

## **Students' Noncompliance to Subject Requirements**

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### **Abstract**

Students' noncompliance with subject requirements is one of the most common and crucial problems that every school encounters. This problem may cause students to lose confidence and enthusiasm for their educational journey. Clearly, this problem affects the progression and development of the students' education. For this reason, this classroom-based action research was carefully considered to understand possible causes and interventions for students with Incomplete Requirement (INC). In addition, a group of students with incomplete subject requirements were contacted, and online interviews were implemented. A detailed analysis of the gathered information revealed that there were a variety of factors contributing to the act of negligence. The factors or reasons for the problem were gathered by the participants. This includes one emergent theme (external factor), four organizing themes (ICT Related Factors, Location/Proximity Factors, Financial/Economic Factors, and Teacher Factor), and eight basic subthemes (No/Limited Internet Connection, No Device, specifically laptop use in online classes, Frequent Power Interruptions, Pandemic Restrictions, High Fair, Work/Part-time Jobs, Financial needs for Mobile Data, and Low to no response of teachers to queries). The study's overall recommendation was for the institution and teachers to give more consideration to and versatility in the tasks and projects they were about to give to the learners.

Keywords: non-compliance, subject requirements, classroom-based, education

### **Background of Study**

There are various practical concerns that people typically neglect when it comes to teaching, such as dealing with pupils who do not turn in required assignments on time. Late submission of tasks by students is an unavoidable part of every teacher's teaching experience. Even while most teachers are flexible with deadlines, particularly at this challenging time of pandemic, as not all students have access to the finest internet, it appears that this does not always have the desired effect. The study's need emerged from the several students who reported INC in their course. Hence, the researchers highlight the need to identify and develop strategies that will assist in ensuring that each of these students will be able to meet their deadlines.

This study is grounded in B.F. Skinner's Theory of Operant Conditioning. According to the theory, people perform an activity in order to either obtain reinforcement or avoid punishment. Operant conditioning entails the strengthening or weakening of a behavior based on the positive or negative outcomes of that conduct. Positive reinforcement for students who complete their assignments on time will result in the desired behavior being repeated. Negative reinforcement, on the other hand, strengthens conduct by preventing or eliminating unpleasant behavior by the INC students. The reinforcement given to INC students' actions will most likely result in a shift in their behavior, encouraging them to be more motivated and complete their work on time.

This study focuses on how to provide solutions to the existing educational problem: the students' noncompliance with subject requirements. The root cause of this problem can be due to maladaptive behavior, where the students opt not to adapt to new and difficult circumstances. Students tend to refuse to start or complete the activity given by the teacher. Tolerating this type of behavior not only affects the student, but it can also have an impact on the teaching environment because the students are not learning to their full potential. If this problem is often neglected, it could affect the academic performance of the student, thus affecting the academic rate of the school. This is why addressing this problem by developing some strategies can uplift the students' academic performance and also maintain the school's academic integrity.

According to Catalano, Torff & Anderson (2021), the emergence of COVID-19 resulted in the widespread closure of private schools and publicly supported schools and immediately adopted online learning. This transition affects most of the students all around the globe and leads to noncompliance with subject requirements. In their study, it was stated that 30% were having difficulty in accomplishing their tasks, resulting in lower marks. This is a huge concern for the student's educational outcome. Moreover, parents and teachers should collaborate in following directions with regard to the notices of noncompliance in order to address the area of concern. There are specific solutions given to those who commit misconduct and disobedience. Some of these are drawing the attention of the parent/s or a one-on-one session (Arkansas Virtual Academy 2020).

Teachers in today's student-centered classrooms serve as mentors or motivators as students' study independently. Throughout the decades, many students have failed to succeed, and the reasons for this have stayed nearly unchanged. According to Seo (2019), many studies have been undertaken to determine the exact reasons why pupils fail, despite the greater impact of current educational technology. Some of the causes were a lack of enthusiasm and perseverance, a lack of preparation and effort, poor time management, and a variety of other external circumstances. But due to COVID-19, the academic institutions find ways to adapt to the new normal, which also greatly affects and brings changes in the educational system. Thus, this research is significant as it will allow the academe as well as the teachers to find out the reasons for the students' perspective that they got incomplete in a certain subject area. In this way, the institution and the teacher can intervene to reduce or permanently halt the number of students who received incompletes in their finals.

## **Intervention**

Interventions are used to target an academic need with a specific program or set of activities (Lee, 2021). Through intervention, teachers can track the struggling students' progress as they will be given a specialized program or series of procedures designed to meet a certain academic demand. Teachers, administrators, and policy-makers across the country need materials that address today's problems and initiatives. Even during the pre-pandemic, educators encountered challenges when it came to students' lack of requirements.

Intervention aids in the prevention and mitigation of the problem and its consequences for students, who may become mentally disengaged from school, doubt their ability to graduate, and lack academic plans as a result of receiving INC.

This research will be utilizing the theory of change through our action research. According to Serrat (2017), a theory of change is a deliberate model of how an initiative—such as a policy, plan, program, or project—contributes to the intended result through a chain of early and intermediate results. Change theories aid in navigating the complexities of societal change. The chief proponents of each theory of change were Auguste Comte (1798–1857); Herbert Spencer (1820–1903); and Emile Durkheim (1858–1917); Karl Marx (1818–1883); and Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), respectively. This theory will be used by the researchers since it explains choices for how the Action Plan will be established or changed, displayed, and used. A theory of change can serve as the foundation for a "performance story"—a unified narrative about how the intervention contributes to specific goals. This can be beneficial for informing potential partners, participants, and policymakers about the intervention, as well as providing a constant point of reference for those involved in its implementation and management.

### Action Research Questions

The purpose of this Classroom-Based Action Research was to find out the students' reasons regarding their INC in the Science subject. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What specific major subject in Science do the students have Incomplete (INC) as a rating?
2. What are the reason/s why the students have INC as a rating?
3. What are the students' suggestions to the institution or the teacher in order to assist them?

### Action Research Methods

#### A. Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

This action research was conducted at the University of Mindanao Digos College. There were four students from different year levels. The participants were chosen since each of them got an INC in one of their major subjects in science. Their participation was entirely voluntary, and prior to data collection, formal agreement from both the school dean and the interviewees was obtained. At the onset of each interview, issues of anonymity and confidentiality in data processing were also fully discussed.

#### B. Data Gathering Methods

The following steps were done by the researchers in gathering the data:

**Requesting Access to Data from the Institution.** The researchers seek approval for the conduct of action research at the University of Mindanao Digos College.

**Inquiring Access to Data from the Teachers.** The researchers requested data from one of the professors in the Department of Teacher Education, specifically in Science subjects, in order to obtain a list of students from various year levels who received INC in Science subjects.

**Administration and Retrieval of the Instruments.** Subsequently, the retrieved data will be used in crafting self-made questionnaires that will be utilized during interviews.

**Data Collection Procedures.** The researchers will now contact the respondents and conduct the interview through Messenger—video call or Google Meet.

**Processing of Data.** The answers given during interviews will be examined and transcribed.

**Interpretation and Analysis of Data.** The researchers will analyze the data using a thematic analysis approach in order to arrive at a certain and more detailed conclusion.

**Action Planning.** Based on the findings, the researchers will devise an action plan to assist academia and teachers in dealing with the large number of students who received INC.

## C. Data Analysis

### Thematic Analysis

This action research employs a thematic analysis approach. For all qualitative analyses, thematic analysis is considered a foundational method (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King & Horrocks, 2010). Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2006) claim that "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data." This is especially beneficial because our study's goal is to uncover themes, concepts, and patterns in the data acquired during the interviews; after that, the researchers will discuss the various aspects of the students' details. Initially, becoming familiar with the data sparked ideas for code creation. The codes that were connected together were then categorized into probable themes. Each theme was double-checked to ensure that it accurately represented both its coded extracts and the complete data set. The themes were built using the data's content to express their explicit meaning. After that, each subject was developed and improved by assigning explicit meanings and names to it. We addressed our opinions, arguments, and questions with one another throughout the process to decrease the possibility of subjectivity and preconceptions. Finally, we came to a conclusion by summarizing the main findings.

### Results and Discussions

The results are presented and discussed with reference to the focus of the study. This chapter focuses on the summary of data collected and its analysis with the basis for the research questions of the study.

#### **Research Question 1: What specific major subject in Science do the students have Incomplete (INC) as a rating?**

Based on the results, the students have varied subjects that they have INC as a rating. These subjects are The Teaching of Science, Anatomy and Physiology, Cell and Molecular Biology, and Waves and Optics.

#### **Research Question 2: What are the reason/s why the students have INC as a rating?**

Based on the findings of this study, the students have a variety of subjects that they have INC as a rating. These are the Teaching of Science, Anatomy and Physiology, Cell and Molecular Biology, and Waves and Optics. Some majors are tougher than others, given that science is such a large field that includes degrees ranging from biology to physics. Against the tragic backdrop of the pandemic, many students may find academic requirements to be

demanding and unforgiving (Literat, 2021). As a result, they are having difficulty doing so. Also, students expressed their dissatisfaction with their workloads and tiredness. Some kids had lost interest. These problems did not go away with time (Niemi & Kousa, 2020).

One of the students received an INC in Molecular Cell Biology, which, according to Onalo (2021), is one of the most difficult Biology degrees to obtain, and Biology is a difficult discipline in and of itself. Also, according to Fauzi and Fariantika (2018), Genetic courses were by far the most frequently rated as the most challenging (first and second toughest) by both educational and non-educational students. Genetics is a part of biology that deals with these issues and contains a lot of challenging topics. Moreover, studies on learning challenges frequently describe Genetics as a topic/concept that students find compelling, both at the secondary school level (imer, 2012) and at the university level (Murray-Nseula, 2011).

### **Matrix 1: External Factors**

<b>Significant Statements</b>	<b>Basic Themes</b>	<b>Organizing Themes</b>	<b>Emergent Theme</b>
Also, it was very difficult to find stable internet connection because it is really hard to search for signal here in Barangay Tibolo.  (Respondent 2)	No / Limited Internet Connection		
I send my activities, before the day or on the time of deadline, even if sometimes I woke up at 1 a.m. to submit because the internet connection is unstable because of our rural area.  (Respondent 4)		ICT Related Factors	External factors
The second reason is because I don't have a laptop, I only use cellphone in editing files because it's very difficult as the screen is small. Sometimes the office docs are not suitable on the cellphone. It takes a lot of time to answer.  (Respondent 3)	No device specifically laptop use in online class.		

I do not deny the fact that we are not financially stable, I only use cellphone that time because I do not have laptop, then it's really hard to edit especially files, but I do know that there is a solution in every problem.  (Respondent 4)			
But that time I was not able to comply and go to school it's because due to pandemic there are travel restrictions in our area.  (Respondent 1)	Pandemic Restrictions	Location / Proximity Factors	
Because that time we experienced brown-out for one week, that's the reason why I was never able to do my requirements for that subject.  (Respondent 2)	Frequent Power Interruptions		
Another problem is that the tricycle fare was high back and forth.  (Respondent 1)	High Fair		
There are a lot of reasons actually, one of the reasons is I am working while studying at the same time, and there are times when the demand for work is more important than doing school requirements.	Work / Part-time Jobs	Financial / Economic Factors	

(Respondent 3)			
When I also use my phone in online class, I also spend a lot of money because the online class consumes a lot data.	Financial needs for Mobile Data		
(Respondent 4)			
Also, when I follow-up my requirements at school the teacher was not there.  I always dropped messages all the time to inform and to be active in her messenger but there's no response. Maybe she is too busy to do school paperwork's.	Low to no response of teachers to queries	Teacher Factor	
(Respondent 1)			
I am also doing follow-ups regarding my INC to the teacher but sometimes it really takes a lot of time to get a response.			
(Respondent 3)			

Matrix 1 depicts the various explanations given by students for their INC in a major science subject. It has been demonstrated that external factors emerge from several aspects that influence a student's academic performance. Based on the data gathered, the researchers come up with one Emergent theme (External Factors), four organizing themes (1. ICT Related Factors, 2. Location / Proximity Factors, 3. Financial / Economic Factors, and 4. Teacher Factor), and eight basic subthemes (1. No / Limited Internet Connection, 2. No device, No Laptop, 3. Frequent Power Interruptions, 4. Pandemic Restrictions, 5. High Fair, 6. Work, 7. Mobile Data, and 8. Low to no response of teachers to queries).

### **1. ICT Related Factors**

- a. *No internet connection.* Over the years, the internet has become an increasingly significant tool for promoting academic programs in tertiary institutions around the world, not just in the Philippines. According to Bauer, Brooks, and Hampton (2020), students in rural areas may lag behind academically due to slow Internet connections

or limited access from their homes. Academic failure, college admissions, and professional chances can all be negatively impacted by educational setbacks. One participant even mentioned that:

*“Also, it was very difficult to find stable internet connection because it is really hard to search for signal here in Barangay Tibolo.”*

(Respondent 2)

*“I send my activities, before the day or on the time of deadline, even if sometimes I woke up at 1 a.m. to submit because the internet connection is unstable because of our rural area.”*

(Respondent 4)

According to the findings, the most rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged students are the least likely to have broadband Internet access at home. Only 47% of students in rural areas have access to high-speed Internet at home, compared to 77% of students in suburban areas, and 58 percent live on a farm or in another rural area.

- b. *No device specifically laptop use in online class.* As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a substantial shift to online learning, which threatens worsening educational inequality. The participant even stated that:

*“The second reason is because I don't have a laptop, I only use cellphone in editing files because it's very difficult as the screen is small. Sometimes the office docs are not suitable on the cellphone. It takes a lot of time to answer.”*

(Respondent 3)

*“I do not deny the fact that we are not financially stable, I only use cellphone that time because I do not have laptop, then it's really hard to edit especially files, but I do know that there is a solution in every problem.”*

(Respondent 4)

According to Nature Editorial (2020) many students are being left out as schools switch to online learning because they do not have access to computers or broadband. Additionally, 36% of individuals without home access live in a home without a computer (Bauer, Brooks, & Hampton, 2020).

## **2. Location / Proximity Factors**

- a. *Local Pandemic Restrictions.* Not only is the current coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic affecting people's health, but it's also affecting how they learn, work, and live. One of the most significant issues posed by COVID-19 is how to modify an educational system based on physical schooling. At its peak, more than 188 countries, accounting for around 91 percent of the world's enrolled students, stopped their schools to attempt

to stop the virus from spreading. School closures have a significant impact on all students, but particularly the most vulnerable, who are more likely to confront additional challenges (UNESCO, 2022). The student even mentioned that:

*"But that time I was not able to comply and go to school it's because due to pandemic there are travel restrictions in our area."*

(Respondent 1)

During the early period of Covid – 19, LGU's in Davao Region has imposed their own travel restrictions such as blocking non-essential travels, presenting barangay certificates in crossing borders of cities, and presenting QR codes in buying necessities or visiting establishments.

- b. *Frequent Power Interruptions.* Rotational power outages, in addition to inadequate internet connections, were a difficulty for students taking online classes at home (Delos Reyes, 2021). The disruption adds to the stress of students attempting to meet class deadlines on time. The participants even stated that:

*"Because that time we experienced brown-out for one week, that's the reason why I was never able to do my requirements for that subject."*

(Respondent 2)

The disruption of electrical power adds to the stress of students attempting to meet class deadlines on time.

### **3. Financial / Economic Factors.**

- a. *High Fare.* Education concerns in the Philippines have intensified as a result of COVID-19, which has added new hurdles to the country's current situation. Distance learning modalities via the internet or TV broadcasts were ordered in response to the unexpected occurrences brought on by the health crisis. In addition, in October 2020, a blended learning program was launched, which includes online classes, printouts, and lessons broadcast on television and social media channels. As a result, the new learning pathways rely on students and teachers having internet connection (Enicola, 2021).

*"Another problem is that the tricycle fare was high back and forth."*

(Respondent 1)

Despite transitioning into online, students with INC will still need to comply and follow-up their requirements in the school. Having this, the amount of money they spend in travelling really cost a lot because of restricting or limiting the passenger in a vehicle.

- b. *Work / Part-time Jobs.* According to Muluk (2017), part-time employment has been identified as one of the elements impacting students' academic success. This is inferred, based on their response.

*"There are a lot of reasons actually, one of the reasons is I am working while studying at the same time, and*

*there are times when the demand for work is more important than doing school requirements.*

(Respondent 3)

Additionally, working more than 20 hours per week has a negative impact on academics and attendance (Wadood, Hussain, & Raza, 2018).

- c. *Financial needs for Mobile Data.* According to Bauer, Brooks, and Hampton (2020) it turns out that poor student performance is linked to both Internet access and socioeconomic factors. Additionally, Norazlan, Yusuf, and Al-Majdhoub (2020) the financial situation of students has a significant impact on their academic achievement. The participants even stated that:

*"When I also use my phone in online class, I also spend a lot of money because the online class consumes a lot data."*

(Respondent 4)

Financial difficulties are a severe problem that must be handled because they lead to a slew of other challenges, including health troubles and poor academic performance. Dang and Bulus (2015) argue that because education is a high-cost social service, students will struggle to improve their academic performance if they do not receive adequate financial support.

#### **4. Teacher Factor**

- a. *Low to no response of teachers to queries.* There is also an issue for students in the new normal in Philippine education, which is the difficulty in communicating with their subject teachers. This is inferred, based on their response.

*"Also, when I follow-up my requirements at school the teacher was not there."*

*I always dropped messages all the time to inform and to be active in her messenger but there's no response. Maybe she is too busy to do school paperwork's."*

(Respondent 1)

*"I am also doing follow-ups regarding my INC to the teacher but sometimes it really takes a lot of time to get a response."*

(Respondent 3)

In the new normal, the students' perceived problem is the difficulty of reaching out to their teachers. In the current circumstances, students find it difficult to communicate with their teachers. This means that more students are at risk of dropping out or failing since students and professors are having trouble interacting and providing feedback. Students who are not watched and offered assistance in the new normal are more likely to drop out, and if they are not given sufficient care, they may lose their prospects of returning to school (Fontanos, Gonzales, Lucasan, &Ocampo, 2020).

Despite the technological difference, Blankstein, Frederick, and Wolff-Eisenberg (2020) stated that professors must communicate with pupils on a regular basis. Instructors, on the other hand, must be given guidance and interventions to help them reach out to students and teachers with the help of school administrators and DepEd policymakers. Teachers must also work with parents, communities, and other stakeholders to keep in touch with students.

### **Research Question 3: What are the students' suggestions to the institution or the teacher in order to assist them?**

Based on the data gathered, the respondents are seeking for consideration of the teacher when it comes to submitting the subject requirements. Three of them even specified that:

*"For me, if there are students who was not able to submit their requirements, they need to consider where the students' lives, since the way of learning is online, students living in rural areas, always raining and brown out, we will have a hard time keeping up with the requirements."*

(Respondent 2)

*The approach was okay. We we're given what mode of learning to choose from, either modular or online. I just want to suggest to give the requirements ahead of time to we can have ample of time especially students like me who have work."*

(Respondent 3)

*Also, to the teacher, consideration and more patience, and try to reach out your students if what are their reason for not submitting the activity. I am not demanding nor contradict in your teaching perspective, but at least an effort will do."*

(Respondent 4)

The statements above imply how students seek for consideration during this trying times. According to Garcia, Weiss, and Welshans (2020) teachers are the first-hand witnesses to the challenges the pandemic has posed for their students, themselves, and their employment, and their knowledge and judgment are vital in resolving these issues as the pandemic continues and after it has passed. This is the reason why students are seeking help from their teachers because they are one of the the focal persons who can help them regarding their academic difficulties.

### **Reflection**

One-third of college students were taking at least one online course as of 2018. (Ruth, 2018). It's surreal to be in year two of the pandemic. It seems like only a day has passed since last March, but it also feels like an eternity. COVID caused everyone to have personal issues,

some of which were more significant than others, but everyone struggled. Although online education has grown rapidly, the online learning environment can have a substantial impact on a student's capacity or motivation to finish a task on time. In addition to the regular problems that students face while in college, online students face additional challenges.

Many internal and external factors obstruct their ability to learn. They can work out or discover a solution to the internal factor on their own, but what about the external factor? - anything beyond their control that can have unfavorable consequences. Students' frustrations with things they can't control, such as power outages, being financially unstable, having no internet connection, not having the right equipment, and so on, have a direct impact on their learning process.

In comparison to their traditional face-to-face counterparts, Yilmaz (2017) discovered that students in an online context procrastinate more on assignment submissions. This is understandable because life experiences might have an impact on one's academic performance. The online learning environment places a great demand on students' ability to self-regulate (Klingsieck Fries, Horz, & Hofer, 2012).

According to the study's findings, external factors are the reasons why students have an INC on their specific subject. The state of students' external circumstances has an impact on their level of belief and self-determination. They felt inept and their online learning was of no use to them (Lepper, Corpus & Iyengar, 2005). Gustiani (2020) also claimed that students felt self-determined for their online learning when they experienced good external motivation. Thus, students who are driven by external factors are more likely to stay on track with their subject requirements and avoid late submissions. As mentioned by B.F. Skinner's Theory of Operant, a little reinforcement will strengthen or weaken a behavior based on the positive or negative outcomes of that behavior. Students will most likely change their behavior as a result of the reward they receive, helping them to be more motivated and complete their work on time.

Moreover, the effectiveness of a teacher, or the lack thereof, can have a substantial impact on the completion of assignments on time (Nordby et al., 2017). This was due in large part to excellent educators creating a classroom environment that allowed pupils to better organize and plan their work. In a nutshell, students and teachers need to work together. Unmotivated learners may become motivated if they perceive someone is assisting and encouraging them in the best way possible.

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