

Students' Compromised Physical Health in Remote Learning and How they Cope with it: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract— Notably, the school program has been rocked by an unparalleled medical issue. Considering the state of uncertainty, it is critical to better comprehend learners' distant educational opportunities throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Though research has been conducted in this field, little detail is known on the deteriorated physical health of distant learning students and the precise measures they use to manage it. As such, this research seeks to fulfill the gap. The results, based on a phenomenological qualitative technique, demonstrated that university learners' perspectives with distant learning differed in aspects of kind and scope. As a result, physical health problems are associated with their domestic educational setting. Students' academic performance, mental health, and subsequent health problems were all negatively affected, according to the findings of the COVID-19 crisis. The most often utilized tactics by learners were managing resources and consumption, assistance wanting, goal setting, and regulation of the school setting. Finally, the article considers the impact on distant learning experience, strategic planning, and areas for further studies.

Keywords: Compromised Physical Health, Distant Education, Digital Literacy Methodologies,, Virtual Education, Tertiary Level Education

1 INTRODUCTION

THE Corona Virus (COVID-19) outbreak has changed many aspects of lives, education, and career. O'Sullivan & Nicola (2020) cited that the full extent of closure, social distance, and segregation on the personal and community scale is just now becoming apparent.

Coto, Rabe & Robinson (2020) found to be significant in their research that for educational as well as field faculty members in medical professions learning, the crisis has posed substantial challenges in terms of delivering pre-requisite instruction to learners, as universities and academe have adapted educational programs on the fly in response to progressively enforced constraints on community interactions. Historically, it took time to develop, execute, and analyze modifications to curriculum implementation. Nonetheless, the present predicament has compelled the academe to undertake drastic reforms in a very limited amount of time (Scott, 2020).

The absence of physical health care among students enrolled in distance education programs, based on several research, is one of the causes for the unacceptability of this mode of professional development (Day et al., 2021). As a result of the present crisis, nearly all institutions are being forced to move their operations from on-campus instruction to distance education programs.

Wang, Luo, Gao, & Kong, 2012 identified a substantial danger to our general well-being or fully functioning wellness posed by open and distance learning, which has resulted in a general shift from vigorous luxury pastimes and various extracur-

ricular activities to unhealthy eating habits and limited movement.

According to the University of Minnesota, 2007, amongst the essential factors in obtaining a college diploma should be everyone's physical and mental wellbeing. Learners are exposed to a variety of negative impacts to their health, as well as those associated with the web and technology, that may prohibit individuals from completing their studies. According to data analysis, obtaining a bachelor's degree does have a favorable influence on one's protracted wellness and overall being. As a result, the moment they spend on the internet should not have a detrimental impact on their ability to complete their study (Wang et al, 2012). Distance education program may be advantageous, yet it certainly carries along with additional hazards to their wellness.

According to Jaggars, 2013 what he referred to as "face-to-face learning" is transferred to a desktop display through the distance education program. Such advancements in technology had already manifested in sleep deprivation, excessive daytime sleepiness, and longer rising hours. A physically inactive lifestyle is related to such a variety of hazards in health, including heart attacks, which is considered the country's highest death rate (Wang et al., 2018).

However, it's not really apparent for certain if hours spent on the screen do have a detrimental effect on wellness among undergrads. Unhealthy lifestyles are second only to lack of physiological activities when it comes to the dangers they pose to wellbeing. This must have investigated the impact on learners'

operational wellbeing due to digital learning.

2 METHODOLOGY

Methodologies utilized in this investigation are outlined in this chapter. Collected data, as well as analyses, are also included in this section. They're laid out in the following order.

2.1 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This paper utilized a more in-depth method through a descriptive phenomenological design or the Husserlian phenomenology. Langdridge, 2007 explained that phenomenology is concerned with exploring and understanding human discoveries both in philosophy and research. According to Guilbeau (2014), Phenomenology is a type of qualitative research that does not necessarily contradict the quantitative approaches but asks a different question. To further elucidate the phenomenon's meaning, it focuses on answering the 'what is it's rather than the 'how much' and 'how many,' which describes frequency or magnitude. Thus, in this research investigation, the aim was to uncover the meaning of the students' experiences in remote learning that compromised their physical health and their strategies to overcome it.

2.2 Subjects of the Study

The participants in this research were five undergraduates (one man and four women) under a tertiary level university in Cebu City, a city in the Philippines. These individuals represented the College of Nursing. The learners are using the distant education program in both the online and offline modalities for at least three semesters at this point. The intermediate population of learners was provided with the primary digital and developmental devices (ex., desktop, speakers, earphones), as well as the requisite of digital literacy to engage in digital sessions. The participants did belong to a diverse range of backgrounds.

Prior to their participation, the respondents were asked to provide their informed permission. Before signing the written informed consent, students were given an overview of the study's aims as well as the degree to which they would be participating. They were also informed regarding the need to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the importance of maintaining their privacy, and their right to decline to cooperate with the research. Furthermore, the respondents were assured that they would not experience any extra costs as a result of their involvement in the study.

2.3 Collection of Data and Use of Research Instrument

How respondents addressed physical health problems while engaging in open and remote education, and how online classes impact the degree or extent of those hurdles, were some of the qualitative questions examined. Respondents also discussed the various techniques they used to surmount physical wellbeing dilemmas while participating in open and distance learning.

The procedure for the one-on-one conversation is divided into two sections: the informed consent portion and the ten phenomenological reflection questions. The purpose of the consent form is to get permission from respondents based on their involvement in the research. Additionally, respondents signed a certificate of permission in which they verified their willingness to engage in the research by affixing their complete identification and signature. A replica of a document was created. One should be kept by the respondents and one that should be kept on file by the researcher. The ten items in the primary topics section addressed issues such as learners' personal experience with open and distance learning and how their physical health is being impacted, the pandemic's influence on learners' problems, and the techniques that learners used to overcome physical health concerns. During the pilot research and one-on-one procedure, the instrument was verified by post-graduate professors and post-graduate doctorands.

Individual interviews are placed over the internet using Google Meet. The interview with each respondent took roughly thirty to forty minutes on average. Respondents were given the option to ask questions and provide feedback to obtain further clarifications about the questionnaire's substance and method during class. Due to the sheer continuous limitations imposed by the Inter-Agency task Force in the country, digital tests were held instead of in-person interviews. Five nursing students from a prestigious university with a tertiary degree were arbitrarily chosen from the class. Bergen & Labonte (2020) emphasized that in order to prevent social desirability distortions during the individual interview, the researcher made certain that the respondents were relaxed and receptive to chatting freely throughout the session. These were accomplished by notifying the respondents that there were no incorrect answers and that their identities and replies would indeed be treated with the strictest anonymity. Using the respondent's consent, the individual interview was captured on video to verify that all essential material was correctly collected for transcript.

2.3 Analyses of Data

Birks & Mills (2011) highlighted that qualitative analysis was employed by the author to answer the queries of the study. Respondents' answers to open-ended inquiries and the transcription of an individual session were examined by the author. To be more precise, the transcript codes were classified using multilayer

coding. An approach that was used to do this was a code-based classification system based on similarity or connectedness between respondent replies. Afterward, the author carried out a continuous comparison and continuous study of examples to enable the initially indicated subtypes to arise and gain momentum. Analyzing qualitative information on one's own is an excellent way to assure accuracy. The original study goal, statement of purpose, research technique, and coding system were all well explained by the author.

3 Results

The researcher looked at how learners coped with the pandemic's effects on higher studies, specifically in terms of open and distance education. Considering how their physical health was damaged, how the COVID-19 outbreak affected their distant educational opportunity, and their techniques for dealing with these physical health threats, the researcher determined the level of difficulties learners faced.

The amount to which distant learning obstacles endanger learners' physical health

Four of the five students who took the survey admitted having their physical well-being jeopardized. For example, if the class session lasted three hours in front of a computer, students' 1, 2, 3, and 4 all reported that their eyes and heads began to suffer after that time. Like student 5, she claims that long-term use of electronic devices like laptop computers might cause physical discomfort (e.g., body aches, headaches).

The effect of distance education on learners' physical wellbeing

COVID-19's influence on locomotion and face-to-face relationships has been questioned. According to three respondents, their fitness regimen was hampered because of the absence of face-to-face engagement with their peers. When it comes to open and distance learning, "I cannot perform workouts during open and distance learning, which keeps me weak. Because I usually feel tired, I consume a lot of food even without realizing it, hence why I have gained more weight than in the face-to-face session. In addition, three other learners revealed that agility constraints restricted their capacity to gain knowledge because they had mild to moderate back spasms from prolonged sitting for long periods of time ("Most of the time we sit and this promotes back pain and sometimes the pain runs to the muscles" - Student 2). Findings from a research project show that four learners recognized anxiousness as a major contributor to their physical well-being, psychological wellness concerns, and isolation. "I worry too much," one student said. "And it results in mental stress." When I do not realize it is already time for supper, I often forget to pack a

meal for the next day. Sometimes, it is hard for me to take care of myself, like the day I forgot to empty bladder if I have the urge and drink water"- Student 3). Due to their deteriorated physical condition, open and distance learning exacerbated learners' distant educational experiences.

Learners' techniques for overcoming obstacles that jeopardize their physical health in a distance education setting

A secondary goal of this research was to assess whether or not the usage of distant learning methodologies had an influence on the educational challenges of the participants. Among the frequently utilized approaches by learners were managing resources and utilization, goal setting, and help-seeking behavior ("I always talk to my family and friends most of the time because I can get support from them" -Student 5). "So my anxiety is reduced every moment I speak with each other." "I constantly make certain that my surrounds are in good condition favorable to studying," says student 1. In order to safeguard my vision, I start making care to keep the illumination of my electronics low and wear anti-radiation eyeglasses. It is no surprise that the two top techniques were also the ones they utilized the most often when confronted with various problems. Nevertheless, these methods utilized by learners with compromised physical health are likewise diverse.

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3 Discussion

This research examines the effects on learners' overall well-being of participating in education in a distance learning context. The study indicates that educational distant instructional obstacles differed depending on the kind and level of their poor physical being. It was the most trying time of their life coping with their educational situation at home. According to the learners' comments, the outbreak of COVID-19 harmed the overall degree of learning, psychological well-being, and accessibility. To expand the knowledge of learners' distant educational experiences, this research looked at how they dealt with and overcame a variety of problems that they encountered while doing their coursework online.

Consequently, the results show that the degree to which students' approaches and overall well-being were impaired and differed from each learner to the next. So, they should be considered the main point of view as a result of the interplay between a significant number of different causes. Finally, there was evidence from learners' replies that overall deteriorated physical health and techniques were influenced by their interactions with instructors and classmates as well as the university's rules and standards for open and distance education.

Disruptions at homes (e.g., noise, unnecessary movements) and limits in studying spaces were found to be the most vital components learners really have to overcome, as evidenced by the results. There is evidence showing that the pandemic's online educational problems are different from those learners faced before the outbreak. Because of this finding, there are a number of possibilities that learners were unable to attend schooling or any other educational facilities outside of their immediate

neighborhoods, which could have led to a more inactive lifestyle and, consequently, to excess weight that puts them at risk for various illnesses. For example, learners' internships and Related Learning Experience (RLE) were cut short because of the lockup, as well as their interactions with classmates and professors. This resulted in a lack of social connection, which in turn led to an increase in psychological state difficulties and loneliness. This has a negative influence on learners' educational engagement. A further explanation for the results is the fact that learners in virtual classrooms have less free leisure than their in-person counterparts. As seen by their comments, their general condition was deteriorating due to their poor time management and over-reliance on electronic devices. In addition, certain learners need to pause during virtual sessions since they are often in contact with their lecturers for even more than six hours.

When it comes to the influence of digital teaching methods on learners' conditions, the COVID-19 test is an important consideration. According to the research, the effectiveness of instruction and the well-being of learners have been found to be the most significant harmed aspects. Learners' fear of COVID-19 and the limited mobility and vulnerability to the outdoors that might harm their condition and well-being is the source of their worry. This study demonstrates the importance of focusing on the moderating impacts of psychological wellness, accessibility limits, and readiness in providing blended programs.

On the other hand, learners came up with a variety of solutions to the problems they encountered when taking classes digitally. Learners, for example, obtain assistance from one's families and sought assistance from others in order to improve their residential setting for learning. Various elements, such as a learner's personality, social background, and interaction with classmates and teachers, might have just influenced their individual techniques.

4 Conclusion and Implications for Policy

The coronavirus pandemic was the primary source of exposure for the learners. In addition to being unable to continue their learning, their academics have been disrupted. Higher education institutions have been shuttered due to false information, a considerable degree of illiteracy, and a lack of persuasive treatment. The research looked at the most significant influences on learners' physical well-being. Creating a stimulating learning atmosphere may help students focus on their distance learning and keep them safe from any physical and mental well-being risks.

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students focus on their distance learning and keep them safe from any physical and mental well-being risks. Another potential risk for learners' psychological development is their engagement in a distant educational environment. Frequent activity, a nutritious meal, physical running, and inhaling clean air will help alleviate the detrimental aspects. A few of these beneficial exercises have been constrained to keep participants from jeopardizing their physical well-being during the COVID-19 measurements and extended exposure to open and distance learning. However, these restrictions can be lifted with the execution of various standard operating procedures (SOPs). Learners might benefit from following these suggestions in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle and avoid situations that could harm their physical well-being. A person's physiological wellness may be enhanced by eating a healthy diet, engaging in regular indoor workouts, abstaining from cigarettes, keeping social distance, limiting time on screen, and using good physical mechanics when seated for extended periods of time, amongst other strategies. Learners can benefit from a sense of calm and well-being due to these consistent guidelines. Preventative techniques must be implemented in institutions, universities, colleges, and the commercial and public sectors to decrease the danger of physical well-being deterioration due to communication and information technology. Learners' overall health state may be determined by obtaining input from instructors and managerial personnel, who can then build safety regulation procedures to ensure the healthy living of learners in prospective research. We also have an obligation to strengthen the healthcare logistical service chains to guarantee the seamless passage of assistance for learners' physical well-being that is endangered.

Continued research might examine the function of sustainability of management operations in open and distance learning to describe learners' exact health fully. These measures would contribute to a more robust academic structure for virtual education, reducing the likelihood of learners developing health problems due to their schooling. Therefore, learners would benefit from this research since it would give them the knowledge to think about potential solutions to the difficulties they face. These are essential facts and figures for successful policymaking, strategic planning, and the eventual application of online learning. In addition, students' physical health may be impacted in certain locations, and instructors may use this information to provide appropriate solutions.

Future research should recognize and resolve some of the study's shortcomings. One weakness of this research is that it only focused on learners' viewpoints. It is possible that upcoming research may expand the study's population to include all participants in the instruction and training activities. A closer investigation of instructors' perspectives and expertise may help researchers better grasp how various aspects interconnect or influence one another. For example, the research only included respondents

from a private university in the Philippines. Institution, notwithstanding the small number of respondents. Further research may include K-12 schools as well as multiple colleges and universities from various parts of the country in order to improve the validity of the results. Last but not least, this epidemic has unquestionably altered and stretched the educational system. However, this once-in-a-lifetime occurrence will strengthen the educational platform so that it can withstand any foreseeable assaults.

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