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PROBLEMS AND BENEFITS OF ONLINE SCHOOLING

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at describing the problems and benefits of online schooling in a secondary accredited private university in the Philippines. A total of 373 respondents which include teachers, students and parents were respondents in this study. The descriptive cross-sectional method of research was used to gather data. Based on the result, some benefits of online schooling include: technological skills, use of technology and utilization of online resources are enhanced, unruly students can easily be identified and muted, promotes research and utilization of online resources. Some of the problems brought up in the use of online class include: not all students can access online class as scheduled, there are health concerns associated with online class including stress. Among the recommendations include: inclusion of online modality as learning option, reducing workloads to essential tasks, induce training, technology upgrade, and provide resources and flexibility.

KEYWORDS: *Online schooling, flexible learning, problems, benefits, descriptive research*
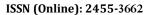
INTRODUCTION

The increasingly flexible delivery modes available for students provide multiple pathways and opportunities for those seeking further education (Gillete-Swan, 2017). Furthermore, Teymori, & Fardin, (2020)concluded that it is essential to pay special attention to the appropriateness of infrastructures required for online education in educational systems, so that in the future, in addition to reducing the prevalence of COVID-19 and similar diseases in schools and universities, the educational costs and would be decreased.

Problems and benefits of online schooling maybe varied in different schools and situations and that those can be identified which are generally encountered. But these are yet to be scrutinized to discover the circumstances a school experience in a setting particularly in online modality.

Despite there were benefits and problems observed in online schooling, further studies need to be undertaken to arrive at a more empirical evidence as supporting data. According to Cavanaugh, Barbour, & Clark, (2009) while K-12 online learning programs have evolved and grown over the past decade, the amount of published research on virtual schooling practice and policy is limited.

The growth of the Internet and online learning will continue, and it will come with challenges. Individuals engaged in an online course may have different qualities for a successful online environment or elements that are challenging. Each experience will be unique to the individual. As educators and students become more comfortable and adept at communicating and learning at a distance, it will remain imperative that the best practices associated with these learning environments continue to be explored. The concerns suggested by teachers and students point towards the fact that more research and study should be conducted to provide more detailed information for changes to occur within design and methodology of online classes. Establishing a structured and user-friendly environment for online mode of education, one that is accessible for all without putting financial burden on students and teachers should be the main criteria in the minds of college and university management while promoting online education. Also, the need for providing adequate technological training to teachers about method of conducting online classes should be prioritized as it is found to be a pre-requisite for successful online class implementation (Nambiar, 2020).

The study of Nguyen (2015) concluded that it would be too easy altogether to jump on the online learning bandwagon or to dismiss it as a fad that will go away (and come back as many educational fads have been known to do). Overall, there is strong evidence to suggest that online learning is at least as effective as the traditional format, but the evidence is, by no means, conclusive. Online learning is a story that is still being written, and how it progresses will likely depend on those present.

Therefore based on the comprehensive details provided above which gives the researcher the idea to undergo this research, it is substantial that a new knowledge about how online schooling works based on the narrative of parents, students and teachers as they embark on a new educational journey of a different interface. This study finds its significance due to the reason that study about problems and benefits will open a Pandora's Box as regard to other realities of online schooling. As new findings occur as a result of this study, more solid recommendations can be derived.

METHODOLOGY

This study is quantitative in nature utilizing the descriptive research design. This design is a systematic approach to inquiry that involves description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of conditions that now exist. According to Baraceros (2016), this research aims at defining or giving a verbal portrayal or picture of a person, thing, event, group, situation, etc. This design was used in this study in describing the problems and benefits of online schooling in one prestigious private junior high school in an accredited university in the Philippines.

Descriptive research provides important information about the population or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive research seeks to explain what is common, prevalent, or already exists in a population. It does not attempt to predict or manipulate an outcome, as is done in experimental or inferential research (Swatzell and Jennings, 2007).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in accredited private junior high school in Cabanatuan City where online schooling is adopted as the mode of teaching and learning. Teachers, parents and students underwent training and orientation about online modality. The school with established Learning Management System and provides distance learning has been preferred by parents and students in times of pandemic when face to face is not an option. Online mode using LMS also allows certain flexibilities and thus also termed as Flexible Learning. There is uncertainty and absence of idea how online learning works if fully implemented during pandemic and thus parents, students and teachers alike have their attitude which may be derived from their perspectives, ideas, beliefs or feelings towards a phenomenon.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the teachers, students and parents of one of a private school in Cabanatuan City. A total of 14 teachers, 183 students and 176 parents participated in this study. The samples were taken from the population using stratified random sampling method.

There are three strata where the samples are taken from each group different from each other. Everyone in the group has given a chance to be participants in the study.
Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents

Teachers	14
Students	183
Parents	176
Total	**373**

The Research Instruments

Structured survey questionnaires were used to collect data using Google form for this study. There were three (3) sets of questionnaires used in the study for teachers, students and parents.
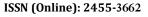
The questionnaires include survey on problems of online schooling for teachers, students and parents, survey on benefits of online schooling for teachers, students and parents and suggestions and recommendations survey for teachers, students and parents.

The weighted means of responses to the questionnaire were verbally described using the following scale:

1 (if there is absence/falsity about what the item describes)
2 (if there is not enough evidence or inadequacy of what the item describes)
3 – (if there is somehow presence or indication of reality of what the item describes)
4– (if there is complete truthfulness and manifestation of what the item describes)

The weighted mean of responses to the scales were verbally described as follows.

Numerical Equivalent	Verbal Description
3.25-4.00	Strongly agree
2.50-3.24	Agree
1.75-2.49	Disagree
1.00-1.74	Strongly Disagree

Data Gathering Procedure
1. The researcher sought the permission from the Supervising Dean of the High School of the University through request letters.
2. The questionnaires were sent to the respondents via group chat in messenger. The link for Google form has been sent to the respondents.
3. The questionnaires were retrieved and tallied later. Thereafter the results were recorded, organized, then analyzed and interpreted.

Validity and Reliability
The validity of the instruments was determined with the help of a statistician. The proponent also consulted other experts in the field to establish the validity of the instruments.

Using the data taken from a school in Cabanatuan City, the Questionnaire for students, parents and teachers were administered beforehand to determine the instrument's reliability. With the assistance of a statistician through careful examination concluded that items of the instruments were clear and the directions well –stated. The data gathered revealed a strong reliability.

Analysis of Data
Using descriptive statistical tools the data gathered were then analyzed. The weighted mean of the responses with regard to problems and benefits survey questionnaires were tabulated and computed then later on analyzed and interpreted.
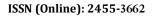
Objectives of the Study
Specifically, the study aimed to:
1. Determine problems of online schooling.
2. Described the benefits of online schooling.
3. Formulate recommendations based on the result of the study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2
Benefits of Online Schooling

Item	Teachers		Students		Parents	
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description
1. Online learning has the ability to disassemble barriers that have been conducted by poverty, location, disability.	2.7	A	2.9	A	2.7	A
2. Allow learning to occur in a setting not restricted by time and place.	2.8	A	2.8	A	2.9	A
3. Online schooling broadens educational opportunities and stays competitive.	2.6	A	3.0	A	2.8	A
4. Online courses are easier because the focus is on learning is not on other factors such as social interaction and physically attending class.	2.8	A	2.7	A	2.6	A
5. Use of technology is enhanced and promotes research and utilization of online resources.	3.1	A	3.1	A	3.0	A
6. Attendance can be easily checked and monitored	2.7	A	3.0	A	2.9	A
7. Progress of students can be determined with analytics embedded the LMS.	2.9	A	2.9	A	2.8	A
8. Checking of submissions of output is not difficult.	2.4	D	2.7	A	2.8	A
9. Students have more time to work on their tasks and assignments.	3.3	SA	2.9	A	3.0	A
10. Lesson contents are essentials thus, learning is more relevant.	3.2	A	2.9	A	3.0	A

		Teachers		Students		Parents	
11.	Financial burden in educational expenses are reduced to work/team from home set-up.	2.4	A	3.0	A	2.9	**A**
12.	Teachers who work from home can also assist their children online schooling.	3.2	A	2.9	A	3.0	**A**
13.	Unruly students can easily be identified and muted so that class discussion will not be interrupted.	3.1	A	3.1	A	3.0	**A**
14.	Technological skills of students are enhanced.	3.4	SA	3.0	A	3.1	**A**
15.	LMS has useful factors to facilitate learning more	3.2	A	3.0	A	3.0	**A**
16.	Asynchronous activities are helpful to induce learning	3.1	A	3.0	A	3.0	**A**
Overall Weighted mean		**3.36**	**SA**	**3.07**	**A**	**3.04**	**A**

Table shows the Benefits of Online Class as perceived by teachers, students and parents. It is clear in the table that items" Technological skills of students are enhanced got the highest weighted mean of 3.4 interpreted as "Strongly Agree" while item" Financial burden in educational expenses are reduced to work/team from home set-up obtained lowest weighted mean of 2.4 interpreted as "Agree". The **overall weighted mean** of teachers response with regards to benefits of online class is **3.36** interpreted as **"Strongly Agree"**.

Based on students' response, item "Use of technology is enhanced and promotes research and utilization of online resources as well as item as well as item "Unruly students can easily be identified and muted so that class discussion will not be interrupted obtained the highest mean of 3.1 interpreted as "Agree". On the other hand, items" Online courses are easier because the focus is on learning is not on other factors such as social interaction and physically attending class and Checking of submissions of output is not difficult obtained lowest weighted mean of 2.7 interpreted as "Agree". The **overall weighted mean** obtained is **3.07** interpreted as **"Agree"**.
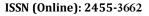
As far as parents' perspective with regards to benefits of online class is concerned, item" Technological skills of students are enhanced got the highest weighted mean of 3.1 interpreted as "agree" while item" Online courses are easier because the focus is on learning is not on other factors such as social interaction and physically attending class." got the lowest weighted mean of 2.6 interpreted as "Agree". The **overall weighted mean** is **3.04** interpreted as **"Agree"**.

In the study of Gilbert (2015) he posited that benefits of online learning and concluded that overall, the research indicates the benefits of online coursework outweighs the challenges that students face. Further research on a larger scale, involving more students, professors, and online courses is needed to better evaluate the benefits, challenges, and useful strategies of successful students. Online courses offer an excellent way for students to broaden their educational opportunities and stay competitive in the ever demanding realm of education.

Table 3
Problems of Online Schooling

Item	Teachers		Students		Parents	
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description
1. There is communication barrier since students cannot get assistance directly but need to wait for teachers reply online	3.1	A	3.0	A	3.2	A
2. Lack of student to student interaction	3.5	SA	3.0	A	3.1	A
3. There is lack of interest and participation among students	3.5	SA	2.9	A	3.0	A

4. Not all students can access online class as scheduled.	3.6	SA	3.3	SA	3.3	SA
5. There are glitches in using LMS	3.2	A	3.2	A	3.1	A
6. There are too many tasks to do in online modality	3.6	SA	3.1	A	3.2	A
7. Teachers discussion could hardly be understood due to interruptions and competing stimuli	3.2	A	3.3	SA	3.1	A
8. It is hard to individually monitor the attentiveness of the students while the camera is off.	3.7	SA	3.3	SA	3.2	A
9. Students tend to cheat during exam	3.7	SA	2.9	A	2.8	A
10. There are health concerns associated with online class including eye strain/ailment due to long exposure to screen (blue light) and stress.	3.6	SA	3.3	SA	3.3	SA
11. There is digital gap among students and teachers.	3.4	SA	3.3	SA	3.1	A
12. There is lack of training regarding online modalities.	3	A	2.9	A	3.0	A
13. Records of students and other data are not secured in LMS	3.2	A	2.7	A	2.8	A
14. It is hard to gauge the ingenuity of students' work via online	3.3	SA	2.9	A	3.0	A
15. Irregular attendance of students.	3.3	SA	3.1	A	2.9	A
16. Students' performance is poor.	2.9	A	2.9	A	2.6	A
Overall Weighted mean	**3.36**	**SA**	**3.07**	**A**	**3.04**	**A**

The **overall weighted** mean based on teachers' response is **3.36** interpreted as **"Strongly Agree"**.

With regards to students' response, items" Not all students can access online class as scheduled", "Teachers discussion could hardly be understood due to interruptions and competing stimuli", "It is hard to individually monitor the attentiveness of the students while the camera is off", "There are health concerns associated with online class including eye strain/ailment due to long exposure to screen (blue light) and stress.", "There is digital gap among students and teachers." obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.3 interpreted as "Strongly Agree". On the other hand, item "Records of students and other data are not secured in LMS" got the lowest score of 2.7 interpreted as "Agree". The **overall weighted mean** is **3.07** interpreted as **"Agree".**

The response of parents about the problems online reveals that not all students can access online class as scheduled and There are health concerns associated with online class including eye strain/ailment due to long exposure to screen (blue light) and stress. The **overall weighted mean** is **3.04** interpreted as **"Agree".**

The findings of the study of Adnan and Anwar (2020) highlighted that online learning cannot produce desired results in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, where a vast majority of students are unable to access the internet due to technical as well as monetary issues. The lack of face-to-face interaction with the instructor, response time and absence of traditional classroom socialization were among some other issues highlighted by higher education students.

Some of these items discussed above have been part of the investigation in this study however above-mentioned study only focus on students view. However, it is interesting to note that problems mentioned really circulate in aspects of online classes are acknowledged by the respondents in this study of attitudes on online learning.

Table 4
Survey Result of Suggestions/Recommendations of Respondents in Online Schooling

Item	Teachers		Parents		Students	
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description
1. Activities in online class should be organized better	3.6	SA	3.4	SA	3.3	SA
2. Provide more training about digital platform.	3.8	SA	3.2	A	3.3	SA
3. Provide Psycho-social support	3.6	SA	3.4	SA	3.3	SA
4. Remedial classes and exams be provided	3.8	SA	3.4	SA	3.3	SA
5. More parents consultations and interactions	3.8	SA	3.2	A	3.1	A
6. Provision for strong internet connections for teachers.	3.8	SA	3.4	SA	3.4	SA
7. Reduce teachers paper works to focus more on mastery of delivery	3.6	SA	3.5	SA	3.3	SA
8. Reduce screen-time exposure to both teachers and students	3.8	SA	3.5	SA	3.3	SA
9. Provide parents training on effective engagement in online modality.	3.6	SA	3.2	A	3.2	A
10. Incorporate learning technologies in strategic plan	3.8	SA	3.4	SA	3.3	SA
Overall Weighted mean	**3.72**	**SA**	**3.34**	**SA**	**3.27**	**SA**

Table shows result of survey about the suggestions/recommendations of teachers, students and parents. It reveals that items". Provide more training about digital platform." Remedial classes and exams are provided." More parents consultations and interactions", Provision for strong internet connections for teachers", Reduce screen-time exposure to both teachers and students, "Incorporate learning technologies in strategic plan, gained the higher weighted mean score of 3.8 interpreted as "Strongly Agree". Likewise, items" Activities in online class should be organized better", "Provide Psycho-social support", "Reduce teachers' paper works to focus more on mastery of delivery "Incorporate learning technologies in strategic plan" obtained the weighted mean of 3.6 interpreted as " Strongly Agree". The **overall mean** is **3.72** interpreted as **"Strongly Agree"**.

With respect to parents survey on suggestion and recommendations items "Reduce teachers' paper works to focus more on mastery of delivery", "Reduce screen-time exposure to both teachers and students" got the highest weighted mean of 3.5

interpreted as "Strongly Agree" while "Provide more training about digital platform.", "More parents consultations and interactions, "Provide parents training on effective engagement in online modality" obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.2 interpreted as "Agree". The overall weighted mean is 3.34 interpreted as "Strongly Agree".

Students survey on suggestions and recommendations revealed that item" Provision for strong internet connections for teachers." while item" More parents consultations and interactions," got the lowest weighted mean of 3.1 interpreted as "Agree". The **overall weighted mean** is **3.27** interpreted as **"Agree".**

Based upon the result it is affirmed that challenges in online schooling can be addressed as a matter of change in policies and programs. Aside from the things commonly regarded as beneficial for the improvements of online learning such as establishing norms, creating accessible content, strengthening relationship, fostering lively interactions and connecting with families, (Nielsen, 2020) there are other concerns that are

recognized to be of utmost needs to be included in the program of instituting technologies like using online modality in teaching and learning.

Findings above show the strong sentiments of respondents that provisions of giving emphasis on those items mentioned above are necessary.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The conclusions that have been summarized are as follows:
1. There are benefits in online schooling/modality.
2. Problems exist in online schooling.
3. Perceived improvements of online modality were derived from the stakeholders.

Based on the conclusions following recommendations were crafted:
1. Include online modality in future curriculum design of the school.
2. Involve the stakeholders, teachers, parents and students in planning and decision making
3. Reduce teachers' workloads and students' tasks as well as screen time to reduce health hazards brought by too much exposure to blue light and gadgets.
4. Provide contingency measures or alternatives to problems encountered in online schooling.
5. Induce more training and follow-ups especially for teachers.
6. Upgrade learning technologies and teachers' capabilities.
7. Provide teachers with resources and flexibility.

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