AWARENESS OF THE REMOTE LEARNING PRACTICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: IN THE EYES OF ILONGGO STUDENTS

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Abstract

Introduction: Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a shift to emergency remote education and blended learning. However, although there have been a number of studies regarding remote education, few have specifically gone into the level of awareness of students on the concepts associated with and the methods utilized in remote education.

Objective: This study determined students' level of awareness on remote learning and blended learning, as well as the methods employed in remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: This descriptive-correlational research study utilized a duly-validated researcher-made questionnaire and was regulated through Google forms among the twenty (20) conveniently selected Ilonggo students. The statistical tools used were: mean, standard deviation, and Spearman's rho set at .05 level of significance. All statistical computations were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results: The results showed that Ilonggo students were very aware (M=3.53, SD=0.21) of the concepts pertaining to remote and blended learning, and very aware (M=4.01, SD=0.65) of the methods utilized in remote education. The Spearman's rho correlation presents a p-value of 0.816 at 0.05 level of significance and there was no significant relationship between the students' level of awareness in the topics being studied.

Conclusion: Awareness of the remote learning among Ilonggo students will help them adjust to the changes in our educational system, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: awareness, remote learning, education, pandemic

1. Introduction

As a result of the most recent figures shown by the current novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak in January 2020 wherein about 200 people out of every 10,000 infected had died, the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared an international public health emergency (Mahase, 2020). It is perceivable that every aspect of human life has been affected by this global health crisis, especially the field of health and medicine. Because public health is currently of utmost concern and consideration, and in order to comply with the recommended social distancing and health protocols to prevent the spread of the virus, governments around the world have decided to temporarily close all educational institutions. As a result, students, educators, and institutions as a whole have been affected and urged to adapt by transitioning into a more virtual platform to continue education despite the challenges posed by the pandemic (Chandra, 2021).

Remote learning in the midst of the pandemic is best defined as emergency response education (ERE) which falls under the category of distance education-- implemented as a result of the health-related concerns that come with traditional face-to-face learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). It has been the main alternative introduced by learning institutions, especially those on the tertiary level, to sustain education in spite of the current circumstances.

The study of Joaquin, Biana, & Dacela (2020) finds that in a developing country like the Philippines, tertiary level institutions are perceivably unprepared for the students' transition into a new mode of learning. Statistics from the same study show that an estimated 3.5 million students, enrolled in the tertiary level alone, are affected by the pandemic in one way or another. This is because aside from the usual responsibilities that come with being a student, they also have to adjust to the unprecedented challenges posed by the new learning setup (Simbulan, 2020).

Although there have been a number of studies conducted in relation to remote education and blended learning, relatively fewer are contextualized in the Philippine setting and specifically look into the level of awareness of students regarding the concepts pertaining to remote learning. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies localized to Iloilo City discussing students' awareness of the different methods employed in remote education as a means of adapting to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students must have an awareness of the current state of remote learning in the Philippines as this is a topic that directly affects them. Because every member of the school community is influenced by the changes in our general educational and institutional systems, students must be equipped with sufficient knowledge about remote education and what this new mode of learning means for them as learners. With this, the researchers aim to determine the level of awareness of students regarding the concepts of remote education and blended learning, as well as the practices utilized in adapting to the current mode of remote education.

Hence, this study has been undertaken.

2. Methodology
2.1 *Purpose of the Study and Research Design*

This study utilized the descriptive research-correlational method of research which aims to describe the variables and the relationships that occur naturally between and among them. The descriptive-correlational design fits well into this study for it aims to determine the relationship between Ilonggo students' level of awareness on the concepts pertaining to remote and blended learning and on the methods utilized in remote education.

2.2 Respondents

The respondents of the study were twenty (20) Ilonggo students who were currently residing in the city of Iloilo. The convenient sampling technique was employed in the selection of the respondents of the study.

2.3 Instrumentation

This study utilized a duly-validated researcher-made questionnaire regulated through Google Forms. The draft of the questionnaire was drawn out based on the researcher's readings, previous studies, professional literature, published and unpublished research relevant to the study. The said instrument was composed of 20 questions. 5 point Likert scale in conjunction with mean and ranking scheme was utilized.

The following are the scales use to indicate the Ilonggo students' level of awareness on the concepts of remote education and blended learning, as well as the practices utilized in adapting to the current mode of remote education.

Responses	Assigned score
Extremely Aware	5
Very Aware	4
Moderately Aware	3
Slightly Unaware	2
Not Aware at All	1

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

After the letter of permission to conduct the study was approved by the Dean, the questionnaire was administered to the respondents of the study through messenger. Responses were collected through Google Forms which was disseminated last September 6-11, 2021. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire given out were successfully completed and retrieved. After data gathering, the researchers tallied the responses and underwent statistical treatment. The Likert scale for interpreting the level of awareness are as follows.

Ranges for 5-point Likert Rating Scale

Scale	Description
1.00-1.79	Not Aware at All
1.80-2.59	Slightly Unaware
2.60-3.39	Moderately Aware
3.40-4.19	Very Aware
4.20-5.00	Extremely Aware

2.5 Date Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using quantitative data analysis approaches. Descriptive analysis uses frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation while inferential statistics uses Spearman rho to present quantitative data collected from students using questionnaires. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 testing set at .05 level of significance.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Level of Awareness Regarding the Concepts of Remote Learning and Blended Learning*

	M	SD	Description
Awareness on Concepts Of RL and BL	*3.53*	*0.21*	*Very Aware*

Legend: M --Mean; SD --Standard Deviation; (4.20-5.00) Extremely Aware; (3.40-4.19) Very Aware; (2.60-3.39) Moderately Aware; (1.80-2.59) Slightly Unaware; (1.00-1.79) - Now Aware at All

Table 1 shows that the respondents were very aware (*M*=3.53, *SD*=.21) of the different concepts pertaining to remote and blended learning. These results are possibly brought about by the experience of students with remote and blended learning for almost two academic years as well as the students' own research of what ideas can be associated with the remote and blended learning setups so as to set expectations about what the experience would be in the unprecedented mode of learning. Furthermore, students may also learn about remote and blended learning through their teachers and learning materials which explain the definitions of these two terms in the beginning of the new education setup in order to orient the learners on how remote education or blended learning will be implemented. In general, internet-based learning is considered an option, an alternative to traditional learning (Abou El-Seoud et.al, 2014, as cited in Pedroso, 2021). During the COVID 19 pandemic, it became an essential element for maintaining the activity of schools and universities. With this, students can learn anytime and anywhere, thereby developing new skills in the process leading to life-long learning (Dhawan, 2020, as cited in Pedroso, 2021)

Table 2. *Level of Awareness about the Methods Utilized in the Remote Learning Setup*

	M	SD	Description
Awareness on methods used in remote learning	*4.01*	*0.65*	*Very Aware*

Legend: M --Mean; SD --Standard Deviation; (4.20-5.00) Extremely Aware; (3.40-4.19) Very Aware; (2.60-3.39) Moderately Aware; (1.80-2.59) Slightly Unaware; (1.00-1.79) - Now Aware at Al

Table 2 shows that the respondents were very aware (*M*=4.01, *SD*=.65) of the methods in remote learning. With this, participants perhaps are very aware of methods such as synchronous, real time lectures, online education platforms, pre-recorded video lectures, collaborative learning in groups, and self-paced instruction being utilized in the remote education setup. In the study of Pedroso (2021), webinars paved the way for students to utilize their past experiences to form new knowledge. Student's experiences may have triggered them to underscore innovative conclusions as they were well-engaged listeners on webinars' live presentations and interactive multimedia which made the distance feel less of a hurdle (Mittal, 2020)

Table 3. *Significant Relationship between the Participants' Level of Awareness of the Concepts of Remote Learning and Blended Learning and the Level of Awareness on the Methods Employed in Remote Education*

	Level of awareness on the concepts regarding remote learning and blended learning	Level of awareness on the methods utilized in remote education
Level of awareness on the concepts regarding remote learning and blended learning	.	
Level of awareness on the methods utilized in remote education	.816**	.

Note: ***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).*

Table 3 shows that there is no significant relationship between the students' level of awareness of the concepts of remote learning and blended learning, and on the methods employed in remote education.

4. Conclusion

In relation to the findings of this survey, it is concluded that the participants are very aware of the concepts pertaining to remote learning and blended learning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants are very aware of the definition and scope of remote education and its purpose. Furthermore, the participants are very aware of blended learning as a separate and different concept from remote education. Aside from this, the participants are collectively very aware of the methods employed in the current remote learning setup. Students have cognizance of the different practices and strategies being utilized in remote education, both synchronous and asynchronous in assessments and instructional delivery, as well as independent and collaborative modes of learning. Lastly, there exists no significant relationship between the participants' level of awareness on the concepts regarding remote learning and blended learning and the level of awareness on the methods utilized in remote education. Awareness of remote learning concepts among Ilonggo students will help them adjust to the changes in our educational system, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is recommended by the researcher that this study be used in the development of further research about remote education and blended learning in the midst of the pandemic.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Summary Of The Respondent's Level Of Awareness Of The

Definition Of Remote Learning And How It Differs From Blended Learning

Question 1: What is the level of awareness regarding the definition of remote learning, and how it differs from blended learning?					
Question	No. of Responses				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Remote learning is not the same as traditional distance education.	0	6	1	8	5
2. Remote education is a response to the unprecedented health emergency, in an effort to sustain education.	1	4	7	4	4
3. Remote education encompasses mobile learning, online learning, distance education, blended learning, and homeschooling.	2	4	5	2	7
4. Remote learning does not seek to replace or substitute the face-to-face (on-campus) learning system.	2	5	3	6	4
5. Remote education is not initiated as a replacement or substitute for traditional distance education.	1	4	3	7	5
6. Remote learning and blended learning differ from one another.	1	7	2	3	7
7. Blended learning is a mode of learning that falls under remote education.	0	4	4	6	6
8. Blended learning is a combination of online education and traditional face-to-face teaching.	1	2	7	2	8
9. Blended learning can be used as an umbrella term which involves combining different methods of instruction, pedagogical approaches, and technologies.	1	1	10	4	4
10. Blended learning is catered towards both the students who learn better in a well-structured environment and those who prefer a more independent, semi-autonomous, computer-based training.	1	2	5	4	8

APPENDIX B - Summary Of Respondent's Level Of Awareness About The

Different Methods Employed In The Remote Learning Setup

Question 2: How aware are students about the methods employed in the remote learning setup? (*Kindly respond to each identified method based on your awareness that it is being utilized in remote education.*)					
Method	No. of Responses				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Synchronous, real-time lectures	0	1	1	5	13
2. Time-based outcome assessments	1	1	6	2	10
3. Time-independent assignments	1	1	2	4	12
4. Pre-recorded video lectures	0	1	2	6	11
5. Distribution of printed learning materials or modules	1	1	2	4	12
6. Online education platforms	0	2	1	2	15
7. Lessons delivered via radio	4	5	2	5	4
8. Lessons delivered via television	4	5	6	4	1
9. Self-paced instruction	0	1	4	3	12
10. Collaborative learning in groups	0	1	2	6	11

APPENDIX C - SPSS Test Results for Nonparametric Correlations

			Remote and Blended Learning	Methods Used in Remote Learning
Spearman's rho	Remote and Blended Learning	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1.0000 . 20	-0.56 .816 20
	Methods Used in Remote Learning	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.56 .816 20	1.0000 . 20

APPENDIX D - Copy of the Cover Letter and Research Questionnaire In

Document Format

I. Cover Letter

Dear Participant,

My name is Heart L. Mellizo, a second year student of West Visayas State University, taking up Bachelor of Secondary Education with a Major in Social Studies. I am currently conducting a simple survey study entitled "*Pag-eskwela sa Pandemya*: Students' Awareness of the Remote Learning Practices During the Pandemic".

In line with this, I would like to request for your valuable time in responding to the following survey questionnaire that seeks to answer the research questions formulated for this topic: (1) What is the level of awareness regarding the definition of remote learning, and how it differs from blended learning?, and (2) How aware are students about the methods employed in the remote learning setup?

I would like to emphasize that your participation in this survey paper is entirely voluntary and, if at any point throughout answering this survey questionnaire you feel any discomfort regarding the questions being asked, you may choose to discontinue your participation in the study. If you agree to proceed to the survey questionnaire, you may continue to the next page to start answering the research questions. Your response will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Respectfully,

Heart L. Mellizo

Head Researcher

II. Questionnaire

Kindly answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Make use of the scale provided below as your guide in choosing the corresponding number in accordance with your own level of awareness.

Thank you very much for your responses.

Scale:
1 - Not Aware at All
2 - Slightly Unaware
3 - Moderately Aware
4 - Very Aware
5 - Extremely Aware

1. What is the level of awareness regarding the definition of remote learning, and how it differs from blended learning?					
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Remote learning is not the same as traditional distance education.					
2. Remote education is a response to the unprecedented health emergency, in an effort to sustain education.					
3. Remote education encompasses mobile learning, online learning, distance education, blended learning, and homeschooling.					
4. Remote learning does not seek to replace or substitute the face-to-face (on-campus) learning system.					
5. Remote education is not initiated as a replacement or substitute for traditional distance education.					
6. Remote learning and blended learning differ from one another.					
7. Blended learning is a mode of learning that falls under remote education.					
8. Blended learning is a combination of online education and traditional face-to-face teaching.					
9. Blended learning can be used as an umbrella term which involves combining different methods of instruction, pedagogical approaches, and technologies.					
10. Blended learning is catered towards both the students who learn better in a well-structured environment and those who prefer a more independent, semi-autonomous, computer-based training.					

2. How aware are students about the methods employed in the remote learning setup? (*Kindly respond to each identified method based on your awareness that it is being utilized in remote education*)

1. Synchronous, real-time lectures					
2. Time-based outcome assessments					
3. Time-independent assignments					
4. Pre-recorded video lectures					
5. Distribution of printed learning materials or modules					
6. Online education platforms					
7. Lessons delivered via radio					
8. Lessons delivered via television					
9. Self-paced instruction					
10. Collaborative learning in groups					

Interested parties of this research instrument may contact the researchers to gain full access to this content.