LEARNER'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE LEARNING IN ONE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

Ramil B. Arante,* Cheela Mae C. Castro
College of Industrial Technology and Teacher Education, Caraga State University Cabadbaran City, Philippines
*Correspondence: E-mail addresses: rbarante@csucc.edu.ph

ABSTRACT. *Higher education institutions face challenges due to Coronavirus disease, and because of the severity caused by the pandemic, most of the Universities in the Philippines have switched to online learning. Students' engagement with online education is critical to the educational system's overall success, which is why it is essential to gain a nuanced understanding of students' online learning experience. This study aimed to explore learners' perspectives on the implementation of online learning in one university of the southern Philippines with a total of 891 participants. It employs a descriptive survey design method. Mean, and Standard Deviation was used to analyze the gathered data. The study revealed that online learning gives students more time to learn, helps them be more independent, and improves their creativity in information and communication technology. On the contrary, the data showed that students get easily distracted. They are less motivated to participate in online classes caused of several distractions like lack of internet connection, noisy background, and less interaction with the teacher. Developing interaction skills to make sense of social presence between students and instill a positive attitude in them, foster trust between instructors and students, improve students' learning comfort, and encourage their engagement are highly suggested.*

Keywords: Instructor's Characteristics, Learner's Perspective, Online Classes, Online Learning, Usefulness of Online Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions face new challenges due to Coronavirus disease (Covid-19). The government discourages crowds from combating the virus and recommends social and physical distance, masks, and hand washing. The government advised staying at home and following the work from home and learning from home activities. This pandemic significantly impacts the higher education system, which requires lecturers and students to do online teaching and learning.

According to United Nations, educational institutions worldwide closed their doors during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has enormously disrupted educational systems, affecting 94 percent of learners in more than 190 countries. Due to the pandemic crisis, teachers and students feel compelled to embrace the digital academic experience as the most significant benefit of online teaching-learning [1]. However, because no one knows when the pandemic will end, educational institutions worldwide have opted to employ the existing technological resources to create online learning materials for students in all academic subjects [2].

The general learning and teaching methods have been altered in many ways as the world transitions from the old to new standards. The most recent and abrupt curriculum reform has generated enormous challenges and discrepancies in its success. Despite the pandemic's pressures, school policymakers examine new instructional techniques in the new standard to preserve educational value and the learning of learners who will place on hold.

Educators must therefore make an extra effort to encourage learning and provide alternate learning environments that meet the needs and capacities of students. Moreover, they must develop and implement solutions in light of the rapid advancement of technology, which is a significant problem for teachers and even specific institutions. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of these new technological advancements to the fullest extent possible. Students are not exempt from making adaptations when faced with flexible learning environments in which independence is almost certainly required. As part of teaching and learning, students will have to use technology extensively. Due to technological advancements, students can gain access to rich material and are more likely to engage in meaningful learning [3].

Online learning is still finding its way to respond to education difficulties during this pandemic. It requires lecturers and students to develop new habits in order to execute the remote learning model, which is the most challenging task for academics that are not accustomed to online learning. Maintaining the quality of education requires using learning technology that supports online teaching and learning activities [4].

Researchers are trying to explore the advantages and challenges of recent e-learning initiatives from the perspective of various stakeholders. Students' voices are essential on this issue [5]. Due to the abovementioned facts, this study explored the learner's perspective on the implementation of online learning in one university of southern Philippines. Findings will be used as basis for further improvement.

Review of Related literature

The Coronavirus Impact on students' Online Learning

COVID-19 severely impacted students, instructors, and educational organizations around the globe. Due to the pandemic crisis, teachers and students both find themselves in a situation where they feel compelled to embrace the digital academic experience as the greatest good of the online teaching-learning process [1] [5].

Because of the severity of the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, the only choice was to switch to online learning. The lockdown is used in most states to protect society against the new coronavirus [6]. Further, he stated that the influence of COVID-19's impact on student's performance in higher education revealed that such circumstances developed students' learning approaches, efficiency, and learning achievement.

Online Distance Learning

Online Distance Learning enables students to use various

technologies to access information from different websites and articles through the internet. The teacher will facilitate and guide the learners while they are geographically separated during instruction. Learners may also communicate with their classmates for collaboration and other activities through technology.

Online Distance Learning could be in the form of synchronous or asynchronous. For synchronous instruction, a stable internet connection is a must. It is considered more interactive since there will be a live discussion and participation from both the teacher and the learners. The responses are real-time, but it is still not considered face-to-face due to the geographical and physical separation [7]. While for asynchronous instruction, the learners could download materials from the internet, and complete and submit assignments online, they may also attend webinars and virtual classes as much as possible [8].

Online media has many academic literature designations, including cyber press, digital media, virtual media, e-media, network media, and new media [9]. The term "online learning" refers to education over the internet.

The instructors have to be very diligent enough in preparing learning materials. They must be very efficient in technology to effectively deliver instruction and receive learners' input and feedback.

Online learning is still finding its way to respond to education difficulties during this pandemic. It requires lecturers and students to develop new habits in order to execute the remote learning model, which is the most challenging task for academics who are not yet accustomed to online learning. Maintaining the quality of education requires using learning technology that supports online teaching and learning activities [4].

The Usefulness and Ease of Use of Online Learning

Online learning has several pros and cons; for example, online education is accessible worldwide, saving time, money, and effort. When students want lecturers to record classes, one advantage of online learning is the ability to record lectures.

For university students' long-term educational satisfaction with the adoption of online classes, it is necessary to provide technology and information that can improve ease of use and usefulness, which can positively influence educational satisfaction and acceptance intention. Moreover, universities should continuously offer education and training to help students perceive online classes as applicable [10].

Most students regarded online classes to be time-saving because they could be done from the comfort of their homes, saving time on travel and commuting and eliminating the need to rush to get to college. Other beneficial aspects mentioned were faster completion of the syllabus and the ability to refer back to it later by recording lessons. The recorded classes can be watched repeatedly until the idea is fully understood. Courses can be taken anywhere, at any time, allowing you flexibility. Among the other benefits, there was less peer disruption and less concern in asking questions [11].

Instructor Characteristics in Online Learning

The difficulty for teachers and course developers working in an online and learning context is constructing a learning environment that is simultaneously learner-centered, content-centered, and assessment-centered. There is no single best media for online learning nor a formulaic specification that dictates the type of interaction most conducive to learning in all domains and with all learners. Instead, teachers must learn to develop their skills to respond to both existing and emergent student and curriculum needs [12].

Instructors who offered online courses during the pandemic had additional responsibilities. In this context, they would have to adjust to a changing climate, refine their technical skills, and develop new students' technical knowledge [13]. It means that instructor quality is a significant determinant of student satisfaction during online classes amid a pandemic. In higher education, the teacher's standard refers to the instructor's specific individual characteristics before entering the class [14].

Instructors are observed to have adequate resources to support the learning needs of the students. Interactive and engaging course design using graphics and text with learners having multiple options to respond also influences students' satisfaction with online learning [3].

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the students' perspective on the implementation of Online learning in one university of southern Philippines. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following question:

1. What are the students' perspectives on the implementation of online learning in terms of:
   - 1.1 Usefulness;
   - 1.2 Ease of Use; and
   - 1.3 Instructor Characteristics.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This research used a descriptive survey research design using a survey questionnaire. It is a quantitative research method that describes the learner's perspective on the implementation of online learning in terms of usefulness, ease of use, online teaching mode, instructor characteristics, and learner factors.

2.2 Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in one university of the southern Philippines the Caraga State University Cabadbaran Campus (CSUCC). It is located at T. Curato Street Barangay 11, City of Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte, during the Academic Year (A.Y.) 2022. It is a government-run university offering tertiary technical-vocational education for free to Filipino citizens [16].

2.3 Research Participants

The participants of this study were the students from the four colleges of the University, namely, the College of Industrial Technology and Teacher Education (CITTE), College of Hospitality Management (CTHM), College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT), and College of Business Administration (CBA). The succeeding table shows the research participants.

Table 1.

Distribution of Participants by College

College/Department	Total Number of Students	Student's Sample Size
1. CBA	567	149
2. CEIT	698	98
3. CITTE	781	394
4. CTHM	982	252
Total	**3,028**	**891**

2.4 Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used to identify the participants in this study [17]. It is a method of sampling where researchers first divide a population into smaller subgroups based on shared characteristics of the members of the group and then randomly select among these groups to form the final sample. The researcher identified first the total number of students for the A.Y. 2021-2022, with a total of 3,266 officially enrolled students from the four Colleges. Then, the researcher used Slovin's formula to get the 30% of the total sample population coming from the four colleges.

2.5 Research Instrument

The research instrument used is a combination of the adopted questions from the study of Venkatesh and Davis [18] based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to measure students' perspectives of the two primary constructs, including Perceived Usefulness (P.U.) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Some questions for Perceived Instructor Characteristics (PIC) was also adopted from POSTOL (Perception of Students towards Online Learning), since the role of the teacher was recognized as essential in the online learning process of the students [19].

To test the reliability of the research instrument, pilot testing was performed in which the questionnaires were administered to 30 Caraga State University Cabadbaran City students. They had the same characteristics but were excluded as study participants.

Table 2.

Results on the Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items	Interpretation
.960	**.966**	43	Highly Reliable

Table 2 shows the result of testing the reliability of the instrument. It was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the items. The data show that 42 articles for the pilot testing for the group of non-participants and the result has Cronbach's value of .960 generated based on the standardized item value of .966 was found reliable.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The questionnaire was first converted into a Google form. Then the researcher sent a letter of request to the Chancellor of Caraga State University Cabadbaran City, asking permission to distribute the questionnaire. After obtaining the approval of the chancellor, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the students through email.

2.7 Statistical Treatment of Data

To treat the data, the following statistical tools were employed. Mean, and Standard deviation was used to determine the participants' perspectives on the usefulness, ease of use, teaching mode, teacher characteristics, and personal factors in online learning.

2.8 Scoring and Quantification of Data

The researcher used the Likert scale to quantify students' perspectives on online learning in terms of usefulness, ease of use, teaching mode, Instructors' characteristics, and students' factor. A five-option Likert scale specifies 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Uncertain, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree. The range, description, and interpretation are given in table 3 based on the Principle of Rounding Off Numbers.

Table 3 Scoring Procedure with Verbal Interpretation.

Rating	Mean Range	Descriptive Response	Implementation Level
5	4.50 - 5.00	Strongly Agree	Outstanding
4	3.50 - 4.49	Agree	Very Satisfactory
3	2.50 - 3.49	Uncertain	Satisfactory
2	1.50 - 2.49	Disagree	Poor
1	1.00 – 1.49	Strongly Disagree	Very Poor

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' perspectives on the implementation of online learning

Table 4. Illustrates the Participants' Assessment of the Usefulness of Online Learning.

Online Learning:	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I find online learning useful during the pandemic	4.09	0.76	Very Satisfactory
2. provides me more opportunities with a wide range of course materials and references	4.04	0.73	Very Satisfactory
3. gives me more time to learn the lesson	3.98	0.83	Very Satisfactory
4. improves my motivation to learn during the pandemic	3.80	0.92	Very Satisfactory
5. helps me to be an independent learner	4.07	0.79	Very Satisfactory
6. improves my understanding of the subjects	3.81	0.87	Very Satisfactory
7. improves my confidence in expressing ideas and opinions	3.86	0.89	Very Satisfactory
8. helps improve my creativity using ICT resources	4.06	0.80	Very Satisfactory
9. facilitates interaction with my classmates and the instructor	3.91	0.84	Very Satisfactory
10. helps me set up a more conducive avenue to study my lesson	3.91	0.82	Very Satisfactory
Grand Mean	3.95	0.69	Very Satisfactory

The table shows that the overall mean scores are 3.95, indicating its Usefulness is very satisfactory. We can conclude that the students find the implemented online learning useful during the pandemic. Also, online learning gives students more time to learn, helps them to be more independent, and improves their creativity in ICT. The standard deviation seen in the table indicates that most participants find the Usefulness of online learning very satisfactory. An online learning environment increases access to material and offers learners the flexibility to learn at a pace, place, and time [20]. E-learning platforms offer

students multiple options to access information and communicate with peers and teachers;this flexibility and control make them self-motivated and self-regulated learners [21]. Online learning platforms also provide students with enhanced learning opportunities and assist them in becoming independent and self-directed learners [22]. According to studies, online learning places the responsibility of learning on the learner, increasing their sense of responsibility and control over their education [23].

Table 5. Illustrates the Student's Assessment of the Ease of Use of Online Learning

Online Learning:	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. allows me to understand the lesson clearly	3.79	0.84	Very Satisfactory
2. captures my attention to study more with ease	3.77	0.89	Very Satisfactory
3. instructions are easy to understand	3.89	0.78	Very Satisfactory
4. the materials provided are easy to understand	3.89	0.76	Very Satisfactory
5. fast tracks in complying with all assigned activities/homework	3.94	0.78	Very Satisfactory
6. add flexibility and self-paced learning	4.03	0.74	Very Satisfactory
7. improves my virtual communication and collaboration with my classmates	3.96	0.82	Very Satisfactory
8. allows me to gain a greater ability to concentrate	3.79	0.91	Very Satisfactory
9. makes it easy to interact with my classmates and the instructor	3.78	0.91	Very Satisfactory
10. more effective than the classroom mode	3.41	1.11	Uncertain
11. more effective than the classroom method	3.40	1.10	Uncertain
12. more learning and knowledge transfer happens	3.67	0.95	Very Satisfactory
13. are less structured than classroom mode	3.73	0.87	Very Satisfactory
14. saves time	4.02	0.86	Very Satisfactory
15. is more convenient to clarify doubts compared to classroom mode	3.63	1.01	Very Satisfactory
Grand Mean	3.78	0.74	Very Satisfactory

The grand mean of 3.78 indicates that the implemented online learning is easy to use. It allows the students to understand the lesson clearly, which will help them study more efficiently. Online learning platforms develop a deep understanding of the subject matter [24]. It also helps them improve their virtual communication and easily collaborate with classmates during synchronous classes. More excellent contact between learners and instructors may lead to improved student performance, happiness with online learning, and positive feelings associated with success [25].

Table 6. Presents the Student's Assessment of the Instructor's Characteristics in Online Learning

The instructor:	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. is friendly and approachable	4.18	0.71	Very Satisfactory
2. motivates me to learn	4.15	0.74	Very Satisfactory
3. is observed to be more conversant on the subject matter	4.11	0.71	Very Satisfactory
4. gives me sufficient learning resources	4.14	0.71	Very Satisfactory
5. gives me a feasible amount of task	4.04	0.75	Very Satisfactory
6. gives me enough time to do a task	4.18	0.70	Very Satisfactory
7. gives plenty of time for turn-taking during the discussion	4.10	0.70	Very Satisfactory
8. solves the emerging problems during online learning efficiently	4.03	0.73	Very Satisfactory
9. gives quick feedback to queries/questions	4.03	0.76	Very Satisfactory
10. is seen to be more creative in the overall classroom management	4.03	0.75	Very Satisfactory
11. has adequate resources to support learning needs	4.12	0.72	Very Satisfactory
Grand Mean	4.10	0.62	Very Satisfactory

As shown in the table, the grand mean of 4.10 implies that instructors' characteristics during online learning are very satisfactory for the students. Students find their instructors friendly, motivating, and encouraging during online learning. They give enough time to do their tasks or assignments. The instructor should develop interaction skills to create a sense of social presence [26]. This is aimed to instill a positive attitude in students, foster trust between instructors and students, improve students' learning comfort, and encourage their engagement. Instructors are also observed as more creative in overall classroom management; they give quick feedback to queries/questions in an online setting than in the traditional setting. Instructors' accessibility, prompt feedback, and clear instructions regarding student performance and learning expectations are critical elements of learners' progress in online teaching and learning [27].

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

The participant's perspectives on the implementation of online learning in terms of Usefulness, ease of use, Instructors' characteristics, and personal factors on online learning are very satisfactory. It gives them more time to learn, helps them to be more independent, and improves their creativity in ICT. Instructors during online learning are said to be friendly and approachable; they give enough time to do their tasks or assignments. Instructors are also observed as more creative in overall classroom management; they provide quick feedback to queries/questions in an online setting than in the traditional setting. On the other hand, students get easily distracted and are less motivated to participate in online classes. This is especially true when the internet connection is poor, noisy background, and less interaction with the teacher, which results in students having difficulty concentrating during online classes.

5. REFERENCES

[1] Lederman, D. (2020). Will shift to remote teaching be boon or bane for online learning. *Inside Higher Ed, 18.*https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2020/03/18/most-teaching-going-remote-will-help-or-hurt-online-learning

[2] Kaur, N., Dwivedi, D., Arora, J., & Gandhi, A. (2020). Study of the effectiveness of e-learning to conventional teaching in medical undergraduates amid COVID-19 pandemic. *National Journal of Physiology, Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, ***10***(7), 563-563. http://www.njppp.com/fulltext/28-1587397745.pdf?1661910084

[3] Song, Mi S. "E-learning: Investigating students' acceptance of online learning in hospitality programs." Last modified 2010. Accessed on November 20, 2020. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.664.6183&rep=rep1&type= pdf

[4] Rahman, R. (2020) Learning Amid Crisis: Students' Perception on Online Learning During Covid-19

Outbreak. Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram. 13555-Article Text-50022-2-10-20210216.pdf

[5] Mailizar Almanthari, A., Maulina, S., and Bruce, S. (2020). Secondary School Mathematics Teachers' Views On E-Learning Implementation Barriers During the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Case of Indonesia. Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, **16**(7), em1860.https://www.ejmste.com/download/secondary-school-mathematics-teachers-views-on-e-learning-implementation-barriers-during-the-8240.pdf

[6] Mahyoob, M. (2020). Challenges of e-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Experienced by EFL Learners. Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume **11**. Number4. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1287713.pdf

[7] Keegan, D. J. (1980). On the Nature of Distance Education. ZIFF Papiere 33. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?q=Desmond+keegan&id=ED311890

[8] Llego, M.A., 2020. DepEd Learning Delivery Modalities for School Year 2020-2021. Available: https://www.teacherph.com/deped-learning-delivery-modalities/

[9] Nasrullah, R. (2014). Teori dan Riset Media Siber (Cybermedia). Jakarta: Prenamed Group. https://www.scirp.org/(S(vtj3fa45qm1ean45%20vvffcz55))/reference/referencespapers.aspx?referenceid=3009807

[10] Jee-Hoon, H., Sa, H.J. (2020) Acceptance of and satisfaction with online educational classes through the technology acceptance model (TAM): the COVID-19 situation in Korea. *Asia Pacific Educ. Rev*. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12564-021-09716-7

[11] Nambiar (2020). The impact of online learning during COVID-19: students' and teachers' perspective. International Journal of Indian Psychology, **8**(2), 783-793. DIP:18.01.094/20200802, DOI:10.25215/0802.094

[12] Anderson, T. (2008). Towards a Theory of Online Learning. Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Theory and practice of online learning / edited by Terry Anderson. – 2nd ed. https://www.aupress.ca/app/uploads/120146_99Z_Anderson_2008-Theory_and_Practice_of_Online_Learning.pdf

[13] Gopal, R., Singh, V. & Aggarwal, A. (2021). Impact of online classes on the satisfaction and performance of students during the pandemic period of COVID-19. *Educ Inf Technol* **26**, 6923–6947 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10639-021-10523-1

[14] Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Evaluating teacher effectiveness: How teacher performance assessments can measure and improve teaching. *Center for American Progress*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535859.pdf

[15] Hara, N. (2000). Student distress in a web-based distance education course. *Information, Communication & Society*, ***3***(4), 557-579. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13691180010002297

[16] Arante, R. B. (2022). Automotive technology students' OJT performance: A reflection of the programme's kind of graduates. *International Journal of Learning & Teaching*. ***14***(2), 55–69. https://doi.org/10.18844/ijlt.v14i2.6254

[17] Simkus, J. (2022, Jan 26). *Simple Random Sampling: Definition, Steps and Examples*. Simply Psychology. www.simplypsychology.org/simple-random-sampling.html

[18] Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management science*, ***46***(2), 186-204. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227447282_A_Theoretical_Extension_of_the_Technology_Acceptance_Model_Four_Longitudinal_Field_Studies

[19] Bhagat, K. K., Wu, L. Y., & Chang, C. Y. (2016). Development and validation of the perception of students towards online learning (POSTOL). *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, ***19***(1), 350-359. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278758147_Development_and_Validation_of_the_Perception_of_Students_towards_Online_Learning_POSTOL

[20] Chizmar, J.F. & Walber, M.S. (1999). Web-based learning environments guided by principles of good teaching practice. Journal of Economic Education, 248-264. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.529.9699&rep=rep1&type=pdf

[21] Limniou, M., & Smith, M. (2010). Teachers and students' perspectives on teaching and learning through Virtual Learning Environments. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, ***35***(0).https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233018683_Teachers'_and_students'_perspectives_on_teaching_and_learning_through_virtual_learning_environments

[22] Singh, G., O'Donoghue, J., & Worton, H. (2005) A study into the effects of elearning on higher education. Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, 2, 13-24. https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=jutlp

[23] Howland, J., & Moore, J. (2002). Student perceptions as distance learners in Internet-based courses. Distance Education, **23**(2), 183-195. https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-020-00194-2

[24] Petrides, L.A. (2002). Web-based technologies for distributed (or distance) learning: Creating learner-centered educational experiences in the higher education classroom. International Journal of Instructional Media, **29**(1), 69-77 https://www.iskme.org/index.php?q=file&n=Web-Based-Technologies-for-Distributed-Learning-in-Higher-Education-Classrooms&id=929

[25] Friesen, N. and Kuskis, A., 2013. Modes of interaction. In Handbook of Distance Education, M.G. Moore, eds,

Routledge, pp. 351-371. https://www.academia.edu/15274519/Modes_of_Interaction

[26] Tu, C. H., & McIsaac, M. (2002). The relationship of social presence and interaction in online classes. *The American journal of distance education*, ***16***(3), 131-150. http://www.haghish.com/talk/anova/The_Relationship_of_Social_Presence_and_Interaction_in_Online_Classes.pdf

[27] Hara, N. (2000). Student distress in a web-based distance education course. *Information, Communication & Society*, ***3***(4), 557-579. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/156578