"I Endured the Learning Struggles": The Sentiments of Senior High School Students in Modular Distance Learning

Daisy D. Bayani, LPT, MAED , Genevieve O. Torino, DBM

daisy. bayani@deped.gov.ph , genevievetorino@gmail.com

T-1 Midsayap Pilot Elementary School, Pob. 3 Midsayap, 9410 Cotabato, Philippine

Dean, College of Business and Accountancy, Notre Dame of Midsayap College

9410 Midsayap North Cotabato, Philippines

Abstract

This study explored the phenomenon of Senior High School students in modular distance learning. Specifically, it examined their lived experiences amidst the pandemic, their struggles, triumphs, and how they coped with these challenges. Face-to-face interview was done with 20 Senior High School students regarding their experiences in modular distance learning. Using Colaizzi's method, findings revealed four major themes: two sides of the coin, uphill battle, get by and get on, and hopeful hearts, along with 19 core ideas and 126 significant statements. The conversational partners' lived experiences in modular distance learning provided some implications: noting that different factors caused problems for the students which could affect their academic performance; there were also several factors that were influencing their experience which were within the students' control and of the faculty; self-determination and perception had been proven to be a hindrance to truly show the students maximum performance; they should also have to balance work and family, to manage time, and to make personal commitment; instructors also should work to establish presence in the absence of physical compresence, work to build intellective relationships with students, and work to create a sense of community; and there should be a balance between students' and faculty's factors that influence their experiences. As a result, it is recommended that students and instructors should re-consider themselves to accept this type of approach in learning amidst pandemic such that they should also allot enough time and effort to achieve one's goal.

Keyterms: Lived Experiences; Senior High School students; Modular Distance Learning; Physical and Emotional Conditions; Mental Health; Psychosocial Support

Chapter 1
Introduction

The Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) may have closed the classrooms but had not halted education. Around the world, most countries have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of the virus known as COVID-19 and reduce infections (Tria, 2020). Because of this, Modular Distance Learning (MDL) became one of the varied modes to deliver education and ensure learning continuity. However, it could have run smoothly, as learners and teachers have encountered many challenges (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020). In a phenomenological study of De Leon (2022), a public school student said, ". . . May oras na hindi ko maintindihan ang aming aralin na kailangan ko ang gabay ng aking guro at ng aking magulang at minsan ay nahihirapan akong sagutan ang mga tanong sa aking module". ("There are times when I do not understand our lesson that I need my teacher and parents' guidance, and sometimes, I have a hard time answering the questions in my modules.")

A qualitative study on students' experiences during the pandemic revealed that with the remote methods of learning, they missed social aspects of learning on campus, which in a way would somehow mitigate some feelings of isolation and reportedly result in higher levels of engagement, motivation, enjoyment and satisfaction with instruction (Nguyen et al.).

In the United States, Australia, and Asia, modular learning is one of the most widespread and recognized teaching-learning techniques. It effectively promotes reflective learning rather than focusing on marks or grades (Sejpal, 2013).

Strauss (2020) & Smalley (2020) agreed that the top issue in choosing the most suitable class mode for a student is how accessible this mode can be for the learner. They deduced that the internet connection is a significant barrier to accessing the online learning modality redirecting them to their second option, which is the modular learning mode, which also has flaws due to the quantity and late distribution of these materials to the learners.

In the Philippines, printed modular distance learning is extensively used by the Department of Education (DepEd) as one of the Alternative Delivery Modes (ADM). Though printed modular distance learning gained skepticism, Guido (2014) concluded that it is effective for the knowledge adaptation of Science and Engineering students.

DepEd Regional Director Alan Farnazo said that for the first time in history, classes were done as if there were no classes because children were at home and the teachers, most of them were at home too for the distance learning (Sarmiento, 2020). In the implementation of Modular Distance Learning in Balbalayang National High School (BNHS) and Baguio City National High School (BCNHS), the main challenges that emerged include a lack of school funding in the production and delivery of modules;
students struggle with self-studying, and parents' lack of knowledge to academically guide their children (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

Moreover, phenomenological studies on MDL generated themes that include poor reading comprehension levels, insufficiency of learning materials, relaxed routine daily schedule, lack of communication to support parents and teachers' constant interaction, and lack of motivation for home teaching (Caslib & Decano, 2021) and the real-time feedback from teachers cannot be experienced by learners, thus affecting their psychosocial learning (Martin, Ventayin, & Morales, 2021).

As to the personal experience of modular distance learning (Brainy. ph, 2021), the student stated: "I had a difficult time with modular remote learning because I am not accustomed to this type of schooling. . . I struggle to understand some of the lessons written in the modules. I am struggling very hard because there is no teacher to assist us and provide guidance so that we can understand the lessons easily."

Because of the various feedback about MDL, the researcher conducted an in-depth analysis of how Senior High School students thrive during the roller coaster year of their education by investigating what happened and how they coped with their struggles.

Statement of the Problem

This study was intended to explore the lived experiences of Senior High School students on modular distance learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of Senior High School students in modular distance learning amidst the pandemic?

2. How do the Senior High School students cope with the experienced challenges?

3. What insights can the Senior High School students share regarding modular distance learning amidst the pandemic?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may benefit the following:

Senior High School Students. The study's findings may serve as a guide as they can apply the exact coping mechanisms whenever they encounter similar experiences during modular distance learning.

Teachers. The study's findings may be used to evaluate their students' situation and what appropriate actions may be implemented.

Parents. The findings of the study may serve as a basis to strengthen their support to the learners since they are the ones who have witnessed their triumphs and struggles during these times.

Administrators. The findings of this study may serve as relevant data to determine the success of modular distance learning. Moreover, the results indicate the need to consider supporting the students more and strengthening their links with the stakeholders.

Educational Institutions. The study's results may help schools improve programs and policies related to modular distance learning.

Future Researchers. The findings of this study can be a reference as they explore areas relevant to the study conducted.

Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences, struggles, and challenges the Senior High School students faced in the new normal. Their experiences and how they coped served as the primary data of this study, wherein the context of the results are within the confines of the area. Only twenty (20) Senior High School students from the municipality of Midsayap who had modular distance learning were chosen as the conversational partners of the study.

Related Literature
Modular Distance Learning

Education plays a vital role in shaping the lives of students. In the process, teachers are one of the essential instruments in delivering quality learning. However, due to the emergence of COVID-19 in the Philippines, many changes happened in the educational landscape. One of these is the mode of instruction that was implemented by the Department of Education, which adopted alternatives to face-to-face teaching and learning. Many education systems moved activities online to allow instruction to continue despite school closures (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020).

The shift of the teaching-learning delivery in schools to modular distance learning (MDL) made education more

challenging. That is why DepEd leaders are constantly

finding avenues to solve the problems and capacitating their teachers and school heads to become more effective in modular distance learning (Bagood, 2020).

The concept of "module," according to Sejpal (2013), is strictly linked to the idea of a flexible language curriculum, which should provide all those concerned with education framework to establish clear and realistic language learning objectives. In addition, Alelaimat and Ghoneem (2012) said that module contains specific objectives, experience, and certain teaching activities carried unit sequence and logical completion to help the learner achieve the goals and develop sufficiency based on the speed of self-learning. As a

result, the module method focuses on the learner, who becomes the center of activities in achieving the objectives of the teaching process. This approach makes the teaching materials more understandable, increases the learner's mental activities, strengthens motivation, consolidates self-satisfaction, and helps keep what they learned.

The role of the concept module is to provide students with the opportunity to gain exposure and experience with a threshold concept by engaging with it from multiple perspectives, thereby having a more incredible opportunity to recognize the implicit threshold nature of the associated concept (Parker & McGills, 2012). Modules include sections on motivation and assessment that serve as a complete guide for the desired competencies for teachers and students. In addition, Sejpal (2013) enumerated some advantages of the module concept. These include, among others, the establishment of a system of assessment other than marks or grades, users studying the modules in their

working environment, and users can study without disturbing the typical duties and responsibilities. Moreover, modules are flexible and can be implemented by various patterns such that they can be administered in a single-use small or large group.

Furthermore, besides economical, it enables the learners to control their learning and accept greater responsibility for learning. However, modules are appropriate only for mature students, and it demands smart classrooms. Estrada (2021) emphasized that modules are not substitutes for teachers.

With MDL, teachers monitor the learners' progress through home visits following social distancing protocols and feedback mechanisms and guide those who need special attention (Manlangit et al., 2020). According to the Department of Education (DepEd, 2020), parents and guardians perform various roles in MDL. They served as module-ator, bundy-clock, and a home innovator. As a module-ator, they are the ones to get and submit the printed Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) from and to schools or barangay halls at the beginning and end of the week, depending on the agreement between the parents and the school. As a bundy-clock, they checked their child's schedule or workweek plan. Because of the number of subjects or activities to be done, they must see that it is being followed accordingly to avoid cramming or delays in submission, which may affect the child's performance. Lastly, as home innovators, they provided their children with a productive learning environment to help them focus more on learning. It must be a well-lighted and well-ventilated space in the house, with little or no distraction.

Moreover, the use of modules encouraged independent study. Another benefit of using modules for instruction is the acquisition of better self-study or learning skills among

students as they learn the concepts presented in the module. They developed a sense of responsibility in accomplishing the tasks provided in the module. With little or no assistance from others, the learners progress independently. They are learning how to learn which way of empowerment. Some other advantages of MDL include more choices and

self-pacing for students, more variety and flexibility for teachers and staff, and increased adaptability of instructional materials (Nardo, 2017).

However, Malipot (2020) stressed that teachers also air their problems on modular distance learning (MDL). As most parents are not certified educators, this modality puts pressure on the parents, especially in the case of an asynchronous learning environment. Even educators know there are struggles when teaching their kids, especially if they have children with different grade levels with different needs of learning assistance brought by modular learning (DepEd, 2020).

However, even then, International Institute for Educational Planning (2020) argued that individualized instruction in modular distance learning has been helpful in remote areas where internet access is limited. Learners used self-learning modules in print or digital format accompanied by teachers' home visits, especially for learners that needed remediation or assistance. Some learners reached their teachers via e-mail, telephone, text, or instant messaging. Based on the study conducted by Ambayon (2020), modular instruction is seen as more operative in the teaching-learning method as equated to usual teaching approaches as students learn in their stride, thus increasing the student-centered approach to learning.

However, implementing modular instruction fostered various challenges for teachers, students, and parents. Likewise, the study by Dangle and Sumaoang (2020) showed that the significant challenges that emerged were a lack of school funding in the production and delivery of modules, students' struggle with self-studying, and parents' lack of knowledge to academically guide their children.

Experiences of Students in Modular Distance Learning

Canonizado (2021) said that schools began to train parents for modular distance learning. They were oriented to their vital role as home learning facilitators during the pandemic. However, they often take this role as an additional workload and challenge because they need more patience and the ability to teach their children lessons. Consequently, the series of orientations enabled the parents to internalize their new position for their children. On the other hand, schools orient the learners to understand the changes that are taking place in the new education system. For the entire period of modular distance learning, their home would act as their school, where their teachers are their parents or older siblings who have the capacity and ability to clarify the substance of the lessons. Modules, learning activity sheets, and other additional materials were given. These learning packages were distributed and retrieved every Friday. They were given one week to perform all the learning tasks in their learning guides.

The modular approach generally promised learner-centered, flexible, accessible, simple, and cost-efficiency modalities to save a lot on transportation and accommodation (Ambayon, 2020). On the other side, parents or guardians face various

dilemmas in assisting their children: 1) if parents or guardians are full-time workers, 2) Elementary and High School undergraduates, 3) low-income workers, 4) jobless due to the pandemic, and 5) parents or guardians cannot afford to buy loads to access their teachers whenever they have queries. The threat to the safety and well-being of the learners and family members at home becomes everybody's concern. It shall facilitate the learning experience must be done at the convenience of their homes while doing some learning tasks (Ibyatova et al., 2018). As the agency moderates prevailing conditions, all concerned are reminded to return or release without fail the Module Key Answers with the corrected submitted modules to help the parents, guardians, and facilitators monitor the learner's progress (DepEd Division Memorandum No. 265, 2021, in support to DepEd Order No. 001 s. 2021).

The qualitative analysis of Duran & Sumagang's (2022) study among STEM students revealed that a more prevalent adjustment to a new setup, poor internet connection, power interruption, lack of motivation, lack of presence of teachers, and learning loss, their households while trying to finish their modules. The students described MDL as challenging, overwhelming, and unideal since self-learning is new. Moreover, the study by Santillan & Labaria (2021) among college students found a positive perception of the use of modular learning as they have seen it as a tool for developing their curiosity which helps improve their learning and understanding. They also considered the modules to increase their knowledge, such as widening their understanding and vocabulary and becoming more creative for having learned to google search, read blogs and news items, Facebook, and YouTube – social media in general for their academic needs social relations. Lastly, the

study revealed satisfactory academic performance among students using modular learning during the pandemic

Challenges of Students in MDL

The World Health Organization (2020) & Morin et al. (2020) opined that the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposed social confinement had produced significant stress, anxiety, and worries about health and the fear of being infected, jobs, and financial problems, and uncertainty about the future. Worry, anxiety, and uncertainty are common in children. They include feelings that are sometimes close to those experienced by adults, such as a fear of death, a fear of their family losing, or what it means to undergo medical

assistance. Suppose schools are closed as part of necessary interventions. In that case, children will no longer have the sense of structure and excitement that the environment provides, and they now have fewer chances to be with their peers and gain the social support that is important for good mental health.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought global problems in business, environment, government, health, technology, and education. Most countries and the Philippine government have closed all educational institutions to control the spread of the disease that directly impacted the students, educators, and academic institutions as it brought sudden shifts from the physical classroom to virtual learning that disrupted many teachers and learners (Chandra, 2020). There is growing evidence that the pandemic and the actions taken to control the virus have caused severe economic and social effects (UNICEF, 2020).

According to Walker (2021), the pandemic profoundly influenced school systems. The closure pushed the administrators to go online, traditional face-to-face classes to flexible learning modalities, and learners enlisted themselves in these new learning modalities. These shifts from face-to-face to flexible learning modes became a tremendous obstacle burdening administrators, teachers, parents, and learners. Similarly, Branquinho et al. (2022) enumerated factors that stand out, namely biological aspects such as headaches and muscle pains; psychological aspects in the form of symptoms of depression, anxiety, loneliness, longer screen time, and more substance use; and social aspect that tended to increase family conflicts and disagreements, loss of significant life moments, contacts, and social skills (Ali et al., 2010).

Along with this, Elmer and Ellis et al. (2020) stipulated that during the pandemic, the level of learners' negative psychological states like anxiety, stress, boredom, loneliness, and other depressive symptoms were worsened compared to pre-COVID time. COVID-19 stresses were related to loneliness and depression, especially for adolescents who spend more time on social media. Beyond COVID-19 stress, students experienced the luxury of time connecting to their friends physically, which helped them cope with their day-to-day issues in life. During the pandemic, the learner's connection between friends and families has been strained, which is why some experienced physical, social, and psychological issues.

The thematic analysis of the study of Eric et al. (2022) revealed that aside from the complexity of Science topics, the conduct of experiments and their materialization and the unreliability scores of the learners also add to the problems encountered by Science teachers. The general perception was that the learning modality was complex.

Coping Mechanisms

The key to reducing stress is giving students a feeling of control over their education, information about what to expect, and feedback regarding what can be done to improve their performance. Stress is inevitable; unfortunately, it produces headaches and neck cricks and causes many health problems, including depression, anxiety, heart disease, and stroke (Clark, 2013). According to Prather (2013), keeping things in perspective, having fun with hobbies, and enjoying indulgences in moderation are secrets to stress busters.

Different coping strategies are observed among both Chinese and international students. Local students mostly returned to their hometowns as long as local transport was available. In contrast, international students were allowed to go back or not to their own country as long as their safety was ensured, like only traveling somewhere without informing their responsible teacher. Following this decision, students in different cities in China faced mental upset and confused what to do, as revealed on various social media (Gao et al., 2020).

Moreover, the Chinese students exposed their problems and coping difficulties in specific cities like Wuhan. Coping strategies are also negatively associated with psychosocial problems, as stated in recent research, due to the high risk of infection and anxiety among health workers (Zhang et al., 2020). Finally, coping strategies in China during the COVID-19 outbreak were utilized differently by two different groups of students. According to a longitudinal study by Wang et al. (2020), one group of students decided to stay in the dormitory and not move anywhere during the epidemic. This coping strategy was not based on students' concern only for themselves; instead, they thought of the safety of others, such as their parents and other family members. Another group of students assumed that they were safe, so they decided to return to their homes. This is another coping strategy observed among students studying in China during the pandemic.

Similarly, Floss and Wang et al. (2020) suggested that keeping a good outlook and trying to be positive would help one to flush out the endless overloads of negative or discouraging reports, illness numbers, and how it was spreading. Holding a good outlook is a way of reflecting on something that can make one get through the day. Students who have a positive outlook are more likely to be resilient in the face of hardship. One should use their maturity perspective to change cognition and reduce their expectations of COVID-19 incident intensity to face and respond to COVID-19 situations courageously and flexibly.

Interestingly, the World Health Organization (2020) and Pastor et al. (2020) suggested that one should need to maintain regular routines and worthwhile activities or assist in the development of new ones in a new environment like regular exercise, cleaning, everyday tasks, singing, drawing, and other activities. Maintain daily contact with loved ones via phone, e-mail, social media, or video conference. Students can benefit through messaging systems, the internet, and social media to avoid the loneliness that could lead to psychological issues. Although students recognize that their leisure preferences may not be enough to combat depression and mental illness, they are seeking other ways to combat the depressive mentality during COVID-19.

Insights of Students on MDL

Modular Distance Learning became one of the educational trends brought about by the pandemic. Panganiban and Madrigal (2021) investigated the lived experiences of the Grade 6 pupils in answering English-written modules with a phenomenological approach. Their study disclosed that delivery modality, the curriculum content and standards, educational equipment and resources, the competence of parents to assist, and the readiness of the learners to read and learn independently greatly affected quality education in the locality during this time of the pandemic. On related accounts, Capinding (2021) examined the impact of modular distance learning on high school students' motivation, interest/attitude, anxiety, and achievement in Mathematics. The study found that students have a very satisfactory rating in Mathematics. The students agree that they were motivated, enthusiastic, and had a positive attitude toward Mathematics. However, they agree that Mathematics caused them anxiety. Based on sex, their Mathematics interest and anxiety differ significantly but there was no significant difference in interest/attitude and achievement.

Similarly, Pastor et al. (2022) investigated the effect of modular distance learning to the academic performance in Mathematics of Senior High School during the existence of COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the study revealed that students had positive perceptions on using modular distance learning approach (MDLA). It had also a positive effect to students' performance as students performed very satisfactory in Mathematics which means they had good quality performance. However, no significant difference exists on their perceptions when grouped by gender and age which means the students had the same perceptions.

As a whole, the related literature reviewed provide a wide array of perspectives on the experiences of the students in modular distance learning. All their experiences, along with the difficulties and challenges they encountered and how they cope were also tackled thoroughly. With these tons of ideas, the responses from the conversational partners could validate the findings and results of the study.

This study was selected because many of the studies that the researcher had read focused on the stresses of teachers and their coping mechanisms while the present study concentrated on the students as conversational partners. Moreover, this study was conducted during the pandemic when health conditions were at risk.

Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored on the Distance Education Theory by Borje Holmberg (1995) which regards distance education as the conversational interaction between the student on one side and the teacher on the other side. The central concepts of his theory are motivation, empathy, non-contiguous communication, learner autonomy and interpersonal communication (Saba, 2014). The study is anchored on the said theory in the sense that the lived experiences of the students during the time of crisis is being tackled which require the central concepts as they need motivation, empathy, and other ceoncepts in order to move on.

This study is also anchored on Transactional Distance Theory by Michael G. Moore (1994) which describes the relationship between course design (structure) interaction (dialogue), and respect/awareness of individual learner's tolerance for autonomy (self-direction). Essentially, the theory suggests that physical and temporal distance between the learner and the teacher gives rise to pedagogical issues that must be mediated by structure of a course and by the interaction between the learner and the teacher to minimize miscommunication and misunderstanding (Bornt, 2011). With regards to the study, the theory is apt as it provides alternatives in pursuing the learning process while classroom learning is not possible.

Chapter 2

Methods

This chapter contains the methods used in this phenomenological study, including the research design, sampling design, role of the researcher, conversational partners, data sources, instrumentation, data gathering procedure, face-to-face interview, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, ethical considerations.

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological qualitative research design. Thisqualitative phenomenological research aims to describe the lived experiences of Senior High School students in modular distance learning. In simple terms, phenomenology can be defined as an approach to research that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who experienced it (Teherani et al., 2015). The phenomenological approach aims to illuminate the specific to identify phenomena through how the actors perceive them in a situation. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. They are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom (Lester, 1999).

Sampling Design

This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling that is selected based on the population's characteristics and the study's objective (Crossman, 2020). It is the primary choice for the sampling design since the conversational partners are purposively selected based on the study's objectives. The teacher-researcher has chosen Senior High School students as conversational partners (CPs).

Role of the Researcher

In this research, the researcher played as an encoder, translator, interpreter, listener, analyzer of data, and provider of ideas based on the responses of the conversational partners. The researcher also dug deep to get insights and relevant lessons in life, particularly concerning the experiences of the Senior High School students on modular distance learning.

The researcher transcribed the data from the recorded audio and translated it into English for a more straightforward interpretation and analysis. The data collection, organization, and interpretation were anchored to the guide questions of the study. A thorough discussion of the data provided relevant information and accurate answers to the study.

Conversational Partners

The participants for this qualitative study were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) Senior High School students, (b) students from public secondary schools, (c) Senior High School students enrolled for the school year 2021 – 2022, and (d) honor student during Grade 11 last school year 2020-2021. These were the typical characteristics of the students chosen to participate in the study. Those who have undergone online and blended learning were excluded from reliably achieving the study's objectives. Those who have yet to meet the criteria were excluded from the study.

Data Sources

The primary data source for the study came from the research and responses of the Senior High School students who served as the conversational partners. The researcher's observations of the students also noted that their gestures meant a lot and provided important hints to validate this study's results. The secondary sources were all the journals and articles related to this study, such as books, data from the internet, and other related literature.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in the study is a semi-structured interview guide consisting of three (3) questions. The following were the arching questions: the lived experiences of Senior High School students, their coping mechanisms with the challenges experienced and the insights they can share on their experiences in modular distance learning amidst the

pandemic.

When collecting qualitative interview data, the researcher herself is the main instrument for data collection. The researcher observes, takes notes, talks to people, and conducts interviews. Just because we talk to people in everyday life, listen, ask questions, and communicate does not naturally make us a good interviewers (ATLAS, 2020).

The interview guide consisted of a list of questions asked to the CPs during the interview. To develop rapport and set the mood before the interview, the researcher asked the CPs how good life is to them and what are the greatest blessings they have received. Their demographic profile was also taken with sheer confidentiality and privacy.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the study, the researcher sought approval from the Graduate School Dean to conduct the study and then from the Schools Division Office of Cotabato, where the teacher-researcher is employed. After this, a letter of consent has given to the school heads where the students under modular distance learning were enrolled. She started conducting the study when the researcher could secure all these approvals.

Minimum health protocols were observed strictly in getting significant information for this study. Furthermore, the researcher gave the informed consent and assent form to the conversational partners, letting them read and understand before finally signing them.

The researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with the full cooperation of the respondents using the data collection procedures such as observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials. Guide questions were given to the conversational partners in advance so they could prepare their responses during the interview. The guide questions were translated into their native dialect so that they could express their views and feelings properly and sincerely.

To ensure that the transcriptions are correct, valid, and reliable, the researcher met the respondents again to verify the interview transcripts. Moreover, they were also informed that they had the freedom to delete or enhance something in the interview transcripts; upon securing their approval, the researcher requested them to affix their signatures.

Face-to-Face Interview

The researcher intentionally informed the conversational partners about the face-to-face interview so they could provide in-depth responses to the questions. Each interview took an hour to sustain the comfort and interest of the CPs. All interviews had recorded with the permission of the CPs. To complete the transcription of the interviews, the researcher incorporated notes based on her observations from the CPs' body language and gestures following a particular question. As to the date and time of the interview, the CPs' available time followed so as not to disturb their activities. Concerning the interview venue, the researcher reached each CP in their respective places, mostly in their schools. Above all, minimum health protocols were observed in the interview since the pandemic still exists.

Chapter 3

Results

This chapter presents demographic information about the participants and the study's significant findings. Emerging themes, an exhaustive descriptive statement, and a high-level data analysis summary had presented. This chapter also includes explanatory information of identification, which was distilled from the comprehensive descriptive report and represented the fundamental structure of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978). Lastly, this chapter presents details about validating the study's findings, including the seventh step of analysis according to the steps outlined in Colaizzi's (1978) method of descriptive phenomenological analysis.

Profile of the Conversational Partners

The CPs were all graduating Senior High School students who revealed their experiences to understand and assess their current situation. Matrix 1 presents the profile of the participants in terms of gender, age, strand, and school.
Matrix 1

Profile of the Conversational Partners

Code Number	Gender	Age	Strand	School
SHS#01_Athena	Female	18	HUMSS	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#02_Aphrodite	Female	18	HUMSS	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#03_Zeus	Male	19	ABM	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#04_Artemis	Female	17	ABM	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#05_Hestia	Female	18	STEM	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#06_Hera	Female	18	STEM	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#07_Selene	Female	18	STEM	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#08_Apollo	Male	17	STEM	Dilangalen National High School
SHS#09_Iris	Female	18	GAS	Arizona High School
SHS#10_Psyche	Female	17	GAS	Arizona High School
SHS#11_Nemesis	Female	18	GAS	Arizona High School
SHS#12_Poseidon	Male	18	GAS	Arizona High School
SHS#13_Persephone	Female	19	GAS	Salunayan High School
SHS#14_Ares	Male	17	HUMSS	Villarica High School
SHS#15_Demeter	Male	17	HUMSS	Villarica High School
SHS#16_Hebe	Female	18	ABM	Villarica High School
SHS#17_Harmonia	Female	19	ABM	Villarica High School
SHS#18_Daphne	Female	18	GAS	Kimagango High School
SHS#19_Penelope	Female	18	GAS	Kimagango High School
SHS#20_Phoebe	Female	18	GAS	Patindeguen High School

All the conversational partners (CPs) answered the same set of questions as stated in the interview guide. The personal interaction with the CPs aided in building rapport which fostered trust necessary for them to open up their thoughts and experiences.

Categorization of Emergent Themes

After the in-depth interviews, the audio-recorded exchanges had transcribed, translated, and analyzed. A cross-analysis in comparing the core ideas had utilized in the information presented. It had adopted after the guide written by Hill et al. (2005) entitled Consensual Qualitative Research: An Update. The article suggested that the cross-analysis could have been conducted in one of two ways: the primary team can generate the categories as a group, or each member can do so separately and present the potential types to the group for an argument. Whatever method had used, all primary team members must agree on the phrasing of the categories and the placement of fundamental ideas within them.

The first classification is General, which means that the core idea applies to at least 50 percent of the CPs who had mentioned the item in their response during the interview. Next is Typical, meaning 26 to 49 percent of the CPs said the article. Lastly, the Variant applies to less than 25% of the CPs.

In categorizing the information, the themes are presented by research questions and referred to as central themes. Under the major themes are the core ideas from the responses of the CPs. Another column was included in the table showing the frequency of the reactions, which became the basis for the categorization.

Themes

126 significant statements and four formulated meanings were framed in the thematic analysis. Matrix 2 shows four significant themes with the core ideas and categorization that emerged from the subjective experiences of the conversational partners, specifically their lived experiences as graduating students.

Matrix 2

Major Themes, Core Ideas and Categorization

MAJOR THEMES	CORE IDEAS	CATEGORIZATION
Two Sides of the Coin	Challenges for independent learning	Typical
	Happy and blessed despite pandemic	General

	Unpleasant feeling and attitude	General
	More flexible and accessible modality	Variant
Uphill Battle	Not focused due to distractions and other responsibilities	General
	Problem with time and internet access	Typical
	Pressured due to bulk of modules	Typical
	Erroneous and not detailed materials	Typical
	Less teacher interaction	General
Get by and Get on	Self, family and friends as motivation and inspiration	General
	Help from internet and other people	General
	Rest and recreational activities	Variant
	Strong-willed and optimistic character	Typical
	Helpful routines	General
	Keeping the faith	Variant
Hopeful Hearts	Gain better understanding of lessons	Typical
	Good grades as reward	Typical
	Face-to-face classes	Variant
	Realizing dreams	Variant

The themes that emerged from the in-depth interviews are: Two Sides of the Coin, Uphill Battle, Get by and Get on, and Hopeful Hearts.

Theme 1: Two Sides of the Coin

Matrix 3 presents the core ideas and categorization of the first major theme Two Sides of the Coin.

Matrix 3

Major Theme 1, Core Ideas and Categorization

MAJOR THEME	CORE IDEAS	CATEGORIZATION
Two Sides of the Coin	Challenges for independent learning	Typical
	Happy and blessed despite pandemic	General
	Unpleasant feeling and attitude	General
	More flexible and acceptable modality	Variant

Reflected in Matrix 3 are four core ideas consisting of two General, one Typical, and one Variant categories. Happy and blessed despite the pandemic and Unpleasant feeling and attitude are categorized as General, while Challenges for independent learning is Typical and More flexible and acceptable modality is Variant. These were extracted from the CPs' responses to their emotional condition, attitudes, independence, and accessibility in the modular distance learning approach.

Matrix 4

Theme 2, Core Ideas and Categorization

MAJOR THEME	CORE IDEAS	CATEGORIZATION
Uphill Battle	Not focused due to distractions and other responsibilities	General
	Problem with time and internet access	Typical
	Pressured due to bulk of modules	Typical
	Erroneous and not detailed materials	Typical
	Less teacher interaction	General

Theme 3: Get By and Get On

Matrix 5 presents the core ideas and categorization of the third major theme Get By and Get On. These are extracted from the CPs' responses to their coping mechanisms in facing the challenges under modular distance learning.

Matrix 5
Theme 3, Core Ideas and Categorization

MAJOR THEME	CORE IDEAS	CATEGORIZATION
Get By and Get On	Self, family and friends as motivation and inspiration	General
	Help from internet and other people	General
	Rest and recreational activities	Variant
	Strong-willed and optimistic character	Typical
	Helpful routines	General
	Keeping the faith	Variant

There are six core ideas under the Get By and Get On theme, of which three are General, one is Typical, and two are Variant. The General core ideas include Self, family, and friends as motivation and inspiration, help from the internet and other people, and Helpful routines. The sole Typical core idea is a Strong-willed and optimistic character. Lastly, the two Variant core ideas are Rest and recreational activities and Keeping the faith.

The second major theme Uphill Battle comprises five core ideas, of which two had categorized as General and three as Typical. Identified as General core ideas include Not being focused due to Distractions and Other Responsibilities and Less teacher interaction, while the Typical core ideas are Problem with Time and Internet Access, Pressured due to the Bulk of Modules, and Erroneous and Not Detailed materials.

Theme 4: Hopeful Hearts

Matrix 6 presents the core ideas and categorization of the fourth major theme Hopeful Hearts as extracted from the CPs' responses to their aspirations and insights.

Matrix 6
Major Theme 4, Core Ideas and Categorization

MAJOR THEMES	CORE IDEAS	CATEGORIZATION
Hopeful Hearts	Gain better understanding of lessons	Typical
	Good grades as reward	Typical
	Face-to-face classes	Variant
	Realizing dreams	Variant

Hopeful Hearts comprises four core ideas, with two as Typical and two as Variant categories. Categorized as Typical core ideas are Gaining a Better Understanding of Lessons and Good Grades as a Reward, while Variant core ideas include Face-to-face Classes and Realizing Dreams.

Functional Implications

The findings of this research inquiry provide a whole new window into understanding the journey of Senior High School graduating students on modular distance learning. The conclusions of this study may provide additional social value to the students, teachers, and even the institution in defining the standard of achieving success regarding the modality.

The current study encompasses the different social strata as it cohesively benefits and involves the self throughout

the professional community of an individual. Based on the findings and generated themes from this study, the following are the implications:

It is important to note that different factors cause problems for students, which could affect their academic performance. Several factors that influenced their experience were the students and faculty's control. Students' control, such as internal factors like self-determination and perception, had been proven to be a hindrance to truly showing the students' maximum performance. Students should also have to balance work and family, manage time, and make personal commitments. Instructors also should work to establish a presence in the absence of physical compresence, work to build intellective relationships with students and work to create a sense of community. It is a balance of students and the faculty's factors that influence their experiences. With this, students and instructors should re-consider themselves to accept this type of approach in learning amidst the pandemic, and they should also allot enough time and effort to achieve the goal of learning.

It is also important to unravel students' experiences with modular distance learning because doing so can help reveal effective learning practices and students' perceptions, including students' satisfaction in the modular distance learning environment. These can provide information about whether students will likely continue to accept modular delivery of instruction and factors that will influence their persistence and retention in these courses.

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