Qualitative Research Methods

How Covid -19 Pandemic impacted virtual learning among K12 students

April 25th 2022.

Interviewer: Saja B. Mboge

Interviewee: Mr. Brittenum

Date: April 25th, 2022.

Transcribed interview data 3rd interview

**Speaker 1: Saja B. Mboge**

Okay, once again, thank you Mr. Brittenum for helping me out. The purpose of the interview is to collect data to help me answer my research question. My research question is How Covid -19 pandemic impacted virtual learning among K12 students.

What were some concerns with transition to remote learning from parents?

**Speaker 2: Mr. Brittenum**

Oh, it's pretty much the access and the access to the materials. So during when we first went to pandemic, I have been a full teacher, yet, I was still a TA and a lot of those concerns that they were had was the ability for the child to have access to class being on device or internet service, some of the kids that we service in this area, don't have internet at home at all, I have a tablet or something or computer at home to log into the system. So, for the most part, those first constraints were the ability to have access to school.

**Speaker 1:** Thank you. Were there any technological issues experienced by students during the virtual learning? and if so, explain.

**Speaker 2:** Yes, absolutely. Um, a lot of kids, like I said, didn't have access to internet or didn't have a device or laptop or things at home. So, once they did get their hands, so hold the device, you know, you had the devices that were shut down, my son didn't work properly, or devices that couldn't connect to the internet. I know, we had logical issues coming with the Wi Fi hotspots. People didn't know how those work and how they were supposed to be maintained and use. Like I said, again, the internet a lot of people didn't have power or didn't have the ability to charge their tablets and things like that. And plus, you know, when dealing with kids, a lot of technical logical issues came from kids breaking or cracking or throwing water on the tablets, whatever the case may be. So yeah, those towards the start,

**Speaker 1:** How did you perceive students’ academic studying experience during this period of online or remote online,

**Speaker 2:** In my honest opinion, I perceived it as deplorable, because our kids school starts at seven o’clock, so having kids wake up at seven o'clock in the morning and have them look at a computer screen for seven hours and expect them to focus and pay attention and not be at home doing things that they normally do in this surroundings. I think it was hard on the children to adjust. And then once they got adjusted, it was hard to stay focused. For example, I had a student that when he first got into the virtual class, he would go to sleep in the meeting, no shirt on, sleep and he would be at home. So, once he did after an hour, get up and get moving, you know, it's a camera off and playing the game behind the scenes, I'm not really focused on the class itself. You don't have a hands-on approach where the kid was sleeping in class, we cant wake them up and refocus them or redirect them If you're at home. And there's no parents at home to redirect and reinforce the learning and things that we do. It kind of made it a hard situation. So, I perceived it to be very trying studying experience.

**Speaker 1**: Would you say this is pretty much for everyone on or some people?

**Speaker 2: M**ajority, you do have parents that are those type of parents that have relationships with their teachers, they greet them when they get home, they set them up and make sure that they're ready for class before they go and do whatever they have to do with their other children are going to wear or whatever the case may be. Some parents are already at work once the school starts, the children are ready to log in. So, I mean, it's a hard experience trying to study and being focused and engaged in class in those parameters. Now when you have those parents that have relationships with the teachers, um, well, they can get on to speak with him, they email correspond, they talk text, those type of situations make the study experience greater, because you got that extra support.

**Speaker 1:** That makes sense that makes sense parents that have a relationship with teachers also like working relationship. Yeah, working

**Speaker 2**: Those working relationships are our lifeline.

Speaker 1: Got it, so how did parents perceive those working relationships with the teachers

**Speaker 2: S**ome parents cultivated them very well, well-kept manner other parents not so much. Um, yeah, some parents don't like to be bothered some parents that don't like you to call them when Johnny's not logged in, or when Johnny's went missing for 45 minutes and plans to change and Johnny is still in the class. So, some of those relationships were very well manicured, and some not so much. But that just depends on the type of parent of the student Hey.

**Speaker 1**: How did students access the online learning material?

**Speaker 2: They** use Microsoft team for the most part.

**Speaker 1:** That is good. So with Team was it easy to access for students? Or was it hard?

**Speaker 2:** Easy, I cannot imagine it being easy for them to have access to because it was hard for us as teachers have access to. It went down every now and then have to come back up and go out or the draft students. So doing that on the teacher side, I knew it was hard of getting in, getting out and all that type stuff with students.

**Speaker 1:** What are student’s perceptions about their teachers to their specific, unique situation during the COVID 19? Pandemic?

**Speaker 2:**  I know personally for me, the first year of the pandemic, the second half of the semester; I took over as a classroom teacher. And it's just having the ability to connect with the students. As well as trying to teach them the prepared lessons based off the standards and objectives. If you couldn't relate it to something that may mean something to them, they kind of changed their views or thought process towards learning the material. For example, I had a student that love to cook. So I'm around lunchtime, he's supposed to be in class, but I would always notice that he was in the kitchen cooking during that period for him and his brother. So when the class started, you know, I kind talked to ask him about what he was cooking, what did he like to cook, I did not plan to be a chef, all that type stuff. And I tie that into our um, our lesson of the days ever since I did that, that student I mean, he was the first person in class, he was answering the most questions, he was very attentive to what I had to say, because I took that time to build that relationship with him.

**Speaker 1**: Besides technological problems, what specific obstacles made online learning very difficult?

**Speaker 2:** I think it is accessible to assess what they know, oh, man, a computer screen, they can Google, I don't know if you know the information yourself, or you're Googling on the next webpage. I don't know, if you're not cheating on the work, whatever the case may be. So not having the ability to have a hand on approach, or hands on, it created an obstacle. Also, another obstacle is the screen time you saw the students. A lot of other students, they tune out on the screen after two or three hours. And then you have the students that don't charge a tablet. So don't tell us when devices and so that they only get one or two periods out of the day, those type of things created a major obstacle.

**Speaker 1:** So What were primary obstacles for teachers to teach effectively during this time, during this pandemic?

Speaker 2: I connected with the student because they are getting it, there is no way to meet for me to make sure that you are in class, and there is no way to, for me to make sure that you are paying attention. There is no way for me to make sure that you are not cheating on a test or an assignment. Online instruction, in most hinder and promotes the learning experience, because you have the world of information at your hands. At the same time that I am teaching you something, you could be correlating it with some other information. That's not from our book or not from our state given standards, you can pull anything. So having that obstacle to do that, but not the ability to I guess. gov, where you go and what you do. And when you do it, when you have drinks, the primary obstacle was freedom.

**Speaker 1**: What was the level of engagement, would you say was from parents,

**Speaker 2**: I had some parents that were extremely highly engaged, had extremely high levels of engagement. Then I also had parents that did not, they were not on that same level.

**Speaker 1**: So this was a case-by-case basis

**Speaker 2:** I could not say majority, because I did not get a chance to speak to majority of the parents that I had. We mean that we had a lot of children. Um, but the ones that I know that I ended up having to interact with, they were very capable of assisting what I needed at that moment. There, so I tried to reach out for help with and it did not go the way that I thought it was.

**Speaker 1:** What were some obstacles for parents who had no formal education to help students either complete homework and assignments during the Covid-19 pandemic?

**Speaker 2**: Was always I took over control of it. Control of the classroom has the ability to issue out assignments and teach how I normally will teach. I gave a lot of class kick assignments or a lot of assignments that were correlated to my PowerPoints. So I will pretty much take the the gray area away everything that we will do either in black and white, based off of the PowerPoint that I gave you are based off of the assignment, primary source materials I gave you. I didn't want to veer off way too far off that path because then it gets you into the opportunity for you to have to go use Google or for you to have to go use some of the source So let's

**Speaker 1**: Overall, how has COVID-19 affected students mental health overall during this time?

**Speaker 2**: A lot of them have anxiety; a lot of them have stress. A lot of them can't sit in or be stationary in one place for too long, they get antsy. Um, I didn't see that much of that before the pandemic. But then again, the eighth graders that I teach, currently, were the sixth graders that live independently. So I can see some of the same sixth grade behavior in eighth graders. Right? They just grew up in age but stayed in mentality

**Speaker 1**: Do you think there might have something to do with maybe lack of interaction not coming to school physical and yes, unable to engage?

**Speaker 2**: Being at home stuck in the house with the siblings and doing everything from a computer, that social interaction and that social socialism period just didn’t helps children learn?

**Speaker 1**: How would you rate your student's academic performance prior to COVID-19 and during COVID-19 pandemic?

**Speaker 2:** If I had to do it on a scale of one to 10, I would give before the pandemic about it eight, during the pandemic, I would give it about a four, maybe a 4.5 and then after the pandemic, I would give it about seven.

**Speaker 1**: So based on these three different statistics you gave before, during, and now, it appears that both of those numbers are higher than during the COVID-19. And that may have something to do with being at the house all day, do you think it has something to do with technology? Do you think I mean, not.

**Speaker 2:** To do with technology, I just hate the fact that they were at home. If you're in class, and I see you if they're not paying attention, if they are on the phone, I can take your phone and you're going to pay attention. But if you're at home on the other side of the screen, and you play the Xbox, making a tic tock or whatever the case, maybe I can't enforce discipline, I can't enforce you to focus on the lesson in hand. If you're at home, you have access to do whatever you have to do at home. And then you have those type of situations where children have people at home with them, that make them do things like during school. For instance, for example, I had a child that was with his mom or his grandma and through the middle of class, she said, I'm going to take the trash out, go to the store to pick up our pizza or get her cigarettes from a gas station. This kid is in the middle of school and he's sending them those type of situations, you know, affected the child's learning

**Speaker 1:** Can you describe the attitude and approach to learning from the parents during Covid-19 pandemic?

**Speaker 2:** I had a majority of parents that were very adamant about learning, adamant about their students being engaged and prepared for class. You know, we all have those students that have parents that don't care or seem to not care. But for the most part of the ones that I did deal with. They were they were very engaged in.

**Speaker 1:** How did students conceptualize classroom participation process during this virtual learning, the fact that they are not in class, but they are still on the computer? How did they conceptualize that classroom participation process?

**Speaker 2:** Oh, I guess for the most part, my students conceptualized pretty well, because how I run my classroom, my virtual classroom is just an extension of my actual physical classroom I have. I have standards, I have things that I require all those type of classroom rules that I would implement in the virtual classroom to get their engagement. You had some that understood that, hey, this is a place for business. This is a place where, you know we got to come to school, even though we're not in school, when we're at home. They've had some that say to hell with

**Speaker 1: H**ow was the general mood among students and parents during this during this time?

**Speaker 2:** You had some students that just could not stand school with a passion. You had some parents that just that was so going about having the students get on from home and not have to worry about picking them up and dropping them off and all that type stuff. It wasn't all peaches and cream but it wouldn't have been. Okay. Um,

**Speaker 1: H**ow do you think social media negatively impact students’ performance during this time?

**Speaker 2:** I think it negatively impacted 100%. Um, with IG with Instagram, using slang with him using Instagram, Snapchat, tik, Tok, Facebook, messenger, Facebook, all of that type stuff is a distraction, even now in my classroom right now is it's a huge distraction that we can't seem to do away with. So during virtual school, it was deplorable. You'd have kids that would make tic TOCs, and AirDrop tic TOCs in the classroom and all that type stuff. technology and social media, very much so negatively affected those because, yeah, kids that were doing inappropriate things in their underwear and stuff like that. And they will send it to one person and one person will put it in the Instagram page. And now the whole classroom sees it and it's crazy.

**Speaker 1**: Would this be like maybe like some students, or majority of the students, or pretty much all of the students?

**Speaker 2: H**aving phones? I can't say majority of all of them. But most of the days everybody has a phone. So I can't say all, I can't say majority, but I wouldn't say no less than half participate in social media, their school.

**Speaker 1:** How accessible was internet, do they have unlimited internet or limited?

**Speaker 2:** It was hard at first a lot. A lot of students didn't have internet, then that's when we got the Wi Fi hotspot. And that went crazy at first because people were getting the hotspots thinking that just for a month, they had unlimited internet, but they didn't know that it only gave you two TV wise on. So for one household, if you have five students in one household, all five of those students had to use that same 15 gigabytes of Wi Fi data for a month school. So six people being on one Wi Fi hotspot would create an issue, because it's going to drain data quickly. If I have six students in the same house, and we're all on one hotspot, then two or three days out of the week. We have to miss school because of the lack of data or the lack of internet access. Um, the students that didn't have internet at home, they were there every day. But like I say, their again, their focus was on something different other than being in school.

**Speaker 1:** So even students when they were given like 15 megawatts, but if you had like more than one student in a house, do they 's still get more megawatts?

**Speaker 2**: I know a family that has five kids that are in school between first grades all the way to eighth. All five of those kids that are in school have used the same hotspot for a household.

**Speaker 1**: So when they used all do they get restarted?

**Speaker 2**: Every month, it 15 gigabytes every month.

Speaker 1: So they don't they don't increase it.

**Speaker 2:** No, they don’t increase it.

**Speaker 1:** So yeah, that we know a lot of those issues and that would affect the whole family if you have a family of three or four students.

**Speaker 2**: A couple of students that had siblings that actually went here to the school that were in the different grades and we would talk to parents every other week because one student wouldn't be on with the other students who had all three when we miss him and It was a cluster ball.

**Speaker 1**: On a scale of 1- 10. One being the lowest 10 being the highest. How would you gauge your student's overall educational experience?

**Speaker 2:** I would say a six, maybe a seven, and I say that because the way that my colleagues and I work we do our lesson planning, we do a lot of things cooperating and the lessons and the assignments that we were given were verified by not only us the teacher but the administrators as well. So we had top notch material on top up work is just the fact that we were we were trying to give top notch materials how guys work during a period where all of the focus wasn't on school, or school Oh,

**Speaker 1:** Mr. Brittenum, how long have you been teaching?

**Speaker 2**: Officially under salary? I've been teaching since December of this year. Officially, I've been a TA since 2017 and I've taken over a majority of the year, I'd say three quarters of the year, four out of those five years. So I say, teaching and doing exactly what I'm doing now. I've been doing it about five years. Officially getting paid for, it'll be a couple months. I just got my salary of December of 2021 and I've been working here since 2017.

**Speaker 1:** Did Covid 19 pandemic made teaching harder or easier, or harder?

**Speaker 2**: It made teaching very harder, like I said earlier due to a host of problems, technological issues, and lack of engagement from some parents and students

**Speaker 1:** What is your opinion about student's education experience during Covid 19 pandemic?

**Speaker 2:** Trials and tribulations,

**Speaker 1**: Do you believe online instruction was effective compared to traditional instruction face to face?

**Speaker 2:** No, I honestly feel that more kids went backwards as far as learning than they did going forward and traditional studies versus virtual

**Speaker** 1: That comes to the end of the question, but I want to say I do appreciate it. Thank you for taking the time, bro. I appreciate you,

**Speaker 2**: You welcome anytime

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