

**VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC INTERMEDIATE
GRADE TEACHERS AS IMPLEMENTERS OF MODULAR
DISTANCE LEARNING**

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Abstract

Teachers as main implementers of modular instruction are raising myriad issues with the modular learning preparations. The study explored the experiences of intermediate teachers of an elementary school in Bacolod City who adopted and implemented modular distance learning during the school year 2020-2021. It is intended to provide a detailed description of the experiences of the six public school teachers concerning the quality, instructional effectiveness, challenges, and coping with challenges of modularized instruction. This paper adopted a qualitative-descriptive type of research using a narrative inquiry approach. The information describing the participants' perspectives was obtained through guided interviews and follow-up questions. The rigors of findings were established using member checking, code-recode strategy, thick description, data checking, and audit trail. Using the six-phase analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke, seven essential themes emerged from the collected data. The teacher-implementers of MDL perceived that the SLM's contents are aligned to the preset learning outcomes, logical, cohesive, and well-integrated. The MDL allowed for independent learning and parent involvement. It had an organized system of deployment of materials that ensured accessibility and less expense. Conversely, the parents' poor academic background and unavailability and learners' low comprehension showed its essential setbacks. The lack of technology devices and inadequate resources exacerbated its disadvantage. Its assessment lacked integrity. The reproduction of voluminous modules, pressure to comply with the modular requirements, and overloaded activities posed a major challenge among the teacher-implementers. They tried to adapt, communicate with parents and use radio-based instruction to overcome the difficulties. There is a need to look into the system support and provision of the needed logistics to minimize these impediments in carrying out MDL.

Keywords: *experiences, intermediate grade teachers, modular distance learning, qualitative research, narrative inquiry.*

Introduction

Rationale

The present pandemic makes it challenging to undertake regular and traditional face-to-face classroom learning (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Relative to this, Amadora (2020) opined that the traditional face-to-face classes are not an option due to COVID- 19 situations; thus, schools have to implement alternative learning delivery modalities, such as online and modular distance learning to continue classes this school year. The new normal provides modular distance learning. Students are introduced to self-learning modules (SLM) based on the essential learning competencies (MELCS) provided by the Department of Education (DepEd), allowing them to become solely responsible for their learning process. On the other hand, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that students are given learning instruments that allow them to absorb and process the material to achieve the learning competencies set for them. The Department of Education believes that the modules are the backbone of distance and blended learning and can serve as the main instrument for education (Adonis, 2020).

There are, however, some drawbacks to the usage of modules. Teachers, the primary implementers of modular education, have various concerns about the preparations for modular learning. According to the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) in the Philippines, these issues include the meager budget allocation for module reproduction, exertion of time and effort, associated risk for module distribution, non-availability of modules at the start of classes, and limited options (Malipot, 2020).

Objective of the Study

Grounded on the preceding discourse, the present study explored the teachers' views and experiences in an elementary school in Bacolod City that adopted and implemented the modularized instructional delivery. More specifically, it endeavored to describe the quality, instructional effectiveness, challenges, and meeting the challenges of modularized instruction.

Framework of the Study

Researchers refer to pragmatism as the importance of students' experiences derived from actions and stored in memory as knowledge. According to Sharma et al. (2018), it is a preparation for pragmatic life wherein a child should know the art of successfully tackling practical problems and real-life situations. Pragmatism proposes a practical approach to coping with the current situation and can be used as a learning style for modular distance learning (Burns, 2011). Education is not only about teaching or imparting knowledge but encouraging learning through self-effort and creative activity (Beniwal, 2018). The researchers viewed the method of learning as active construction, recursive and continuous. In other words, students are building their knowledge. As someone pours water into empty bottles, this signifies that knowledge cannot be conveyed in their thoughts. Instead, students create conceptual structures that shape the idea of their knowledge by selectively experiencing new things. A guide or learning facilitator is a teacher who has a better understanding of the application of MDL (United Nations Children's Fund or UNICEF, 2020) and a greater awareness of how to deal with their deficiencies in executing the function—examining instructors' knowledge of the COVID-19 epidemic, their experiences, and their schools' preparation, as well as their responses to the challenges of conducting distant learning education in the Philippines. As this pandemic is slated to exist until the preventive vaccine is discovered, it's essential to grasp how the educators who are the prime facilitators of the education adjusted to the recent transition and what challenges they faced while adapting to the current transition preparedness for the approaching times. For the continuity of learning and each school, in any case, accomplish its main goal and vision: to supply efficient quality instruction to every Filipino student.

Narrowing the focus, the current study looked into the views of teachers on the quality and instructional effectiveness of MDL. It further looked into the challenges they encountered in MDL and how they coped with those challenges.

Methodology

Research Design

The study covered intermediate grade teachers' personal views and experiences in implementing MDL. It is intended to offer a clear

perspective of the quality, instructional effectiveness, distribution, practicality, the conduct of assessment, challenges, and meeting the challenges of modular learning. The study used teacher-oriented questions that led teachers to retell, express, or unfold their thoughts and feelings. Subsequently, the data collected used a narrative on the realities and experiences of the intermediate grade teachers in modular distance learning. Given the nature and the type of analysis required in a study, a qualitative research design utilizing a narrative inquiry approach was adopted.

Study Site and Respondents of the Study

The study has six teachers from a public elementary school in Bacolod City who were purposively selected based on the following criteria:(a) employed at an Elementary School in Bacolod City, Philippines, (b) a licensed professional teacher, (c) handling intermediate grade pupils at the time of the study, and (d) have at least four years of teaching experience.

Research Instrument

This study collected the teachers' experience with modular distance learning. It gathered data using a direct-data survey to gather the information that revealed the status of modular distance learning (Lavrakas, 2008). Accordingly, the researchers drafted a semi-structured questionnaire for the interview. The questionnaire was shown to the panel of experts who judged the appropriateness and meaningfulness of the questions to the intended objectives of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The following steps focus on data collection: stepping into the field, conducting the interview, deep talks, checking the missed parts, consulting the participants for validation, and storing the data in an electronic file. The interview was done twice with a gap of 10 days between the first and second interviews. Data saturation was ensured when there was enough information to replicate the study, the ability to obtain additional new information had been attained, and further coding was no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Mode of Analyses

Data explication process. The researchers followed the following six steps developed by Braun and Clarke for the thematic analyses of data. The first step was to get to know the data. Acquiring a complete picture of all the facts collected before analyzing individual items is essential. Next, the researchers coded the data, highlighting textual parts – typically words or sentences – in excel spreadsheets and constructed brief labels to describe their content.

After which, the researchers looked over the codes they created, identified patterns among them, and started coming up with themes.

The researchers had to ensure that the articles were helpful and accurately represented the data. Finally, they wrote the analysis of the data. Writing up a thematic analysis required an introduction to establish the research question, aims, and approach.

Rigors of findings. To ensure the success of this narrative inquiry, the researchers employed the rigors and management of data to ensure the quality of the research process and the trustworthiness of the research findings. The researchers ought to associate the cognizant of the provisions to address matters such as credibility and transferability in accumulating, examining, analyzing, and interpreting the data gathered (Shenton, 2004). Accordingly, the researchers utilized member checking for the participants to confirm and clarify their responses, did the coding and recoding strategy in refining the narrations, provided a rich account or thick description of the data obtained from the respondents, and performed data checking and audit trail.

Ethical Considerations

Before the interview, the researchers gathered teachers' views and perspectives on their experiences using MDL. The researchers sought the consent of the respondents to participate in answering the questionnaire. The researchers endeavored to protect the participants' physical, social, and psychological well-being. Their rights, concerns, sensibilities, and privacy were accordingly respected and protected. The principle of explicit consent reflects views that open and respectful communication between social researchers and those they examined. Finally, the participants in

the study had complete control over how much personal information they would give and under what conditions.

Results and Discussion

Four major themes emerged from the responses provided by the participants. They are descriptive of the perspectives and experiences of the six public elementary school teachers concerning the implementation of modular distance learning.

Quality of Modular Distance learning

Teacher-implementers assured that this new learning system's implementation follows the same standards as the traditional face-to-face class system. Its quality was aligned to the original system that the education adapted and designed to achieve the learners' set learning outcomes and objectives. They vouched for the quality of modules distributed to public school learners. They emphasized that the modules provide essential lessons that would lead to the development of expected competencies among the learners. The contents passed through the rigorous procedures for quality checking. Well-trained personnel took charge of the preparation and assessment of the modules. The teacher-respondents added that the quality of the modules is beyond question.

Teacher 1: “MDL is based on the essential learning competencies or what we called MELCS. It serves as the complete guide for teachers and students based on the competencies. Regarding the quality, the modules or the SLM are already quality assured by DepEd. The content of the module has undergone quality assurance by the personnel assigned to do the modules. As much as possible, if there are colored pictures needed, we have to print them in color as well.”

Teacher 2: “Actually, we cannot question the modules since it was sent to the division office for the QA, quality assurance, so it was quality assured by the supervisors and their personnel in the division office.”

Teacher 4: “We were told that the modules had been created by carefully chosen and experienced staff in elementary education. We are not in the position to question it at this time.”

To accommodate the varied settings of learners, teachers, learning environments, and support systems, field implementers are encouraged to contextualize the essential learning competencies, considering both the content and performance standards. MELCs can be used as long as the intended activities teach the procedures and methods for applying such knowledge and abilities in a specific situation. Despite the current health crisis, learners may still expect relevant and high-quality basic education (Department of Education, 2019).

Furthermore, the content and instructional design must be of high quality, as well as the printing and delivery. The learners can value high-quality printing of print modules because it allows them to be completely satisfied with their print modules, which has a beneficial impact on their learning (Khalid et al., n.d.).

The physical quality of the said material, such as the printed forms, was ensured that it would not add up to the burden of the learners, SLMs, or self-learning modules, are in place to match each learner's requirements, circumstances, and means and ensure that education specialists have subjected learning resources in public schools have been subjected to quality assurance by education specialists. Modules are logical (sequence)—the steps reflect occupational steps, prerequisite knowledge and abilities, and difficulty. Its content is cohesive and well-integrated and contributes to the learner's mastery of the competencies within a reasonable time. According to (Goble, 2018), self-paced learning modules can be comprehensive. They include all factual content, activities, and assessments for the learner to complete the module independently.

Instructional Effectiveness

Modular distance learning is tied up with having varied instruction—the self-learning module is still outlawed. Modules are responsible for delivering learning to the learners in their households. The participants expressed that even though the pandemic has been going on for almost a year, it continues to spread unabated throughout the country. The self-learning module is the only teaching employed in modular distance learning; hence, it must be effective enough to promote implicit learning amid the

pandemic. However, depending on the conditions, the efficiency of the instruction provided in this new learning technique may vary. In terms of the efficiency of the lesson, the participants identified the advantages and disadvantages of modular distance learning.

Advantages. Modular distance learning could help learners still engage and continue the process of learning. In self-paced learning, they were responsible for their time in the given period to work on their learning materials and to be submitted them again to their teachers. Since this kind of learning mode is done in the comfort of homes, the involvement of parents is crucial. They are the key to making this new learning mode a success. Additionally, they could build a stronger bond with their children by spending more time together during the learning process. The teachers conveyed:

Teacher 1: *“Advantages, since this is self-learning so, the students will be able to study at their own pace.”*

Teacher 2: *“It teaches them to become responsible students because they are the ones who are actually answering their modules. Another one is they can go back to the lessons they wanted to review if they don’t know the lessons since they have their modules and learning activity sheets.”*

Teacher 3: *“Recreational activities. Students can find time to play or have leisure time because they are just staying at home, and there is no need for them to stay inside the classroom where there is limited time for them to play.”*

Teacher 4: *“Responsibility is a lesson that the kids learn.”*

Teacher 6: *“Their reliance on their teachers is waning.”*

Modular distance learning through self-learning modules allows learners to work at their own pace and modify their learning acquisition. It provides them enough time to enjoy learning without being enclosed inside a classroom, and they can practice managing their own time. The approach of taking in modules has evolved into a piece of instruction for all levels. Module teaching is a self-contained package that contains a single topic or unit. It can be used in any setting beneficial to the learner (Sadiq & Zamir, 2014).

In modular distance learning, parental involvement is essential for their child’s development. Since learning happens in the safety of the learner’s home, parents, guardians, or any adult in the family

acquired the teacher's role as the guide in the learning process. It is also an opportunity for the parents to spend time with their children while helping them cope with the difficulties experienced in this pandemic. It also lets them personally involved in their children's learning development. The teacher-implementers conveyed:

Teacher 2: *"It actually helps parents to become closer to their family because their parents are usually the ones who teach them and guide them in answering their modules."*

Teacher 4: *"Parents and pupils have more time bonding. It is a coping-up time in terms of the involvement of parents in their child's learning because they used to depend on their child's learning development from the teachers. Following up on their child doesn't really happen regularly."*

Teacher 5: *"There are times when the parents and kids can spend together."*

Teacher 6: *"It enables parents to spend time with their kids."*

Modular distance learning improves the child's relationship with their parents by playing an active role in their learning process. Parents would be the ones to facilitate and guide their children through the modular lessons that would be sent (Lebaste, 2020). Students can continue their education under the modular distance learning approach if possible. They will be effective through the active help of parents, guardians, or any adult family member.

Furthermore, the elementary grade teachers considered MDL to be practical and pro-poor. MDL is the best option to access education without increasing the number of COVID cases. In consideration of those who do not have access to the internet, MDL was seen by the participants as the most practical and feasible means and option to ensure continuous learning without risking the safety of the individual involved in the process, such as the teachers, students, school personnel, and staff. Relative to this, the teacher-implementers verbalized:

Teacher 1: *"Those students who can't afford to buy loads for the internet and no gadgets like cellphones, tablets, computers, laptops continue to learn at this time of the pandemic."*

Teacher 2: *“We can reduce spending on transportation and daily expenses.”*

Teacher 3: *“You don't need to be concerned about whether or not your kids can go to school.”*

Teacher4: *Unlike face-to-face learning, MDL is less expensive. The parents and the guardians can save a lot of money. There's no need to spend money on their daily allowances, transportation, and other expenses in school. One teacher-implementer.”*

Teacher 5: *“Modular is effective, especially the threat of an increasing number of individuals affected by the virus.”*

Teacher 6: *“Even without a daily allowance, they can continue to study.”*

MDL is by far the most practical learning mode currently used by all public schools as most parents prefer it with children enrolled this academic year in consideration of those residing in rural areas where the internet is not accessible for online learning (Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020). The Department of education offered various learning modalities and repeatedly assured everyone that no student would be left behind. Parents preferred this modality – their children were taught through printed self-learning modules (Adonis, 2021). The usage of modular printed materials was made official by the Department of Education. MDL is designed specifically for students who do not have access to the internet (Fidel, 2021). Parents think that this modular approach is safer for their children. This approach is also in consideration for learners living in areas where the internet is not accessible. Apart from that, some parents do not have enough gadgets for their children's use during online classes (Pe Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

Disadvantages. Modular distance learning also has its share of setbacks. The modular approach situates students to learn in the comfort of their homes. Parents are known as home facilitators, assisting, guiding, and supporting their kids but will not teach the subject matter or answer the tasks themselves. Doing so is not an easy task, especially with working parents who have not acquired a higher level of education. Parents without the necessary training have to jump into the pit of being the ones who will be teaching,

guiding, and monitoring their children's learning in working with their SLMs. Teachers, parents, and students brace for heavy workloads and unfamiliar tools (Adonis, 2020). The level of parents' understanding may be limited as they are not used to teaching their children and cannot explain and enhance the idea from the book. The teachers conveyed:

Teacher 1: *“For those parents in a family who are not well educated. There are topics and lessons in the module that are very hard to understand, especially the directions like math. So, if the parents or no one in the family can assist the child in answering the modules, that would be a disadvantage for the child.”*

Teacher 2: *“Since there are subjects that are very difficult for them to understand, especially Math. Sometimes, it would be very hard for them to comprehend, particularly in solving.”*

Teacher 3: *“For parents without formal education, very challenging.”*

Teacher 4: *“Children who have college-educated parents only have an advantage.”*

Teacher 5: *“Some parents have a low educational background. They don't know how to let their children understand the lesson.”*

Teacher 6: *“Because I did not complete elementary school, I find it challenging to assist my child with his modules.”*

Parental association in a kid's schooling is definitely identified with a youngster's scholarly presentation. With that being said, parental education also impacts the frequency of children's involvement in academic activities. Children in highly educated families are more often involved in structured academic activities such as worksheets, online school resources, and other educational resources during pandemics (Lase et al., 2019). Additionally, parents' and guardians' low educational attainment might play a role in distant learning difficulties. According to the 2015 Family Income and Expenditure Survey, released in 2017, up to 54 percent of Filipino household heads did not finish high school. Parents may be suffering regardless of whether they have the time to guide their children (Terrazola, 2021).

Moreover, self-learning modules are characterized as a self-contained and independent way of learning. Learners who have difficulty comprehending the lesson and activities provided will find this learning approach even more complicated and, worse, impossible to become effective. It's a challenge for them to acquire what is expected for them to develop fully. Teacher-implementers also observed that it is hard for the learners to fully understand the lesson in SLMs and comply with all the activities provided to the point that some parts are left unanswered. These were evident in the information laid by the teacher-implementers.

Teacher 2: *“Not all kids, especially those with poor academic performance, can handle modules.”*

Teacher 3: *“Good for youngsters who have ample provisions at home, particularly those who have access to library materials and technologies.”*

Teacher 4: *“On the part of our learners, the disadvantage is they have difficulties in understanding some lessons because they are new lessons and lack background knowledge.”*

Teacher 6: *“It's good only for very independent learners. I think it does not apply to those children who are not knowledgeable about these subjects.”*

With the current setup, the possibility of anyone genuinely learning anything is low. The modules are not substitutes for teachers (Estrada, 2021). Not all learners are suited to this method of instruction, and not all subjects are best taught this way. Distance learning is most likely successful for older pupils (Doug, 2002). Without a knowledgeable person who can explain confusing or complicated concepts written in the module, the student won't understand it. Their ability to understand the complexity of the lesson content must be enough for them to accomplish the task given to have an effective result.

The lack of communication gadgets posed another issue in modular distance learning. Communication gadgets became a barrier for those learners who do not have the technical equipment. The lack of it hindered the pupils' learning because they could not communicate with their teachers to inquire about the lessons. Consequently, the learners' development cannot easily be

monitored, and the teacher cannot immediately respond to their needs. One of the teacher-implementers shared:

Teacher 3: *“If the students want to consult with their teacher regarding the modules they’re working on, they cannot easily communicate to teachers, especially because they don’t have gadgets like cell phones, tablets or laptops.”*

Teacher 5: *“Very advantageous for children without a gadget and access to the Internet.”*

Communication and understanding between teachers and learners are vital elements of successful distance education. For successful learning to occur, there should be no barriers between the sender and receiver (Isman et al., 2003). At this time, the usage of gadgets became abrupt. Even though public schools implemented modular distance learning through self-learning modules, the lack of devices made communication difficult. Teacher-implementers and students struggled to reach one another to help minimize the problems each had encountered. Hence, the learners who do not have access to the needed technology for learning find it more difficult to acclimate to remote learning (Sadia, 2020).

The resources in the reproduction of the self-learning module are also inadequate. As the educators take on another role in this educational system- the reproducer and distributor of SLMs – it is inevitable to face challenges and difficulties along this process. Being the primary source and bridge of learning amidst the pandemic, there were delays and lapses in the reproduction of SLMs due to the insufficient budget allocated for this specific purpose and not fully functional equipment. Along with this, some teachers struggled to manipulate technologies that aides the challenges of modular distance learning. They claimed that it is due to their old age and lack of experience. The teacher-implementers shared:

Teacher 2: *“We are actually using our own resources, for example, printers. We have a lot of printers already that are broken.”*

Teacher 3: *“On the part of teachers, one of the major disadvantages is the budget in reproducing modules. The teacher will do this if the school cannot provide the materials.”*

They get the budget from their own pocket to ensure the reproduction of modules.”

Teacher 1: *“It is a burden on our part to do this technical work. Printing modules every day of our lives is what we do, in this time of the pandemic.”*

It can't be denied that teachers impart their resources to fill the gaps in the higher administration. The expense of reproducing and distributing the printed modules has already been exhausted, thus, forcing teachers to dip into their own pockets to provide the materials for their students (The Manila Times, 2020). Furthermore, operating the device for printing is another limitation of teachers due to their lack of experience handling these tools. Summing up, they had difficulty managing this type of educational approach.

Finally, assessment, as the crucial factor in the learning process, bears the difficulty in the modular distance learning approach, especially for educators, in terms of monitoring and measuring learners' learning.

Though currently portraying different roles, teacher-implementers still keep track of the learning development of learners. However, the validity of responses was challenged due to educators' absence in assessing the learning process. Because parents/guardians or any adult companions supervise the students' learning process, the possibility of not allowing the learners to answer the modules on their own is quite high. The teachers expressed:

Teacher 6: *“Perhaps if I am going to look at it based on their assessment, I'm not sure if they are the ones answering their modules. We have alternative evaluation forms using the performance task and the assessment test.”*

Teacher 3: *“Grades are based on summative and performance tests. We cannot give a failing grade or below 80.”*

The validity and trustworthiness of students' responses may also become an issue as distance learning cannot provide real-time guidance to teacher facilitators when giving examinations and making outputs (Manalo, 2020). Shuey (2002) even added students could not be evaluated well enough in the process under modular distance learning. Assessment is a major challenge teachers face in preparing for distance learning. Teachers are worried about the

equality of assessment where the students take the tests under the same conditions and situations. They can submit equivalent written works and other indicators of achievement of objectives (Manalo & De Villa, 2020).

Challenges in Modular Distance Learning

Distance learning has presented challenges to teachers who are trying to adapt. MDL, through self-learning modules, imposes difficulties with printing SLMs, compliance, and applicability of SLMs. Though SLM is quality assured by the DepEd, there are some cases where SLM is questioned because of its printing quality. One teacher verbalized:

Teacher 1: "In terms of quality, it also depends. For example, if the printer is not functioning well, then the printing quality will be affected. There are times that it couldn't be read anymore by the children."

Base on the statement above, it can be seen that teachers' challenges in the quality of SLMs are related to materials and supplies needed to prepare and print the modules. The lack of printing materials and supplies makes the production of modules a tough job for teachers. Learning materials serve as significant learning resources for distance learners, and quality learning materials help students learn effectively at a distance. In distance education, the course materials serve as considerable learning resources for students. The accessibility of high-quality learning materials is urgent to work with the student's learning interaction with the learning materials. As Mutiara et al. (n.d.) put it, the learning materials fill in as a significant learning asset for distance learners.

Another challenge regarding modular distance learning is compliance with its requirements. Teachers, parents, and students brace for heavy workloads and unfamiliar tools (Adonis, 2021). In a week or two, the teachers distribute thick modules, and students have to answer the voluminous pages in the modules. Parents and guardians must allocate time to be with their children without the necessary training to answer the modules. Parents have different responses on how to comply with the SLMs. On the other hand,

teachers are in doubt regarding the outputs that the students complied with.

Similarly, students are obliged to do several modules at a time. As a result, the learners become exhausted. Students do not have enough time to answer all the modules within a week. The teachers verbalized:

Teacher 1: "As a teacher, we also presumed that some of the modules would be answered by the parents themselves, and we could identify and distinguish if the child is the one who answered the modules or not."

Teacher 5: "First to second grading, it was good, but there were those who lost interest as this situation takes too long."

Teacher 6: "The children are very lenient. Perhaps they are very tired of reading the whole module. We give them more or less 8-9 modules every week, so they cannot do it all alone."

Based on the statement above, the teacher's challenges in collecting the modules were associated with the integrity of students' responses, sustained efforts, and leniency in waiting for submission. The real evidence of learning was missing because teachers could not see who answered the modules. The student's interest in reading and answering their modules was not sustained. Answering the modules would take time, and students were bombarded with voluminous pages to accomplish. Some activities were also difficult to perform and could not be left alone.

Consequently, students became tired and withdrawn. This not only poses a challenge to the teacher's responsibility in monitoring the student's performance but also a struggle to see a student not learning anything from school during the pandemic (Castoverde & Acala, 2021). The failure of students to follow the set schedule for submitting modules affects the teacher's schedule in checking the modules as it devours time in checking all the students' outputs. Teachers will acknowledge late modules, yet they offer guidelines to the students to achieve the lacking activities. The students further indicated that they have difficulties learning due to overloaded lesson activities. This difficulty sometimes loses the learning value of the lesson (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020). Since SLM

is about independent study, students are responsible for their learning. It encourages students to learn on their own. An unrestricted self-learning style, in which instantaneous reinforcement stimulates students and builds curiosity. The teachers verbalized:

Teacher 5: *"Yes, but it does not apply to all, especially those students that can learn if they are inside the school with the guidance of their teacher."*

Teacher 6: *"I think, as I've said, independent learners can do this on their own, but for those who cannot do it, of course, they need to have the guidance of their parents or other people."*

While modular learning is considered the best of all modalities in this pandemic, teachers cannot assure its applicability for all.

Education is no longer held within the school. Schools have to establish a connection and guide the child. The use of modules encourages independent study and the acquisition of better self-study or learning skills among students. With little or no assistance from others, a student cannot progress all alone. Some students can attend to their modules independently, but some badly need help understanding even just some of the lessons in the prescribed modules. Others, even facilitators, experience issues understanding the exercises and can barely continue to the following exercises. Since the secluded methodology arranges students to learn in the solace of their homes, there is likewise the possibility that they work on the modules for compliance, not for learning (CDCP, 2020).

Coping with the Challenges

Teachers had to be adjusted and adapted to this new setting immediately by considering the different difficulties that the learners were experiencing. Other than that, orientations were strengthened to provide parents/guardians with insights on how they may assist their children in learning at home. Online communication with parents and learners also offered to learn possibilities and aided knowledge clarification. The Radio Based Instruction (RBI) was also used to give learners additional learning possibilities when using their SLMs without genuine face-to-face engagement. The teacher participants conveyed:

Teacher 6: *“Every quarter, the parents of those pupils who are not that very good in the assessment and performance task is called and informed of their children’s assessment results.”*

Teacher 2: *“We have GCs. We ask students if they are having difficulty with the lesson. We hold conferences with them so we can assess and help them.”*

Teacher 1: *“The RBI can supplement it because the teachers presenting in the RBI can explain well and discuss.”*

Teacher 4: *“The RBI serves as their basis in answering because what is found in the module can also be found in the RBI.”*

As the new learning approach forbade physical interaction, teacher-implementers still found ways to maintain their communication with the learners and the parents or guardians. They communicated through GCs (group chat) to determine what needed to be filled in and corrected. In this way, it generated learning opportunities, clarified information, and stimulated a passion for learning (Mary, 2021).

Communication between the teacher, parent, and the learner was essential for encouragement, consultation, and assessment. The information was clearly communicated to the parents as they need to know precisely what is expected of guiding their children. It offered learners the opportunity to recourse the problem to their teachers and get assessed for improvements. The parents were considered the teachers' partners in the learners' learning process. Limited contact with teachers placed parents or guardians as the learners' model (Lebaste, 2020). They were involved in the learning process. Collaboration is a key tool in creating a meaningful learning experience for all. Parents understand the needs of their children, thus making them more engaged in extending help and support.

On the other hand, the teachers become more responsible for providing quality instruction to their learners (Manalo & De Villa, 2020).

Additionally, the RBI was designed to assist learners with their difficulties in grasping the lesson and improve the delivery of the lesson information. The foundation of the responses became evident through the use of RBI. It provides a classroom-like setting that enhances the learners' learning experience while in the comfort of their homes. The RBI is a distance learning mode that aims to increase educational access by providing knowledge of where the students are (Avery, 2020).

Finally, the schematic map below presents the major themes and sub-themes drawn from the analyzed responses of the teacher-participants.

The key themes and subthemes that emerged from the study are depicted in the diagram. According to the primary grade instructors who implemented MDL, the modules' content is aligned to the target outcomes, logical, cohesive, and well-integrated. In terms of efficacy, parents were more active in helping their kids, which was thought to be practical during this pandemic since students learned at their own pace. On the other hand, it was discovered that MDL's shortcomings were the parents' lack of education and availability, the student's learning capacity, and their access to communication devices and other resources. The obstacles of MDL included reproducing the materials, adhering to the stringent rules, and cramming too many classes and activities into each day. Teachers must be flexible, engage with parents, and explore using radio-based learning to meet these issues.

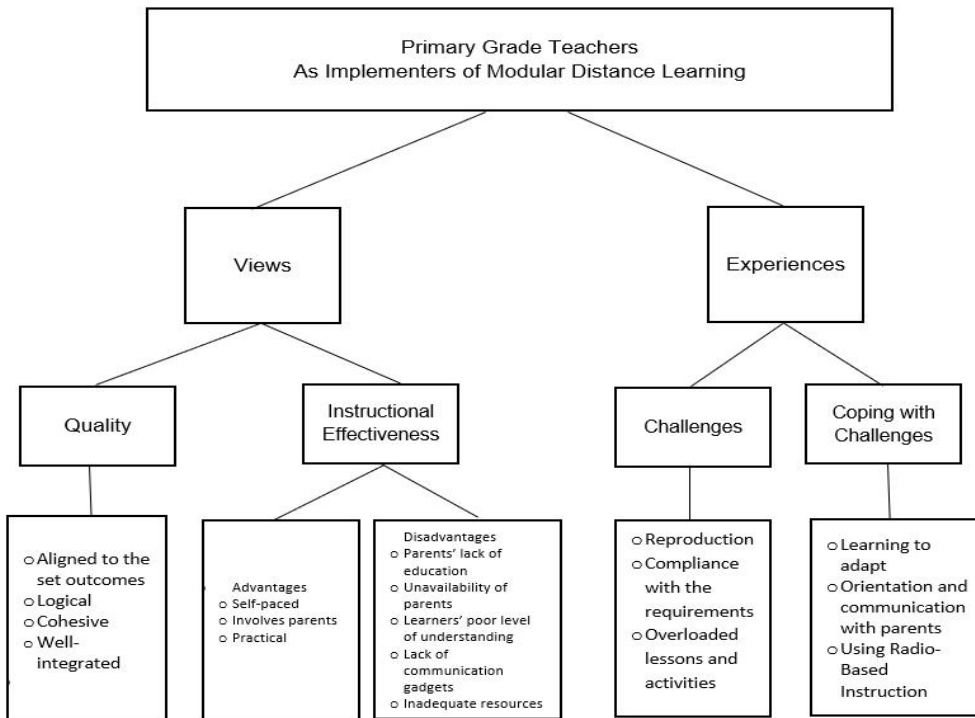


Figure 1. Schematic model of the study

General Statement

The Department of Education has set up systematic guidelines for the uniform delivery of MDL. The MDL is the viable alternative learning mode that ensures quality content and materials for instruction during the pandemic. It provides a venue for learners to learn independently, experience learning at their own pace, bond with their parents, and continue studying in the comfort of their homes. However, children with poor comprehension and no access to technology are at the losing edge. Likewise, children without parental help and guidance are disadvantaged by those whose parents are academically equipped and have time to assist them in accomplishing their SLMs. The integrity of assessment is one limitation of MDL that must be countered by a more strategic approach to ensure evidence of learning and objective measure of student performance. The teacher-implementers need stronger system support and provision to carry out MDL successfully. On their end, they need to be innovative in dealing with and coping with the challenges and implementing MDL.

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