



# Understanding the Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Class during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdowns in Southern Philippines

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## ABSTRACTS

This study aims to further understand the online approach to learning during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in Southern Philippines. This study is based on Linda Harasim's theory of online collaborative learning, which emphasizes that rather than memorizing correct answers, students are encouraged to collaborate to solve problems through conversation. The teacher or instructor is a key player in this process. Collaborative learning is a method that involves students of various performance levels working together in small groups to accomplish a common goal. Students are responsible for each other's education in addition to their own. Face-to-face collaborative learning is being replaced by online collaborative learning.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 Pandemic carried a massive disruption to many aspects of human life most particularly in education (Iglesias-Pradas *et al.*, 2021). Many lockdowns imposed by the Philippine government have given out with the situation by shutting down many operations, while others continued to deliver instructions using the internet and various modern technological applications that truly assist online teaching and learning. This unexpected shift from the face-to-face class to the unusual pure online approach of teaching and learning was the result. When the COVID-19 pandemic first broke out, virtual or online education exploded onto the scene and has only grown in importance since. Concerns regarding the quality of education it provides, and the difficulties teachers and students confront are growing along with the rise of virtual classes (Dung, 2020). The continuation of the classes online resulted in too many issues for all the teachers, parents, and students ranging from lack of technology to mental health issues.

The pace of change in the globalization process is accelerating. Disruptive technology, particularly online learning and online learning programs is causing critical changes in the modern world of education. These changes are making learning and training in education much more important. However, the success rate of learning online without close monitoring remains very low in terms of quality. Low cost, flexible scheduling, and a large audience were among the benefits; nevertheless, low success rates, distractions, and lack of student contact was negative. The students' well-being is prioritized during times of crisis in their online education. The school is already paying attention to how it can help parents maintain their mental health while helping their students in learning.

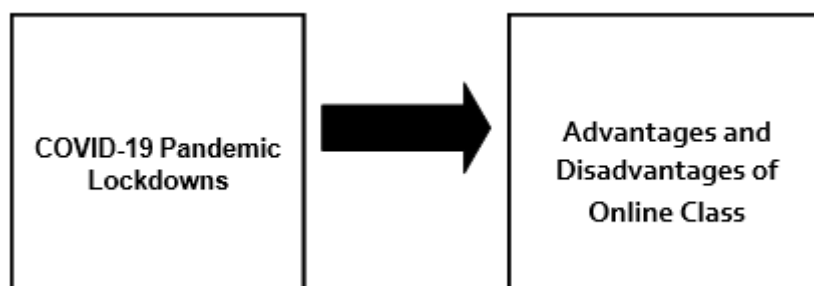
Online learning is the outcome of instruction that is electronically given through computer-based media. E-learning gives students access to knowledge as well as precise results. It can also track student progress and report student performance in addition to giving e-learning instruction (Martono and Nurhayati, 2014). To ensure the success of online learning, technical infrastructure and internet connectivity play a crucial role. For the same material to be supplied across several institutions and divisions within the same institution, content and technology providers need also to offer portable, high-quality, interoperable solutions. Additionally, the benefits can be used to promote online learning and educate best practices for using online learning platforms.

The students with greater numbers of online courses also reported less exposure to effective teaching practices and lower quality of interactions. The correlation between these engagement measures and the proportion of classes taken online implies that while some types of involvement may thrive online, others may be somewhat discouraged by it. Institutions should consider these findings when developing the material for online courses and should urge professors to think about how to increase student involvement in a range of delivery methods (Dumford & Miller, 2018). As part of the health and safety precautions during a pandemic, the Philippines is already making a lot of effort to integrate online learning. However, in addition to the difficulties faced by all parties involved, the education sector is also dealing with issues relating to the health of the teachers, who are all coping with this pandemic and the difficulties in their daily lives since the introduction of online learning.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the Online Collaborative Learning Theory of Linda Harasim. In OCL, instead of memorization of right answers, students are encouraged to work together to solve problems through conversation; the teacher or instructor plays a crucial part in this

process. Students of various performance levels work together in small groups as part of a strategy known as collaborative learning to achieve a common objective (Tagle & Cabigan, 2022). Along with their education, students are also accountable for one another's. Online collaborative learning is a strategy that shifts face-to-face collaborative learning online. Conceptual framework is shown in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** The illustration shows the Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Class During the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdowns in the Southern Philippines.

### 3. METHODS

#### 3.1. Research design

A descriptive quantitative survey research design was used to further understand the advantages and disadvantages of online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in the southern Philippines.

#### 3.2. Locale of the study

This study was conducted at various places in the provinces of Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, and Sarangani. We selected the areas because it is where the students are experiencing pure online at that time of COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

#### 3.3. Respondents of the study and sampling procedure

We used quota & purposive sampling for the selection of the respondents. The respondents of the study were college students who were officially enrolled in the University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, Cotabato for the SY 2020-2021. A total of 256 respondents were chosen to answer the questionnaire.

#### 3.4. Research instrument

We used a self-made Google form questionnaire due to public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The said instrument was used to understand the advantages and disadvantages of online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in the southern Philippines. The reliability of the instrument was also assured by avoiding biased treatment of the data gathered.

#### 3.5. Scope and limitations of the study

To further understand the advantages and disadvantages of online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in the southern Philippines, this study is limited only to the preference of the students on the delivery of instructions between the face-to-face class and online classes, preference of the students on the pure online delivery of instructions, students' readiness for an online class, students' readiness for examinations after online class, the advantages and disadvantages of online classes.

### 3.6. Data gathering procedure

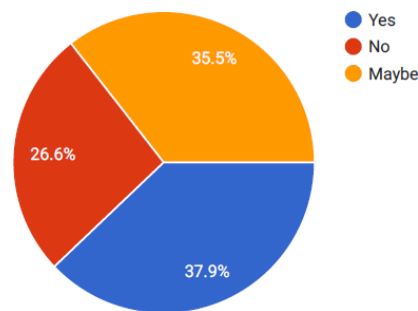
As previously mentioned, we used a self-made Google form questionnaire due to public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Moreover, we communicated with the students to respond and inform them about the significance of their participation in the said study. After a series of explanations, we forwarded the self-made Google form questionnaires via social media and Email Accounts.

### 3.7. Data analysis

We evaluated and discussed the data in a narrative form. The data gathered from the respondents were analyzed using bar and pie graphs to describe the understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in the southern Philippines.

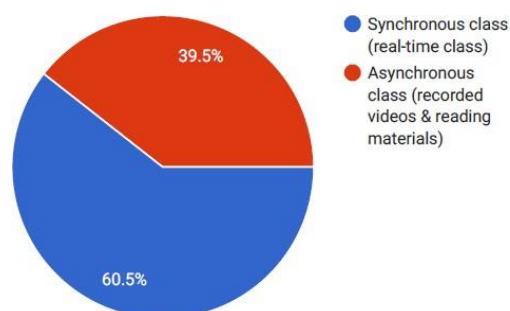
## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Figure 2** shows that 37.9% of the total numbers of respondents signified that they preferred pure online delivery of instructions, followed by 26.6% who do not prefer it and 35.5% who are uncertain. This simply explains that during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, the majority of the students agreed to utilize pure online classes so that they can pursue their education however more than half of the population disagreed and some are uncertain or not so sure because of many considerations such as financial capacity, knowledge on technology, and also frequent electric interruption and lack of internet connectivity.



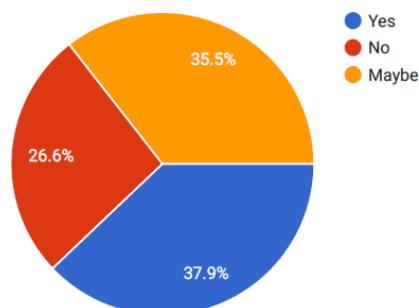
**Figure 2.** Preference of the students for the pure online delivery of instructions

**Figure 3** shows that 60.5% of the total numbers of respondents signified that they preferred to utilize synchronous class and 39.5% preferred to utilize asynchronous class. This simply explains that during online classes, the majority of the students are comfortable with the real-time class because they have a direct connection with their teachers and a more interactive approach to learning that enable them to learn more during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.



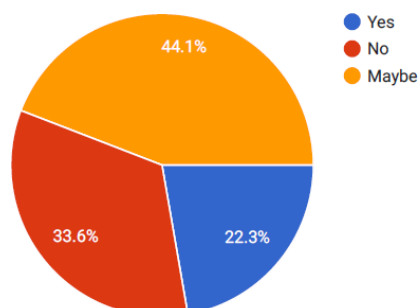
**Figure 3.** Preference of the students between Synchronous and Asynchronous online classes.

**Figure 4** shows that 37.9% are ready for an online class and 26.6% are not ready and 35.5% are uncertain about online classes. This simply explains that almost half of the students are slightly adjusting to the new approach to learning which is the online class. However, almost more than half are not ready and uncertain or not so sure because of many considerations in **Figure 2** elaborated that financial capacity, knowledge of technology, and also frequent electric interruptions, and lack of internet connectivity are the usual challenges encountered by the students during an online class.



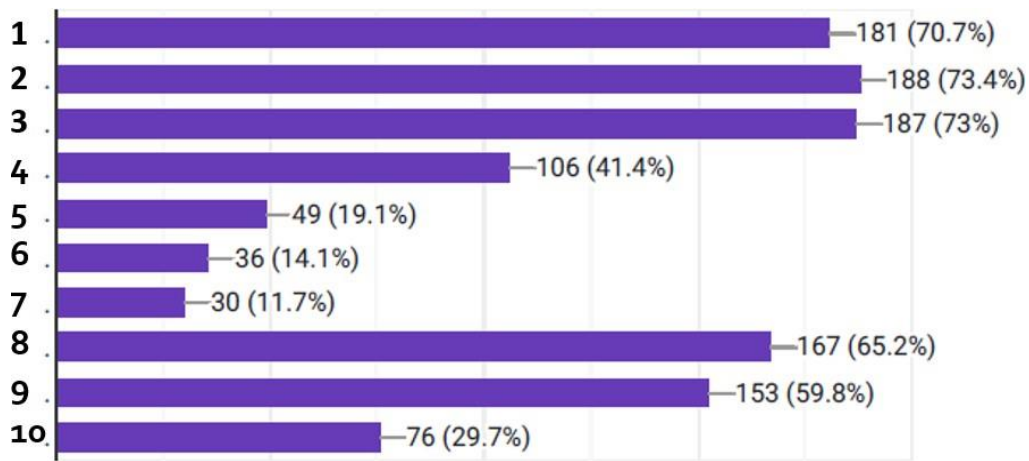
**Figure 4.** Student's readiness for an online class.

**Figure 5** shows that 22.3% are ready for examinations after online classes, 33.6% are not ready and 44.1% are uncertain. This simply shows that only a few of the students are ready to take their examinations after attending online classes and the alarming concern is that almost half of the students are not ready and uncertain or not so sure to take examinations after attending online classes. That is why the usual challenges encountered by the students in terms of financial capacity, knowledge of technology, and also frequent electric interruptions, and lack of internet connectivity should be addressed so that the learning of the students should not be negatively affected.



**Figure 5.** Student's readiness for examinations after online class

**Figure 6** shows the percentages of each statement on the advantages of online classes. It simply shows the benefits of online classes to the learning of the students during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdowns. The top advantages of online classes for students are more focus on the following terms; convenience, flexibility, feeling at home, financial benefits, and self-discipline. These are the things that make the students competent, disciplined, and productive individuals even during the time of COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

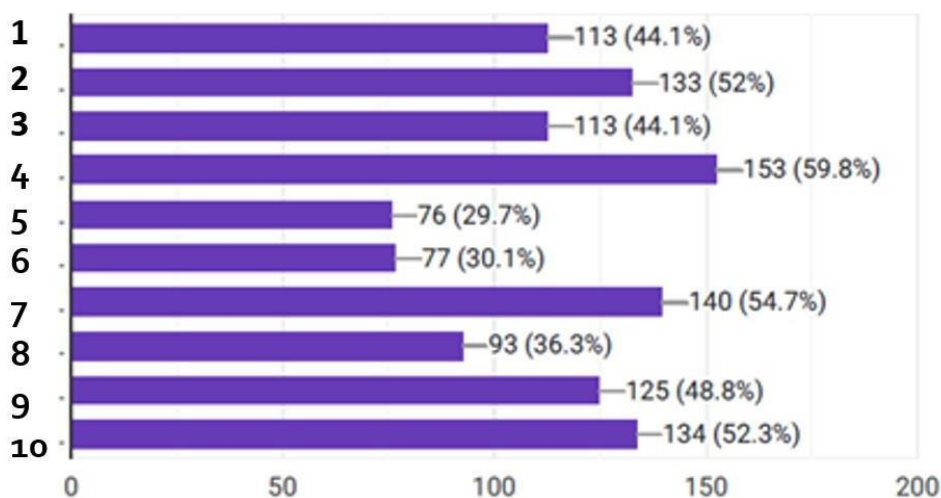


**Figure 6.** The advantages of online classes.

Regarding **Figure 6**, several statements are used:

- (i) Online classes are convenient.
- (ii) Online classes offer flexibility.
- (iii) Online classes bring education right to your home.
- (iv) Online classes offer more individual attention.
- (v) Online classes help you meet interesting people.
- (vi) Online classes give you real-world skills.
- (vii) Online classes promote life-long learning.
- (viii) Online classes have financial benefits.
- (ix) Online classes teach you to be self-disciplined.
- (x) Online classes connect you to the global village.

**Figure 7** shows the percentages of each statement on the disadvantages of online classes. It simply shows the negative effects or results of online classes on the learning of the students during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The top disadvantages of online classes for students are more focus on the following terms; a sense of isolation, self-paced learning, easier to procrastinate, demand for time-management skills, problems in finding own initiative to learn, and limited transactions on the school campus. These are the thing that makes the students isolated, problematic, procrastinated, less motivated, and physically and mentally stressed which results in negative effects on their concentration or focus to learn during the time of COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdowns.



**Figure 7.** The disadvantages of online classes.

Regarding **Figure 7**, several statements are used:

- (i) Online classes require more time than on-campus classes.
- (ii) Online classes make it easier to procrastinate.
- (iii) Online classes require good time-management skills.
- (iv) Online classes may create a sense of isolation.
- (v) Online classes allow you to be more independent.
- (vi) Online classes require you to be an active learner.
- (vii) Online classes don't have an instructor hounding you to stay on task.
- (viii) Online classes give you more freedom, perhaps, more than you can handle.
- (ix) Online classes require that you find your path to learning.
- (x) Online classes require you to be responsible for your learning.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

- (i) During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, the majority of the students agreed or preferred to utilize pure online classes for them to pursue education, however, more than half of the population have many considerations such as financial capacity, knowledge of technology, and also frequent electric interruption and lack of internet connectivity.
- (ii) In online classes, the majority of the students are agreed or preferred of the real-time class because they have a direct connection with their teachers through an interactive approach to learning that enables them to learn more during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.
- (iii) Half of the students are still adjusting to the new online approach to learning, and almost more than half are not ready and uncertain or not so sure to utilize the online approach to learning.
- (iv) Only a few of the students are ready to take their examinations after attending online class and almost half of the students are not ready and uncertain or not so sure probably because learning during online classes is not effective due to many considerations.
- (v) The students emphasized that online class is advantageous particularly in the province of convenience, flexibility, feeling at home, financial benefits, and self-discipline for the students and these are the thing that makes the students competent, disciplined, and productive individuals even during the time of COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.
- (vi) On the other hand, the students also highlighted that online class has disadvantages, particularly the sense of isolation, self-paced learning, easier procrastination, the demand for time-management skills, problems in finding the initiative to learn, and limited transactions on the school campus. These are the thing that makes the students isolated, problematic, procrastinated, less motivated, and physically and mentally stressed which results in negative effects on their concentration or focus to learn during the time of COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdowns.

Based on the conclusions of this study, it is highly recommended that:

- (i) Understanding the essential components of various learning platforms is important since they offer a variety of services like break-out rooms, screen sharing, management of learning resources, and communication support. To properly organize lessons and ensure a session runs smoothly, teachers should test the platform's features. It is important to grasp the platform's benefits and limits.
- (ii) Using the right teaching strategies and technology is important because online lessons appear to limit teachers to a small screen, which causes students to become disengaged from the subject matter being covered. This is in contrast to classroom teaching, where

students can interact physically in a rich environment. Students usually lose interest in lengthy, one-way live-streaming sessions after 10 to 15 minutes. To engage students, people may think about breaking up the session into manageable chunks of time.

- (iii) Monitoring students' engagement and progress in lessons because ideas on how to monitor students' engagement and progress over time include the following:
  - a. Assignments, tests, polls, and class observations are used to evaluate student learning and monitor students' advancement.
  - b. Create individualized learning opportunities by forming small groups for student engagement and discussion inside the classroom.
  - c. Reward good student behavior by giving them personalized online badges and awards, which increase the student's motivation when they see them.
- (iv) It is crucial to have a supportive home environment for kids to engage in learning, so parents and other caregivers are encouraged to assist in online learning. It could be
- (v) difficult for many parents to support their students. Contact them and determine how they can help. Inform them of the responsibilities and standards. Ensure that it is acceptable if students fall behind on their assignments. Motivate them to involve their students in regular activities and easy tasks like reading a book or journaling about their day.
- (vi) Creating interactive learning activities that involve discussions, group projects, role plays, case studies, and student presentations encourages students to learn skills outside of the classroom and makes lessons more engaging. Activities involving groups of people can be facilitated using a variety of online collaboration tools.

## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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