Nearly three-fourths, or the majority, have teaching experience of 10 years or less or experience in the lowest range of years. Moreover, roughly half of them have a Bachelor's degree or a minimum educational qualification as their highest level of schooling.

3.1. Challenges affecting the delivery of blended instructional approach in Sulu

Technology Barriers

Respondents stated that problems prevent the application of the blended strategy, as evidenced by the total weighted mean score of 3.3917 with a standard deviation of .49201, which is rated as "agree." They understand that teachers may need more devices or only have restricted access because of device sharing and that their internet connections may need improvement, nonexistent, or unstable.

Individual Barriers

A total weighted mean score of 3.1240, with a standard deviation of .50274 and a rating of "agree," shows that respondents agreed that there are problems with teachers' inability to modify their teaching and learning styles as problems with their mental and physical health.

Domestic Barriers

A total weighted mean score of 3.0300 with a standard deviation of .53575 and a rating of "agree" shows that respondents thought there were problems with the lack of basic needs, conflicts in the family, financial hardship in the home, lack of space for module preparation and studying, and the need to fulfill domestic responsibilities.

Institutional Barriers

Respondents who received an overall weighted mean score of 2.8233 with a standard deviation of .42959 and were asked to rate their agreement with the statement "agree" felt that there were administrative problems, a lack of organizational support, poor communication between students and teachers, insufficient teacher skill, poor quality learning materials, gaps in student's knowledge and skills from current teaching methods, excessive cognitive load, and few opportunities for interaction with other students.

Community Barriers

There are problems associated with mobility constraints caused by community lockdowns, power outages, and socio-political concerns, as shown by a total weighted mean score of 3.0020 with a standard deviation of .58084 and a rating of "agree." The Significant difference in the challenges affecting the delivery of blended instructional approach along the context of Technological barriers, Individual barriers, Domestic barriers, Institutional barriers, and Community barriers when data are categorized:

According to gender

When statistics are broken down by gender, there is a variation in the severity of obstacles preventing the delivery of a blended instructional approach along the lines of technological, personal, domestic, institutional, and societal obstacles. None of the sub-categories included in the extent of problems impacting the delivery of the blended instructional approach are statistically significant at alpha .05. Thus, there is generally no difference between the perceptions of male and female teacher-respondents. It implies that being a male teacher-respondent does not necessarily make him more aware of the magnitude of difficulties in implementing a mixed educational method or the opposite.

Therefore, it is acceptable to claim that the teacher respondents' variable gender did not significantly impact the teacher respondents' perceptions. We, therefore, accept the hypothesis that "When data are categorized according to gender, there is no significant difference in the challenges affecting the delivery of blended instructional approach in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu along the context of Technological barriers, Individual barriers, Domestic barriers, Institutional barriers, and Community barriers."

According to age

Except for Individual Barriers, all other sub-categories included in the obstacles impacting the implementation of the blended instructional method are not significant at alpha.05. Although the teacher respondents' ages vary, their perceptions are essentially the same. This finding suggests that a teacher respondent who is 30 years of age or younger may not be better able to recognize the level of obstacles affecting the implementation of a blended instructional approach than those who are 31 to 40, 41 to 50, and 51 years of age, or vice versa. Because of this, it is accepted that "When data are categorized according to age, there is no significant difference in the challenges affecting the delivery of blended instructional approach in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu along the context of Technological barriers, Individual barriers, Domestic barriers, Institutional barriers, and Community barriers."

According to civil status

The breadth of the barriers affecting the delivery of the blended instructional approach is reflected in all sub-categories' F-values and probability values. However, they are not significant at alpha .05. Although teacher respondents' marital status varies, their perspectives are the same. This finding suggests that being single as a teacher respondent does not necessarily make one more perceptive of married, separated, widowed people, or vice versa. When data are categorized according to civil status, the hypothesis that there is no discernible difference in the difficulties affecting the delivery of blended instruction in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu, along the context of technological barriers, individual barriers, domestic barriers, institutional barriers, and community barriers is accepted.

According to the length of service

At alpha .05, the F-values and probability values of the sub-categories are insignificant. This indicates that, generally speaking, teacher-respondents with different lengths of service do not have different perceptions. This finding suggests that a teacher respondent with less than ten years of classroom experience may need to be better able to understand the scope of issues affecting the delivery of blended instruction in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu, or the opposite. When data are categorized according to the length of service, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the difficulties affecting the delivery of blended instruction in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu, along the context of technological barriers, individual barriers, domestic barriers, institutional barriers, and community barriers is accepted.

According to educational attainment

All of the sub-categories' F-values and probability values are not significant at alpha .05. This indicates that despite the teacher respondents' varied levels of education, their perspectives are not different. This finding suggests that a teacher who holds a bachelor's degree may be better perceived than those who hold a bachelor's degree plus units from a master's program, a master's degree, a master's degree plus units from a doctoral program, or vice versa. The claim that "there is no significant difference in the difficulties affecting the delivery of blended instructional approach in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu along the context of Technological barriers, Individual barriers, Domestic barriers, Institutional barriers, and Community barriers when data are categorized according to educational attainment" is therefore accepted. The significant correlation among the sub-categories subsumed under challenges affecting the delivery of blended instructional approach in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu. The relationship between the sub-categories is included under the heading "challenges" that affect the implementation of the blended learning approach in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu, in the context of technological barriers, individual barriers, domestic barriers, institutional barriers, and community barriers. The estimated Pearson Correlation Coefficients (Pearson r) between these variables are significant at alpha .05.

The degree of correlations specifically demonstrates:

- 1) a moderate positive link between technological barriers and those posed by individuals, domestics, institutions, and communities;
- 2) a high positive correlation exists between individual barriers and domestic, institutional, and community barriers;
- 3) a high positive correlation between domestic barriers and institutional and community barriers; and
- 4) a moderate positive correlation between institutional and community barriers.

These findings show that there is little likelihood that the same group of teachers who responded to the survey will perceive individual, domestic, institutional, and community barriers as "agree" and the extent of under challenges affecting the delivery of blended instruction in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu.

The claim that "there is no significant correlation among the sub-categories subsumed under challenges affecting the delivery of blended instructional approach in Pangutaran District, MBHTE-Sulu, along the context of technological, individual, domestic, institutional, and community barriers" is therefore disproved.

4. CONCLUSION

This descriptive-correlational study compared the blended instructional strategy in Sulu to online and modular methods to determine the number of implementation issues. In terms of gender, age, civil status, duration of employment, and educational achievement, teacher respondents are fairly represented. Generally, primary school teachers in the Pangutaran District of the MBHTE-Sulu firmly agreed that difficulties exist in implementing the blended learning strategy. Technological, individual, domestic, institutional, and community barriers are indicators of these obstacles. Gender, age, civil status, length of service, and educational achievement are not significant determinants of how people perceive the size of problems; those who agreed that challenges existed were likely the same people who concurred on the size of the identified barriers. This study seems to support the Howlett D. et al. (2009) Integration of a case-based online module-based Baticulon, Ronie et al. (2020) Model of Hurdles (Technological, Individual, Domestic, Institutional, and Community barriers) to blended learning at the period of COVID-19.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests that the elementary school principals of the Pangutaran District MBTHE-Sulu develop programs and policies that would expedite issues that impede the implementation of the blended approach by addressing teachers' lack of devices or limited access due to gadget sharing, unreliable, slow, or no internet access, and lack of technical skills, as well as their difficulty adapting to teaching/learning styles, mental health issues, physical health issues, and other factors. Furthermore, they advise future researchers to conduct studies akin to this but with the addition of other variables, including student academic progress in different contexts and instructor performance ratings.

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