

Digital Assessment Experiences in Mathematics under Modular Distance Learning

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ABSTRACT

Modular distance learning is indispensable and using digital assessment as a method to measure students' progress is essential as the Philippines education system shifted from face to face classes to distance learning this time of pandemic.

The main purpose of this study was to describe the lived experiences of the students about digital assessment in mathematics under modular distance learning.

This study utilized Qualitative Research Design, Hermeneutic Phenomenological method which involved 15 students.

There were four emerging categories and eventually formed nine major themes: (1) Educational Involvement (2) Learners Engagement (3) Support (4) Educational Tool Refinement. While the emerging major themes were 1) students experience digital assessment tool predicament in mathematics (2) difficulty grasping the topic through teachers' instructional method (3) students have a proclivity to engage in academic dishonesty (4) procrastination and cramming are common among students during exams (5) learners have become passive to their own learning development (6) students' internet connections at home are inadequate (7) students are unable to focus during the exam as a result of the destructive environment (8) Digital Assessment tool commendation and new preference is evident among the students (9) Students have learned to appreciate the worth of their time and work.

Key words: Modular Distance Learning, Digital Assessment

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Assessment has been described as the heart of the learning process and is considered as one of the most vital, and powerful elements of education. Through assessment, it helps education sector to craft a new curriculum that would fit on the inevitable demand of the changes of education. Meanwhile, assessment has also been considered as one of the most important part of an educational experience. This also perceived as one of the difficult to reform as there was an increase reform towards better assessment as this positively affects the teaching and learning process (Alison Oldfield, Rosamund, Sutherland, & Sutherland, 2012).

The concept of digital assessment is not new to education, it has been used as a tool to transform education and is use to open for new possibilities of advantageous offer for students' learning. Additional to this, the used of this tool offers self-assessment learning for all learners and its engaging activity demonstrates benefits among learners (Alison Oldfield,, Rosamund, Sutherland, & Sutherland, 2012). Moreover, the digital assessment would help improved the 'self-regulated learning' which is considered as one of the important roles for students' self-assessment (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, D., 2006). Through digital assessment help learners reduce their text anxiety and thus minimize the disruptive flow of the learning (Shute et al, 2010).

There were several researches claimed the importance and benefits of the digital assessments which mostly centers on the technological advancement of the assessment. However, not enough research has been done to the lived experiences of the students on a specific discipline. Thus, this study does not only benefit the school of whatever be the result would come up but also the Division of Biliran as a whole. As the findings of this study would provide rich insights and context for mathematics teacher, curriculum developer, and institution about digital assessment in mathematics

The general purpose of this study explored the main research question: How do students describe their lived experiences about digital assessment in mathematics under modular distance learning?

Framework of the study

Self-efficacy theory has been the cornerstone of this study as this theory

contributes a lot from how students experience digital use in assessing one's learning. Furthermore, the said theory's use contributes to the researcher in determining the belief of one's ability to accomplish certain things, especially that the respondents had their first time in modular distance learning due to pandemic. Therefore, students' efficacy must be considered beforehand to honestly evaluate the students' productiveness of their self-amidst health crisis.

Hence, in general, it tells us the idea of attempting to do things in which we believe we can do and the idea of not trying to attempt a specific stimulus in which we believe we will fail. With the strong notion of this theory, the researcher decided to adopt Albert Bandura's concept as it is compatible with the said study.

The model below is of Albert Bandura's Self-efficacy theory:

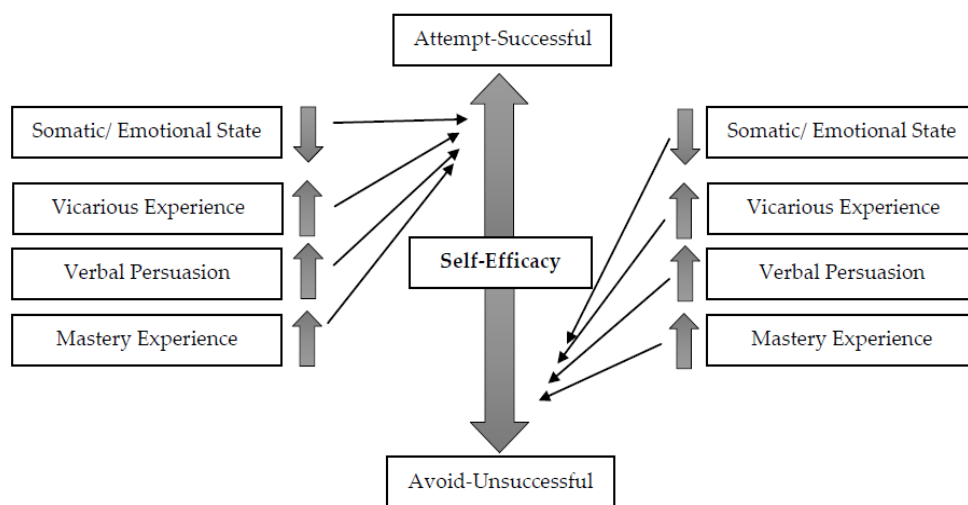


Figure 1: Self-efficacy theory

The theory's perception is highly influenced by four factors: Mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and somatic and emotional state.

Mastery Experience

These happened when we try to do something successful because such an activity has been mastered long before. This experience helps boost the students' self-efficacy as they are confident to attempt

such activity because they have already mastered the skills necessary to accomplish a current activity.

Vicarious Experience

This factor highlights the experiences of others. This is the direct observation of success and the failure of their peers, family, or other people that serve as their model in attempting to do such activity. Conversely, observing other people with the

same experiences as yours would tend to threaten an individual's self-efficacy if such a model has failed to do so. Nonetheless, it would also serve as an advantage to a person if the model has accomplished activity; thus, it would boost an individual's psyche in the same case.

Verbal or Social Persuasion

This is the third factor that affects an individual's self-efficacy. People are encouraged and persuaded through a verbal act and would tend to accomplish the task being given. Hence, this only verifies that a person who verbally supported would tend to uplift its spirit and positively perform the task. That is why coaches and teachers should uplift the students' eagerness and enthusiasm, especially those who see the subject as complex. It is by verbal persuasion that they will continue to work despite the challenges confronted.

Somatic and Emotional States

This factor shows the importance of emotional stability of an individual as this would yield to severe stress and depression. This occurs when one contemplates something as to the likelihood of success or failure. According to (Pajares, 2002) anxiety, fear, stress, and worry could result in the depreciation of self-efficacy. Therefore, the emotional state of human beings should be improved to reduce or at least eradicate emotional stress and other emotional crises.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Internet advancement through improvement of schooling

Changes happening in data innovation have caused people to pay little mind to their geological area and learn past usual existence limitations through offices determined without help from anyone else. The headway of innovation has prompted the rise of utilizing fresher apparatuses for moving information at the local area level.

Accordingly, the rise of the Internet and its advancement prompted the

improvement of schooling, which prompted virtual picking up being considered after distance learning. Virtual schooling for the last couple of years has gained colossal ground everywhere in the world. Our nation is not a particular case, and specific themes have been raised, for example, setting up virtual learning courses and electronic substance creation. The presentation of these recent advances into training has changed the educating and learning measure (Jahini, 2012). Because of these progressions, which are quickly pushing ahead in learning and showing conditions, the execution of virtual instruction has been proposed as a significant need to offer new types of assistance and advances in educating and learning (Parker, 2004). Along these lines, this innovation in instructing and learning has been recommended as another option or corresponding to conventional learning. Likewise, the progression of advanced education with the assistance of these innovations has gotten perhaps the leading viewpoints in virtual colleges' administration (Sejzi et al, 2012).

Knowledge and communication technology in an increasingly digital environment as growth enablers promote ICTs that play a crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Appended to the global health crisis of COVID-19, which occurred suddenly in early 2020, underlined the critical significance of, as may be nothing else might have, important connectivity to the livelihoods, jobs, health and welfare, education, and social participation of people. Nonetheless, according to ITU estimates, nearly the Internet is still not used by half of the world's population.

Assessment as the heart of the learning process

Assessment lies at the core of the learning experience: how students have evaluated shapes their comprehension of the educational plan and decide their capacity to advance. Simultaneously, evaluation and

criticism structure a vast piece of specialists' remaining burdens and, with expanded numbers, decreased spending plans and higher student assumptions, keep on involving worry for some institutions. Several impacts have carried appraisal and input to the cutting edge of institutional and instructive plans, bringing about an expanding basic to upgrade appraisal and criticism rehearses through innovation. Since the 1990s, instructive analysts have progressively contended that evaluation should help adapt instead of test and confirm accomplishment.

Subsequently, terms, for example, 'developmental evaluation' and 'appraisal for learning' have gotten broadly utilized and regularly stood out from 'summative appraisal' and 'evaluation of learning.' Developmental evaluation alludes to exercises that empower students and specialists to screen learning and utilize the data produced to adjust the ensuing learning and instructing exercises.

In 2006, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick re-deciphered the exploration on developmental evaluation and input inside a model of 'self-managed learning.' Their work distinguished seven rules that, whenever actualized, would urge students to control their learning – for instance, by observing, assessing, creating input on, and making decisions about their work.

From another point of view, Gibbs and Simpson (2004) recommended that learning would be more successful if appraisal configuration 'drew in' students by urging them to spend 'time on an errand' all through class and appropriate their work equitably across their program of study.

Virtual education gives the chance to figure out how to every person whenever and make another worldview (Khan, 2004). Because of its boundless application at advanced education levels, e-learning has given admittance to assets whenever and place for most individuals locally. Khan considers three attributes of the e-learning framework: adaptability, dispersion in every area, and transparency (Tang et al., 2019).

The research has zeroed in on students with considers including understudies (Astin, 1984; Gellin, 2003), understudy patterns (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lamp, 2007; Ellison, Steinfield, and Lamp, 2011; Kenny, 1990), understudy assumptions (Kuh, Gonyea, and Williams, 2005; Rothgeb and Burger, 2009), and understudy improvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Kohlberg, 1976; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Perry, 1970; Piaget, 1965). Understudies are the immediate purchasers of this instructive exertion, and college presidents are accused of driving the achievement. The way wherein understudies insight and comprehend the administration is yet to be explored and longs for disclosure.

Despite the multitude of advantages of utilizing e-learning, its usage will bring about a progression of issues in the instructive framework. This way, the consistent division of e-gaining from the genuine climate will, without doubt, mess up the character and character of the students. The absence of cooperation in this sort of room is one of the primary limitations. Without a doubt, far-reaching and comprehensive help is lost in this sort of training, and here and there, the standard of autonomy is addressed (Islam et al., 2015). Then again, Talebian et al., (2014) accept that e-learning will not be reasonable for instruction.

Assessment designers have a critical part to play in trying these standards. To get compelling in directing their learning, students should be occupied with and roused by assignments. It is also significant that the plan of undertakings empowers students to take responsibility for learning. While commitment necessitates that students comprehend the objectives and standards for the appraisal, invest energy on assignment, and get criticism from academic staff, strengthening necessitates that they have openings for self-evaluation, peer discourse, and companion input they use criticism to improve resulting errands. Adjusting commitment and strengthening is a crucial

plan challenge. From an understudy's perspective, the chance to evaluate others can advance the general insight of learning.

In a circumstance where our instructive framework cannot give ground to all understudies with low and high inspiration, the execution of e-learning as another strategy may cause a progression of issues that have been proposed as the principal difficulties of e-learning. It is, hence, a goal and unavoidable to distinguish and examine these issues. Numerous investigations have zeroed in on these issues and different difficulties looked at by e-learning in various nations, including Iran. The consequences of these examinations have sorted these difficulties into various gatherings. Among these investigations are (Schroeder et al., 2010) and (Afzalkhani & Ghods, 2003) showing that regardless of the benefits of virtual instruction in advancing the instructive framework, the execution of this task at colleges has consistently been joined by hindrances and issues. The deficiency of talented and prepared staff and the absence of monetary and actual assets to furnish brilliant colleges with PC frameworks and the necessary gear are the primary issues in advancing such colleges. Additionally, aftereffects of studies led by Beckwith and Sailor demonstrated that the main issues and impediments are the hierarchical constructions inside the instructive framework, the way of life, the capacity to utilize the devices and offices, natural conditions, and all the more significantly, the public insight about this marvel.

Until this point, numerous examinations have been led on e-learning. Notwithstanding, there is no examination researching the difficulties from the understudies' perspective at the Virtual School of SUMS. By and by, there are a couple of studies directed on e-learning and its connected difficulties in specific colleges and advanced education organizations. Given the abovementioned, this examination intends to explore the difficulties of e-gaining from the

understudies' perspective at the Virtual School of SUMS. This is because accomplishing virtual instruction depends on acknowledging these difficulties since these difficulties are firmly related and disregarding one of them would influence the overall way of e-learning measure.

According to the study of Sarvestani et al., (2019), the principal challenge was the instructive challenge. This exploration's discoveries are affirmed by contemplates directed by Forsyth et al., (2010), IHEP (2000), Bastani et al., (2013), Gregory (2011). Appropriately, it very well may be said that SUMS faces instructive issues concerning e-learning that ought to be tended to or improved. Instructive issues may make it difficult for understudies to examine the substance, reason, media, putting together learning materials and other instructive materials and decrease their learning quality (Bastani et al., 2013). This reality returns to similar preparing difficulties referenced above, remembering the absence of specialization for exercises and the absence of consideration regarding instructive requirements for understudies in this field.

The subsequent test looked at by understudies at the Virtual School of SUMS was hierarchical difficulties. Discoveries of considers led by Darab & Montazer (2010), Forsyth et al., (2010), Bastani et al., (2013), Long (2017) affirm this finding. These issues propose an absence of consideration regarding authoritative issues as one of the significant components while focusing on the factors influencing e-learning (Bastani et al., 2013). This requires consideration in the college plan since disappointment in disposing of them may hold these projects' nature beneath the ideal level. Another part is the impedance between the class and working hours, which may sabotage the idea of virtual schooling and passage conditions. Since one of the conditions for understudies admitted to these projects is having work. This impedance in hours will forestall their powerful support in online classes and considerably more in disconnected ones. It

makes it difficult to contemplate and work at the same time. Long (2017) likewise contended that this sort of challenge could overpower the acknowledgment of innovation and make e-learning programs issues.

The third test included moral issues. The connected discoveries of our examination were predictable with those of Arkami (2003), Thames (2017), Long (2017). Given the outcomes, it ought to be expressed that the Virtual School of SUMS has bombed in fulfilling a portion of the e-adapting necessities of understudies in this field. These may incorporate non-acknowledgment of the Virtual Faculty's authentications by the enlistment tests that Entireties may confront. This issue influences understudies who are worried about what is to come of this sort of advanced education. Likewise, the need for consideration of the framework and teachers to the social variety demonstrated that SUMS has not been utterly fruitful intending to the social and confinement factors, which are the idea of e-learning (Darab & Montazer, 2010). Virtual schooling's nature necessitates that people can partake in the projects in a more adaptable route as far as time, culture, geology, and advanced apparatuses contrasted with in-person training. The fourth test looked at by understudies at the virtual staff of Aggregates was mechanical (framework). The unsettling discoveries were reliable with those of Forsyth et al., (2010), Assareh & Bidokht (2010). Low transfer speed was one of the principal infrastructural challenges at SUMS during the semester. This will lead to preliminary meetings and classes. The absence of cutting-edge gear communicated by understudies alludes to programming and equipment issues, not appropriate for virtual clinical schooling. It likewise alludes to library assets just as the entrance to information bases that show the requirement for more thoughtfulness regarding the substance of the executive's framework (Forsyth et al., 2010). Notwithstanding, as

indicated by Creswell & Clark (2017), not all the foundation and innovation issues are identified with hardware. Like this, nonattendance of trained professionals and specialists gives route to these issues. Subsequently, it very well may be said that innovative and infrastructural challenges mirror the requirement for a genuine thought of e-learning in the Virtual School of SUMS. Moreover, discoveries about the help difficulties affirmed these outcomes in the exploration led by Khan (2001), Darab & Montazer (2010), Assareh & Bidokht (2010). These discoveries demonstrate the unseemly conveyance of help administrations to members. This, as indicated by Assareh & Bidokht (2010), may cause genuine issues in setting up e-learning in Medical Sciences and change its distance-learning nature. Khan (2001) has likewise underscored on them. This issue shows that making a suitable what more beneficial climate for e-learning is includes a few components, including support, which in the Virtual School of SUMS requires unique consideration as an essential for effective fulfillment of the program.

The 6th challenge, likewise called the assessment challenges, was predictable with the discoveries of Asghari et al. This illustrates the absence of proportionality from the perspective of understudies at the Virtual School of SUMS. Furthermore, it recommends that the association and educators have not had the option to apply the assessment abilities in the light of electronic assessment culture. Essentially, Rice & Carter (2016) underscore the significance of this point. The seventh challenge experienced by the Virtual School of SUMS's understudies was the administration challenges, which were predictable with considers done by Khan (2017), Forsyth et al., (2010), Mirzakhani et al., (2010), Gregory (2011), Creswell & Clark (2017). The presence of such difficulties in the virtual schooling of the Virtual School of SUMS, given the understudies' perspectives, may also cause issues for different virtual framework

pieces. This shows the absence of experienced chefs to deal with the e-learning framework and distribute reserves, which will like this led to feeble help (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the students' digital assessment experiences in mathematics under modular distance learning, utilizing a Qualitative research design with a Hermeneutic or Interpretive

phenomenological method. Fifteen students were theoretically chosen to be part of this study.

Semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews were employed to explore the participants' lived experiences, they were interviewed face to face with their consent and their parents' consent as well.

This study adopted and employed the seven-step (Moustakas, 1994) modified by Van Kaam method:

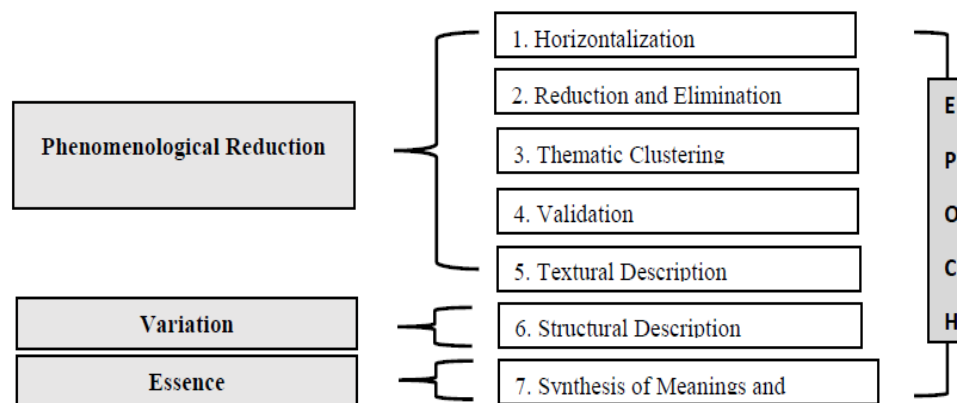


Figure 3: Data Analysis Steps

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were four categories emerged and nine major themes. The four categories were as follows: (1) Educational Involvement (2) Learners Engagement (3) Support (4) Educational Tool Refinement. These four categories and connections have resulted to nine major themes and thus determined to be the result of this study: (a) students experience digital assessment tool predicament in mathematics (b) difficulty grasping the topic through teachers' instructional method (c) students have a proclivity to engage in academic dishonesty (4) procrastination and cramming are common among students during exams (e) learners have become passive to their own learning development (f) students' internet connections at home are inadequate (g) students are unable to focus during the exam as a result of the destructive environment (h) Digital Assessment tool commendation and new preference is evident among the

students (i) students have learned to appreciate the worth of their time and work.

Theme 1: Students experience digital assessment tool predicament in mathematics

The digital evaluation instrument was challenging to use for the vast majority of the participants, according to the results. The majority of the reasons were that options could not be clicked due of a bad internet connection, which might be linked to theme 6, resulting in the need to retake the exam and some students passing the test late. This theme relates to the research sub-questions 1 and 2. The results speak of how students differentiate digital assessment from traditional assessment, as well as how students perceive digital assessment under modular distance education.

When the students were asked about their digital assessment experiences in mathematics, unexpectedly one of the students answered; *“To be honest, before*

this digital assessment, I already find it difficult to answer the test in a hardcopy how much more it was being situated in an online mode... I really find myself dumb." It is undoubtedly a significant change for a student practicing in a health crisis to transition from traditional evaluation to digital assessment. It is common for students to complain about not having enough time to complete a test because they must spend that time reading the mathematics problem, solving the problem to obtain an answer from the choices, transferring the answer to a clean sheet of paper, scanning the paper, and sending it back to the teacher to demonstrate that they have truly completed each item.

The following are the assertions that provide support for the information presented above. Originally, all of the students' responses were in vernacular, which allowed them to express themselves more freely. Following that, the researcher translated their responses into the English language, which was then evaluated and approved by an English language teacher.

"Since solving math problems takes a long time and I have to transfer it to a clean sheet of paper to show our teacher that I have a solution for every item, it is extremely difficult on our part, and sometimes internet connection is poor and I am unable to load the images from my phone or laptop, resulting in delayed submission."(Respondent 4, Line Numbers 72-74)

Another student expressed his digital assessment experiences;

"I found it difficult to see mathematics symbols when taking the exam on our online platform, and there were instances when I simply selected the answer that was the closest to what I was looking for."(R5, LN 92-93)

Nonetheless, issues such as these will help to create a more favorable environment for e-learning, which consists of a few components, including assistance, and necessitates special care as a

requirement for successful completion of the program (Khan, 2001).

Theme 2: Difficulty grasping the topic through teachers' instructional method

Teaching is a complex process that involves not just delivering knowledge to students, but also determining whether or not those students comprehend what is being taught and whether or not they can put it into practice in their everyday lives (Act. No 20 of 2003). As a result, if the instructor fails to successfully provide the instruction to the students, expect a poor outcome from the evaluation, because teaching and learning are intertwined concepts that influence one another. The second theme explains why students are having issues with their teacher's teaching style in a modular remote learning environment. Due to the modular nature of remote learning, fifteen students experienced difficulties in grasping the subject matter. It was necessary to provide them with modules that were connected with video talks by the teacher and with uniformed books recommended by the school. Moreover, this theme relates to sub-questions 1, 2 and 4.

One of the students expressed her experiences where she finds the digital assessment difficult, because of the teacher's instructional method. She even compares the face to face classes to the current mode of learning. *"Despite the fact that my teacher provided us his video discussions, yet I find it difficult to understand the topic, because I don't have the opportunity to asked queries if I have found it vague to understand at some point."* (R2, LN 44-46)

As a result of the teacher's instructional method, one of the students' shared her own experiences in which she found the digital assessment challenging. The face-to-face sessions are even being compared to the present style of learning. *"Even though my teacher made his video talks available to us, I still find it difficult to comprehend the subject matter since I do not have the option to ask questions if I am*

unsure about something at any time." (R2, LN 49-51)

One student also shares her experience about video discussion by the teacher which is in connection and support to the statement of (R2, LN 49-51). *"When it comes to this learning environment, the modular distance learning is insufficient for learning examples that are relevant to our topic, and not all topics will be discussed by the teacher. Furthermore, if I have any questions about the topic, I will not receive direct answers from the teacher."*(R4, LN 82-86)

Nevertheless, one student shares his experience when he failed to ask for learning videos from his teacher he said; *"It is really challenging, because I don't have access to any learning videos provided by my teacher, and instead I have to seek assistance from YouTube or from my classmates nearby."* (R14, LN 187-190) Naturally, teaching methods differ from group to group, but that does not mean that we should stick to what we have done in the past; rather, the responses of the participants may guide us to intensify teaching planning and take into account students' opinions, because, after all, teaching and learning are a two-way street.

Theme 3: Students have a proclivity to engage in academic dishonest

Thirteen out of fifteen students said that they engage in academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty refers to people involved in teaching, learning, research, and other associated academic activities conduct or assist in the commission of dishonest actions. This includes not just students, but also all other members of the academic community who work in the academic environment (Cizek, 2003; Whitley, Jr. & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). This theme is linked to research sub-questions 1 and 2, furthermore, this theme as well is related to themes 4 and 5, which were procrastination and cramming are common among students during exams and learners have become passive to their own learning development

respectively. It is said to be connected to the identified themes as a consequence of the replies of the students, which would result in academic dishonesty being perpetrated.

Respondent 1 shared his experience whenever he finds the item hard to answer:

"There were instances when I didn't know the answers during tests and I would seek for help from my classmates by taking photographs of their answers and sending them to me, but I still had to review and try to understand their work, particularly their solutions." (R1, LN 18-20)

When one of the students was involved in academic dishonesty, he communicated his honesty to the researcher, even going so far as to call it cheating. *"Because we were only given a limited amount of time to answer the test, cheating is very simple in an online setting. I simply ask for help from my classmates who have already answered the specific problem, and I don't have to copy their answers immediately because one of us has a unique sequence of the test but the same problem."* (R1, LN 18-20)

These participants' shared experiences merely demonstrate that they are only up to grade, and that imposing a time restriction during tests would just result in their being passive to learning, which is connected to theme 4 as previously indicated. Another student mentioned during the interview, *"I've even tried to open the teacher's learning videos or even my own book in order to get the solution if I don't know what the question is. Unfortunately, if I genuinely don't know the answer, I'll just make educated guesses instead."* (R14, LN 192-195).

Another student explained her part which is in contrary with R14 experience, *"Since some of the questions were closely related to the examples given by our teacher, I simply took a picture of them and save it to my phone in case the question would look similar to the item appeared in the test."* (R1, LN 10-12).

The actions performed by the pupils have something to do with the factors that

drive them to take such actions. Hearing all of the students' experiences, however, may serve as another guide for them in terms of how to properly disclose information in order to reduce academic dishonesty.

Theme 4: Procrastination and cramming are common among students during exams

Procrastination is defined as "a lack of intention or readiness to take action" in a situation (Ryan & Deci, 2000 as cited in Rakes & Dunn, 2010). Procrastination has been rampant among students, as a matter of fact based from the revealed study of Steel (2007), It has been estimated that more than 80% of undergraduate students engage in procrastination, with up to 50% of them being regular procrastinators. This theme is connected to theme 4 as it was mentioned earlier and thus, related to research sub-questions 1 and 2.

In relation to procrastination, one of the students revealed his personal experience. He stated, *"If our test is approaching, I don't need to study or check my notes because we don't have our proctors to check upon us."* (R4, LN 85-86). Another student expressed also his experience about his study habit in modular set up; *"There is no need for me to study my lesson because, we're at home and there is no pressure at all."* (R11, LN 135-136) To respondent 5, *"Before, during face to face classes I ought to study everyday, because our teacher might know if my teacher will give surprise quizzes, unlike today, I don't need to study my notes."* (R4, LN 37-40).

By understanding the responses and the personal experiences of the participants, the suggestions of Rakes & Dunn (2010) to the teachers must be equally considered. According to them, self-regulated learning techniques should be given greater importance in consideration of the growing number of students who are participating in distant learning contexts where instructors do not physically present themselves to them. Nevertheless, there were some students who still practice the habit of

studying despite, modular distance learning. *"In this new learning modality, I still review and study during exams I simply lists down all the formulas needed."* (R12, LN 145-146). However, based from all the responses of the participants most of them procrastinate in studying.

Cramming on the other hand, is defined as intense working, the technique of working hard in order to acquire huge quantities of knowledge in a short period of time in preparation for impending examinations, especially soon before they are scheduled to take place, students frequently engage in this practice (Wikipedia, 2015). When student procrastinate in studying, as a result they would tend to cram during the examination. One student described his personal experience related to cramming in taking the test, *"When it comes to our digital evaluation, I generally answer the questions without fully comprehending the situation and simply making educated guesses about the options."* (R14, LN 200-201). According to respondent 1 in line numbers 13-14, he crams throughout the test, especially if he is not aware of the time allotted by his subject teacher subject teacher. While to some student, they tend to cram because of the poor internet connection which is related to theme 6 which will be mentioned as we go through. To substantiate the preceding claims, consider the following remark from a student: *"I cram throughout the test due of the bad internet connection and the fact that we have a time restriction."* (R11, LN 80-82).

Theme 5: Learners have become passive to their own learning development

Learners become passive to learning in many different ways. It is said to be possible for passive learners to passively take in information and knowledge while not generally participating with either the material received or the educational process itself. This theme is the result when there is a poor instruction from the teachers and

most especially when students procrastinate in their studies which could be linked to themes 2 and 4.

Understanding from topic 2, this subject discusses teacher's responsibilities, whereas theme 4 discusses the responsibility of students to manage their time and devote it to study. Connecting these themes, truly teaching and learning is a deal, and as a result, both parties must work together to achieve their own objectives. However, themes 2 and 4 were not the overriding reasons for why learners have become passive in their own learning growth; the experiences of the participants will show the fundamental explanation for this phenomenon.

Respondent 7, line numbers 49-53:

"I just copy answers from my classmates throughout exams because they are merely a conversation away. It is a waste of time for me to try to solve it on my own, so I'll simply copy it to Lara (her best friend and classmate), and because I have to pass the solution along, I'll just copy it to her instead."

In addition to her experience, she still expressed her habit of studying yet she still doesn't get the correct answer every time she answers the exam. She even tells the researcher how she copied the answer through screenshots. *"But before I'm going to copy from my classmates answers and solutions still I tried to review and check how did they solve it,"* as she explained.

Based on the learner's own experience, it merely highlights the fact that something is missing in their passion for learning, or even their motivational element, which has resulted in their becoming passive in their own learning progress and development. Her admission, which may be connected to academic dishonesty from topic 3, is noteworthy.

Theme 6: Students' internet connections at home are inadequate

A conducted study by Sarvestani, Mohammadi, Afshin, and Raeisy (2019) about "Students' Experiences of E-Learning

Challenges; a Phenomenological Study" one of the challenges experienced by the participants was low-speed of internet connection. According to the Cavalier Daily written by Kim (2020), for students, varying levels of access to high-speed internet have lowered the overall quality of their education and it is estimated that roughly 10% of college students in Virginia do not have access to internet services. The statistical data indicating that other countries have a poor internet connection may provide a challenge to them in providing excellent education to their learners, and this is especially true in the Philippines. According to reports, the Philippines is now ranked 75th in the world in terms of internet speed as of June 2021, demonstrating how bad the internet connection is, yet exert efforts to improve it for Filipino users. Furthermore, the study mentioned above merely demonstrates how internet connections may have an influence on students' learning and even their appraisal of their work.

As noted on the other themes, including themes 1, 5, and 7, it has been mentioned in several individuals that having a bad internet connection has been their main difficulty, which has resulted in finding digital assessment challenging. According to one of the students, *"During our previous exam the internet connection was poor, and I find it difficult to continue to answer with imposed time restriction."*(R1, LN 31-33).

As supported by another respondent, *"Especially that we are taking mathematics exam we should be reminded that we have to show our solution as a proof. While I am in the middle of the test, my internet connection lost and I have to restart it again and the sequence of my test also shuffles."*(R4, LN 74-79)

One of the students also shared her different experience about having trouble in internet connectivity, *"Actually, I can open the given link by my teacher, however what makes it difficult is the sending process of*

my solution through email nor messenger,” She said in an interview.

Having a bad internet connection was something that all of the participants had experienced, and by monitoring their replies, it is possible to see how it affects their ability to answer the exam and even their learning process as a whole. Teachers in a modern learning environment, particularly when it comes to internet concerns, must have the qualities of consideration and sensitivity that students require.

Theme 7: Students are unable to focus during the exam as a result of the destructive environment

Attempting to grow oneself in the face of rapidly emerging and changing knowledge in the current information era has become a need, and individuals attempt to satisfy this mandatory need in a variety of ways and in a variety of learning environments.

Students would suffer unfavorable consequences if their learning settings were destructive. While going through a difficult period, all of the participants in this study were enrolled in a distance learning program. One of the most unexpected things the researcher heard from students was that one of their experiences in a modular remote learning setting was that it was a destructive atmosphere. One student explained that she found it difficult to concentrate during exams at times because of the damaging environment in which she was studying.

Learning Environment is being define as the many physical settings, social situations, and cultural backgrounds in which pupils learn. Because students can learn in a variety of settings, such as outside of school and in the outdoors, the term "learning environment" is frequently used as a more accurate or preferred alternative to the term "classroom," which has more limited and traditional connotations—a room with rows of desks and a chalkboard, for

example—and is therefore less accurate or preferred.

Respondent 12, Line Numbers 88-91:

“During digital assessment, I cannot focus on the test because I have my younger brother who always bothered me as well as my mom who ask some help to household chores, that’s why I have to hold the exam for a while,” as one of the students expressed her experience as home.

Theme 8: Digital Assessment tool commendation and new preference is evident among the students

Despite all of the challenges experienced by the students it still evident that digital assessment has been a good assessment tool during distance learning. This theme answers to research sub-questions 1, 2, and 4. According to respondent 5, *“It was your first time to send us the link during our exam, and I thought that it was difficult to access the link but all of a sudden I came to realize it was just fine, but the problem is when poor internet connection strikes in our area,”* as she said.

To respondent 9, line numbers 117-119:

“I feel comfortable to online exam, because it lessens the pressure, despite time limit restrictions it is better compared to face to face examination.”

Nevertheless, students still find online examination relevant but there were few problems to be settled and to be furnish when school would be adoptive to assessment changes. Another student shared her good experience about the tool but couldn’t help herself give suggestions for betterment of the assessment experience.

Respondent 10, line numbers 121-123:

“The digital assessment tool was great, but there were disadvantages like living in the mountain side where it requires strong internet connectivity, I really have to go to the main town just to access the link.”

To respondent 9, line numbers 117-119:

“It would be better if you will just provide hardcopy instead, it will

automatically exit when I pass my answers when there is poor internet connection. That's why I personally prefer hardcopy."

From the responses mentioned by the students it is undeniable that they commended the tool but there still "buts" in their answers. Here is another shared experience by the student about how she can manage to pass her exam answer on time.

Respondent 12, line numbers 121-123:

"During an examination using digital assessment, I will not be required to bring my book in order to receive an answer, nor will I be required to study learning videos provided by my teacher, because doing so will just waste time. I prepared ahead of time by reviewing my notes, which is why digital assessment has proven to be a simple tool for me."

Theme 9: Students have learned to appreciate the worth of their time and work

This theme answers the research sub-question 3, when students were asked about the values they have learned that impact their lives; all participants appreciated the worth of time and work. According to respondent 1 line number 1, "*it is really important not to waste time*" while to respondent 3 line numbers 10-11 "*because we do not know what will happen in the future, we do not need to squander our time.*"

Surprisingly some students shared about being honest to work and being attentive to broadcast information by the teachers especially related to subject matters.

Respondent 2, Line numbers 6-8:

"You must learn to be independent enough especially to school related matters such as answering the module and even to exam. Don't be too much reliant to the answers of your classmates nor friends because you will not learn from it."

Respondent 5, Line numbers 17-18:

"I have learned to be alert especially to school related announcements

like sending requirements through email, or messengers."

The replies of the students may differ, but what is essential is the values they have acquired throughout this initial period of learning setting up, since after all, it is the value of time and effort that counts to them, and knowing their responses is the first step in recognizing their worth.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

After adopting the data analysis method by (Moustakas, 1994) modified by Van Kaam method, the research discovered four emerging categories and the said four categories create nine major themes, thus it was further explained above. The four categories unfold were (1) Educational Involvement (2) Learners Engagement (3) Support (4) Educational Tool Refinement. While the emerging major themes were 1) students experience digital assessment tool predicament in mathematics (2) difficulty grasping the topic through teachers' instructional method (3) students have a proclivity to engage in academic dishonesty (4) procrastination and cramming are common among students during exams (5) learners have become passive to their own learning development (6) students' internet connections at home are inadequate (7) students are unable to focus during the exam as a result of the destructive environment (8) Digital Assessment tool commendation and new preference is evident among the students (9) students have learned to appreciate the worth of their time and work.

CONCLUSION

Previous studies did not delve deeper into the students' perceptions of digital assessment; nevertheless, a great deal of study has been done on digital assessment as an alternative option in an online learning set-up or its effectiveness to conventional assessment. The researcher believes that phenomenology is more efficient in defining personal experiences about specific things than quantifying,

which may result in the study being vague. As a result, this study made use of phenomenological methodology to allow for the unfolding and definition of individual experiences, which provided additional insight into this phenomenon. According to the findings of the study and the general observation, the majority of the students' encounters with digital assessment tools were mostly challenges and problems that needed to be addressed equally in order to have a good impact on students' learning. While understanding the primary themes that emerged, it is important to note that the majority of the topics exemplify the significance of teaching and learning as a process, as they are intertwined with one another.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations further suggested by the researcher:

1. Learners must share their problems and difficulties in setting up digital assessment in order to address the problem right away. Thus, learners must learn how to speak up, because they were the one whom had the first-hand experience in the digital assessment given by the teachers.
2. Teachers must learn how to listen from their students and should be patient enough to understand their situation. Teachers should also give much importance about feedbacking as several researches reveals the positive effect of feedbacking to learners.
3. Parents are encouraged to be part of the students learning, they should monitor their children especially school related matters. In this new learning set-up they are advised to strengthen parent and teacher bond as parent are the one who can oversee of what their children or learners doing.
4. The school administration should also take part of what revisions should be done in digital assessment tool in order to have a greater and effective impact to learners. They should be obligated to

oversee teachers work in order to help them what to do next for the betterment of the experiences of the learners.

5. For future research, researcher/s must consider investigating each theme especially theme 1, students experience digital assessment tool predicament in mathematics. They may conduct exploratory qualitative research and after proceed to quantitative after exploring underlying problems if there were no studies further conducted in this matter.

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