LEARNING ONLINE AND LEARNING AT HOME: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON DISTANCE AND AT HOME LEARNING

APRENDIZAGEM ONLINE E APRENDIZAGEM EM CASA: A PERSPECTIVA DOS ALUNOS SOBRE O ENSINO A DISTÂNCIA E A APRENDIZAGEM EM CASA

Freddie R. Cabrera*
*College of Education, Isabela State University, Cauayan City Isabela, Philippines
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9083-1497
freddie.r.cabrera@isu.edu.ph

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

Abstract
This qualitative study explored students' perspectives on distance and at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at Isabela State University-Cauayan City Campus in the Philippines. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 students from four colleges chosen through purposive sampling. Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed four major themes: outlook of participants on online learning, preference for online or distant learning, benefits of online learning, and problems in online learning. Participants expressed both positive and equivocal outlooks on their online learning experiences. While they appreciated the opportunity to continue their studies during lockdowns, some felt ambivalence due to challenges encountered, such as poor internet connectivity, power outages, inadequate personal resources, pressure to complete requirements, and limited access to technological tools. Despite these issues, participants agreed that online learning was the best instructional method available during the pandemic. Benefits cited included the ability to study outside of school, reduced expenses, ease of access to learning resources, and improved discipline, responsibility, and time management. However, participants generally preferred face-to-face instruction, finding it more convenient for certain aspects of their courses. The study highlights the need for systematic training initiatives to improve technological skills, the development of structured educational materials and e-learning platforms, and consistent communication between teachers and students to address the challenges of online learning during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID 19. Learning Online. Learning at Home. Perspective. Qualitative Research.

Resumo
Este estudo qualitativo explorou as perspectivas dos alunos sobre o ensino a distância e em casa durante a pandemia de COVID-19 no campus da Universidade Estadual de Isabela em Cauayan City, Filipinas. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com 12 alunos de quatro faculdades, selecionados por amostragem intencional. A análise temática dos dados das entrevistas revelou quatro temas principais: visão dos participantes sobre o ensino online, preferência pelo ensino online ou a distância, benefícios do ensino online e problemas no ensino online. Os participantes expressaram visões tanto positivas quanto ambivalentes sobre suas experiências de ensino online. Embora tenham apreciado a oportunidade de continuar seus estudos durante os lockdowns, alguns sentiram ambivalência devido aos desafios encontrados, como má conectividade com a internet, quedas de energia, recursos pessoais inadequados, pressão para cumprir requisitos e acesso limitado a ferramentas tecnológicas. Apesar desses problemas, os participantes concordaram que o ensino online era o melhor método de ensino disponível durante a pandemia. Os benefícios citados incluíram a possibilidade de estudar fora da escola, redução de despesas, facilidade de acesso a recursos de aprendizagem e melhoria na disciplina, responsabilidade e gestão do tempo. No entanto, os participantes geralmente preferiram o ensino presencial, considerando-o mais conveniente para certos aspectos de seus cursos. O estudo destaca a necessidade de iniciativas de formação sistemática para melhorar as competências tecnológicas, o desenvolvimento de materiais didáticos estruturados e plataformas de aprendizagem online, bem como uma comunicação consistente entre professores e alunos para enfrentar os desafios da aprendizagem online durante a pandemia.

1 INTRODUCTION

Given the alarmingly rapid spread of COVID-19, the World Health Organization declared it a global pandemic, resulting in the closure of different schools and universities. Government agencies all over the world mandated strict social containment measures, and this resulted in an unprecedented restructuring of education delivery as educational institutions had to undergo closure. This new norm brought about challenges, problems, and opportunities for the academic sector, especially with regards to the teaching-learning process. For instance, school closures resulted in a widespread venture of educational institutions into the world of distance and online learning. While said modalities have been around for some time, it was only during the pandemic that they gained a strong traction given the restrictions of the current times. Due to the aforementioned, the implementation of flexible learning seems more advantageous. According to Muller et al. (2018), for example, flexible learning, just as the term itself suggests, enables students to gain better access to learning with regards to time, place, pace, learning style, content, assessment, and learning path. In the Philippines, this became the authorized modality for tertiary education as accorded by the Commission on Higher Education, specifically in the issued Memorandum No. 4, Series of 2020, which guidelines in the implementation of flexible learning and teaching options, approaches, strategies, systems, pedagogies, and modalities in all higher education institutions in both graduate and undergraduate, including those under permit status. Schools, colleges, and universities are forced to conduct lectures and classes online as an alternative method by which to continue students' learning. While online learning has been proven to support the health of students during the pandemic, it is not as effective as face-to-face.

Not all educational institutions are ready for the sudden shift. Some schools may be equipped with some sort of technology embedded in their regular face-to-face classes. Even so, they find it quite challenging to upskill their shareholders with the technology required for distant online learning and teaching in such a short time. Most schools,

however, do not have such a privilege in terms of resources and facilities for online learning. Such a condition has posed extra challenges to their school communities. Not all students are accustomed to online learning. Moreover, many teachers and lecturers are not yet proficient in teaching using internet technology, especially in various regions and far-flung schools in the Philippines. In Isabela State University, the students are subjected to both online, at-home learning, and asynchronous modalities. The university president mandated this through the issuance of Memorandum No. 252, Series of 2020, which ordered the implementation of a 40-minute, one-day online lecture for each course, with the rest of the week consisting of asynchronous and modular learning activities. This shift has brought with it an opportunity for the academic sector to fully investigate the impact of online learning, learning at home, and synchronous learning arrangements for students in higher education. As Veletsianos and Houlden (2019) mentioned, flexible learning has been a topic of study in the last 40 years, as there are various questions and issues not only about its impact but also how it is defined and practiced. This is due to the fact that the concept of flexible learning is in constant evolution given the modernization of instructional practices and the development and inclusion of technology in education, especially the internet (Naido, 2017).

Numerous studies have been conducted about the effectiveness of online learning and learning at home, and the challenges and restrictions that it can cause to students have been considered. Among these are studies conducted by Hazwani et al. (2017), Irfan and Iman (2020), Awal et al. (2020), Wildana et al. (2020), Muhammad and Kainat (2020), and Nurul Haidah et al. (2020). Irfan and Iman (2020) contend that online learning is ineffective and is conducted inappropriately. They demonstrate this with reference to several factors, such as unsuitable internet facilities, teachers' inability to implement online learning, and the lack of cooperation given by parents. Contrastingly, Awal et al. (2020) found that online learning is effective but inefficient. They understand online learning to be effective as a response to the urgency of the pandemic; however, learning outcomes cannot be met, as it requires significant costs to purchase suitable internet packages.

Online learning can be defined as instruction delivered on a digital device that is intended to support learning (Clark, 2016). In the literature, several advantages of online learning have been highlighted: studying from anywhere, at any time; the possibility of

saving significant amounts of money; no commuting on crowded buses or local trains; flexibility to choose; learning at home and saving time [Nagrale, 2020; Brown, 2020; Bijeesh, 2020]. Online learning is thus becoming more and more important for education during the time of the worldwide health emergency, offering the opportunity to remain in touch, even if remotely, with classmates and teachers and to follow lessons. However, many challenges. Interactive online classes are also providing opportunities for social interaction and facilitating the continuity of education for all via remote learning, and through that they will learn and study at home.`

In view of the aforementioned views and literature, the researcher took an interest in determining students perspectives on online and at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the nature of the times, it is expected that distance learning is the new norm for educational institutions not only in the Philippines but also all over the world. Since this is the case, the researcher conducted this study for the purpose of providing empirical insights that can help ISU improve its learning delivery to the students and, as a result, improve their performance as well. The findings will help identify the required changes on a priority basis to make it more practical and worthwhile.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to determine the students perspective on online and at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it aimed to identify:

1. their overall perception about online learning based on their experiences
2. preference for online and distant learning;
3. benefits of online learning;
4. problems in online learning; and
5. Problems and issues in online learning

2 METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The researcher utilized qualitative research design by conducting one-on-one interviews. Conducting one-on-one interviews with the respondents is suitable and

appropriate to this study in order to attain the goal and objectives of the study, which are to determine the students perspective on distance and at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents of this study were the 12 students from the four (4) colleges/institutes of Isabela State University-Cauayan City Campus chosen through purposive sampling. It is composed of 3 students from the College of Education, College of Business and Management, Institute of Agricultural Technology, and Polytechnic School. Semi-structured interviews were adopted as the principal tool to elicit verbal data for this study. The author worked as the interviewer and asked four broad, open-ended questions to direct the interview. The interviewees were encouraged to give detailed responses to the following four questions: 1. What is your overall perception about online learning based on your experiences with it? 2. Would you say you prefer online learning to face-to-face instruction? Why/Why not? 3. What would you consider the most beneficial aspects of learning or studying from home? Why? 4. What would you consider the most troublesome aspects of learning or studying from home? Why? Transcriptions were made, and the data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Generally, thematic analysis is the most widely used qualitative approach to analyze data or information. It is used for "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data" (Braun, 2006). The information collected was analyzed and categorized, revealing four major themes: (1) Outlook of participants to online learning; (2) preference for online or distant learning; (3) benefits of online learning; and (4) problems in online learning. Each theme was categorized and formulated in meaning and theme cluster.

Furthermore, respondents from the College of Education were coded as PB, the College of Business and Management as PB, the Institute of Agricultural Technology as PC, and Polytechnic School as PD.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 General perception of participants on online learning

Table 1

Emergent Theme 1: Outlook of Participants to Online Learning

Statement	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
I was thankful that our school made an effort that allowed us to continue learning even if we were confined to our homes. (PA1)	Gratitude for opportunity to continue studying	Positivity
Of course, I am happy that, despite the pandemic, online learning enabled us to continue our studies. While there were adjustments, in my opinion, the advantages really outweighed the disadvantages, especially given the situation we were in at that time. (PA2)		
I appreciate the effort my school puts into giving us the chance to continue our classes, which is why I have a positive outlook on online learning. (PB1)		
I appreciated it because it was what we needed in order to continue our studies. When the lockdowns started, my main concern as a student was my studies and how I could finish my course. (PB3)		
It was new, and of course, it was a big help for us students when COVID-19 came. That's why I appreciated it overall. (PC2)		
I am thankful that our school was able to give us students that option during the pandemic, especially for students like me who were close to graduating. It was a blessing for me, in general. (PC3)		
I am thankful that the school applied it. As someone who was expecting to graduate, the sudden suspension of classes was a huge setback. Online learning gave me hope that I could still continue my studies, and although there was a delay, it wasn't as bad as I initially imagined. (PD1)		
It was God-sent because I was able to keep up with my studies. (PD2)		
It was a good thing, especially during the height of the pandemic. It was really necessary. But there were also a lot of adjustments, not just for us students but even more so for our school and our teachers. As an education student, I can imagine the difficulty our teachers faced in adapting so suddenly to the new learning environment. So I think online learning was necessary, but I also know that there's still a lot that needs to be improved. (PA3)	Recognition of positive and negative sides of the experience	Ambivalence
I think, just like everything else, the entire experience has its positive and negative qualities. But given the situation during the pandemic, when quarantining and social distancing were prioritized, online learning was really an essential move for schools to continue operating and for us to keep learning. (PC1)		
It was a new experience, and for the most part, it was beneficial. But of course, we also encountered problems that were a bit discouraging, especially things beyond our control like resources, for example. However, I also understand that if I was having		

difficulties, surely the school and my teachers were also doing their best to adjust to the new situation we were all in. (PD3)		

Analysis of the participants statements during the interview revealed two theme clusters on their outlook regarding their experiences in online learning: positive outlook and equivocal outlook.

Under the cluster of positivity, the formulated meaning was the feeling of gratitude of some of the students for the opportunity to continue their studies. This was stipulated in the statements of PA1, PA2, PB1, PB3, PC2, and PC3, respectively, who signified that they were thankful that they could finally continue studying even during the midst of the pandemic lockdowns when everyone was required to stay in their homes. The statements of PC3 and PD1 also revealed that the possibility of them getting delayed from finishing their studies caused them worry.

Similarly, several studies have revealed that the pandemic took its toll on the mental health of many students. In a comprehensive literature review conducted by Jehi et al. (2022), for example, it was determined that at least a third of students in higher education suffered from anxiety during their confinement in the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the reasons cited for the prevalence of anxiety among students was the uncertainty of the future. As PC3 also mentioned in the interview, "Honestly speaking, just alleviating my worry that the delay in my studies wouldn't be too long was a big thing for me." Other studies that highlighted this concern among college students included those by Son et al. (2020), Tee et al. (2020), and Wu et al. (2021).

Given that the students worry about being delayed in their studies, they found the introduction of the online learning modality as a good alternative for them to continue studying even during the lockdown; hence their positive outlook towards it. A similar reaction from students was also determined in the study of Almahasees et al. (2021).

The second theme cluster identified was ambivalence, which was elicited by the formulated meaning of recognition of positive and negative sides of the experience. PC1 stated: "I think, just like everything else, the entire experience has its positive and negative qualities. But given the situation during the pandemic, when quarantining and social distancing were prioritized, online learning was truly an essential move for schools so they could continue operating and for us to keep learning." In the same note, PD3

explained, "It was a new experience, and for the most part, it was beneficial. However, we also faced challenges that were somewhat disheartening, particularly those related to factors beyond our control, such as resources."

The statements from these participants indicate that while they acknowledge the benefit of having an alternative learning modality during the pandemic, they also recognize the difficulties they experience while engaging in online learning. As Almahasees et al. (2021) also found out in their study, both faculty members and students agree on the usefulness of online instruction during the pandemic, but at the same time, they also cited that there were challenges in using that modality. As PD3 also stated, "But I also understand that if I was having difficulties, the school and my teachers were surely doing their best to adjust to the new situation we were in."

The two themes identified with regards to the general perception of the participants about their experiences with online learning show that while all of them had a positive outlook about it, there was also a mention of difficulties; hence, some of the participants felt ambivalence towards the said learning modality. All of the participants agreed, however, that online learning was the best instructional method that could have been used during the pandemic.

Such response can be rationalized by the fact that online learning is new in many HEIs in the Philippines in the sense that while it was already done in the past, it was a learning modality that was just an option that not many teachers used regularly pre-pandemic.

Table 2

Emergent Theme 2: Preference for Online and Distant Learning

Statement	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
If the pandemic had not happened, I believe I would still prefer face-to-face learning. There's really a different effect, a different impact. Maybe it's because that's what I'm used to. (PA1)	If given a choice, face-to-face is preferred	Negative
If I really had a choice, I would still prefer the old way. This is primarily due to the sudden nature of the transition, which made the adjustment process challenging. We were not adequately prepared, and my mindset as a student still aligns more with traditional face-to-face classes. (PB1)		
I still prefer face-to-face learning over online learning. So if the pandemic hadn't happened, face-to-face would definitely be my preference. (PD1)		

I don't want to sound ungrateful because I do appreciate the opportunity that online learning provided me as a student during the lockdown. However, if COVID-19 had never happened, I would still prefer face-to-face classes. (PD2)		
In my course, many of our subjects are theoretical, so it can be said that they can be taught and learned online. However, I believe that certain parts of the lessons are more easily understood when conducted in-person. It's easier to concentrate in face-to-face classes, so I prefer that setup better. (PC1)	Face-to-face learning is more convenient	
I still prefer face-to-face learning. It's easier to understand lessons when our professor is right there. For example, the explanation and elaboration of concepts is more effective when done face-to-face. (PC2)		
Maybe it's because I've gotten used to face-to-face learning that I can say I prefer it over online learning. I understand the lessons better when I'm in the classroom. It's more convenient because the environment is controlled, so to speak. (PC3)		
Objectively, I think we should acknowledge that online learning is beneficial to some extent, but at the same time, there are also challenges in adapting to it. (PA2)	There are advantages and disadvantages depending on the course	Ambivalent
It might be better if college classes were a combination of both face-to-face and online learning—a blended approach. Both have their own strengths and weaknesses. Half of me thinks online learning is good, but there's also a part of me that sees the disadvantages it presents. (PA3)		
I think it's about 50-50. As I mentioned earlier, there are positive and negative sides to online learning. So, I'm just neutral regarding my preferences for it. It is beneficial in some aspects, but it is also not as effective in others. (PB2)		
I can't discount the advantages of online learning. However, I also think that we can still make improvements to make it smoother and more effective. That's why I won't say that I prefer one over the other; it really depends on the situation. (PB3)		
It has been a great help. It serves as an alternative to the type of classes we are used to, and there are indeed a lot of benefits. However, we should also acknowledge that there are challenges not only for us students but also for teachers, right? (PD3)		

Table 2 indicates the 9mbivalen theme of the participants preference for online and distant learning. The interview revealed two theme clusters, which are negative and 9mbivalente.

Under the negative theme cluster, one formulated meaning was that if given a choice, face-to-face is preferred. According to PA1, for example, "If the pandemic had not happened, I think I would still prefer face-to-face learning. The effect and the impact

are still different. Maybe it's because that's what I'm used to." PB1, PD1, and PD2 also shared the same opinion.

According to Almahasees et al. (2021), the online learning modality is considered a 'temporary' solution that will enable the continuation of classes for students during the pandemic. That is why many of them still prefer the usual face-to-face instruction they had pre-pandemic.

Another formulated meaning under the negative theme cluster was that face-to-face learning is more convenient, and this was expressed in the statement of PC1, who said, "In my course, many of our subjects are theoretical, so in that aspect, it can be said that these can be taught and learned online. However, there are also parts of the lessons that I think are easier to understand when done face-to-face." PC2 and PC3, who share the same course with PC1, also gave a similar viewpoint. In relation to this, Jaggars (2014) found out in her study that one reason why college students show more preference for face-to-face classes is because they believe that their 'difficult' or 'important' subjects are taught better face-to-face.

Meanwhile, in the theme cluster of ambivalent, the meaning formulated was There are advantages and disadvantages depending on the course. PB2's statement was classified under this theme cluster. According to PB2, "Maybe it's about 50-50. Because, just like I mentioned earlier, there are positive and negative sides to online learning. So, I'm neutral regarding my preferences for it. It is beneficial in some aspects, but it is also not as effective in others." Other participants who shared PB2's opinion include PA2, PA3, and PB3, respectively.

The same sentiment was also perceived in the respondents in the investigation conducted by Muthuprasad et al. (2021). Therein, it was indicated that the student respondents also had mixed opinions about online learning since they recognize that the practical aspects of their courses would be more suitable for face-to-face instruction.

3.2 Perceived benefits of online learning for the participants

Table 3

Emergent Theme 3: Benefits of Online Learning

Statement	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
Distance learning is truly a good alternative overall because of its convenience for students who might prefer learning from home or outside of school. The main advantage is really the flexibility it offers. (PA1).	Alternative modality for studying even outside school	Convenience
The convenience comes from being able to study and learn in the comfort of your own home or in a place away from school. (PA3)		
It's convenient because learning outside the classroom and school is possible, which was really beneficial in situations like emergencies, such as when COVID-19 spread across the country. (PB2)		
It's convenient in the sense that there is flexibility. In my case, I had more time to help my parents at home. Unlike when I was studying face-to-face, as I was living in a boarding house back then. Online learning gives me the flexibility in my schedule to fulfill my other responsibilities, like helping my parents. (PC1)		
Experiencing online learning showed students like me that there is an option beyond the usual, conventional face-to-face learning modality. (PC3)		
It helps save money. As someone from a family that is not financially well-off, online learning allowed me to save on expenses like boarding house fees and allowances. For me, that's one of the biggest benefits. (PA2)	Lessens expenses	
Practically, learning from home was also beneficial in terms of saving on allowances, boarding house fees, transportation costs, and other expenses we usually have to deal with in face-to-face classes. (PC3)		
Expenses were reduced since I was just at home. The only costs I had to worry about were for internet access. As a former commuter, online learning significantly reduced my expenses by eliminating the need to budget for transportation and school allowances, such as food and other expenses. (PD2)		
The availability of learning materials is a significant advantage, as lectures are usually conducted online. I can even record the real-time lectures if I want to. Additionally, supplementary materials are also posted online, which makes access easier and faster. (PB3)	Ease of access to learning resources	
In terms of learning, one advantage is access to resources. For example, some lectures are posted online, allowing us to access them at times that work best for us or when we have enough time. Additionally, we are given more freedom in how and when we study. (PD1)		
I can easily access the learning materials because they are all saved and posted online. (PD3)		

Another aspect is that we were expected to be more responsible in our studies since our teachers are not always there to remind or guide us. (PA3)	Teaches discipline, responsibility and time management	Improvement of learning practices and habits
It fosters a sense of responsibility in my learning process. I have a greater responsibility to ensure that I am disciplined enough to study independently. If I truly want to succeed, I have to avoid distractions and stick to a study schedule. While it's easy to get distracted at home, my drive to finish my studies has pushed me to become more responsible about my learning. (PB1)		
I became better at managing my time. In school, there's a set schedule that we must follow. However, with online learning, there isn't always a regular timetable, which required me to be more responsible and mindful about using my time effectively. (PB2)		
Discipline was a significant factor. There was no one else available to supervise me. In school, that's part of a professor's role. However, being at home meant I had to self-supervise and train my mind to focus on my studies. Therefore, I believe online learning helped me build discipline and responsibility. (PC2)		

This table depicts the 12orks12nde theme of the benefits of online learning as perceived by the participants. Two theme clusters were identified herein: convenience and improvement of learning practices and habits.

Under the first theme cluster of convenience, formulated meanings included alternative modality for studying even outside school; lessens expenses; 12orks12nd of access to learning resources.

PA1, PA3, PB2, PC1, and PC3 specifically spoke about the benefit of online learning as na alternative that enables them to study even outside the school setting. And as PA1 and PA3 mentioned, having experienced online learning shows that there is na option for students in situations when they cannot be physically 12orks12nd in school. Also, PA2, PC3, and PD2 stipulated that learning from home helps save expenses since there is no need to spend for fare, school allowance, and boarding house fees. The same thing was also mentioned by the 12orks12ndence in the study of Almahasees et al. (2021) as one of the benefits of online learning. PD1 meanwhile said, "In terms of the learning aspect, one of the benefits is accessing resources. For example, some lectures are posted online, allowing us to access them at times that are most 12orks12ndenc for 12orks when we have enough time. This flexibility enhances our ability to engage with the material and reinforces our learning experience." This signifies the convenience of having ease in accessing learning resources such as prerecorded lectures, notes, and references online.

The other theme cluster is Improvement of learning practices and habits, which formulated the meaning of teaching discipline, responsibility, and time management, which was expressed by PA3, PB1, PB2, and PC2. PA3 specifically stipulated that online learning helps instill responsibility: "Another aspect is that we were expected to be more responsible in our studies, as our teachers were not 13orks13 13orks13nd to 13orks13nde guide us." In line with this, PB2 specifically mentioned time management, stating, "I improved my time management skills because, in school, there's a set schedule we have to follow." However, in online learning, there isn't always a regular timetable, so I had to be more responsible and mindful about using my time effectively. This experience pushed me to prioritize tasks and create a structure for my study sessions, allowing me to stay on track despite the flexibility."

The aforementioned statements for the formulated meaning of teaching discipline, responsibility, and time management also tallies to what has been determined in other studies, such as the one conducted by Wahyuni (2018), which determined that remote learning methodologies such as blended learning and online learning promote independence since students are taught to be responsible not only for their own learning but also for managing their time effectively. Other studies that came up with similar findings include the works of Geng et al. (2019) and Zhu et al. (2022).

3.3 Perceived problems in online learning

Table 4

Emergent Theme 4: Problems in Online Learning

Statement	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
The biggest issue is really the internet. The poor connection makes learning harder. Actually, if the internet connection were like those in other countries, I think more students would prefer online learning. But since it's not, many of us still prefer face-to-face learning. (PA1)	Poor internet connection and power outages disrupt learning	Connectivity
Oh, the problem is with connectivity. I think it's actually a universal problem here in our country—the poor internet connection. There are many instances when our online classes get disrupted because either our connection as students or our teacher's connection becomes slow or completely disappears. That usually ruins the momentum of the discussions. (PA2)		
There are many times when one of us in the class loses the internet connection. Then, our teacher will stop and try to wait for that person to get their connection back. (PB1)		

The biggest problem is the internet connection. The lecture gets delayed, and even viewing resources and submitting requirements are affected when the signal is weak. (PB2)		
I live in a remote area, and when it rains or the weather is bad, the internet connection is affected. So that's really an issue. (PC2)		
Internet connection, the strength of the signal, and also power interruptions like sudden and unannounced brownouts are disadvantages; these are the problems I usually face when it comes to learning online. (PD1)		
Poor internet connection, such as weak or no signal, is an issue. Additionally, there are also many scheduled power interruptions, which delay us in completing the things we need to finish. (PD2)		
While it's not an issue for me, I have a lot of classmates and friends who are not as fortunate to have the proper tools for online classes. Because that's really one of the basic requirements, right? The gadgets. It's just unfortunate that not all of us students have the means to afford the proper equipment to effectively engage in online learning. (PA3)	Data cost and availability of technological tools	Limited resources
Data is expensive, and on top of that, there's the problem of signal issues. The difficulty is doubled. There are times when I run out of load before I finish all my requirements. It's a bit embarrassing to ask my parents for extra allowance because it's not cheap, and my siblings also need load allowance for their own classes. (PB3)		
I do not have gadgets that are as good or as up-to-date as some of my classmates, so I think the quality of the online lectures is not as good. That's another problem. Additionally, load is expensive. (PC2)		
It's difficult if your equipment for an online class isn't functioning well. In my case, for example, I only have a tablet, which is an old model. There are times when it lags because it's outdated. In a way, that affects my studies because I take longer to access the classes and also to download and submit requirements. (PC3)		
One more thing is the pressure of meeting the requirements. The setup for schoolwork that we need to comply with has changed, such as quizzes or exams. In our course, we have demo teaching in some of our subjects. It's difficult to do demo teaching when it's recorded or in real-time online. (PA2)	Pressure in complying to and finishing requirements	Requirements and compliance
It feels strange regarding the quizzes and exams and even other requirements. Of course, the way they are conducted and the time allotted for them have changed. (PC1)		
There are times when I get overwhelmed with the schoolwork. That is really hard, especially when the deadlines from different subjects are so close; it really causes anxiety. (PD2)		
I feel most pressured by the deadlines. Almost all the time, the deadlines for activities in different subjects are almost simultaneous. It confuses me. On top of that, the degree of difficulty adds to the pressure. (PD3)		

Table 4 indicates the emergent theme of problems in online learning as perceived by the participants of the study. Three theme clusters emerged from the analysis: connectivity, limited resources and requirements, and compliance.

One formulated meaning under the theme cluster of connectivity is that poor internet connection and power outages disrupt learning. This, in fact, is the foremost problem identified by the participants. As PA1 put it, "I think the poor internet connection is actually a universal problem here in our country." Given the body of literature on this, it is affirmed that internet connectivity is not just a problem that is unique to the Philippines but to other countries as well and thus became a challenge when remote learning became the norm during the pandemic. Studies conducted in Nigeria (Ivwighreghweta & Igere, 2014), the United Arab Emirates (Ali, 2018), Ireland (Cullinan et al., 2021), and Indonesia (Thamrin et al., 2022) have affirmed the universality of this problem for web-based learning.

Another meaning formulated under the theme cluster of limited resources is data cost and availability of technological tools. Participants who cited this include PA3, PB3, PC2, and PC3. P3 said, "I do not have gadgets that are as good or as up-to-date as some of my classmates, so I think the quality of the online lectures is not as good. That's another problem. Also, mobile data is expensive." This highlights another problem that was cited not just in research studies but also by mainstream media, which stipulated that the widespread utilization of remote learning modalities emphasized, if not widened, the gap among students of different socioeconomic statuses (Asio et al., 2021).

The third theme cluster identified was requirements and compliance, in which the meaning formulated was pressure in finishing requirements on time. According to PA2, "One more thing is the pressure of complying with requirements. The setup for schoolwork that we needed to comply with, such as quizzes and exams, has changed. And then, of course, in our course, we have demo teaching in some of our subjects. Doing a demo that is recorded or done in real-time online is difficult." Other participants who mentioned the same problem are PC1, PD2, and PD3.

The aforementioned reflects the idea that has already been shared by the other participants in the first theme, in which they mentioned that there are really some parts of their course that would be more effectively conducted in the face-to-face setting.

3.4 Issues in online learning based on students' experiences

Based on the experiences that the participants shared during the interview and the analysis of themes that emerged therein, the researcher was able to identify the following as the foremost issues that students have regarding online and distant learning:

3.4.1 Connectivity issues

The participants' statements emphasize the fact that of all the difficulties they encountered in online and distant learning, the most prominent and the most difficult to resolve was connectivity. Poor internet connection is a nationwide issue in the Philippines, and this has become more apparent now that students have to rely on it for their education. There are many students who reside in remote locations where internet connectivity is either poor or even nonexistent, and this hinders them from having the same opportunities as their peers who have better access to the internet. Inequality results, which may also lead to demotivation and failure on the part of the learners.

3.4.2 Inadequacy of personal resources

The socioeconomic differences among students also became more pronounced when online and distant learning became the only means for students to continue with their education during the pandemic. Not all students had the adequate or proper tools to access online resources, and while alternatives such as modules existed, the fact remains that inequality is there, affecting the degree of learning they are able to acquire.

3.4.3 Compliance with course requirements

The sudden shift from face-to-face instruction to online and digital learning spaces also changed the dynamics of pedagogy and assessment. Students were expected to adapt despite the fact that the new learning environment was unfamiliar territory for them. Because of this, they had difficulty adjusting, hence their feelings of anxiety and being pressured when it comes to complying with the rigors of online and distant learning. But

as they also mentioned, this alternative learning modality has helped them become more responsible and independent learners as they had to adapt to disciplining themselves and managing their time without strict supervision from their teachers.

4 CONCLUSION

Learning at home through online learning allowed schools and students to provide learning largely undisrupted during school closure forced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Students have a positive and equivocal outlook regarding their experiences in online learning. Online learning modality as a good alternative for them to continue studying even during the lockdown; hence their positive outlook towards it.However, some of the participants felt ambivalence towards the said learning modality because of the problems and issues they encountered, such as poor internet connection, power outages disrupting learning, inadequacy of personal resources, limited resources, pressure in complying with and finishing requirements, and the availability of technological tools. All of the participants agreed, however, that online learning was the best instructional method that could have been used during the pandemic and even during calamities like typhoon ,floods etc as alternate mode of teaching and learning. This modality helps students to learn even outside school, lessens expenses, and eases access to learning resources.

5 RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with the aforementioned, the researcher highly suggests the following:

Systematic training initiatives should be provided to improve teachers' and learners' technological skills in relation to new emerging models and approaches encouraging the effective use of online learning. A clear and consistent plan should be developed, providing structured and planned educational material (content, methodologies, and common goals) and more adequate e-learning platforms by using interactive, suitable digital learning resources (videos, animations, quizzes, and games) to maintain students' attention. Strategies for communication and digital education

assessment need to be created. Teachers should communicate consistently and often with students so that they do not feel isolated and confused.However, this method is recommended as alternate mode of teaching during pandemic and other calamities .

REFERENCES

Alawamleh, M., Al-Twait, L. M., & Al-Saht, G. R. (2020). The effect of online learning on communication between instructors and students during COVID-19 pandemic. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, *11*(2), 380-400. https://doi.org/10.1108/aeds-06-2020-0131

Ali, G. (2018). *Study of the impact of students' access to internet and its impacts on their relationship with their teachers and on their academic engagement: A case study of four schools in UAE* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The British University in Dubai.

Almahasees, Z., Mohsen, K., & Amin, M. O. (2021). Faculty's and students' perceptions of online learning during COVID-19. *Frontiers in Education*, *6*. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.638470

Asio, J. M., Gadia, E., Abarintos, E., Paguio, D., & Balce, M. (2021). Internet connection and learning device availability of college students: Basis for institutionalizing flexible learning in the new normal. *Studies in Humanities and Education*, *2*(1), 56-69. https://doi.org/10.48185/she.v2i1.224

Bijeesh, N.A. Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning. 2017. Available online: **http://www.indiaeducation.net/online-education/articles/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-distancelearning.html**

Braun, V.; Clarke, V.(2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qual. Res. Psychol.* **2006**, *3*, 77–10

Brown, C. (2017) Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning. 2017. Available online: **https://www.eztalks.com/elearning/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-distance-learning.html**

Clark, R.C.; Mayer, R.E.(2016) *E-Learning and the Science of Instruction*, 4th ed.; Wiley: Hoboken, NJ, USA,

Cullinan, J., Flannery, D., Harold, J., Lyons, S., & Palcic, D. (2021). The disconnected: COVID-19 and disparities in access to quality broadband for higher education students. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *18*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00262-1

Geng, S., Law, K. M., & Niu, B. (2019). Investigating self-directed learning and technology readiness in blending learning environment. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-019-0147-0

Hazwani Mohd N., Noor Raudhiah Abu B. and Norziah O. (2020). E-Pembelajaran Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Di Sebuah Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Selangor. Selangor. Malaysian atas talian. Journal of Education.

Irfan, F. and Iman Hermawan Sastra, K. (2020). Teachers Elementary School in atas talian Learning of COVID-19 Pandemic Conditions. Jakarta.

Ivwighreghweta, O., & Igere, M. (2014). Impact of the internet on academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, *5*(2), 47-56.

Jaggars, S. S. (2014). Choosing between online and face-to-face courses: Community college student voices. *American Journal of Distance Education*, *28*(1), 27-38. https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2014.867697

Jehi, T., Khan, R., Dos Santos, H., & Majzoub, N. (2022). Effect of COVID-19 outbreak on anxiety among students of higher education; A review of literature. *Current Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02587-6

Kayode, B. K. (2018). Effect of communication management on distance learners' cognitive engagement in Malaysian institutions of higher learning. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *19*(4). https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v19i4.3672

Muhammad, A. & Kainat, A. (2020). Learning Amid The COVID-19 Pandemic: Students' Perspectives. Pakistan. Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology Nor Shela, S. and Mohd Shafie, R. Tinjauan Literatur Sistematik

Muthrupasas, T., Aiswarya, S., Aditya, K., & Jha, G. K. (2020). Students' perception and preference for online education in India during COVID -19 pandemic. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3596056

Nagrale, P. Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Education. 2013. Available online: **https://surejob.in/advantages-anddisadvantages-of-distance-education.html** (accessed on

Nurul Haidah Saidon, Muhammad Ilham Ahmad Zaini, Muhammad Athif Asyraf Sukry, Mohamad

Izzuan Mohd Ishar. (2020). Amalan Kemahiran Penyesuaian dalam Kalangan Pelajar Universiti. Suatu Pemerhatian Awal. Johor. Malaysian Journal of Social Science dan Humanities.

Son, C., Hegde, S., Smith, A., Wang, X., & Sasangohar, F. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on college students' mental health in the United States: Interview survey study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *22*(9), e21279. https://doi.org/10.2196/21279

Tee, M. L., Tee, C. A., Anlacan, J. P., Aligam, K. J., Reyes, P. W., Kuruchittham, V., & Ho, R. C. (2020). Psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *277*, 379-391. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.08.043

Thamri, T., Chitra Hasan, D., Rina, N., Hariri Gani, M., Hariri Gani, M., & Maharani Miranda, A. (2022). Advantages and disadvantages of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: The perceptions of students at bung Hatta University. *KnE Social Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i6.10636

Wahyuni, E. (2018, July). *Improving students' independence and collaboration with blended learning* [Paper presentation]. 5th International Conference on Community Development, Quezon City, Philippines.

Wu, S., Zhang, K., Parks-Stamm, E. J., Hu, Z., Ji, Y., & Cui, X. (2021). Increases in anxiety and depression during COVID-19: A large longitudinal study from China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.706601

Zhu, J., Zhao, H., Wang, X., Yang, L., Qin, Z., & Geng, J. (2022). Effects of online learning on college students in eastern China: A structural equation model. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.853928

Zulaikha Mohd Basar1 , Azlin Norhaini Mansor2 , Khairul Azhar Jamaludin3* , Bity Salwana Alias (2021), The Effectiveness and Challenges of Online Learning for Secondary School Students – A Case Study, AJUE Asian Journal of UniversityEducation,Vol.17.No.3,(2021),
: https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v17i3.14514

Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

How to cite this article (APA)

Cabrera, F. R. (2026). LEARNING ONLINE AND LEARNING AT HOME: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON DISTANCE AND AT HOME LEARNING. *Veredas Do Direito*, 23, e235113. https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v23.5113