



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: FACTOR THAT AFFECTS MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT:

The deadly Coronavirus pandemic has caused a significant impact not just on our health care system but on our educational setting as well. With schools closing their doors to students and adopting remote learning, it has presented a huge challenge to the new normal in education. This research was conducted in response to the current issues of our learners especially in Cabuan National High School in Cabuan, City of Naga, Cebu, Philippines for the School Year 2020-2021 during the COVID-19 Pandemic. These concerns related to the poor academic performance of learners in the new normal setup seemed that a number of students relatively have inconsistencies in responding towards their education. One factor that affects students' performance during modular distance learning is their socio-economic status. In order to gather the needed data, survey questionnaires were given to 20 student-participants of Cabuan National High School that were selected in a random manner. A mixed-method design which combines quantitative research and qualitative research was employed to collect and analyze all the findings. Based on the results, students perform poorly at school because they have to work to provide for their families; they have financial problems in accessing learning resources such as gadgets and internet connectivity; and that they are distracted with their learning environment. Hence, several recommendations are discussed by the researchers based on the findings of the study.

### KEYWORDS:

REMOTE LEARNING, MODULAR DISTANCE LEARNING, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

### INTRODUCTION

In response to the educational challenges created by school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 90 per cent of countries have implemented some form of remote learning policy (Fluellen & Paguia, 2021).

Robert Jenkins, UNICEF Global Chief of Education in an article by United Nations News stated that "Remote learning has been a lifeline for many children around the world during school closures". This method delivers lessons through various ways, including online, television, radio, and printed materials (Fluellen & Paguia, 2021). Among these modalities, the most popular type of Distance Learning implemented in the Philippines is Modular Learning. This learning modality is currently used by most public schools because according to a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents with children who are enrolled this academic year (Bernardo, 2020). This is also in consideration of the learners in rural areas where internet is not accessible for online learning (Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

Some students from low-income households or remote

areas do not have internet access and gadgets; and as per Albay Rep. Joey Salceda shared on Phil star Global article, only 17% of Filipino students have internet access at home and only 3.74% have mobile phones (Daguno-Bersamina & Relativo, 2020). This factor poses a great impact on students' performance during modular distance learning as they can't have enough resources to use to aid their learning.

As cited by Cuisia-Villanueva, MC. & Nuñez, J., (2020), a study conducted among three hundred and ninety-nine (399) students in California State University San Marcos concluded that those at an economic disadvantage are exposed to higher chances of experiencing difficulties accessing materials online. Another research conducted by Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and Institute of Education (IoE) from England reported that children from poorer families spend less time learning at home during the lockdown due to the lack of study spaces and online resources (Andrew, Cattan, et al., 2020). Both studies show that there is a relationship between socio-economic status and accessibility; the lower a household's social status is, the higher the possibility their accessibility to education will be affected negatively (Cuisia-Villanueva, MC. & Nuñez, J., 2020).

It is important and imperative for the researchers to initiate this study in the hope of finding the nature of the problem and formulate solutions and countermeasures to mitigate this eventuality. The predicaments in this research cannot yet be foreseen in absolute and certainties, but however, manifests that actions had been made with optimism that somehow this research will arrive in finding the answer.

In the latter, surveys and reviews are administered to gather concrete data that can provide actual details of the real situations in the field and the result should be the basis towards the final resolutions and conclusions.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study was to identify the common reasons why students attending modular distance learning have poor academic performance. Specifically, it determined the struggles of students in answering their modules in relation to their socio-economic status.

### METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methods used in this study. It includes the research design, respondents of the study, data gathering methods, ethical considerations and data analysis. They are discussed as follows.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This research employs the mixed method design which combines quantitative research and qualitative research to collect and analyze all the findings. The quantitative data will be gathered through the survey results of the participants and will be analyzed through statistical techniques. Meanwhile, the qualitative data will be gathered through indirect interviews by using a survey questionnaire and the qualitative data will be analyzed through interpretive phenomenological analysis.

### RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents of the study comprised 20 junior high school students who are enrolled at Cabuan National High School in Cabuan, City of Naga, Cebu, Philippines for the School Year 2020-2021. They are selected through random sampling to achieve an unbiased representation of the total population of the school.

### DATA GATHERING METHODS

The data was gathered using an interview questionnaire given to the student-participants who answered open-ended questions and a focus group discussion (FGD)

was conducted in support of the data gathering. The results of the survey were tallied and tabulated. It employed statistical analysis; the mean was determined and its interpretation was based on the Likert's Scale. Furthermore, the other sources of data were taken from online journals, books, magazines, news articles, and the like.

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study adheres to the ethical considerations to assure the privacy and safety of the respondents/participants and the data they have provided in this action research.

It is made clear to the respondents/participants that their participation in this study is voluntary and that they are not compelled to participate should they believe detrimental to their interest. Furthermore, the respondents/participants will be informed that the research is conducted solely for academic purposes and the data gathered from them shall be exclusively used for such purpose.

The researcher also ensures the confidentiality of the gathered data relative to the personal information of the respondents/participants of this study and shall not be disclosed to the public at any cause. This can be guaranteed by the following activities:

- The names of the respondents will be replaced by codes.
- The sheet containing the name of the respondents shall be removed and be kept or destroyed when no longer needed for the research.
- The researcher shall have the sole access to the code's master list.
- Files containing research data shall be password protected and encrypted to keep the data safe.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the questions in our study. In our quantitative data, we use the Likert scale that was computed through excel. We computed the mean score to test whether the factors are influential and affect the performance of the students.

For our qualitative data, students were asked about their family background, socio-economic status, and gender, everyday challenges in answering the module, what are their mood and behavior with the situation, and how these students respond to their daily challenges.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

	Descriptor	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	MEAN $\bar{x}$
1	I often delay in submitting my modules because of my work (construction worker, vendor, others)	13	7	0	0	0	4.65

2	I have a difficulty in managing my time because of overlapping work	5	9	2	2	2	3.65
3	I have a limited time in answering my module because of household chores	11	6	1	1	1	4.25
4	It's my willingness to work to sustain family needs	12	3	2	2	1	4.15
5	During pandemic, I find it difficult in learning without gadgets	5	5	5	5	0	3.5
6	During pandemic, I find it difficult in learning without data or internet connection	7	8	9	1	1	3.95
7	I have a financial problem in accessing learning resources such as gadgets	12	5	1	1	1	4.3
8	I have insufficient amount of data connection	4	8	2	3	3	3.35
9	I have a difficulty in selecting best time in working with my modules	8	5	2	2	3	3.65
10	I am distracted with my environment in answering the module	12	8	0	0	0	4.6
	General Weighted mean						4.005

According to our table, the students responded to descriptor number 9 (mean = 4.6) that their learning is affected by their environment so as their learning is affected by the different household chores (mean = 4.25) and different work (mean = 4.65). Learners also have difficulty in accessing gadgets that are to be used for answering their modules and for learning (mean = 4) for this reason, students have the willingness to work to support their needs in learning and to support their family needs (mean = 4.15).

## CONCLUSIONS

The importance of surveys cannot be underestimated especially in this time of crisis. The academe believed that this type of approach is very much effective mainly in identifying the source of the problem and to struggling learners. Its affectivity during the old-normal setup is now presumed to be this seemingly challenging new normal setup.

There is a lot of research that explains the different factors that affect students' performance especially during this time of pandemic. In our study, there are specific factors that affect the performance of students attending modular distance learning and we found out that it is the learning environment and the socio-economic status that affects their performance the most. The results from the statistics proved that the socioeconomic status of the learners such as difficulty in accessing learning resources, lack of financial assistance from parents, and the learning environment affects students such that attention is divided with works (construction worker, vendor, household chores, and others). For this reason, there is a delay in the submission of modules and students perform poorly in school. Given the amount of time to conduct the research, there are still underlying issues needed for future research since the respondents of this study were limited only to

the students of Cabuan National High School. We would highly suggest doing another quantitative study with a larger amount of respondents from other schools to test different hypotheses (especially when the Philippines starts the educational shift this academic year 2020-2021 via blended or modular printed learning due to the pandemic) and do a qualitative approach in order to view different perspective of the study.

This endeavor may also aid teachers in making sound judgments to every child involved based on concrete data. In conclusion, the said activity must be fully supported by the Department of Education and different concerning government and non-government agencies, in order to address the current needs and sustainability of each learner.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Regular home visitations must be encouraged, thus local schools should arrange schedules for teachers in conducting visitations especially for those who are identified as struggling learners to assist them with their studies. Furthermore, regular parent conferences must be administered purposely to constantly monitor the learner's performances, and regularly update parents in regards to the movements of lessons. Lastly, financial assistance from the local government should be provided to the identified struggling learner, especially those who are living in remote regions and barangays in the City of Naga, Cebu, Philippines have difficulties in accessing educational materials and activities.

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