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Research Article

Towards a Better Distance Learning: Experience of Radiologic Technology Students in a Higher Education Institution

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ABSTRACT

Radiologic Technology students are among those who felt the intensity of drastic changes brought by the pandemic in education, particularly when distance learning was utilized. The main objective of this study is to find out the varied experiences of the selected students and find out the necessary measures that need to be taken to address the emerging issues that surround distance learning. This phenomenological qualitative research was done by interviewing the selected respondents from Iligan Medical Center College, transcribing their answers, and utilizing thematic analysis to find out the recurring themes. The respondents of this research were the eight selected students, who were enrolled in Radiologic Technology program. There were two respondents taken from each year level and interviewed online. The responses taken from the interview transcripts were grouped and labelled according to their semantic similarities. The researchers found out that the current distance learning practices of Iligan Medical Center College include online-synchronous and online-asynchronous learning. The students' main problems regarding this type of education include their teachers' lack of knowledge on technology utilization, financial constraints, internet connection problems, lack of focus on their lessons, their vulnerability to cheating, and the health issues and problems. Moreover, the coping strategies of the students to the problems they encounter in distance learning include time-management and getting support from the significant persons around them. In addition, the students assert that the school administration should monitor the teachers even more and improve their digital skills in order for them to relay the lessons more efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, they also emphasized that the teachers' discussion should be livelier in order to encourage active learning and that they should be more considerate and patient, especially when the students try to approach them for something that they did not understand. In addition, the students also believed

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that the teachers should practice more in using their technological resources. Generally, data from this research imply that the distance learning will be even more successful if there is a proper preparation and training for both the teachers and students. Also, there should be an intervention program that will help the students in dealing with their mental and health issues.

Keywords: *Distance Learning, Phenomenology, Education, Radiologic Technology*

Background

Education is a significant part of Filipinos' lives because it serves as a factor that guides them in order to become productive individuals and citizens of the Philippines. Apparently, with the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, education has been one of the sectors that have been badly affected. Many issues surfaced as to how the education sector would implement the new normal in terms of education especially in less-economically developed countries (Clemen et al., 2021). The major change in education system led to more challenges of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA) (Liu & Chen, 2021).

Petillion and McNeill (2020) conducted surveys and interviews in order to determine the emergency remote teaching experiences of the students. The data that they have gathered conveyed that some of the difficulties of the students included motivation and commitment problems, personal scheduling, contact with faculty, and increased stress and anxiety. Furthermore, Purarjomandlangrudi and Chen (2020) investigated that the lack of engagement is one of the most pressing problems in online learning environments that has led to the stagnation of online education and students' dropout. In Capdeferro and Romero's study (2012), online learners who engaged in online computer-supported collaborative learning experiences felt frustrated. The study also identified the sources the learners attribute their frustration from.

In Pangasinan State University in the Philippines, Pastor (2020) exposed the students' sentiments on the online learning instruction delivery and the study shows that a handful of students expected the difficulties and are concerned about the area's internet connectivity.

Trillanes et al. (2020) identified the challenges of computing students at one private university in the Philippines. Statistics show that the main obstacles and difficulties faced by students were the difficulty to clarify topics or conversations with teachers, absence of an online research or work area, and the absence of a good internet connection to engage in online activities. In addition, Baticulon et al. (2020) conducted a national survey to medical students in the Philippines to discuss the obstacles in online learning, which was divided into five categories: barriers to technology, human, domestic, institutional, and culture. The results revealed that difficulty adapting learning styles, having to perform duties at home, and inadequate communication between educators and learners were most experienced by the medical students.

According to Alvarez (2020), the sudden shift from the traditional learning environment to remote emergency teaching is deemed problematic and suicidal. It is not unusual that accessibility and affordability issues were a national concern before this untoward case. Therefore, it can cause learning disturbances to immerse learners from a culturally face-to-face design and imminent problems with good internet coverage, high technical system costs and financial constraints. Furthermore, Berg (2020) verified that each student, organization, and program is unique throughout these experiences, and each exhibits a unique background with different strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the university lecturers and administrators need to be mindful of potential vulnerabilities and obstacles, with the contexts of students being taken into account when preparing and developing online courses. It remains the responsibility of a university to put programs

in place and provide its students with the requisite online training and support. With the right teaching strategies, the students would then be able to benefit optimally from their connective learning environment. This will also encourage them to be lifelong learners.

On a survey by Kedraka and Kaltsidis (2020), students consider distance learning as interesting, new, adequate, and convenient, but cannot replace their interactions with fellow students and teachers. While they appreciate that it has avoided halting their studies and their lecturers' sacrifices during the pandemic, they long to return to their lecture halls and laboratories, as well as their regular educational routine.

The main aim of this research is to find out the varied experiences of the selected students who are taking Radiologic Technology. Although there were previous studies that attempted to establish the common struggles of the students in distance learning, their studies did not include the learning strategies that need to be utilized by the students in order to fully grasp their lessons. Hence, the researchers decided to evaluate the new normal mode of learning through collecting the experiences of Radiologic Technology students from one of the Higher Learning Institutions in Iligan City.

Aside from compiling the experiences of the selected respondents, this study particularly sought to provide guidelines and proper strategies in the learning process. The researchers chose the Radiologic Students as participants of this study because they believe that the Radiologic Students are among those who felt the impact of distance learning due to the fact that most of their activities are done in Science laboratories. In addition, it is important for undergraduate Radiologic Technology programs with diverse student populations to assess their students thoroughly and to intervene effectively to ensure that these students are well prepared for entry-level professional Radiologic Technology practice (Talaroc et al., 2021). Their learning experiences should be explored in order to provide appropriate program interventions.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to find out the experiences of the students because their opinions and suggestions will be the bases of the

learning guidelines and strategies that will be formulated at the end of this study.

Furthermore, this phenomenological qualitative research also aims to provide tangible recommendations and suggestions in order to improve the current education system that is being implemented amidst the pandemic. The researchers believed that through this study, the current problems in the education system of the Philippines can be alleviated, especially for students who are taking courses that are mostly spent in laboratories. In addition, this research also serves as a platform that gives an avenue for the concerned students to relay their comments and opinions about the new normal education.

Statement of the Problem

This phenomenological qualitative research aims to explore the experiences of Radiologic Technology students from the current distance learning practices of Iligan Medical Center College (IMCC) and provide recommendations for further improvements. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the current distance learning education practices of IMCC?
2. What are the experiences of participants toward the distance learning education practices of IMCC?
3. How do the respondents cope with the issues in the implementation of distance learning education in IMCC?
4. What recommendations the respondents may provide for the improvement of distance learning education delivery of IMCC?

Methods

Research Design

This study aimed to provide information about the current distance learning experiences of the selected students and analyzed their current situations. At the end of this study, their answers to the interview were used as the guide in formulating learning strategies for the students.

Since this study mainly revolved around the answers of the respondents from an interview, the qualitative research method was utilized by the researchers. This is because in this type of research, the main focus is on the purpose

depicted in the experience, behavior, or even a narrative (Walters, 2017).

Furthermore, the qualitative phenomenological research design was appropriate for this study because the transcripts of the interview conducted are non-numerical data that need to be analyzed using thematic analysis. Using the thematic analysis, the lived experiences of the selected student respondents were eventually revealed by the themes.

Research Environment

This study was conducted in Iligan City, particularly in one of the higher education institutions located within its vicinity. Iligan City is one of the places in the Philippines wherein the impact of the pandemic was extensively felt that is why it is a suitable location to conduct the study. Moreover, Iligan Medical Center College is the specific locale of this study. This school is one of the HEIs in Iligan City that offer Radiologic Technology. It is in Pala-o, Iligan City and is adjacent to its affiliate institution, the Iligan Medical Center Hospital.

Participants of the Study and Sampling Procedure

Qualitative analyses require a smaller sample size than quantitative analysis. They should be large enough to obtain enough data to sufficiently describe the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions. The goal of qualitative researchers should be the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to twenty-five (25) respondents and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6) respondents.

In this study, the researchers decided to get eight respondents through the quota sampling. In quota sampling, the respondents should have a 1:1 ratio. Therefore, there were two respondents from each year level who were interviewed by the researchers. Moreover, in each year level, there were one male and one female respondents. All of them were

Radiologic Technology students from Iligan Medical Center College.

Research Instruments Used

Using the guide questions prepared by the researchers and content validated by the research adviser, the eight participants were asked to participate in an interview. Respondents were assured that their responses will be kept confidential and that their name will never appear in any part of this study.

To make sure that the questions are clear and understandable to the participants, and that it can extract the information necessary to answer the query of this research study, the questions were pilot tested to students who had no participation in the study. The conduct of this study was held in an online platform. This procedure is crucial to the extraction of experiences from the participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

The initial part of the research procedure involved the construction of the interview form that was validated by three field experts. Specifically, the researchers used a semi-structured interview to find out the opinion and perspectives of the students. However, since semi-structured interviews are harder and more complicated to develop, there was a need for some experts to verify the interview form that the researchers constructed.

It is important to note that in order to fully understand the lived experience of the respondents, conducting an interview with them is necessary instead of letting them answer a survey form with multiple choice. This is a research method that enables researchers to get their respondents' authentic and candid answers, therefore giving the respondents the freedom to fully express their experiences (Walter, 2017).

Next, pilot testing was conducted in order to evaluate the viability of this study and estimate the time that will be consumed in conducting the interviews.

After the initial steps were accomplished, the interviews were conducted online via video conference or video call applications. The consent of the prospect student was taken prior to the actual interview. The participant under

study were assured that the data collected from the questionnaire would be treated with the utmost care and kept with utmost confidentiality. As evidence for voluntary participation in the phenomenon under study, written consent was secured from the respondents who are under study.

After interviewing all the respondents, their answers were transcribed by an expert transcriptionist and the acquired transcripts were thematically coded by an expert researcher. Furthermore, the themes were verified by another person who is expert in qualitative research. The researchers wanted to ensure the credibility of the results of this study that is why there was a need to get the help of a transcriptionist and two experts in the field of research.

Ethical Considerations

The research adviser reviewed and approved the interview guide questions. The researchers obtained the ethical approval certificate from the local Institutional Ethics Review Committee of Iligan Medical Center College with the approval number 202-101-003. The protocols of informed consent were followed. The consent guaranteed that the students voluntarily participated as a respondent of this study. In addition, the participants were informed about the estimated duration and the procedures. The participants were not forced to participate and were given the right to decline and withdraw from participating in the interview.

The principle of voluntary participation requires that the participants would not have been forced into participating in the research. The researchers maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. They were given information on how the researchers would utilize the gathered data in this study. Lastly, they were sent hard copies of the transcription to verify the correctness of the content.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data has been executed in the following order:

The first step involved the preparation of the gathered data or transcripts of the interviews. The gathered data from the respondents were transcribed from preferred language used by the respondents to ease the analysis. To make sure that the translation was accurate and flawless, the translated data was proof-read.

The second step was data analysis. During analysis, similarities, differences, and patterns were investigated from the experiences of the participating students.

The third step includes data reduction to thematic statements and grouping those statements with commonalities.

The last step was the construction of the theme to capture the content of each thematic statement.

Results and Discussion

The identification of the themes that emerged from the transcripts started from creating a matrix or responses of all the study participants in each research question. The responses were then grouped together to determine patterns of similarities and differences. There were several reviews made from the reasons of informants prior to coming up with the themes which are essential. Along the process of the analysis, a theme is noted when a particular experience or statement was emphasized by the informants.

1. Current Distance Learning Education Practices of IMCC

This section presents the two current practices of distance learning education in the study area. The practices include the following: (1) online – synchronous and (2) online – asynchronous.

Online – Synchronous. Based on their answers, several participants believed that one current distance learning education practiced by the school is online-synchronous learning. In this type of learning, the teachers and learners meet at the same time via online platforms. Several students responded that most of the online-synchronous interaction happens in the Google Meet. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

It is via online google meet. (Student C)
There is a time that they are going to meet us in google meet. (Student C)

Online – Asynchronous. Another distance learning education practice currently employed by the school is online-asynchronous learning. In this type of learning, learning does not need to happen in real-time; students can access the contents of their lessons online in a time that is convenient for them. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

They only share resources to facilitate information, does not require real time interaction at the same time and place. (Student B)

Yes, we are in an online class, but we just do not meet unless there is an activity. (Student F)

All these learning modes are under the distance learning framework. Moore (1997) argued that distance learning can come in many types and strategies but the common thing between them is the lack of personal interaction of the teachers and the students.

II. Experiences of Participants Toward the Distance Learning Education Practices

This section presents the seven themes that emerged from the experiences of participants toward the distance learning education implemented in the study area. The emerging themes include the following: (1) Convenience, (2) Teacher Factor, (3) Financial Constraint, (4) Internet Connection Problems, (5) Lack of Focus; (6) Vulnerable to Cheating, and (7) Health Issues.

Convenience. The first theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their experiences toward the distance learning education practices is convenience. Students believed that attending distance learning education is convenient because it allows them to attend classes anytime and anywhere. In terms of the learning materials, several students find ease in browsing them because the files are already posted in the online learning platforms. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

You are able to attend your class anytime anywhere. (Student A)

Files are already there. (Student B)

The distance learning gives us students of more convenience. (Student C)

It is convenient, and you don't have to write anymore. (Student H)

There are learning material that we can easily access because it is already posted on google classroom. (Student H)

The Transactional Distance theory of Moore (1997) suggests that distance learning may be advantageous in a relative way because of the varied availabilities of resources that the students possess. Some students prefer distance learning because of their residence's geographical location. It is convenient to have a distance learning, especially if the student lives miles away from school as long as they have the necessary learning materials and technologies.

Teacher Factor. The second theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their experiences toward the distance learning education practices is teacher factor. Several participants urged that teachers play critical role in their experiences towards the distance learning education offered by the school. However, they expressed that teacher also suffered from the common issues faced by the students such as poor Internet connection. The lack of digital skills among the teachers also impeded the class interaction with the students. As a result, the class is sometimes cancelled. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

The teachers are also having a hard time giving us the lesson because of limited Wi-Fi or sometimes their Wi-Fi connection is not very strong in the house. (Student D)

Instructors have a hard time to adjust because not all they have in mind is the school matters, they also have other errands in their houses. (Student E)

Every time we meet, I just let my google meet app open and do not listen anymore. I just do it. I search and watch YouTube when there is an activity given by our teachers. We just depend on google more than our teachers. (Student F)

Teacher loses their interest also now that we are in distance learning, they just kept on giving activities without further explanation about what this topic will tackle about. They can't express it well to discuss the lesson because of distance learning. (Student G)

Not all teachers know how to operate a computer and internet. (Student H)

Other teachers don't know how to operate a computer. Sometimes, they delay meeting with the students. (Student H)

Sometimes, they are too lazy to take classes "oh I don't know how to operate this so I won't meet them, I'll just give them a work activity" so the student will be forced to self-study. (Student H)

The results on this section can be elaborated through the Self-Efficacy theory of Bandura (1986). Arguably, the biggest factor in a student's learning capability is the ability of the teachers in teaching, using the educational technology, giving timely feedback, and establishing an active learning environment. The students achieve self-efficacy in their academics when teachers are successful in boosting their self-esteem. Thus, the teacher factor should always be prioritized in a learning institution.

Meanwhile, the study of Torres et al. (2021) revealed that teacher role in developing students' learning experiences is important. Teachers should always be reminded that student progress monitoring in learning is a very important tool to continually evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and make more informed instructional decisions.

Financial Constraint. The third theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their experiences toward the distance learning education practices is financial constraint. Several participants mentioned that one of the disadvantages of the distance learning education is that they need to have adequate resources such as mobile data and gadgets to continue their learning. These resources added the cost of learning given that the country is still facing the pandemic. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

Lack of money to buy load to have internet data. (Student A)

We are short in resources, not all have gadgets. (Student E)

My main challenge is the internet because I do not have Wi-Fi, so I'll need to buy a prepaid load and it's expensive because...financial problem. (Student H)

According to the Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura (1986), many social factors can affect a student's cognitive prowess. The financial constraint the students experience in a distance learning can affect their studies because they mainly rely on using the internet to learn and submit their tasks on time.

Internet Connection Problems. The fourth theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their experiences toward the distance learning education practices is internet connection problems. Most of the participants confirmed they experienced problems related to Internet connection at one point during their distance learning classes. When asked about their challenges, these are the responses:

The internet connection. (Student A)

Poor internet connection. (Student B)

Poor internet connection, loss of internet connection. (Student B)

Not all students have a good connection. (Student C)

Limited Wi-Fi connection. (Student D)

Main problem really is the internet connection. (Student F)

There are also times when we cannot submit on time of our activities because our internet is not stable then we were late for attendance. (Student F)

The Social Cognitive Theory also best explains why some students in a distance learning mode fail to accomplish their academic tasks. Their internet connection or mobile signal within the vicinity of their area is also a big factor that might discourage students from continuing to learn and submit their outputs.

Lack of Focus. The fifth theme that emerged from the responses of the participants

pertaining to their experiences toward the distance learning education practices is lack of focus. Some students said that they cannot focus in listening during the online – synchronous meeting because of either external distractions or lack of self-motivation. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

I can't focus in listening while the teacher is discussing because it's difficult for me to motivate myself to continue this online class. (Student A)

I cannot focus well. (Student A)

Some students cannot focus since there are a lot of distractions like Facebook, YouTube. (Student C)

Students can be easily distracted. (Student D)

The Social Cognitive Theory also states that a student's learning environment affects their studies and if a student's area is unorganized, their thought can also be unorganized. Therefore, in order for them to focus, they need to study in a conducive space.

Vulnerable to Cheating. The sixth theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their experiences toward the distance learning education practices is vulnerable to cheating. Cheating is a form of academic dishonesty and therefore, a behavior that is not tolerated in school and could result in expulsion. Some students mentioned that they depended on Google in almost all activities given to them. They were honest in stating that they just copied and pasted texts provided by Google. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

I did not work hard on all the activities that were given to us because we depended on google for all our answers. (Student A)

Some students are also using this new kind of technology by cheating. They are using the copy paste mode of answering activities because they focus on google since this is the easiest way of accessing answers. (Student C)

If it's online, cheating can't really be avoided because the access to the internet is easy, with google, they can search quickly during exams. (Student H)

The theory on Self-Efficacy by Bandura (1986) emphasized the importance of self-esteem and motivation for a student to be more independent in accomplishing their works. Thus, some students, who are not properly guided and motivated may resort to cheating just to get by and finish the semester without actually grasping the concepts introduced to them.

Health Issues. The final theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their experiences toward the distance learning education practices is health issues. Most of the students expressed that distance learning education can cause issues that ultimately affect their health. Several notable health issues include mental illness, mental breakdown, and migraine. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

Mental illness. (Student A)

Physical health. (Student A)

There is a time that I do not like attending the class because my eyes hurt while using cell-phone. (Student A)

Mental breakdown. (Student D)

Your eyes are so stressed because of sleeping very late. (Student D)

It can affect mental health, emotionally specially the deadline in thesis. (Student E)

It can double my anxiety because there are students that cannot stay watching their phone or laptop for 2 hours. (Student E)

It can trigger my migraine. (Student E)

Mental health. (Student F)

The students' overall health and wellness is mainly affected by their environment. Therefore, the Social Cognitive Theory explains why some students lose the motivation to continue studying and submitting their tasks. Moreover, according to the Self-Efficacy theory, a student that loses motivation eventually stops studying when they do not recover. This result also justifies the Theory of Transactional Distance because a lack or gap of quality communication between the teachers and the students may leave the students thinking that they are not progressing academically.

III. Coping Strategies in the Implementation of Distance Learning Education

This section presents the two themes that emerged from the coping strategies of participants toward the distance learning education implemented in the study area. The emerging themes include the following: (1) Time Management and (2) Getting Support from Significant Persons.

Time Management. The first theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their coping strategies toward the distance learning practices is time management. Some participants managed time effectively so that the right time is allocated to the right activity. In this manner, they were able to cope up with the challenges they encountered in distance learning education. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

Time management. (Student B)

Time management - I am not used of "mamaya na yan" habit so that I will not be late in submitting deadlines to avoid being in rush and not missed any activities given. (Student C)

Time management. (Student G)

The Self-Efficacy Theory of Bandura (1986) asserts that a learner can be independent and creative if they have a sufficient level of self-efficacy. One of the manifestations of self-efficacy is shown in the ability of the students to manage their own time and organize their own schedules.

Getting Support from Significant Persons. The second theme that emerged from the responses of the participants pertaining to their coping strategies toward the distance learning practices is getting support from significant persons. Most of the students believed that during the onset of distance learning education, they got the support of the significant persons in their lives. Notable persons include their family members, friends, and even, the officials of the school. This theme is corroborated by the following responses:

Seeking support. (Student B)

The parents and guardians of the students are my sources of support since they played a vital role with regards to their children's life. Other than them are the teachers and the school administrations for their consideration with this situation. (Student C)

For me, I would say the guidance counsellor, even though she is busy, but I still find time for her to talk about the issue and how I'm coping up on the pandemic. The other source can be my best friend because I always complain to her every time I call and she tells me you can do this. (Student D)

I would sometimes talk to my best friend and sometimes, I would share my concern to her and to my cousin like I can't do this anymore like it's so hard for me to understand online classes. (Student D)

Other than motivation, they [the teachers] would give us their words of wisdom specially when they are speaking from their experiences when they are student themselves. (Student D)

It's God, the family and the trusted friends. (Student E)

Its sir [teacher] also, because he's the one who helped us. (Student F)

I think they [family] are the reason why you keep on going. (Student G)

The Social Cognitive Theory proposed by Bandura (1986) explains how the students are affected by their environment, especially by the people around them, therefore, with the Self-Efficacy theory, if the students are motivated by the persons around them, whom they consider as significant, they self-esteem and determination increase.

IV. Recommendations for the Improvement of Distance Learning Education Delivery

This section presents the recommendations for the improvement of distance learning education delivery of the school under study. The recommendations are formulated by recipient whom the respondents addressed. Two common recipients of the recommendations are presented in the table given. These are as follows: (1) School Administration and (2) Teachers.

Table 1. Recipient of recommendations, formulated meanings, and significant statements

Recipient of Recommendations	Formulated Meanings	Significant Statements
School Administration	Monitor Teachers	I will recommend that the school administration should monitor modes of online classes especially in terms of synchronous and asynchronous classes, because we have experience during the first semester that some of the teachers are not following this kind of learning mode of classes. School administration should assign a staff to monitor such situation like this so that students will not be left behind especially in major classes. (Student C) It could also be possible to check the examinations given by the teachers because some of the teachers are providing examination question not in line with our discussion. (Student C)
	Improve Digital Skills of the Instructors	One of the things I can recommend is that they do workshops with teachers, all teachers regardless of age to enhance their ability in online learning. (Student H) They should improve modular learning because there are others who complain about modular mode so they also should also pay attention to those in modular mode. (Student H)
	Active Learning	The discussion should be lively and jolly. (Student A)
Teachers	Extended Consideration and Patience	They should be very considerate. (Student D) More patience with the students because not everyone can cope-up immediately or fast-learner and especially others have anxiety, mild depression, and migraine. (Student E) Be approachable and understanding because sometimes, when they are too strict in thinking that, that is what is good for the students. They are not aware that it will affect the students not only academically but also in their mental health. (Student F)
	Improve Digital Skills	Improve their technology awareness, with their skills in technology because that is the source of our education today. (Student H)

The Theory on Transactional Distance by Moore (1997) highlighted the importance of the relationship between instructors and the students. Therefore, the teachers should be able to improve their learning strategies in order to accommodate the learners' needs. Moreover, the Social Cognitive Theory best explains why the school must train their teachers and

improve the learning facilities. The teachers are ones who interact with the students most of the time during the entire course of school year that is why they should be prepared to vary their learning styles and improve their digital skills. Also, according to the Self-Efficacy Theory, if the students see that the teachers are doing their best to give them the quality education

that they need, they are also motivated to give their best in their studies.

Conclusion

1. The following conclusions were derived after the thematic analysis and interpretation of the data:
2. The current distance learning practices of Iligan Medical Center College include online-synchronous and online-asynchronous lessons.
3. The students believe that distance learning is convenient. However, their main problems regarding this type of education include their teachers' lack of knowledge on technology utilization, financial constraints, internet connection problems, lack of focus on their lessons, their vulnerability to cheating, and the health issues and problems that they got because of too much exposure to their gadgets' screens.
4. The coping strategies of the students to the problems they encounter in distance learning include time-management and getting support from the significant persons around them.
5. The students assert that the school administration should monitor the teachers even more and improve their digital skills in order for them to relay the lessons more efficiently and effectively. Moreover, they also emphasized that the teachers' discussion should be livelier in order to encourage active learning and that they should be more considerate and patient, especially when the students try to approach them for something that they did not understand. In addition, the students also believe that the teachers should practice more in using their technological resources.

Recommendation

With the findings and conclusions derived from the data of this study, the following are hereby recommended by the researchers:

1. School Administrators – The school administrators must conduct more trainings to their teachers, especially in using the computer in conducting and presenting the lessons. Also, there should be a proper monitoring of the teachers because some

students said in the interview that their teachers just cancel their online classes just because of the slight inconveniences on their end.

2. Teachers and Instructors – The teachers should practice more in using the educational software installed in their gadgets in order to avoid delays in their lessons. Moreover, the students also expressed their concerns regarding some of the teachers' tendency to be inconsiderate and impatient. Both of the students and the teachers are still adjusting to this new type of education delivery that is why the researchers suggest that there should be an intervention program like mental health seminar or regular online guidance consultation in order to ease their burden.
3. Future Researchers – The findings of this research can be used as a guide in researching more about blended and distance learning. There are different angles of this research topic that should be explored even more considering that this is still one of the current studies that aim to explore the impact of distance learning imposed by the recent onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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