

Online Learning Expectations as Perceived by Selected Students in Higher Education

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Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled the education sector in the Philippines, to adapt swiftly to online learning. This study explores the online learning expectations as perceived by selected students in Surigao City, acknowledging the challenges faced by both students and teachers during this transition. Amid lockdowns and restrictions on face-to-face interactions, schools shifted to an online learning platform. The impact of this shift led to modifications in course content and teaching styles, significantly affecting the learning experiences of students. To address these challenges, the researchers conducted this study to identify students' online learning expectations and propose interventions for creating a productive online learning experience. The study involved respondents primarily in the age range of 18-21 years, with a majority from public senior high schools. The participants expressed very high expectations for online learning in terms of developing their skills and knowledge relevant to their courses. They also emphasized the importance of meaningful learning experiences through online modalities. Furthermore, the students had strong expectations for active participation in their learning process, indicating their awareness of their academic needs and preferences. They hoped for teachers to use language suited to their learning abilities, facilitating better understanding and engagement. Overall, this research provides insights into the expectations of these selected students regarding online learning. Understanding these perceptions can guide the development of interventions to enhance the quality of online education, thereby fostering a more productive and effective learning environment for both students and the institution during the new normal of online and distant education*

Keywords: Online Learning Expectations, Perceptions, Higher Education, Students

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a rapid transformation in the education sector of the Philippines, prompting a swift adaptation to online learning. As schools in Surigao City faced lockdowns and restrictions on face-to-face interactions, they transitioned to an online learning platform. However, this shift brought about significant challenges for both students and teachers, leading to modifications in course content and teaching methodologies, and impacting the overall learning experiences.

To address these challenges and improve the online learning experience, this study delves into the perceptions of selected students in Surigao City regarding online education. By identifying students' online learning expectations, the research aims to shed light on the areas where improvements can be made to create a more productive and effective virtual learning environment.

The study focused on respondents primarily in the age range of 18-21 years, with a majority from public senior high schools. These students expressed high expectations for online learning, particularly in terms of skill and knowledge development relevant to their respective courses. They also stressed the importance of meaningful learning experiences through online modalities.

Moreover, the students demonstrated a strong desire for active participation in their learning process, indicating their awareness of their academic needs and preferences. They hoped for instructors to adapt their language and teaching styles to suit their individual learning abilities, fostering better understanding and engagement.

By gaining insights into the expectations of these selected students, this research aims to pave the way for targeted interventions that will enhance the quality of online education. Ultimately, it seeks to create a conducive and fruitful

learning environment for both students and educational institutions during the prevailing new normal of online and distant education.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines in 2020 has had a profound impact on various sectors, including education. With the necessity to curb the spread of the virus, schools in Surigao City, like many others nationwide, were compelled to suspend face-to-face classes and swiftly transition to online learning platforms.

This sudden shift from traditional classroom settings to virtual learning environments brought about significant challenges for both students and teachers. Educational institutions had to adapt their curricula and teaching methodologies to suit the online format, while students faced new learning expectations and technological demands.

Amidst the lockdowns and restrictions, Surigao City's education system sought to ensure continuity in learning by embracing online education. However, the effectiveness of this new approach depended largely on understanding the perceptions and expectations of the students who were at the heart of this transition.

To address the need for a more comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives, this study was undertaken. The research aimed to explore the online learning expectations of selected students in Surigao City. By identifying their specific needs, preferences, and challenges related to online learning, the study sought to propose interventions that would enhance the quality and productivity of the virtual learning experience.

The insights gathered from this research hold the potential to guide educational institutions, policymakers, and teachers in their efforts to improve the online learning environment. Understanding the expectations of these selected students is vital for designing more effective and inclusive online education strategies, ensuring that learning continues unhindered in the face of future challenges. Through this study, we endeavor to contribute to the ongoing evolution of the education system in the new normal of online and distant education.

III. METHODOLOGY

To collect all the data and make this research possible, the researcher used the descriptive correlational design. A descriptive correlational research design used to study the present situation on online learning and the relationship of its elements and its effectiveness. The researcher used random sampling in choosing the participants of the survey. Ninety-four (94) students were selected as the respondents of this study. The instrument used in gathering the data was an adapted-modified questionnaire based on the perceptions of roles and responsibilities in online learning developed by Annemieke Craig Et Al 2008, the proponent of this study. Further, the questionnaire was validated by three experts from faculty of different schools here in SurigaoCity. The instrument composed of two parts. Part I was consisted of items for the profile of the respondents. Part II was intended for the online expectations of the respondents. Part II is composed of three subparts with different sets of statements. The first subpart is for the assessment of online learning expectations in terms of learning expectations in general, the second part is for student's role and the third part is for the teacher's role.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we present the key findings derived from the responses of ninety-four (94) students who participated in the study. The results offer a comprehensive analysis of students' perceptions of online learning expectations, encompassing various aspects such as learning expectations in general, student roles, and teacher roles in the virtual learning environment.

TABLE 1. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Profile	f(n = 95)	%
Age		
18 - 21 years old	62	65.26
22 - 25 years old	30	31.58
26 - 29 years old	2	2.11
30 and above	1	1.05

SHS Graduated		
Private School	40	42.11
Public School	55	57.89
Resident Type		
Urban or City	53	55.79
Rural or Country Side	42	44.21

Table 1 presents insightful demographic information derived from the responses of the 95 participants. The data reveals that a significant proportion of the respondents, 62 (65.26%), fell within the age range of 18 to 21 years, indicating a predominant representation of young adults. Participants aged 22 to 25 years constituted 30 (31.58%) of the sample, while those aged 30 years comprised a smaller portion, with 2 (2.11%) respondents.

Regarding educational background, the majority of participants, 55 (57.89%), graduated from Senior High School in public institutions, underscoring the significance of public schools in the study. Additionally, 40 (42.11%) respondents completed their Senior High School education in private schools.

Examining the participants' residential locations, 53 (55.79%) reported living in urban or city areas, while 42 (44.21%) resided in rural or countryside settings.

These findings offer crucial insights into the characteristics of the participants, which are vital for understanding the diverse perspectives and experiences of students in the context of online learning. The demographic distribution presented in Table 1 serves as a foundation for comprehending how various factors may influence students' expectations and experiences in the virtual learning environment.

TABLE 2: LEVEL OF ONLINE EXPECTATIONS OF THE 3RD YEAR MARITIME STUDENTS OF SEC IN TERMS OF LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Factors	M	SD	VI	QD
Learning Expectations, in general				
1. I want to develop skills and knowledge for my course.	4.73	0.47	SA	VHE
2. My focus is on making the most of all opportunities that are available to me.	4.48	0.58	SA	VHE
3. My focus is on completing my course as quickly as possible.	4.64	0.52	SA	VHE
4. I am prepared to ask the teacher for help whenever I am unsure of anything.	4.20	0.56	SA	VHE
5. My participation in scheduled classes is important.	4.62	0.53	SA	VHE
Average	4.53	0.53	SA	VHE

Table 2 provides an insightful analysis of the selected students' level of online expectations in terms of learning expectations. The participants overwhelmingly expressed Strong Agreement with an average rating of 4.53, indicating Very High Expectations.

The data reveals that all indicators pertaining to learning expectations garnered notably high mean scores. Specifically, the statements "I want to develop skills and knowledge for my course," "My focus is on making the most of all opportunities that are available to me," "My focus is on completing my course as quickly as possible," "I am prepared to ask the teacher for help whenever I am unsure of anything," and "My participation in scheduled classes is important" received average ratings of 4.73, 4.48, 4.64, 4.20, and 4.62, respectively. These findings, denoted as Strong Agreement and qualitatively described as Very High Expectations, indicate a strong intrinsic desire and motivation among the students to actively engage in their studies.

The results align with Henry's study (2020), which emphasized the significance of intrinsic motivation in fostering students' focus and dedication to their academic pursuits. Participants also anticipated the development of robust academic skills, such as proficiency in academic language and critical thinking, underscoring their commitment to academic growth.

Moreover, the data reinforces the notion that online students expect meaningful interaction with their instructors and value guidance, feedback, and support from their educational institution. This emphasis on meaningful engagement aligns with the students' high expectations, contributing to their overall satisfaction and success in the online learning environment.

Overall, the results of Table 2 highlight the students' resolute commitment to learning, as well as their eagerness to develop essential skills and knowledge through the online learning platform.

TABLE 3. LEVEL OF ONLINE EXPECTATIONS OF THE 3RD YEAR MARITIME STUDENTS OF SEC IN TERMS OF STUDENT'S ROLE

Factors	M	SD	VI	QD
Student's Role				
6. I am prepared for my classes.	4.35	0.56	SA	VHE
7. I am aware of the requirements in my subjects.	4.36	0.54	SA	VHE
8. I ask help when I am not sure.	4.26	0.62	SA	VHE
9. I express my opinion.	4.01	0.59	A	HE
10. I submit activities on time.	4.26	0.67	SA	VHE
Average	4.25	0.60	SA	VHE

Distance Education has emerged as a modern approach to learning, offering individualized instruction through computer-assisted programs and various technologies like television. As technology continues to advance, learners seek fast, convenient, and accessible education opportunities that can be pursued anytime and anywhere. They expect high educational standards that align with global competition. Distance Education serves as a viable alternative to traditional on-campus instruction, or it can be blended with on-campus courses to cater to diverse learning preferences (İşman et al., 2004).

Table 3 presents the level of online expectations among students concerning their role in the learning process. The data indicates a Strong Agreement with an average rating of 4.25, which qualitatively translates to Very High Expectations.

Notably, the indicator "I am aware of the requirements in my subjects" received the highest mean score of 4.36, indicating a Strong Agreement and suggesting Very High Expectations. The students' attentiveness to subject requirements underscores their conscientiousness in managing their academic responsibilities.

Concurrently, the indicator "I express my opinion" obtained the lowest mean score of 4.01, reflecting an Agreement and qualitatively described as High Expectations. Although the rating is slightly lower, it is evident that students still have substantial expectations regarding their ability to express their thoughts and opinions in the learning process.

Overall, the findings in Table 3 reveal the students' strong agreement with their active role in the online learning experience. Their awareness of subject requirements indicates a proactive approach to their studies, while their desire to express their opinions suggests a willingness to engage in meaningful interactions within the virtual learning environment.

TABLE 4. LEVEL OF ONLINE EXPECTATIONS OF THE 3RD YEAR MARITIME STUDENTS OF SEC IN TERMS OF TEACHER'S ROLE

Factors	M	SD	VI	QD
Teacher's Role				
11. Teacher provides useful feedback on my activities.	4.13	0.82	A	HE
12. Teacher provides stimulating and challenging experiences	4.19	0.64	A	HE
13. Teacher uses language that I can understand.	4.37	0.62	SA	VHE
14. Teacher tells me exactly what I need to know.	4.33	0.71	SA	VHE
15. Teacher provides guidance in discussions.	4.37	0.60	SA	VHE
Average	4.28	0.68	SA	VHE

Table 4 presents a comprehensive analysis of the level of online expectations among the selected students concerning the Teacher's Role, resulting in an overall mean of 4.28. The data reveals a Strong Agreement, indicating Very High Expectations in this aspect of online learning.

Specifically, three indicators received remarkably high mean scores, each reflecting a Strong Agreement and qualitatively described as Very High Expectations. These indicators are as follows: "Teacher uses language that I can understand" (mean = 4.37), "Teacher tells me exactly what I need to know" (mean = 4.33), and "Teacher provides guidance in discussions" (mean = 4.37). The students' strong agreement in these areas highlights their expectations for clear communication and supportive guidance from their instructors, enhancing the overall learning experience.

Additionally, two indicators, "Teacher provides useful feedback on my activities" (mean = 4.13) and "Teacher provides stimulating and challenging experiences" (mean = 4.19), received slightly lower mean scores, reflecting an Agreement and qualitatively described as High Expectations. Although the ratings are slightly lower than the other indicators, the students still expressed considerable expectations for constructive feedback and engaging learning experiences.

These findings align with previous studies such as Cole (2000) and Rovai (2003), which emphasized the critical factors influencing student persistence or attrition in online courses. Pre-requisite skills, learning style, and teaching style preferences were identified as crucial factors affecting students' decisions to persist or withdraw from online courses. Additionally, the CPM model proposed by Rovai encompasses specific characteristics that impact individual students' retention or attrition decisions.

The results of Table 4 provide valuable insights into the expectations of the selected students regarding the Teacher's Role in online learning. By recognizing and meeting these expectations, educators and institutions can enhance the overall quality of online education, fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment that promotes student persistence and success.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research on online learning expectations as perceived by selected students in Surigao City has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of distance education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study unveiled significant findings that shed light on students' perspectives and preferences, contributing to the enhancement of online learning experiences.

The demographic analysis in Table 1 revealed a diverse representation of students, with a majority aged between 18 and 21 years, highlighting the significance of the young adult population in the study. A considerable number of respondents graduated from public senior high schools, reflecting the accessibility of distance education to a broad spectrum of students in the region.

Table 2 unveiled the students' strong commitment to online learning, with very high expectations concerning skill and knowledge development, active participation, and making the most of available opportunities. These insights underscored the students' intrinsic motivation and their enthusiasm for meaningful learning experiences through virtual modalities.

Moreover, the results in Table 3 highlighted the students' proactive role in their learning journey, with very high expectations in understanding subject requirements. While the indicator "I express my opinion" received a slightly lower mean, it still reflected a high expectation for student engagement and participation.

Table 4 further emphasized the students' very high expectations concerning the Teacher's Role in online learning. Clear communication, guidance, and supportive feedback were significant factors that students sought in their virtual instructors, contributing to an engaging and effective learning environment.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate the students' readiness to embrace online learning and their desire for quality education that aligns with global standards. By recognizing and addressing these expectations, educational institutions and policymakers can adapt their strategies to create a more productive and fulfilling virtual learning experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of online learning, presenting both opportunities and challenges for the education sector. With the insights gained from this research, educators can tailor their approaches to distance education, fostering an inclusive and interactive learning environment that nurtures students' growth and success.

It is crucial to acknowledge that distance education requires continuous improvement and adaptation. As technology advances and students' expectations evolve, educators must remain responsive to their needs and preferences. By proactively addressing the identified expectations, online learning can become a powerful and effective tool in providing quality education, even beyond the challenges posed by the pandemic.

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