



B.Ed. Students' Experiences using Electronic Learning Platforms in the New Normal Situations

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Abstract:

This research was conducted to determine the benefits gained, problems encountered & proposed solutions of B.Ed. student in using technological learning platforms in the new normal. The researchers use the Google Forms to create an e-questionnaire which was sent to the list of names purposefully chosen. From the data gathered, they stated that they usually benefitted from the usage of different technological learning platforms. The result also proves that, despite the benefits they gained from using it, they encountered many problems during their usage of these platforms. On the other hand, they have suggested many possible solutions to address these problems. Thus, the result of the study suggests to the agencies concerned to formulate or find solutions to address the problems being encountered by college students. the suggested solutions may be considered by the authorities to lessen the burden of college students. Based from the experiences of the respondents in the usage of the different technological learning platforms, it is somehow beneficial to their learning despite of the problems they encountered. The respondents proposed different intervention to address the problems they encountered while using those technological learning platform nowadays. This is an initial paper to address the problems encountered by the students on the usage of different technological learning platforms conducted in the locale of the study.

Keywords: *Technological learning platform, problems, new normal*

I. Introduction

The societal shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the long-overdue exposure of systemic racism, have starkly unveiled the deep-rooted inequalities in our contemporary society. While some may yearn for a return to the "normal" of the past, it is clear that this so-called "normal" was inherently inequitable. Thus, there is a pressing need to collectively forge a new paradigm underpinned by principles of equity. Establishing a more equitable educational system is an indispensable cornerstone of this emerging new normal.

One immediate sphere requiring our focused attention is educational technology (Ed Tech). For decades, Ed Tech has held the promise of delivering a more effective and equitable educational experience. This promise still holds allure for many, especially those envisioning a transformation of education with technology at its forefront. However, formidable obstacles persist, hindering technology's potential to create a more equitable learning environment, rather than exacerbating existing disparities.

Some of these hurdles became glaringly apparent during the abrupt transition to emergency remote teaching prompted by the pandemic. For example, communities grappled with glaring



inequalities in access – inequities in the availability of computers, reliable high-speed internet, and the digital literacy necessary to harness online learning's potential. While noble efforts have been made to address these inequalities in response to the COVID-19 crisis, disparities persist, and this is inexcusable. Often, the most vulnerable students remain the least connected, and a greater reliance on technology in education only serves to widen the chasm of societal inequalities.

Another hurdle, albeit less conspicuous, is the inequitable access to educational content attributed to the design of Ed Tech. Frequently, educational technology is crafted by technologists with limited input from a select group of educators, potentially resulting in solutions that cater best to students who fit traditional schooling models. While educator input is invaluable, a broader spectrum of voices, including those rooted in research and community perspectives, must be heard to mitigate these inequities.

The landscape of education has undergone a profound shift from bygone eras when students scoured library shelves for information. In the 20th century, the quest for knowledge evolved, with vast resources accessible within seconds. Technology has indeed progressed and continues to evolve.

The abrupt transition to online learning ignited impassioned debates, underscoring the stark contrast in living conditions among learners. A conspicuous gap emerged between those who could and couldn't afford the resources necessary to engage with the new educational platform. The condition of children in the public school system signals a disquieting message of inequality, even as the Department of Education's mantra of 'no child left behind' resonates. Yet, learning remains a non-negotiable imperative, for it fuels our economic engine. This has necessitated rigorous measures to sustain educational institutions in the face of looming risks.

Computers, laptops, smartphones, and tablets have ceased to be mere leisure items in today's age. They are now indispensable tools in the realm of education. The power and significance of technology in education have become more evident than ever, particularly as Filipino students require unfettered access to education during crises.

Technology has advanced to the extent that it now propels business growth, prompting companies to harness it for enhanced performance and hire tech-savvy professionals. In alignment with this trend, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in shaping future professionals by

integrating technology into their curriculum, facilities, and learning materials. Furthermore, today's digitally native students stand to benefit from technology in their daily studies, harnessing its potential to propel them forward. Amid the ongoing pandemic, technology has been heralded as the "silver lining" of our education system, particularly in a virtual round table discussion titled "Education During Trying Times" in October 2020. This underscores that we are indeed in an era characterized by technology and digitalization, and it is our collective duty to maximize these tools to find solutions to the challenges faced by the education sector, as articulated by Dr. Valenzuela in 2020.

In this era, technology serves as the bridge between quarantine and effective teaching. Throughout the second quarter of 2020, we witnessed our education sector pivot to online classes. Smartphones have transcended luxury status to become essential tools. Digital technology, during this time, is no longer a luxury but a fundamental necessity. The present health crisis has particularly affected students, especially those in the College of Teacher Education. To address the gaps in education today, we employ technological tools. Challenges are an integral, albeit surmountable, part of the learning process. Students encounter difficulties in completing their modules and often grapple with retrieving and submitting assignments, primarily due to the unavailability of transportation that was previously accessible.

In light of the perspectives expressed regarding the use of technological learning platforms in the education sector during crises, researchers seek to identify the "benefits gained, problems encountered, and proposed solutions of B.Ed. students in using technological learning platforms in the new normal."

Theoretical Framework

In the context of present research, the framework of the study is illustrated at the research paradigm, the input-process-output, to determine the benefits gained, problems encountered & proposed solutions of B.Ed. student in using of technological learning platforms in the new normal.

The researchers used the input-process-output format as conceptual framework. The Input includes profile of participants, benefits gained, problems encountered & proposed solutions of B.Ed. student in using of technological learning platforms in the new normal.



The process identifies profile of participants, benefits gained, problems encountered & proposed solutions of B.Ed. student in using of technological learning platforms in the new normal.

For the output, the results of the recent study addressed the coping mechanism of students on the usage of technological learning platform in education of B.ED. students under new normal.

II. Methodology

The researchers utilized the descriptive method using qualitative approaches in gathering information about the present condition. To define the descriptive type of research, Creswell (1994) stated that descriptive research as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing condition, practices, beliefs, processes, trends, and cause-effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate interpretation about such data with or without the aid of statistical methods. A descriptive type of research according to Creswell (1994) involves the collection of data to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study. It is designed to gather information or conditions existing at a particular period of time. The focus of the whole process is on the discovery of theory on comparison or contrast of the findings.

The researchers of the study used e-questionnaire, the major instrument in gathering information from the target participant. An e-questionnaire is a research instrument consisting series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering data needed in the study. An e-questionnaire designed by the researchers was titled "Benefits gained, problems encountered & proposed solutions of B.Ed. student in using of technological learning platforms in the new normal." Likewise, the e- questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part was the personal information of the participants and second part was the information, where the answer of the specific problems stated in Chapter I found. The researchers used the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis or IPA. The content of the instrument was based on the findings of the e-questionnaire conducted with the student.

Benefits Gained by the B.Ed. Students in Using Technological Tools in the New Normal:

The query was intended to determine the benefits gained by the participants on the use of technological tools in studying in the new normal. The general themes that were identified are easier access, new mode of learning, and collaborative learning.

Theme 1: Easier Access

A participant mentioned that using the technological tools in the new normal benefits her because according to her "it is easier to finished my school paper/activities". Another participant said that "it is easy to use and convenient". Most of the participants claimed that, the technological tools being used in the new normal they can "access information more easily".

The above statements proved that technological learning platforms makes the task easily done. It said the technological learning platforms makes them access easily. Students find to do their job or task easily because there are different platforms that can be used in their online learnings. By the used of this technological learning platforms, students' learnings become easier. They can easily access to what they want to know. They don't need to go to school library in order to search what they need. They just simply use these platforms. These platforms make the life of students easier. And so with the teachers, they don't need to go to their student's home to give their modules, but instead they just used the different platform to send the needs of their students. They can also use it to instruct directly their students to what they will be doing. The teaching and learning process in education is continuously happening in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic through the use of the different technological learning pplatforms.

Moreover, distribution and retrieval of modules through online is more convenient. It is mentioned by a participant that "Sending modules through online or instead of going to school to submit, there is technology where you can send your outputs". The other participant uttered also that, "It is easy to get modules". This implies that through technology, participants can continuously access their learning materials through downloading them from the different platforms. With that, they don't need to go to school to have face-to-face instead they can discuss or give instructions to the different technological learning platforms. On the other hand, these platforms become as way for module distribution and retrieval as stated by the participants.

Theme 2: New Modes of Learning

According to one of the participant, "through technological learning platforms, teachers may be able to explain many things. As student it helps us to learn and study hard.", The other participant uttered that, "It enhanced



technology literacy skills”. While the other participant cited that “With the help of technological learning platforms, as student, I can continue my studies instead of face-to-face learning to avoid the spread of Covid-19 virus.

With the statements being uttered by the participants these platforms become useful in the teaching and learning process. Technological learning platforms served as medium of learning in the new normal. Since the time Covid-19 spread in the country, Education sector find many ways to pursue the student’s learning. One of these modalities they introduced was through online learning. Online learning uses different platforms in order to connect the teachers to their students. Integrating technology into teaching and learning is not a new challenge for universities. Since 1900s, administrators and faculty have grappled with how to effectively use technical innovations such as video and audio recordings, email and teleconferencing to augment or replace traditional instructional delivery methods (Kaware&Sain, 2015; Westera, 2015).

Theme 3: Collaborative Learning

Collaboration is also gained during the use of Technological Learning Platforms. Collaboration means working together with one, or more people to complete a project or develop ideas or processes. Collaborative learning has been shown to not only develop higher-level thinking skills in students, but boost their confidence and self-esteem as well. Students collaboration is important in learning social skills and exploring areas of interest.

The participant responded that “encourages collaboration among students”. As the participants had mentioned that collaboration among students was enhanced during the used of Technological learning platforms. Students collaborate to each other especially during the classes. These technology tools serves as the medium during their class discussion. They ask questions or queries to each other using their platforms. They don’t go out any more to clarify the things that they don’t know.

Collaborative learning can be defined as a set of teaching and learning strategies promoting student collaboration in small groups (two-five students) in order to optimize their own and each other’s learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). In addition, in informal learning settings, advanced technologies also facilitate collaborative learning through the flexible and instant feedback (Rambe and Bere 2013). Previous studies indicated, social

media, tangible interaction reality tools can serve as vehicles to support collaborative learning in informal setting. For example, learners can adopt Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to discuss with peers, experts and parents, which elicit to generate new ideas about subject matters (Dabbagh and Kitsantas 2012).

Problem/S Encounter in Using the Different Technological Learning Platforms in the New Normal

Theme 1: Unstable internet connectivity

One of the most recurring problems experienced by the students is unstable internet connectivity. Most of the time, this problem is caused by the geographic location.

Based on the gathered responses on the participants, one participant responded that, “not stable internet connection and power interruption”. The other participant cited that, “Poor internet connection”. While the other uttered that, “Maybe what hinders me most in using this technological advances is the unavailability of internet connection.”

The statements that responded by the participants imply that due to unstable internet connection, they cannot connect or attend to on their online class. They cannot understand the lesson/discussion when the connection is slow. That’s the reason why some of the students will not attend on the scheduled online class. They just sacrificing reading the given modules to them. Even though sometimes they don’t understand what they are reading.

Slow Internet connections or limited access from homes in rural areas can contribute to students falling behind academically. The educational setbacks can have significant impacts on academic success, college admissions and career opportunities. Students with no high-speed Internet access at home are also less likely to plan to attend a college or university. (Hampton, et al.)

In connection to this, the poor network is commonly a major problem for developing countries with telecommunication systems and ICT, not being properly developed (Aboagye, et al., (2020). Although there are many existing internet bundles in the country, they are, “Fluctuating” and are not created equally in terms of speed and stability (Amadora, 2020).

Theme 2: Limited background knowledge to different platforms

As stated by a participant, “It took me sometimes to understand and learn how to use a



certain platform”. Other participant stated that, “Unfamiliar with the application used in classes”. While the other cited that, “The lack of knowledge in using some application sometimes due to the abrupt transition of the traditional education to the new normal of education”.

This implies that not all the participants are tech savvy. Some of the participants are not 21st century learners. Technological Learning Platform in the first place was hard to understand, especially to those students who are not so familiar with this term. They don't have enough knowledge to use different Technological Learning Platforms. They don't know how to utilize this kind of applications. The long life learners cannot easily access to this kind platform because they are unfamiliar to it. They cannot easily cope up during online classes. That is why it become another problem to them, the usage of different platforms. On the other hand, students are trying their best to cope up in this new trend of education during the new normal.

For example, university administrators may view technology as a tool to attract and retain students, whereas faculty may struggle to determine how technology coincides with existing pedagogy (Lawrence & Lentle-Keenan, 2013; Lin, Singer, & Ha, 2010). In addition, some faculty may be hesitant to use technology due to lack of technical knowledge and/or skepticism about the efficacy of technology to improve student learning outcomes (Ashrafzadeh & Sayadian, 2015; Buchanan, Sainter & Saunders, 2013; Hauptman, 2015; Johnson, 2013; Kidd, Davis, & Larke, 2016; Kopcha, Rieber, & Walker, 2016; Lawrence & Lentle-Keenan, 2013; Lewis, Fretwell, Ryan, & Parham, 2013; Reid, 2014).

Theme 3: Financial related problems

The students encounter problems in online learning in terms of its financial demands. It requires internet expenses. As one of the participant stated that “Lack of money that will be used for mobile data” is one of the problems encountered. The second participant also commented that, “Don't enough budget in sustaining load” in order to be always connected to internet. The above statements of the participants implied that without sufficient money, they cannot connect to the platform in a longer period of time. They should have enough money or load in order to continuously connected so that they would not left behind or always connected to the different applications/platforms needed in learning. However, poor internet connectivity and the high

cost of data subscription were identified to be the major challenges confronting the students.

Another problem that repetitively appears in the responses of the participants is the inadequacy of learning resources. Most students use only phone and need other resources. The participant stated in the study that “no accessible gadget to use”. Others have a challenge in terms of the storage capacity of their available gadgets. The other participant also cited that, “Full storage phone because of many files”. Other have commended that due to the low unit of gadgets they are using, it makes it as problem to them, as the other participant stated that, “Low quality of gadget”.

The above statements implied that there is a large problem of the students using different gadgets. Though they have the means or gadget, there are many problems that can be attached to it. It is not completely helpful for their studies having these gadgets problems. They cannot easily comply through the use of low tech they have. Poor students cannot buy high tech gadgets.

(Meanwhile, the findings of the studies (Coleman, 2011; and Henaku, 2020) corroborate the other result of the study in which inadequate learning resources are among the problems confronting the students. This also confirms the finding of (Saavedra, 2020) that access to remote learning devices like computers has been a recurring challenge for students as schools shift to online distance learning in the middle of a global health emergency. This problem may stem from financial-related problems as another difficulty/problem disclosed by the student participants. This finding in which students in Zimbabwe faced financial problems in a distance set-up (Matswetu, et al., (2020).

Theme 4: Conflict Schedule

While they are at home, students voiced problem with balancing the home and work responsibilities to home learning. It keeps their time divided. One participant uttered that “lack of time coz I have much work at home like cooking, washing plates, cleaning inside and outside the house, taking care of my son, washing clothes, etc.”. The other participant cited that “Time management”. The above statements of the participants imply that there is a conflict of time during online classes. They have other activity aside from studying. This also imply that some of the participants are married and working students. That's the reason why they uttered that there is



problem in their time management and activity scheduling.

Time Management is a process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. Good time management enables you to work smarter-not harder-so that you get more done in less time, even when time is tight and pressures are high. Failing to manage your time damages your effectiveness and causes stress. However, blended learning effectiveness may be dependent on many other factors and among them student characteristics, design features and learning outcomes. Research shows that the failure of learners to continue their online education in some cases has been due to family support or increased workload leading to learner dropout (Park & Choi, 2009).

Moreover, students voiced out the challenge that remote learning schedules conflict with their home responsibilities. This disruption usually happens that remote learning because students need to participate in doing household chores. This problem may influence university students' academic performance as shown by previous achievement where students' involvement in household responsibilities negatively affects their academic achievement (Poncian, 2017: and Amali, Bello & Adeoye, 2018).

Theme 5: Compromised Physical Health

The students encounter problems in online learning to the point that they feel they are sacrificing their physical health. They report eye strain due to exposure to the gadgets This implies that health issue among students arises when they use different gadgets. Their health, most probably their eyes are being affected when they use these gadgets too much. Excessive use of any gadget is dangerous to one's health. Excessive use of gadgets such as mobile phones, tablets and computer desktops can cause physical and mental damage to children.

Responding to some of these concerns, researchers have explored how the time children spend using digital technology impacts their lives across various domains. Over the course of the past decades, individual research studies have indicated that increased use of digital technology might have some negative impacts on children's well-being, ranging from mental issues such as depression (Kim et al., 2010) or addiction (Young, 1996), to public health issues obesity (Sisson et al., 2010).

Students spend almost the entire day for online classes and answering activities, thus giving

less time or no time to engage in physical activities. This issue has been similarly raised by students in Malaysia where they experience strains of attending 6 to 8 hours online classes, which further worsen their stress level (Sundarasan et al, 2020).

Proposed Solutions of B.Ed. Students to Address the Difficulties they encountered in Using Technological Learning Platforms

Theme 1: Free Wi-Fi Installation

Wi-fi is the technology used to connect computers, tablets, smartphones and other devices to the internet. Wi-fi is the radio signal sent from a wireless router to a nearby device, which translates the signal into data you can see and use. During the conduct of the study one participant uttered that "If possible, there should a Free Wi-fi in all Barangay so that all the students can cope up with the new trends of education". Other participant also cited that, "free Wi-Fi for educational purposes". The other participant also stated that, "It is best that during this trying times, the CHED and Dep-Ed should tie up with Barangay Officials in order to request the local Government for Public Wi-fi in Rural places". The statements mentioned above suggested one solution in order to address the problems being encountered during the use of Technological Learning Platforms. This implies that there should be a free access of internet connection in all areas for educational purposes.

Theme 2: Provision of Student's Allowance

In order to be always connected to the internet, students need additional load allowance. As stated by one of the participant, "You should always have extra load". The other participant also mentioned that. "Encourage Parents to Take Advantage of Community Resources". While the other suggested that "Giving free loads for students without Wi-Fi".

The above statements of the participants imply that there is a need of different resources by the parents and different agencies concerning in giving load allowances. It is suggested that free loads to students is one of the solution to address the problems being encountered in using the different Technological Learning Platforms. The Dep Ed and other Government agency concerned should allocate funds for the load allowance of students. Scholarships should be grant to those deserving students. The parents of the students are obliged to allocate enough money or load assistance to their children in order to be always



connected to the internet during online classes during the new normal.

Theme 3: Attendance to Webinars

A webinar is an online event that is hosted by an organization/company and broadcast to a select group of individuals through their computers via the internet. As stated by one of the participant, "I think conducting webinars about the proper ways on how to deal and use TLP would be of big help". The other participant also cited that "Learn to ask questions about the things they don't know". And the other one stated that, "Introduce to the society properly".

The above statements of the participants imply that not all of them knows how to manipulate the different Technological Learning Platforms. They feel ignorance on the applications being used. They suggested that conducting Webinars about how to utilized these platforms will be of big help to them. Not all of them belongs to 21st century generation, that's why some of them don't know how to use these platforms.

Theme 4: Limited Face-to-face learning among college students

Face-to-face means within each other's sight or presence. The participants suggested that "Must have face to face learning as soon as possible for the better education", Face to face classes at least two times every week because as college student it is better to have experience in face-to-face so that it become successful in the teaching profession someday.

The above statements of the participants suggested that among college students there should be a limited face-to-face classes for them know and understand better the knowledge needed in their profession someday. College students needs to learn in a face-to-face basis so that they can learn what is needed in their career or profession. They need to be fully equipped or knowledgeable enough in order overcome all the problems they can encounter in the near future, when they become professionals. In addition, limited face-to-face was suggested. In order to avoid too much exposure to gadgets, there is a need of face-to-face learning among college at least 2 time a week only.

Theme 5: Time Management

Time Management is a process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. Good time management enables you to work smarter-not

harder-so that you get more done in less time, even when time is tight and pressures are high. Failing to manage your time damages your effectiveness and causes stress. It is managing time effectively so that the right time is allocated to the right activity. According to the responses gathered from the participants "Time Management", "I work overtime to get what to attend all the problems encountered using diff. learning platforms".

These responses imply that time management should be observed especially to those who has another activity to do aside from studying. These is necessary to those working students and married students.

III. Conclusion

The results of the findings have determined the benefits gain, problems encountered and proposed solutions by the College of Teacher Education students. Through technological learning platforms, they can continue their studies. They can send and retrieve their modules easily. They can also enhance their collaboration skills with their classmates and peers. It also a way for teaching and learning process.

Likewise, the analysis showed that the quality of education under new normal is not as effective as to face to face learning, due to the recognized problems encountered by the students. Unstable internet connection is one of the mention problems by the participants. In addition, financial-related problems are also encountered. Likewise, due to limited background knowledge in utilizing these platforms, they find conflict, especially to their time and schedule. Their health status was also being affected especially when they used their gadgets in a long period of time.

Although, seeking successful education nowadays is very hard. They suggested solutions to overcome these problems encountered. One of it is, through installation of free Wi-Fi in all barangay halls used by the students in their studies. This free Wi-Fi was used for educational purpose only. Higher authorities should impose provisions of giving student's allowance. Webinars in utilizing technological learning platforms should be done in order to help the students who has limited knowledge in using such platforms. Limited face-to-face among college students was suggested in order for them to fully standard the different concepts needed in learning their professions. Time Management should be also considered to avoid conflict of schedules among working students.



As a result, through technological learning platforms, students now can continue their studies with the help of their instructors, friends, families and community they belong and means to overcome the problems they encountered. The general implication arrived at this study is for students to be equipped in utilizing different technological learning platforms. Education under new normal is such a challenge to all students, teachers, school administrators and national officials. Likewise, technological learning platforms can make a significant milestone in the process of learning of the students.

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