ATTITUDE OF GRADE VI PUPILS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT
This study sought to determine the attitude among Grade VI pupils in the implementation of online distance learning of Borongan City Division in school year 2020-2021. Specifically, it aimed to identify their reading abilities and their association with their attitude toward online distance learning. To address the objectives, this study used a correlational design. A total of 217 Grade 6 pupils from the five districts of Borongan City Division served as respondents of this study. A survey questionnaire was adapted to gather necessary data on the reading levels of learners and their attitudes toward the online distance learning modality. Meanwhile, inferential statistics such as Pearson r Coefficient were used to identify the association between the reading levels of pupils and their attitude toward online learning which was found to have a significant relationship.
KEYWORD: *attitude, online distance learning, correlation*

INTRODUCTION

K-12 pupils in the Philippines are currently missing face-to-face instruction due to COVID-19. Many parents and educators thus share a common worry: When the pandemic subsides, pupils will return to school with lower achievement. There are also concerns that the gap between high- and low-achieving students will become larger.

In addition, extended interrupted education that disengages students from the learning process has the potential cost of reversing gains in learning results. An even higher cost comes from the disengagement of students with learning challenges (academic, socio-economic, students with special/diverse educational needs or persons with disabilities) who may not effectively cope with remote learning strategies or cannot access the information. School closings also impact labor supply as they increase the burden on parents, who need to stay home or find new arrangements if children have to stay at home.

Though health precautions are, without a doubt, a paramount consideration in these challenging times, Filipinos' education cannot be left behind, even during this crisis. With this severe problem, the Department of Education decided that it was time for the Philippines to fully adopt distance learning. This initiative would utilize the power of current technologies to provide education even with significant limitations such as community quarantines and social distancing policies. DepEd's online learning platform is specially crafted to deal with the current limitations that both teachers and students face during the crisis. Their platform is a convenient place where interactive provides practical solutions to the problems that the education sector is facing right now.

Without a doubt, this initiative from the Department of Education-Central Office is laudable, but the DepEd is still faced with another hurdle that will surely limit the full realization of distance learning in the Philippines. According to Huawei's Global Connectivity Index, which annually ranks 79 nations based on various factors, including digital economic performance, ICT investment, and ICT maturity, the Philippines ranked 59th and is categorized as a "Starter." Also, the Department of Education (DepEd) cannot deny that the necessary equipment for their distance learning initiative cannot be afforded by most public school students.

However, at the regional office upon recommendation by the Schools Division Offices, after consultation with the schools under their respective jurisdictions, authorities have decided on the learning delivery modalities deemed appropriate in the context of the local conditions and consistent with the COVID-19 guidelines and regulations of different schools. It urges all thirteen (13) Schools Division Offices (SDOs) across the region to adopt blended learning as a modality in the implementation of BE-LCP. Blended learning utilizes the modular approach (either online or offline) coupled with other distance learning modalities such as online distance learning (either synchronous or asynchronous), or TV/Radio-based Instruction suited to the context of every SDO.

DepEd-Borongan City Division in its quest to continue providing basic education to its pupils has reached out to 11,453 pupils (from non-graded to Senior High School) to come up with the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) that may determine the kind of learning modality that the institution would best fit into. According to the survey, the Key Stage 1 (Non-Graded) has the lowest percentage in terms of internet connectivity/mobile data where of all the forty (40) pupils, no one or 0% has a laptop/desktop at home while there were five (5) pupils having smartphone or tablet at home but no one has the internet connectivity/mobile data. However, Key Stage 5 (Senior High School), got the highest percentage in terms of internet connectivity/mobile data from among the 5 key stages which comprise 36% or 649 pupils out of the 1,819 who were enrolled (data source from the Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) of the division.

OBJECTIVES

This study primarily aimed to determine the attitude of Grade VI pupils of Borongan City Division for school year 2020-2021 in the implementation of online distance learning modality.

Specifically, it addressed the following objectives:

1. Determine the Grade VI pupils' classification in terms of the following reading abilities:
   1.1 non-reader;
   1.2 frustration;
   1.3 instructional; and
   1.4 independent
2. Determine the attitude of Grade VI pupils towards the implementation of online distance learning; and
3. Determine the association between reading abilities of pupils and their attitude to online distance learning?

METHODS
Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of Grade VI pupils from the five (5) central schools of Borongan City Division during the school year 2020-2021. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970, cited by Khorrami, Farhadian & Abbasi, 2018), random sample of 217 pupils was selected.

Instrumentation

The first instrument looked into the pupils' reading levels in terms of: (a) non-reader, (b) frustration, (c) instructional, and (d) independent. The data gathered was based on the Phil-IRI GST which was conducted during the school year 2020-2021 and had been obtained by the researcher from the teacher-adviser of the respondents. From it, they were the one who ticked the appropriate reading level of the identified respondent in the questionnaire.

The instrument focused on determining the attitude of pupils towards implementation of online distance learning modality.

Questionnaire was adapted from the research entitled "Readiness for Blended Learning: Understanding Attitude of University Students" by Chun Meng Tang. This part made use of a five-point scale coded using the following scale: Strongly Agree (4.51-5.00), Agree (3.51-4.50), Neither Agree Nor Disagree (2.51-3.50), Disagree (1.61-2.50), Strongly Disagree (1.0-1.50).

Data Collection

In gathering the pertinent data, the following procedures were made. A preliminary survey or inquiry was conducted at the Borongan City Division Office particularly to the Division Planning Officer to determine the feasible number of respondents to be obtained. Then, a permit for the conduct of the study had been taken from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Districts In-Charge, Principals and Teacher-Advisers/District Nurses. On the other hand, letters of request and consent to respondents together with the questionnaire checklist were hand-carried by the researcher and given to the identified pupil-respondents. The questionnaires had been retrieved as soon as the respondents have finished answering the tool. Data were gathered, encoded and classified according to variables described in Chapter 1 and were tabulated and analyzed according to appropriate statistical tools described in this chapter.

Moreover, the data gathering procedure made by the researcher has followed strictly the minimum health protocols set by competent authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of all concerned.

Statistical Analysis

Frequency, percentage and rank were used to summarize the reading levels and health conditions of the pupils. On the other hand, mean was used to summarize the data on the attitude of pupils to the implementation of online distance learning.

Pearson r correlation had been employed in determining the significant relationship between the reading levels and attitude to online distance learning. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Reading Levels of Learners

The reading level of the pupils towards the implementation of online distance learning is indicated in Table 1.

It can be deduced in the table that with regards to the respondents' reading levels, instructional with 112 out of 217 respondents or about 51.61 percent got the highest percentage; followed by independent with 86 out of 217 or 39.63 percent; frustration with 19 out of 217 or 8.76 percent got the lowest percentage.

This result can be associated with the study of Atwell (2015) wherein the results from major assessments of reading ability indicate a direct correlation between proficient student readers

and habitual independent readers. "When an independent reading component is added, test scores go up". Independent reading is not just an act we perform to improve test scores, though, independent reading serves as a catalyst for improving reader identity: "During independent reading time our students discover who they are as readers". Independent reading offers students the opportunity to get into the "zone". While in the zone, frequent, voluminous reading happens without distraction, allowing students to become immersed in the plot of the story and in the lives of their book's characters.

Table 1. Reading levels of learners

Reading Levels	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Independent	86	39.63	2
Instructional	112	51.61	1
Frustration	19	8.76	3
Total	**217**	**100**	

Attitude of Learners towards the Implementation of Online Distance Learning

The attitude of pupils towards the implementation of online distance learning is indicated in Table 2.

It can be gathered from the table that in terms of the seventeen (17) item indicators of attitudes for online distance learning, the respondents rated it with neither agree nor disagree as indicated by the general weighted mean of 3.45.

A closer scrutiny of the data showed that indicators of attitude for online distance learning were ranked as follows: (1) indicator no. 1, I believe face-to-face learning is more effective than online learning; (2) indicator no. 17, I respect opinions and information provided by others in online communities; (3) indicator no. 18, I provide an interesting and motivating learning environment; (4) indicator no. 19, I am motivated to develop independent learning skills; (5) indicator no. 8, I believe the Web is a useful platform for learning; (6) indicator no. 7, I find it very difficult to study online; (7) indicator no. 6, I get bored when studying online; (8) indicator no. 15, I would like to interact with other students outside of the classroom; (9) indicator no. 13, I am comfortable using Web technologies to exchange information with others; (10) indicator no. 9, I am comfortable using Web technologies; (11) indicator no. 2, I am comfortable with self-directed learning; (12) indicator no. 20, I am motivated to prepare well for my studies in online learning; (13) indicator no. 16, I appreciate easy online access to my lecturer; (14) indicator no. 4, I would like lecture time in the classroom to be reduced; (15) indicator no. 14, I would like to interact with my teacher online; (16) indicator no. 3, I like online learning as it provides richer instructional content; and (17) indicator no. 5, I would like to have my classes online rather than in the classroom.

This result can be associated with what Wadmany et al. (2011) mentioned that the combination of interaction and asynchronism encourages students to reflect on their own learning and that of their peers. Because asynchronous forums give participants time, space, and the freedom to express themselves whenever they wish, participants are more likely to express in-depth an individual, even if it challenges others' views. Major advantages for online teacher learning include the greater flexibility it offers, and the opportunities it provides to utilize resources and reflection.

Table 2. Attitude of learners towards the implementation of online distance learning

Attitude towards Online Distance Learning	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. I believe face-to-face learning is more effective than online learning	4.84	Strongly Agree	1
2. I am comfortable with self-directed learning	3.31	Neither Agree nor Disagree	11
3. I like online learning as it provides richer instructional content	2.91	Neither Agree nor Disagree	16
4. I would like lecture time in the classroom to be reduced	3.12	Neither Agree nor Disagree	14
5. I would like to have my classes online rather than in the classroom	2.20	Disagree	17
6. I get bored when studying online	3.42	Neither Agree nor Disagree	7
7. I find it very difficult to study online	3.48	Neither Agree nor Disagree	6
8. I believe the Web is a useful platform for learning	3.77	Agree	5
9. I am comfortable using Web technologies	3.34	Neither Agree nor Disagree	10
10. I am comfortable using Web technologies to exchange information with others	3.37	Neither Agree nor Disagree	9
11. I would like to interact with my teacher online	3.02	Neither Agree nor Disagree	15
12. I would like to interact with other students outside of the	3.41	Neither Agree nor Disagree	8

classroom			
13. I appreciate easy online access to my lecturer	3.18	Neither Agree nor Disagree	13
14. I respect opinions and information provided by others in online communities	4.10	Agree Agree nor Disagree	2
15. I provide an interesting and motivating learning environment	4.08	Agree Agree nor Disagree	3
16. I am motivated to develop independent learning skills	3.96	Agree	4
17. I am motivated to prepare well for my studies in online learning	3.20	Neither Agree nor Disagree	12
General Weighted Mean	**3.45**	**Neither** Agree nor Disagree	

Relationship between Reading Abilities of Learners and their Attitude to Online Distance Learning

The significant relationship between reading levels of pupils and their attitude to online distance learning is reflected in Table 3.

It can be gleaned from the table that the reading abilities of pupils was found to have significant relationship to their attitude to online distance learning.

This is proven with the obtained correlation coefficient value of 0.28 established at 0.032 level of probability which signifies a direct relationship between the reading abilities of pupils having a corresponding increase in their attitude towards implementation of online distance learning.

This result is in consonance with what Graff (2010) pointed out that people who are considered more proficient readers are provided more opportunities to increase the volume of and expertise in reading; however, those who struggle with reading are afforded fewer and less varied opportunities, resulting in a perceptual and vicious cycle of deficiency for struggling readers. Such cycles substantially increase the probability of reader disengagement.

Table 3. Significant relationship between reading abilities of learners and their attitude to online distance learning

Variables		R	p-value	Interpretation
Independent	Dependent			
Reading Levels	Attitude	0.28	0.032	Significant

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing findings and the hypotheses posited in this study, the conclusions was drawn that the reading levels of pupils were found to have relationship to attitude to online distance learning, thus the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between reading levels of pupils and attitude to online distance learning was rejected.

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