THE CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY GRADE SEVEN (7) SSC STUDENTS OF ABORLAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ABORLAN, PALAWAN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MODULAR DISTANCE LEARING

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ABSTRACT:

Due to the health threat of the pandemic, the DepEd decided to bring education to the comfort of their homes as they continuously developed different learning modalities to ensure that education is accessible to all and to ensure the continuity of education. However, behind the good plans of Department of education for the betterment of every learner there are some challenges encountered during the implementation of Modular Distance Learning. This study conducted to determine the challenges experienced by the grade seven (7) SSC of Aborlan National High School during the implementation of modular distance learning. This study utilized descriptive quantitative research design to identify and describe the challenges encountered by the learners in modular distance learning. The study employed different statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and rank. Based on the results obtained in the study, four major indicators are identified as the roots of the challenges encountered by the grade 7 SSC students, such indicators are time management, self-study/independent learning, learning resources/materials, and distribution and retrieval of modules.

Keywords: challenges encountered, implementation, modular distance learning.

INTRODUCTION:
BACKGROUND:

Philippine Education Sector was taking by surprise by COVID-19 Pandemic transforming the life of all learners since March of 2020. Schools and Community Learning Centers were shut down thus face to face learning engagement of students and teachers were suspended. As such, Philippine education become the society's most affected sector (Agarin, 2021).

According to UNESCO, ninety percent (90%) of learners were affected by school closures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of March 2020, almost 400 million children and youth have problems or unable to personally attend schools due to the indefinite closures mandated by various governments in an attempt to curve the spread COVID-19 (Goldberg, 2020).

The sector of the Philippine education

has delayed an estimated 140 million young minds since pandemic began (UNICEF, 2021). Hence, it is noticeable that any rapid transition from the proven and tested face-to-face learning style to the somewhat unfamiliar area of distance learning might confuse the students or even full-time faculty members (Arinto, 2016). It is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected how we approach the teaching and learning experience at various educational levels (Jover, 2019).

Emergency Remote Education such as distance learning became an option that creates a temporary alternative to learn and to perform instructional support to provide learning to the learners amidst the crisis circumstances. (Hodges et al., 2020)

On the other hand, Modular learning is the most popular type of Distance Learning. In the Philippines, this learning modality is currently used by all public schools because according to a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents with children who are enrolled this academic year (Bernardo, 2020).

The use of modules encourages independent study. One of the benefits of using modules for instruction is the acquisition of better self-study or learning skills among students. Students engage themselves in learning the concepts presented in the module (De Claro, 2021) Modular Distance learning is applicable for the learners even they in the area of with or without the internet connectivity.

Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, (2020) also identified the disadvantages of modular instruction that include greater self-discipline and self-motivation required for students, increased preparation time and lack of concrete rewards for teachers and staff, and greater administrative resources needed to track students and operate multiple modules.

The key purpose of this research is to find out the challenges encountered by the Grade 7 SSC students of Aborlan National High School in the implementation of Modular Distance Learning relative to some variables.

OBJECTIVES:

This study was conducted to determine and describe the challenges encountered by Grade 7 SSC Students of Aborlan National High School in the implementation of modular distance learning.

This study aimed to identify the demographic characteristics of grade seven (VII) pupils in terms of sex, economic status, and academic performance; determine the challenges encountered by the students in the implementation of modular distance learning in terms of time management, self-studying, learning materials/resources, distribution and retrieval of modules; and describe the challenges encountered by the student-respondents relative to their demographic profile.

METHODOLOGY:

This study utilized descriptive quantitative research design to identify and describe the challenges encountered by the grade 7 SSC students in modular distance learning.

Sampling:

This study used total enumeration as sampling technique which comprises of 60 Grade 7 Second-

ary Science Class (SSC) students of Aborlan National High School, Aborlan, Palawan.

Instrumentation:

In this study, the researchers gathered the necessary data using a researchers-made instrument consisting of two parts. The first part was focused on the demographic profile of the students, while the second part was dwelt with the challenges encountered by the students in the implementation of modular distance learning relative to some variables.

Data Analysis:

Data analysis were done immediately after data collection. Different descriptive statistical tools were used such as frequency, percentage, mean, and rank.

Ethical Consideration:

Research proposal was submitted to the committee of research for checking. The researchers seek permission from the school head through written request to allow them to conduct survey among the Grade 7 SSC students. The process followed minimum health protocols in order to keep everyone safe.

Research findings were finalized and research report were made available. The researchers significantly monitored the ethical principles of research throughout the study. Confidentiality of responses and anonymity of respondents were strictly observed.

Results and Key Findings:

This deals with the presentation, interpretation, and discussion of the data gathered to answer the problems raised in the study.

Profile of the Respondents:

There were 60 students who served as respondents of this study. Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents' demographic profile such as sex, socio-economic status, and academic performance.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	18	30%
Female	42	70%
Total	**60**	**100%**
Socio-economic Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Middle level	53	88.33%
Low level	7	11.67%
Total	**60**	**100%**
Academic Performance	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Outstanding	34	56.67%
Very Satisfactory	26	43.33%
Total	**60**	**100%**

Sex:

As depicted in the table 1, majority of the student-respondents are female representing 70%, while 30% were represented by female respondents.

Socio-economic Status:

Results shows that 53 out of 60 students belong to middle level of socio-economic status, which represents 88.33%, while seven or 11.76% student-respondents belong to low level economic status.

Academic Performance:

As for the academic performance of the student-respondents, majority of them are outstanding comprising 34 or 56.67% while 26 or 43.33% are belong to very satisfactory category.

Challenges Encountered by the Student-Respondents:

The following section provides the challenges encountered by the student-respondents in relation to their modular distance learning in terms of time management, self-study/independent learning, learning resources/materials, and distribution and retrieval of modules.

Table 2. Challenges Encountered of the Student-Respondents in   Modular Distance Learning

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Time Management		
managing proper time	42	12.28%
utilizing time in answering their modules	38	11.11%
Self-Study/Independent Learning		
motivating self in understanding and answering modules	57	16.67%
developing independent learning	37	10.82%
Learning Resources/Materials		
unorganized and difficult to understand	10	2.92%
adequate learning materials/resources	52	15.20%
Distribution and Retrieval of Modules		
following given schedule of distribution and retrieval of modules	56	16.37%
picking and submitting modules in a timely manner	50	14.62%
TOTAL		**100%**

Table 2 presents the identified challenges encountered by the grade 7 SSC students in their modular distance learning. These challenges are categorized into four, such as time management, self-study or independent learning, learning resources/materials, and distribution and retrieval of modules. As the table 2 shows, the highest challenge percentage is 16.67 which is under self-study or independent learning, specifically the challenge involves is motivating themselves to understand and answer their modules, this implies that students have difficulty in motivating themselves to learn independently. This is somehow logical since the traditional teaching prior to pandemic was face-to-face instruction, where students are used to it. The shift from face-to-face instruction to modular leaning modalities affects the students learning considerably, thus resulting to difficulties such as independent learning.

Meanwhile, under the category of learning resources/materials, unorganized and difficult to understand have the lowest challenge percentage of 2.92, this implies that even though it is considered a challenge, it is also considered as external factors, where learning resources/materials is not in the hand of the students but rather it is in the teacher or modules writers' responsibilities or jurisdictions. Other categories such as time management and distribution and retrieval of modules are also challenges met by grade 7 SSC students in their modular distance learning.

Challenges Encountered by the Student-Respondents Relative to their Demographic Profile

Table 3.1. Challenges Encountered and Sex

INDICATORS	Male		Female	
Time Management	F	%	F	%
managing proper time	15	14.42%	27	11.34%
utilizing time in answering their modules	10	9.62%	28	11.76%
Self-Study/Independent Learning	F	%	F	%
motivating self in understanding and answering modules	16	15.38%	41	17.23%
developing independent learning	12	11.54%	25	10.50%
Learning Resources/Materials	F	%	F	%
unorganized and difficult to understand	5	4.81%	5	2.10%

adequate learning materials/resources	15	14.42%	37	15.55%
Distribution and Retrieval of Modules	F	%	F	%
following given schedule of distribution and retrieval of modules	16	13.38%	40	16.81%
picking and submitting modules in a timely manner	15	14.42%	35	14.71%
TOTAL		100%		100%

Table 3.1. shows the challenges encountered by the students in terms of their sex. Results shows that in terms of time management, female students are more struggling to manage their time as compared to their male counterpart. This may imply that female students have more task to do at home as compared to male students, since they study at home, lots of household chores are being given to female students, resulting to struggling in managing their time towards their studies.

As for self-study or independent learning, results show that female students struggle a lot as compared to male students in learning independently. It can be said that female learners rely more on teachers' instruction rather than forcing themselves to understand the lessons on their own. On the other hand, male students are more independent when it comes self-motivating in learning lessons or doing their modules, thus it is easy for them to inculcate with themselves the independent learning.

Male students have more difficulty under the category of learning resources/ materials. This may imply that male students have a limited perseverance in reading and understanding their learning materials. While female students are more persevered in reading and understanding their modules.

Under the category of distribution and retrieval of modules, it clearly shows that female students have more difficulty on that area as compared to male students. This might be connected to the time management struggles among female students, since they are struggling more in managing their time in answering their modules, probable results are failed to finish answering their modules on time resulting to its late submission, thus getting succeeding modules will also be out of schedule.

Table 3.2. Challenges Encountered and Socio-Economic Status

INDICATORS	Middle Level		Low Level	
Time Management	F	%	F	%
managing proper time	37	12.29%	5	12.20%
utilizing time in answering their modules	33	10.96%	5	12.20%
Self-Study/Independent Learning	F	%	F	%
motivating self in understanding and answering modules	50	16.61%	7	17.07%
developing independent learning	32	10.63%	5	12.20%
Learning Resources/Materials	F	%	F	%
unorganized and difficult to understand	9	2.99%	1	2.44%
adequate learning materials/resources	46	15.28%	6	14.63%
Distribution and Retrieval of Modules	F	%	F	%
following given schedule of distribution and retrieval of modules	49	16.28%	7	17.07%
picking and submitting modules in a timely manner	45	14.95%	5	12.20%
TOTAL		100%		100%

As depicted in table 3.2., the identified challenges encountered by the students are presented in relation to their socio-economic status. It has been noted that in terms of time management students who are in low level socio-economic status are struggling the most. This can be reasonable since students who have socio-economic difficulty spend their time more on work at home or work to augment additional income, hence they also met some difficulties in managing their time towards their studies.

More so, students who are belong to low level socio-economic status also struggle the most towards self-study or independent learning, since they are busier working at home or working to earn extra income, they neglect to do self-study, thus developing independent learning is a challenge to them. They prefer to have somebody (a teacher or facilitator) to do the lecture about the lessons and giving instructions on the activities and/or outputs they have to do, as a result they have difficulty in acquiring or developing independent learning.

On the other hand, students who are belong to middle level socio-economic status have met challenges in learning resources/materials and distribution and retrieval of modules. In terms of learning resources, the students might be more curious and particular about the lessons, activities, and outputs, as a result they may find learning resources/materials difficult for them. Whereas, the students who belong to lower level socio-economic status were not able to scrutinize their modules, thus they do not find it challenging.

As for the distribution and retrieval of modules, students may find it challenging since they only rely on the schedules of their parents, since they are not allowed to go to school to get and submit their module. That even they already finish their modules if their parents are busy at work, they would not be able to submit it on their desired time, still the visit to school would be just base on the free time of their parents.

Table 3.3. Challenges Encountered and Academic Performance

INDICATORS	Outstanding		Very Satisfactory	
Time Management	F	%	F	%
managing proper time	33	14.29%	9	8.11%
utilizing time in answering their modules	29	12.55%	9	8.11%
Self-Study/Independent Learning	F	%	F	%
motivating self in understanding and answering modules	34	14.72%	23	20.72%
developing independent learning	34	14.72%	3	2.70%
Learning Resources/Materials	F	%	F	%
unorganized and difficult to understand	0	0%	10	9.01%
adequate learning materials/resources	34	14.72%	18	16.22%
Distribution and Retrieval of Modules	F	%	F	%
following given schedule of distribution and retrieval of modules	34	14.72%	22	19.82%
picking and submitting modules in a timely manner	33	14.29%	17	15.32%
TOTAL		100%		100%

Table 3.3. presents the challenges encountered by the grade 7 SSC students relative to their academic performance. Based on the academic performance of the students who belong to the outstanding group, they find it difficult to manage their time as well as to develop themselves towards independent learning. They perform well academically, however they considered

time management as a challenge, it can be said that they may have limited time spent to answer their modules because there is other learning stuff they intend to do or study.

Another challenging indicator among outstanding students is self-study/independent learning. This can be logical enough since students who perform academically bright intend to be directed by their teachers and/or facilitators, they want to make sure that they are correct in their understanding about the lessons, activities, and outputs.

Learning resources/materials, and distribution and retrieval of modules are two indicators that are challenging among very satisfactory performers (students). Very satisfactory students have good performance academically, however learning resources/materials is challenging among them, this might be due to some learning resources/materials that are unorganized and difficult to understand, another reason might be inadequate learning resources/materials. More so, they also treat distribution and retrieval of modules as a challenge because the schedule and availability of modules might not be suited for them.

Conceptual Paradigm of Challenges Encountered by the Student-Respondents:

Figure 1 shows the conceptual paradigm of the challenges encountered by the Grade 7 SSC students of Aborlan National High School in the Implementation of Modular Distance Learning

Figure 1: Conceptual Paradigm of the Challenges Encountered

Different challenges occurred as the modular distance learning implemented in the Philippines. The grade 7 SSC students of Aborlan National High School encountered different challenges under four indicators such as time management, self-directed/independent learning, learning materials/resources, and distribution and retrieval of modules.

Time Management:

Time management plays a significant role in improving learners' performance and accomplishments. It is a skill to manage time and every learner must familiar and command on this skill for the sake of better results. A student can

only survive if he/she has ability of time utilization properly (Ahmad et al., 2019).

Time management is crucial in almost every facet of life. Tasks and other work will be completed in a timely manner, tension from cramming will be avoided, and peace of mind will be achieved. With poor time management, the student would have a tough time assimilating their studies. The scheduling of time is one of the challenges of SLM. Poor time management is one of the challenges that affects distant learning.

As a result of poor time management, the learner is rushed throughout the day due to the lack of a routine. The student started up late, which causes a domino effect, and they underestimate the amount of time it will take to finish a task. Multitasking is one element that influences time management; students spent a large deal of their time assisting their parents with household chores and making ends meet, resulting to negatively affect the completion of their modules on time.

Furthermore, distractions are contributory to time mismanagement. While many technologies and social media platforms make it easy to communicate, they are also the primary source of distraction, aside from the noise outside the study area. They also admitted that using their telephones was distracting them from their studies.

Self-directed/Independent Learning:

Even in the process of learning, no man is an island. Working alone and away from the people who used to be your friend while you went through your studies for a couple of years signalled the beginning of a battle as the students welcomed the dramatic changes in the educational system.

More studies on this subject have been published, one of which being Ancheta's work, which can be useful to researchers. According to him, learning on the side of students has changed dramatically in the new normal, whether it is through online lessons, using a platform, or through offline classes. Students may struggle to adjust to the new system because they are accustomed to face-to-face engagement with their teachers. It necessitates adequate orienting and acquainting yourself with the new normal. With the help of their parents or guardians, students must be encouraged to use the new learning method and comprehend the teachings at their own pace.

The use of modules encourages independent study. One of the benefits of using modules for instruction is the acquisition of better self-study or learning skills among students. Students engage themselves in learning the concepts presented in the module. They develop a sense of responsibility in accomplishing the tasks provided in the module. With little or no assistance from others, the learners progress on their own. They are learning how to learn; they are empowered (Nardo, M.T.B, 2017).

Learning Materials/Resources:

Being the primary learning resource to be used in modular distance learning in the present educational setup, DepEd said SLMs shall be provided among learners. It is therefore important that the modules are sufficient enough, properly sorted and ready to distribute in order to avoid problems during implementation. "The kind of learning resources used in schools mirrors the kind of education being offered," DepEd said. "If quality education is expected to be offered, it is crucial that quality learning resources

shall be provided to the learners"

Distribution and Retrieval of Modules:

This indicator is also considered as challenge in a way that the schedule, the procedures, and the availability of their parents in getting and submitting their modules are beyond the students control but rather it is considered as external factors of their studies. The modules distribution and retrieval schedules and procedures are given by the school, where students can only follow, while the availability of their parents to get

and pass the modules are also beyond their control, thus this indicator are classified as a challenge met during this modular distance learning.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE STUDENTS:

The table presents the action plan that was developed for the students to coped with challenges experienced during the implementation of Modular Distance Learning (MDL). It involves a specific plan to be done for the entire modular set-up of learning.

Objectives	Activities	Persons Responsible	Materials needed	Evaluative Techniques
To manage time effectively	Develop class schedule and Prepare and impose weekly home learning plan	teachers parents students	Class schedule Printed WHLP	Monitor the class schedule and the WHLP
To develop independent learning	Teachers and parents should motivate the students to develop selfstudy/ independent learning. Capacitate the students in motivating themselves to self-study/ independent learning.	teachers parents students	Cellphone Internet connection Face-to-face meeting of parents and teachers	Daily engagement to subject teacher concern
To provide quality SLMs	Simplify, contextualize, and localized SLMs Constant communications between parents and teachers, and teachers and students.	teachers parents students	SLMs	SLMs jived to the MELCs
To follow schedule of modules distribution and retrieval	Set reasonable schedules and procedures in module distribution and retrieval Conduct orientation pertaining module distribution and retrieval Develop and enforce module distribution and retrieval agreement	teachers parents students	Schedule of modules distribution and retrieval agreement form	Monitor the distribution and retrieval of modules using appropriate tool

CONCLUSION:

Accordance to the "Most Essential Learning Competencies". These self-learning modules are already Based on the foregoing results obtained in the study, the following conclusion were drawn: four major indicators are identified as the roots of the challenges encountered by the grade 7 SSC students, such indicators are time management, self-study/independent learning, learning resources/materials, and distribution and retrieval of modules.

It is therefore concluded that students were not able to properly manage their time towards their studies and other tasks, thus affecting their performance in answering their modules. They may not be oriented and trained in properly utilizing their time for them to finish their modules on time.

Similarly, it can be concluded that as for the self-study/independent learning, the students have less self-motivation to learn or do their modules on their own. Self-study/independent learning might not be instilled among them.

In terms of learning resources/materials, the researchers concluded that the students may not use to SLMs, that might be the reason of difficulties. However, there are some issues with regards to the learning resources/materials like unorganized and difficult to understand topics, activities, and instructions, as well as its inadequacy, which affects the performance of the students.

Furthermore, as to the distribution and retrieval of modules, it can be concluded that it is also the concern of the students. Whereas, they believe that following the given schedule for modules distribution and retrieval seems to be difficult since they simply relying that task to their parents/guardian who are also busy at work.

Recommendations:

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are made: intensifying weekly home learning plan must be adhered to help the students in utilizing their time appropriately, thus providing them a chance to finish their modules on time.

Teachers and parents should work hand and hand to motivate the students to develop self-study/independent learning. Capacitate the students to motivating themselves to self-study/independent learning.

Learning resources/materials must be simplified, contextualized, or localized for effective and efficient utilization of it. Constant communication with teachers using different communication platforms regarding the modules, limit group activities, and providing more examples and explanations to each of the given activity.

Set reasonable schedules and procedures in module distribution and retrieval that students/parents have to follow. Proper orientation pertaining module distribution and retrieval must be intensely conducted. Module distribution and retrieval agreement can also be made and enforced.

Furthermore, this study might be replicated in other schools to examine challenges encountered by the students relative to modular distance learning. Bigger sample size would allow for better data generalization. Finally, the researchers' progress toward reaching their goals should be evaluated using the comments they have obtained. An ideal follow-up for this study would be to shift the study's focus to solutions that rely on proactive measures to tackle the issues.

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