



Indonesian Community Empowerment Journal

Journal Homepage: <https://icejournal.com/index.php/icejournal>

Issues and Concerns of Teachers in Mindanao State University-Sulu Towards Modular Distance Learning Approach

Michelle Y. Alvarez^{1*}

¹Mindanao State University-Sulu, Sulu, Philippines

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Education
Teacher
Modular distance learning
Teaching guideline

*Corresponding author:

Michelle Y. Alvarez

E-mail address:

michelleypac24@gmail.com

The author has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

<https://doi.org/10.37275/icejournal.v1i2.8>

ABSTRACT

The modular distance learning approach (MDLA) involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy. This study aimed to investigate on the issues and concerns of the Mindanao State University-Sulu teachers on the modular distance learning approach. This research was a descriptive study. The location of the study was at Mindanao State University-Sulu, Philippines. There were 48 teachers who served as respondents from different colleges of Mindanao State University-Sulu. The respondents were given enough time to answer the questionnaire, after which the questionnaires were collected immediately. The participants agreed that they failed to communicate and guide the students easily due to poor internet access, in which they inevitably encountered discourteous attitudes from the students. Teachers admitted that they receive inappropriate approaches and complaints if the students do not understand the modules, which eventually leads to not receiving the answer sheets on time. In conclusion, The issues encountered towards the modular distance learning approach were communication failure like that of instructions or confusion of students on the modules, limited teacher guidance, student's discourteous approach to teachers, complaints about not understanding the module, and all of which results to misbehavior on students and failure to pass worksheet on time.

1. Introduction

Distance education is defined as an educational process and system in which all or a significant proportion of the teaching is carried out by someone or something removed in space and time from the learner.¹⁻³ Distance learning traditionally has focused on nontraditional students, such as full-time workers and nonresidents or individuals in remote regions who are unable to attend classroom lectures. On the other hand, modules are increasingly being used in many countries as a way of organising a language curriculum.⁴⁻⁶ As a consequence, many course books are now structured on the basis of modules rather than units. The concept of a module is strictly linked

to the idea of a flexible language curriculum. A module is a set of learning opportunities organized around a well-defined topic that contains the elements of ordinate dictation, categorical objectives, edifying cognition activities, and evaluation utilizing criterion measures.⁷

The modular distance learning approach (MDLA) involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy.⁸ Thus, MDLA is an essential tool for the education and learning process, especially at this time when the COVID-19 pandemic hit not just our lifestyle but also our economic situation, livelihood, as well as the educational system is

concerned.⁹⁻¹¹ It is where the so-called new normal approach is visible in the sight of learners and should have to cope with the new situation. With the help of MDLA, teachers and students are discussing lessons, requirements, assignments, and activities accessibly. The goal of the modules is to provide resources to instructors that will allow them to transform their classrooms into active, student-centered learning environments.¹² This study aimed to investigate on the issues and concerns of the Mindanao State University-Sulu teachers on the modular distance learning approach.

2. Methods

This research was a descriptive study. The location of the study was at Mindanao State University-Sulu, Philippines. There were 48 teachers who served as

respondents from different colleges of Mindanao State University-Sulu. A random sampling technique was used to choose the participants. In gathering the data, the researcher used a survey questionnaire. The respondents were given enough time to answer the questionnaire, after which the questionnaires were collected immediately. The score will be described as follows; 3.50-4.00 (strongly agree), 2.50-3.49 (agree), 1.50-2.49 (disagree), and 1.00-1.49 (strongly disagree). The results were presented as a table and narrative explanation.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants. These are the faculty members of Mindanao State University-Sulu coming from seven colleges and a senior high school department.

Table 1. Participants characteristics.

Characteristics	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	24 (50)
Female	24 (50)
College/department	
Education	4 (8.3)
Agriculture	10 (2.8)
Public affair	8 (16.7)
Art and science	6 (12.5)
Computer studies	4 (8.3)
Business administration	8 (16.7)
Fisheries	1 (2.1)
Senior high school	7 (14.6)

Table 2 presents the issues encountered by the faculty members towards the modular distance learning approach. The participants agreed that they failed to communicate and guide the students easily due to poor internet access, in which they inevitably encountered discourteous attitudes from the students. Teachers admitted that they receive inappropriate approaches and complaints if the students do not understand the modules, which eventually leads to not receiving the answer sheets on time. On the other hand, the teachers disagreed that they ignore the

questions and doubts of the students, that they do not give clear instructions, nor they are without consideration on late submission of answer sheets. The respondents vehemently disagree that they were not approachable nor did not appreciate or recognize the effort of students in answering the modules. Finally, the teachers disagreed with the notion that they were not good at using any device for the distance learning approach. Moreover, the result justifies that the respondents disagreed on the issues encountered towards MDLA.

Table 2. Issues encountered by the teachers.

No	Indicator	Mean score
1	Teachers receive inappropriate approaches and complaints if the students do not understand the modules.	2.85 (agree)
2	Teachers encountered discourteous attitudes from the students.	3.00 (agree)
3	Teachers failed to communicate and guide the students easily due to poor access	3.00 (agree)
4	Teachers do not receive the answer sheets on time.	2.85 (agree)
5	Teachers do not appreciate/recognize the effort of students in answering the modules.	2.27 (disagree)
6	Teachers do not pay attention to the questions and doubts of the students.	2.10 (disagree)
7	Teachers do not give clear instructions.	2.04 (disagree)
8	Teachers who are not approachable.	2.29 (disagree)
9	Teachers without consideration (Ex. Late submission of answer sheets).	2.23 (disagree)
10	Teachers who are not good at using any device for distance learning approach.	2.06 (disagree)
	Total	2.47 (disagree)

Table 3 shows the concerns of the MSU-Sulu teacher towards the modular distance learning approach using weighted mean. There were ten items rated by the teachers on their concerns regarding the management of classes during the pandemic times. Results revealed that the teachers agreed, with a grand mean of 2.80, that they have met the following concerns as follows. First, there were hidden costs/expenses of the teacher towards modules. Second, inevitably there were teachers who were not media literate or, as they say, were not good in terms of using gadgets and smartphones. Third, the poor internet connection hinders discussion of the lesson and proper communication between teacher and students; fourth, time constraints among teachers on rechecking the content of the module because of the busy loads. Fifth, problems with the equipment,

difficulty in explaining thoroughly the modules given without further examples, and complexity of identifying students who hardly work for the answers. Sixth, teachers are unable to manage students from time to time. Seventh, the unavailability of the teachers to cope with the prepared tools for the modular distance learning approach, and lastly, difficulties on the side of the teacher to discussing the lesson if the student is slow. Measuring only the core skills and competencies that teacher education programs seek to enhance rather than measuring everything. Thus, the result indicated that the teacher-respondents agreed on all the concerns of the MSU-Sulu teacher towards the modular distance learning approach. This means that they were bothered enough about how they would be able to manage classes during these trying times.

Table 3. Concern about the modular distance learning approach.

No	Indicator	Mean score
1	Unavailability of the teachers to cope with the prepared tools for the modular distance learning approach	3.00 (agree)
2	The low access of the teachers in discussing their lessons with their students due to poor signal at a particular location	3.17 (agree)
3	Difficulties on the side of the teacher to discuss the lesson if the student is slow.	2.98 (agree)
4	uneasy for the teacher to identify students who hardly work for the answers.	3.13 (agree)
5	Teachers are unable to manage students from time to time.	3.06 (agree)
6	Teachers who are not good in terms of using gadgets, smartphones, etc.	3.19 (agree)
7	Hidden cost/expenses of the teacher towards modules.	3.25 (agree)
8	Problems with the equipment ex. printing, copies, etc.)	3.13 (agree)
9	It would be hard for the teacher to explain thoroughly the modules given without further examples.	3.13 (agree)
10	Teachers no longer have time to re-check the content of the module because of the busy loads.	3.15 (agree)
	Total	2.80 (agree)

Table 4 depicts the teaching preparations for the adaptation of the modular distance learning approach using weighted mean. There were two indicators which it is based on issues and concerns. In the case of issues, the respondents agreed that teachers must update and set time to pay attention to the questions and doubts of the students and must set an extension of the date interns of passing answer sheets like 1-3 days, for other students may come from far-flung areas/ isle. In the same vein, the concerns were based

on teaching preparations for the adaptation of the modular distance learning approach. Based on the results, the respondents agreed that teachers should encourage handwritten and not encoded answers to avoid copy-paste from the internet. To sum it up, the result indicates that the respondents agreed on the teaching preparations for the adaptation of the modular distance learning approach based on both issues and concerns of the MSU-Sulu teacher.

Table 4. Teacher’s preparation on the adaptation of modular distance learning.

No	Indicators for issues	Mean
1	Teachers must be considerable towards student’s behavior, for some students have attention deficit hyperactive disorders (ADHD)	2.58 (agree)
2	Teachers must set an extension of the date interns of passing answer sheets, like 1-3 days, for other students who come from far-flung areas/ isle.	2.75 (agree)
3	Teachers must know how to appreciate/ recognize his/her students to boost their confidence and avoid favoritism/conflict.	2.60 (agree)
4	Parents pass answer sheets one at a time if he/she has relatives so that it could lessen their financial (transportation expenses).	2.71 (agree)
5	Teachers must update and set time to pay attention to the questions and doubts of the students.	2.94 (agree)
	Total	2.72 (agree)
	Indicators for concern	
1	If the teachers lack printing materials like answer sheets, students must find a way/initiative to provide the answers.	2.71 (agree)
2	Due to poor access, if teachers cannot be contacted, parents/elders at home must help and guide their children for some clarifications on their modules.	2.77 (agree)
3	Verily teachers also need Parental Guidance at home to ensure that other students fret about following the rules or instructions of their teachers.	2.54 (agree)
4	Teachers encourage handwritten and unencoded answers to avoid copy paste from the net/website.	2.75 (agree)
5	Not all teachers are good enough in terms of using technology; therefore, if the teacher wanted only to have modules for their learning materials, so be it.	2.50 (agree)
	Total	2.65 (agree)

Distance education is an increasingly common educational alternative as well as a key contributor to the new competitive landscape in higher education. Once regarded as an experimental alternative outside mainstream university education, distance education has attained new levels of legitimacy and expansion and has grown into a higher education industry of its own. This trend is also reflected in transnational education.^{13,14} Advances in technology, including computer conferencing, interactive media, digital technologies, and the Internet, are transforming the world into a borderless educational arena. The new technologies significantly increase the reach of

distance provision; they enable content to be current; they allow students to interact with instructors and with each other at any time; and they open up a global market. The technologies not only offer new and better ways of communicating at a distance but also have the potential to reduce the fixed costs of education.¹⁵

New private higher education institutions have also emerged recently on the distance education market as a result of a growing demand for foundation-level higher education (learners in the 18-25 age group) and for continuing and specialist education.¹⁶ These institutions usually provide specialized programs in business, engineering, information technology, and

teacher training to the niche market of working adults. However, technology played a significant role in the development of distance education prior to the emergence of the computer and high-speed network connections: earlier technologies, including print, radio, television, and video, also shaped distance education and contributed to its growth. Accreditation services, the publishers contribute their expertise in marketing distribution and content and electronic delivery systems. This generation signified yet another milestone, namely, increased interactivity among students between students and teachers and between students and content thanks to high-speed networks and more sophisticated software. Consequently, the amount and types of information that could be communicated have significantly increased, and the exchange of information took significantly less time.^{17,18}

The use of online education technologies has been accompanied by the development of pedagogies to improve the merging of distance education and asynchronous learning. To this end, instructional designers were employed to create online units, and tutors were employed to implement the learning programs. Through international collaboration, students around the world can participate in cooperative learning activities sharing information through computer networks. In such cases, global classrooms may have participants from various countries interacting with each other at a distance. Many mediated educational activities allow students to participate in collaborative learning activities.¹⁸

Distance learning technologies are intended to support an integrated program, not replace it. Balancing virtual and 'real' interaction will be one of the key educational challenges as we enter the 21st century. In short, technology cannot replace most human contact without significant quality losses. Current distance education programs represent a wide range of approaches. One end of the spectrum offers fully online programs relying on computer-based student contact and feedback: the other end offers technology-assisted programs with computer-

delivered instruction, electronic mail communication between students and teachers, some centralized face-to-face class sessions, and weekend meetings of cluster groups. The programs have different scopes (from local to international).^{6,17}

The rapid expansion of distance education offerings is providing students with more options: good quality programs will be demanded. This great increase in the number of distance education programs, students, and providers has prompted researchers to investigate the effectiveness of such programs. The characteristics of effective distance education programs to be used in this research study emerged from the comprehensive review of the literature. Numerous studies have determined the attributes of effective distance education through the attributes of its components, including students, instructors, program design, technologies, and organizational support.¹⁸

4. Conclusion

The issues encountered towards the modular distance learning approach were communication failure like that of instructions or confusion of students on the modules, limited teacher guidance, student's discourteous approach to teachers, complaints on not understanding the module, and all of which resulted in misbehavior on students and failure to pass worksheet on time.

5. References

1. Burns M. 17,000 islands and one goal: Creating online communities of practice. *Journal of Staff Development*. 2010; 31(1): 18–23.
2. Sejpal K. Modular method of teaching. *International Journal for Research in Education*. 2013; 2(3).
3. Bitler MP, Seifoddini A. Health impacts of food assistance: evidence from the United States. *Annu Rev Resour Economics*. 2019; 11: 261–87.
4. Brazendale K, Beets MW, Weaver RG. Understanding differences between summer

- vs. school obesogenic behaviors of children: the structured days hypothesis. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act.* 2017; 14: 100.
5. Brooks SK, Webster RK, Smith LE, Woodland L, Wessely S, et al. The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence. *Lancet.* 2020; 395: 912–20
 6. Decosimo CA, Hanson J, Quinn M, Badu P, Smith EG. Playing to live: outcome evaluation of a community-based psychosocial expressive arts program for children during the Liberian Ebola epidemic. *Glob Ment Health (Camb).* 2019; 6: e3.
 7. Durisic Ma, Bunijevac M. Parental involvement as an important factor for successful education. *CEPS Journal.* 2017; 7(3):
 8. Dyrud MA. The third wave: a position paper. *Business Communication Quarterly.* 2000; 63(3): 81-93.
 9. Kirel B. The rights and responsibilities of parents according to the views of teachers. *Asian Journal of Education and Training.* 2019; 5(1): 121-33.
 10. Mason F, Farley A, Pallan M. Effectiveness of a brief behavioural intervention to prevent weight gain over the Christmas holiday period: randomised controlled trial. *BMJ.* 2018; 363: k4867.
 11. Perrin EC, Leslie LK, Boat T. Parenting as primary prevention. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2016; 170: 637–38.
 12. Sadeghi M. A shift from Classroom to Distance Learning: Advantages and limitations. *International Journal of Research in English Education (IJREE).* 2019; 4(1).
 13. Son SHC, Morrison FJ. The nature and impact of changes in home learning environment on development of language and academic skills in preschool children. *Developmental Psychology,* 2010; 46(5): 1103-18.
 14. Sprang G, Silman M. Posttraumatic stress disorder in parents and youth after healthrelated disasters. *Disaster Med Public Health Prep.* 2013; 7: 105–10.
 15. United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural organization. COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. 2020.
 16. Biner RM, Russell SJ, Croker H, Packer J, Ward J, et al. School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: A rapid systematic review. *Lancet Child Adolescent Health.* 2020
 17. Wang Y. How will COVID-19 impact global education? *CGTN.* 2020; 11(37).
 18. Williams TT, Sanchez B. Identifying and decreasing barriers to parent involvement for inner-city parents. *Youth & Society.* 2011; 45(1): 54-7.