

# Students' Experiences In Learning English Using Online Platforms In Pandemic: A Case In A State College

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## **Abstract**

This study was conducted to determine the experiences encountered by the students in their English classes using online platforms for the first semester, 2019-2020. This qualitative narrative inquiry research gathered data through an in-depth interview. An open-ended interview guide was used to gather data, and this was validated by the experts in this field of study. The participants of the study were selected using purposive sampling. In dealing with qualitative questions, themes across data sets were identified and analyzed to provide a clearer description of the experiences shared by the participants. The analysis observed the explication process introduced by Braun and Clarke. It covers familiarization with data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. The study's findings revealed that in the course of learning English online, the students encountered different experiences. These include the financial concerns, ability to manage the time with flexible learning autonomy, teacher factors, accessibility to the technology and connectivity, self-motivation, learning styles, coping mechanism strategies, and the recommendation to improve online learning.

**Keywords:** Experiences in Learning English, Online Platforms, Time of Pandemic

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 has resulted in schools shutting all over the world. There are over 1.2 billion children who are out of the classroom. Consequently, education has changed dramatically, with the phenomenal rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms.

Online learning became a significant component in education, and is seen to provide considerable advantages in the learning process. Therefore, instruction has shifted from traditional or face-to-face classroom settings to online learning environments in many countries. All fields of education witness the occurrence of this shift, including in English language instruction. Online learning is student-centered because students can control their own learning pace, and activities can be flexible to adapt to the

preferred learning style of the student. Online learning also provides occasions for active learning. In addition, with suitable online learning applications or software, students have chances to participate in the discussion. They can express opinions, and share knowledge equally regardless of classroom size and time. However, students taking online courses could face difficulties that they might never have encountered in a traditional teaching and learning environment. This is the case despite the benefits of online teaching and learning environment. These difficulties could fairly impact negatively on their learning performance (Davies & Graffs, 2005).

In the case of learning styles and preferences, Lee (2017) posited that there is a need for students to adapt to some of the new challenges they will face in the new learning

environment. These challenges that some students encounter might arise from the need to deploy a different learning style. For learners who are less skilled in using technology, this lack of skills may be problematic. Most young and teenage learners prefer and are more familiar with studying with peers and with teachers.

Furthermore, Chang's (2013) study, students who were learning using the traditional method face to face performed better academically than those who did not on the test of general English proficiency. It is due to the fact that English is a complex subject with speaking, writing, reading and listening as its major competencies.

Concrete data on the experiences encountered by the students in learning English using online platforms in time of pandemic can provide information to help the institution. Specifically, the data can help the state college and its faculty members plan, design, and implement better strategies to improve its curriculum and instruction for the benefit of its number one stakeholder- the students.

With the premise mentioned above, the researcher necessitated conducting this study.

The main objective of this investigation, then, is to determine the experiences encountered by the students in learning English using online platforms in time of pandemic.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research inquiry anchored its methodological approach to the theory of constructivism. Constructivists espouse a qualitative approach to construct the meaning of the phenomena under investigation.

The researcher, taking inspiration from the constructivist approach, was able to examine and interpret across personal accounts of the participants. John Dewey, for example, emphasized that the core of understanding experience lies in learning what people make of

the world around them, how people interpret what they encounter, and how they assign meanings and values to events or objects (Williams, 2017). The participants of this study served as storytellers, and their experiences became the focus of inquiry. The flexible approach allowed for unanticipated interactions and conversations. Interviewing was made central to the process of gathering data. There was also a reflective dimension to the interviews. The participants and the researcher took advantage of a rare moment's stillness to gather thoughts and share insight and stories about the matters at hand.

The researcher used this theory to determine the experiences in the learning of English using online platforms in times of pandemics. The researcher used a qualitative approach in the constructivists perspective to collect the respondents' answers through interviews about their experiences in English learning.

## **III. METHODS**

This researcher used a qualitative type of research that collects and works with non-numerical data. The researcher seeks to interpret meaning from these useful data. The nature of the problem called for a qualitative approach to obtain a clearer and more complete view of the experiences in the learning of English using online platforms in time of pandemic. Qualitative research allows the researcher to collect and work with non-numerical data. It also seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help understand social life by studying targeted populations or places. (Crossman, 2018).

## **IV. SOURCES OF DATA**

The study obtained its data through interviews where data on students' experiences in learning English using online platforms in time of the pandemic. Relative to this, the researcher

identified six purposively chosen students to address the research question advanced in this study. These participants shared similar characteristics in terms of role, qualification, and experiences in learning English using the online platforms. In consideration of these criteria, the paper observed the purposive homogenous sampling method in selecting interviewees. Sarantakos (1998) described this sampling method as judgmental or selective sampling where the researcher purposely chooses the respondents, they think can provide objective and comprehensive information about issues under study. In the achievement of this, the researcher set the following criteria to qualify the potential respondents: (1) they are BSED major in English students of the College of Education in Talisay campus, (2) they belong to the different year level (3) they are taking up online classes for their English subject. The researcher employed a structured interview guide. The questions explored the participants' experiences in learning English using the online platforms, particularly; the description of the difficulties and challenges they encountered in this type of teaching modality. Before the interview, the structured interview guide was presented to five experts who checked on the appropriateness and meaningfulness of the questions to address the study purpose. This may be considered as a form of face and content validation where the validators assess the relevance and comprehensiveness of the items or questions to the intended objectives of the research study.

## **V. DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE**

The researcher observed protocol in the before, during, and after the conduct of the study.

1. Before the study, the preliminary process consists of securing approval from the Dean of the College of Education to conduct the study. For ethical consideration, the researcher informed the concerned official of the nature and purpose of the study, procedure, and the type of information that will be elicited from the participants. These details are explicitly

contained in the researcher's commitment statement. Since the participation of participants is voluntary, they were made to sign the informed consent form.

2. In the conduct of the study, the first interview took one hour and thirty minutes and the follow-up interview for one hour each. The interview was done one person at a time using the conversational style. A one-week gap was observed between the first and second interviews. The participants were informed two days before the follow-up interview. The steps involved: (a) briefing the participant, (b) conducting the interview, (c) transcribing the interview, and (d) concluding the interview.

3. After the conduct of the study, the researcher made a final arrangement with the interview participants. The researcher organized the interview data for methodical analysis and interpretation.

## **VI. DATA ANALYSES PROCEDURE**

To deal with qualitative questions, themes across data sets were identified and analyzed to provide a clearer description of the experiences shared by the participants. The analysis observed the explication process introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006). It covers the (a) familiarization with data, (b) searching for themes, (c) reviewing themes, (d) defining and naming themes, (e) writing up, and (f) coding. Rigors of findings were ensured using member checks for credibility, code-recode strategy and stepwise replication for dependability, thick description and purposive sampling for transferability, and data checking and audit trail for confirmability.

## **VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Several themes emerged during the conduct of research. The 9 major recurring themes about the experiences encountered in learning English using On-Line Platforms in Time of Pandemic include on the financial concerns, on the ability

to manage the time with flexible learning autonomy, on the teacher factors, on the accessibility to the technology and connectivity, on the self-motivation, on the learning styles, on the coping mechanism and on the recommendation to improve the online learning.

### **On the financial concerns**

There are different experiences encountered by the students in learning English using the online platforms in time of pandemic. Foremost is on the financial concern. The study conducted by Norhaslinda Daud, N, et. Al (2018) on students in higher education reveals their need for additional money to cover the cost of study and living in universities. This is due to the rising cost of higher education in public and private institutions. Because of the rising cost there may be students struggling with financial problems as verbalized in this study:

Student 1: “For someone like me who rely on my sister for my school allowance, which was drastically cut during this pandemic, I badly need money to purchase internet load in order to go online for class. Since I am residing in my live-in partners place, I would resort to borrowing money from my partner’s mother just to have internet load. My whole allowance is just enough to pay what I borrowed.”

Student 6: “Also in online class, once Globe notifies you of the remaining amount of data you have it ends there. What happens to my class when I don’t have any additional load?”

Student 3: “How much can we have for internet load? Our load of 90 pesos for 7 days will not be enough!”

Financial concern is undoubtedly one of the struggles of online learning, particularly in the public school wherein some students have no other financial resources and rely only on scholarships and education loans. Some groups of students comprise of poor and underprivileged families. Majority of them worried about their financial resources.

In this study, financial concern tends to have occurred as a pattern of struggle in learning using the online platform as shared by the participants.

### **On the ability to manage time with Flexible Learning Autonomy**

According to Shurville et al. (2008) in Joan (2013) "Flexible Learning is a set of educational philosophies and systems, aimed at providing learners with increased choice, convenience, and personalization to suit the learner. In particular, it provides learners with choices about where, when, and how learning occurs". It uses a full range of teaching and learning theories, philosophies, and methods to provide students with chances to access information and expertise, contribute ideas and opinions, and correspond with other learners and mentors.

However, flexible learning has no universally accepted definition. (Muller, 2018). In keeping with the often-quoted definition of Chen (2003) in Muller (2018) it is stated that at least in one of the different learning dimensions (i.e., time, place, pace, learning style, content, assessment, or learning path) flexibility must be present. This also implies a change in how one organizes teaching and learning from an institutional point of view. As an example, the content must be made available in a way where students can access it anytime and anywhere. This is the most basic form of flexible learning design. In this sense, flexible learning is often used synonymously with terms such as e-learning and open learning.

There were positive experiences encountered by the respondent in the online learning. As narrated:

Student 2: “A positive thing I can say about online is that you are able to learn any time of the day while doing multi-tasking. I need only to put on my earphones and listen to the lesson while doing house chores and the like. I can always access the lesson anytime if there is internet service.”

This was also supported by Student 6 who shared that:

Student 6: “We can still learn even if we are not in school uniform, we don’t need to change into school uniform or even bathe before attending class.”

Student 1: “At the same time traveling to school won’t be a hassle anymore. Like me, I needed at least 3 or 4 rides before I reach school since I am from Bacolod and the school is in Talisay. More or less, I would often come late for our first period class.”

This was agreed by Student 3 as she commented:

Student 3: “You won’t be late anymore”

Student 4: “For me, I would be able to do my responsibilities at home and in school at the same time. Just like what Nene said one can access the online class anytime when at home. One will be responsible in managing one’s own time.”

Student 3: “My positive experience is the luxury of spending time at home while attending to my academic improvement and the convenience it brings. It is more convenient and at the same time we can really assure our since

by staying at home we are less exposed to dangers outside.”

Student 5: “That’s it ... one can manage one’s own time at home. You can cook rice, wash clothes and tinker on house chores while having class. That is for me is the positive side.”

Student 3: “As a call center agent online class is very convenient since it gives me time to rest during the day and do my class tasks anytime of the day. And more importantly, it affords me the time to spend in my work and with my family. It teaches you to be independent in learning.”

Student 4: “It affords to be flexible with my time. However, in this kind of learning the challenge for me is time management.”

Student 2: "You alone need to balance your time. Another challenge for me is responding to the needs of our other classmates because it's online. Especially when they ask me to send files or do the copy-pasting of their works because they are low on data or have no connectivity. But since I have the means I can't do otherwise but help them. It is quite a hassle to do these."

Flexible learning enables students to have access and flexibility with regard to at least one of these following dimensions: time, place, pace, learning style, content, assessment or learning path. In a pilot phase, conducted by Muller (2018) on a semi-experimental study on the learning effectiveness of blended learning design enabling students to be more flexible as to the time and place of study. It reduces time for classroom learning, replacing some of it with an e-learning environment for self-study that includes instructional videos. Students'

perceptions of the new study format were positive. Furthermore, the final test results of students in the program were the same as those of other students, despite the classroom learning time was reduced by about half.

The positive answers of students were focused on temporal flexibility/individual responsibility, having the flexibility to organize one's learning time and spatial flexibility, students need not to commute in going to school, time saving, it is possible to learn at one's own pace. However, there were those who answered negatively. Their answers were focused on discipline, problems engaging in self-regulated learning, missing classroom teaching, missing direct interaction with lecturers/students, time management, difficulty estimating the time needed for learning, missing reference solutions, study instructions were partially unclear and too much material to cover and too time-consuming

As Samarawickrema (2005) in Muller (2018) found out that the partial shift in responsibility to the student for the process of learning leads to problems; he made a conclusion that a significant challenge for students in a flexible study format is the individual learning process. Hence, they need self-regulated learning skills in a blended-learning design.

However, in the study conducted by Joan (2013) on the flexible learning as new learning design in classroom process to promote quality education, the findings show that flexible learning in the classroom helps to promote quality education.

Hence, in a lot of countries, there is a shift from traditional or face-to-face classroom settings to online learning environments that is happening. This shift has been taking place in all fields of education, including English language instruction (Vovides, SanchezAlonso, Mitropoulou, & Nickmans, 2007).

Kuama, and Intharaksa, (2016), presented that online learning is student-centered since they dictate the pace of their own learning, and activities can be flexible so as to better suit

their preferred learning style. Furthermore, learner autonomy in foreign language learning like English has been a favorite topic for a long time. Plenty of studies to promote learner autonomy in different levels of foreign language education at different schools and at different universities have been done since the beginning of the millennium. A number of new approaches and innovations have been utilized to develop learner autonomy in foreign language education in the past years. A fundamental and universal duty of the foreign language educators is to help foreign language learners to become autonomous. Learning methods and approaches may be effective in learning new foreign languages when learners see the necessity to develop their learning styles. This may also inspire their teachers or professors to enhance and develop their methods and techniques in teaching. Though they are not easy to distinguish, the ideas of concepts of autonomy and responsibility are two critical requirements in learning which require active practices, Yagcioglu (2015).

According to Moore in Yagcioglu (2015) learner autonomy begins with an assumption that an autonomous learner is responsible for his/her own learning. In doing this, they recognize the goals of their learning and what they need to learn; their learning processes or how they will learn it; how they use and evaluate their learning; their conceptions of learning is well-founded; they have an array of approaches and skills in learning; they are capable of organizing their learning; they possess good information processing skills and they are well motivated to learn. Thanasoulas (2000) in Yagcioglu (2015) illustrates that that autonomy can be considered as a break from education being a social process, as well as in terms of reallocation of power to attend to knowledge construction and the participants' roles in the process of learning.

Learning autonomy is one of the experiences encountered by the participants in their online classes in English. They shared that:

Student 3: “When it comes to being distant with one’s classmates, one can learn how to do the class tasks alone without minding them. At least one is aware of one’s own idea and it helps widen one’s perspective that one can actually do it alone during that time.”

Student 4: "The challenge that I see a student who is at the same time a mother is when my toddler would insist on joining me in my online class. I just hope that my teachers would understand my situation since my baby would really sit on my lap during our online classes. I am thorn between accommodating my baby since it is next to impossible to prevent him from disturbing the online class while at home and my motivation to really pursue my study. Why I am pursuing my studies in the end is because of my child, to provide him with a better future. This is one challenge which I really need to overcome."

Theoretically, autonomy entails the liberty and capacity to manage one's affair coupled with the right to make decisions. On the other hand, responsibility involves the ability to take upon oneself the consequences of one's action. Both autonomy and responsibility are interrelated and necessitate active involvement

Basically, learning happens only when learners are willing to contribute even when teachers provide the needed conditions and input. For learners' active involvement in the process of learning, they need to realize and affirm that success in learning is dependent not only on the teacher but on the students as well. Hence, the outcome is both their responsibility. Moreover, the responsible attitude of learners speaks much of their success in learning.

### On teacher factor

Being passionate about one's job is not enough to be an effective language teacher. A teacher needs also to be genuinely concerned about the students. Instructors are effective when they go out of their way to ensure fun and dynamic lessons by discovering the interests of Perez, (2019)

However, there were different experiences encountered by the participants with regards to their teachers during the conduct of their online classes. As narrated:

Student 4: “The sudden changes of schedule by the teacher is a challenge. It is ok to re-schedule the class, but the difficulty comes when the teacher re-schedules the re-scheduled class. It affects all our other schedules especially my schedule with the student I am tutoring. For example, when a teacher re-schedules our class I would take that as a free time to devote with my tutee. The difficulty comes when the teacher re-schedules it again and conflicts with my adjusted schedule. Sometimes I would compromise my classes in favor of my obligation to my tutee.”

Student 3: “We cannot follow what the teacher is talking about during class. The next day that teacher would immediately post quizzes that we could not cope. This is my concern that the problem is really with the teacher.”

Student 3 further narrated that:

Student 3: “I cannot really open up my concern with this teacher. Hearing from my other classmates how she replied to them I feel it will be very

difficult to approach this teacher. Promise!”

Student 2: "My difficulty is in the engagement between students and teacher in online class. Unlike the face-to-face class where I can be very interactive, in the online class there are limitations like I cannot automatically ask questions. I need to wait for opportunities to join in the discussion. This lack of interaction of students somehow limits the discussion and does not trigger to widen the topic. It seems the learning is limited only to the input of the teacher. Also, the teacher has no personal touch that's why she could not fully understand the situation of the students, especially if the teacher does not want to entertain private messages from the students."

. Student 2 further shared that:

Student 2: "The level of understanding ends with how the teacher delivers her lesson. Since asking questions are limited, we cannot anymore dig deeper into the topic and what needs more elaboration is not elaborated. Most often, many of my classmates fall asleep during online class because the teacher just kept on talking and lecturing without interacting with the students."

Student 6: "If you were a student who was not able to attend her previous class, you will not be able to answer her questions. It is manageable if the questions require only application but

what if it entails solving problems?"

Student 4: "On my part, there are some teachers I am not at ease to approach and ask a favor to further explain the previous lessons. One for example would retort back that it is because I did not attend her online class and that so few attended it. That's why as a student I would simply do the research and make out the lessons through the notes that she sent. It is difficult because we know that she has a prerequisite in our previous. It is difficult since this is the first time to have this subject."

Further, Student 2 continue to share that:

Student 2: "There are times when I cannot attend our class because of her practice of rescheduling the class. It is also sometimes because of lack of interaction especially when we are hindered to ask questions. Most of the time it is only the teacher who is talking. That's why when she asks questions, we are second-guessing our answers because we do not fully understand what she was discussing. Although the teacher discusses well but we need more interaction during the lesson, hoping that she will open up to the suggestions from the students. Most often it doesn't happen. We find it hard to reach and communicate with her because every time one opens a conversation one gets scolded. To be honest there are teachers who would only send their module without discussing the lesson. The student is left to



research about the topic and answer the module. That makes it time consuming since as students we are not sure if what we are researching is right since we are simply given the module.”

Student 3: “Honestly on my part there is one teacher I find so difficult. It’s almost every day that she meets us online, even taking our Saturdays for exams and quizzes. She should have also considered our part. I can’t understand why we are having online class with her every day.”

Student 1: “The teachers need to be patient with the students because not all can afford to purchase load, have an internet at home or laptop. Also, I feel bad when this teacher would broadcast in group chat her comment on a particular student. I feel it’s not proper because it has an emotional effect on the student concerned. Sensitive as I am, I would feel bad if it were me. That’s why teachers should have more patience and stick to the schedule of the class. We are not elementary and high school students who have classes every day. What I expect from the teachers is that they be more understanding when it comes to students complying with their requirements since not all students have ready access to the internet or can afford having the necessary gadgets.”

Student 6: “My expectations from teachers is that they will be more understanding especially in giving learning tasks and not to overburden us students. I expect

in the future that they would be giving us fewer tasks but are comprehensive enough to cover the learnings.”

Student 6 further shared that:

Student 6: "The teacher should be considerate in extending the deadline of submission knowing that we have classmates who also work at the same time. At least the teachers should be aware that there are students who are working while at the same time studying and to give them grace period in submitting the requirements. The teachers also need to extend their patience especially when giving quizzes because of connectivity problem. For example, one teacher would allow only 20 or 30 minutes for a True or False quiz. We could not just guess our answers. Another thing is the engagement between teacher and students. I expect the teacher to consider the responses of the students and entertain our questions. Most often the teacher doesn't want us to interrupt her discussion or even bother to ask us students if we understand their lesson or not."

In the study conducted by Delfino (2019), it was found out that the difficulties that they encountered by the students could be attributed to the existing student-teacher relationships, availability of the faculty and the dedication of the faculty to extend help beyond classroom walls, no discussions about the grades and assignments with the faculty members. The low engagements of the students were due to their fear of their teachers. According the students, there were teachers who got mad easily whenever they approached them on any matter.

Some teachers were offended by their queries students and sometimes threatened them to lower their grades.

Moreover, in the conduct of the focused-group discussion among the respondents, they said that they were inspired to participate and understood better the lesson if the teacher has a deep knowledge about the subject matter. If the teachers were not knowledgeable about the topic, they felt that the discussion has no direction, they were disappointed, and they lost interest to do their study, (Delfino, 2019).

These findings were supported by the study conducted by DeVito (2016) in Delfino (2019), where he found that the students became engaged in learning when they clearly comprehend the teacher's expectations and when they had the opportunity to take part in decision-making. The respondents also pointed out the importance of the teacher's instructional styles as important factor that encouraged them to become actively engaged.

As revealed in the present findings, the use of technology of the teachers contributed positively to the student's interest in learning. There is a similarity in the findings of the present study with the study conducted in Delfino (2019) by Groves et al. (2012), where they found that the relationships with their teachers was found to be the most important ones. The quality relationships with their teachers (Russel and Slater, 2011) in Delfino (2019), approachability and the willingness of the teachers to engage with the students in class were among the major reasons (Case, 2007) in Delfino (2019).

### **On the accessibility to the technology and connectivity**

One of the factors that could motivate the use of English by young people is the use of digital technology and the internet. As is now well-recognized, it provides a major incentive to learn English, and the means to do so (Sockett, 2014) in (Lamb, 2018).

There were different experiences shared by the students as far as their learning on English thru online was concerned. As narrated:

Student 3: "What for me is negative is the lack of resources when it comes to securing laptop and internet connectivity. I only depend on 'pesonet' for my connection that's why I am always the last in submitting my requirements."

Student 6: "On my part, my main concern is connectivity. To be honest, I am blessed that I have an internet connection, but the problem sometimes is a poor internet connection, especially during bad weather. Sometimes I would miss the class not because I absent myself but because of poor internet connection. Although we are in the city center the connection is unstable and beset by power interruption".

Student 1: "Ahhh... for me though I am blessed with having wifi at home it is not that stable. This is compounded by bad weather and power interruptions."

Student 2: "Another thing is the connectivity issue. Yes, I do have resources for internet load however the connection is still unstable. We cannot predict when it will become unstable. If I am in Granada, which is at the outskirts of Bacolod City, there are areas where there are really no signal whether it is SMART or GLOBE, unlike when in I'm in Villamonte in the city proper where the connectivity is better."

Student 6: "For me it is the volume of the assigned tasks. Honestly there are more tasks now in the online class that require gadgets. It is ok for those who have gadgets but what about those who do not have?"

Student 3: "For me, the positive experience of having access to internet is the convenience it offers in accessing our online classes."  
(Student 3)

Henry (2013) in Lamb (2018) however, pointed out that there is greater evidence that digital technology demotivates informal learning settings. Experts have shown that there is a difference between what learners of English do in actual setting and what they do online as far as learning of English language is concerned.

According to Aydin (2011) in Kuama and Intharaksa in (2016), one factor that can have a negative impact in the learning of the language is the challenge posed by the network system. This may result to anxiety for students who are less skilled in the use of this platform.

Anyona (2010) in Cahapay & Rotas, E (2020) found out that one of the major challenges to learning online in Africa are the demands of connectivity. This requires updated computers and processors and cheaper internet services.

### **On the self- motivation**

Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013) mentioned in Kimotho (2018) that students with enough motivation would mean success in the long process of learning a foreign language because they would tend to persevere. The study by Young (2013) in Kimotho (2018) highlights motivational characteristics such as self-efficacy and self-regulation as necessary in distance education.

Student 6: "Actually, what pushes me to go on is because I am looking forward for our graduation."

Student 3: "What inspires me to keep going in spite of the challenges, the quarantine and the lack of resources is because I want to graduate on time. That's why keep in pursuing my studies no matter what happens."

Another factor that is important in learning English as a second language is motivation. Boo, Dornyei & Ryan (2015) in Lamb (2018). Through motivation students can increase confidence in learning English language (Lamb, 2018).

Another expanding line of research however has been directed at understanding situated motivation, that is, exploring the various aspects of context which influence learners' motivation, including the immediate and longer-term motivational impact of different forms of pedagogy. Kukulska-Hulme and Viberg (2018) in Lamb (2018) claim that the use of mobile devices like smartphones and iPads in language classrooms produce 'positive effects in terms of learner attitudes, enthusiasm, engagement and mutual encouragement. It can enhance learners' long-term motivation for L2 learning through promoting learner autonomy and individualization.

Ilic (2015) in Lamb (2018) for instance shows how collaborative activities using their mobile phones can motivate learners to do homework. It can increase learners' L2 motivation indirectly by providing more opportunities for oral communication practice, as through video-conferencing or online game playing when learners may not feel as nervous or embarrassed speaking in the L2 it can help learners construct identities as L2 users, partly through the self-confidence that accrues from successful L2 communication (see previous point), partly through the opportunities that online platforms provide to try out new and alternative (Lamb, 2018)

One of the most important factors in learning a second language is motivation.

Richards (2014) in Cahapay, M & Rotas, E (2020) believes motivation as a factor that determines the desire of the person to perform an action. Quite obviously, more learnings happen to those are motivated than in those who are not. They distinguish two types of motivation: First is the integrative motivation wherein the interest of the learner to learn the language is to be able to communicate with the people of another culture who speak the language. Second is the instrumental motivation wherein a learner's goals for learning the second language are necessitated by practical reasons such as its function and utility. Employing any of the two types of motivation depends on the situation and circumstances. Integrative motivation plays a major role where L2 is learned as a 'foreign language'. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is more important where L2 functions as a 'second language'.

In addition, motivation can also be intrinsic and extrinsic. (Brown, 1994 as cited by Cahapay, & Rotas (2020). Extrinsicly motivated behaviors look for reward outside of self, while intrinsically motivated behaviors find reward in self-satisfaction.

Englisia (2014) in Cahapay & Rotas (2020). insists that there is greater success in learning a foreign language when one is intrinsically motivated. Brown (1994) as cited in Cahapay & Rotas (in 2020) attitude of students could affect the acquisition of language learning as well as their personality, be it in a negative or a positive manner. Therefore, a correlation between attitude and language learning can be concluded. (Khasinah, 2014)

Cahapay & Rotas (2020) found out that the students employ self-regulating strategies as a way to cope and motivate themselves in this type of learning. They condition themselves to stay positive.

Motivation and learner autonomy are the essential issues in successful learning. Student participation in learning will be greatly

reinforced when motivated with new and modern approaches.

### **On the learning styles**

Shaadi in (2012) found out that learning by themselves is what some of the students preferred. This is evidence that students have different learning styles which can influence their ability to acquire knowledge and information, and eventually respond to their learning environment. Discovering one's learning style may help the students learn better sustain their motivation in acquiring language learning process, Azlinda, (2006), in Shaadi (2012).

Student 1; "I feel I am a visual learner that's why I would prefer face to face class where the lessons can be really explained. In face to face, we can use the board to demonstrate, and we can easily throw our questions and discuss the lesson with the teacher and our classmates."

Tsai (2009) in Kuama and Intharaksa in (2016) found out that online platform foster challenges that they have not encountered in their face-to-face classes and these difficulties could have a negative impact on their learning performance

There is a necessity in the case of the learners to set their own learning schedule. According to Chang's (2013) in Kuama and Intharaksa in (2016) study, students who managed their own learning schedule fare well academically compared to those who did not.

Lee (2001) in Kuama and Intharaksa in (2016) shared a study on students' preferences and learning styles. According to the findings, there is a need for students to adapt to the new learning environment by employing different learning styles from what they usually practice in a traditional learning platform. This may be a challenge for learners who are less skilled in

terms of technology. (Kearns, 2012; Lee, 2001) in Kuama and Intharaksa in (2016).

The findings of Surjono's (2015) in Kuama and Intharaksa in (2016) study showed that students tend to be more successful in online learning when there is a congruence between the online course materials and their style of learning and multi-media preferences. Additionally, Solak and Cakir (2015) in Kuama and Intharaksa (2016) asserted that students learn faster while at the same time have fun in learning when effective online strategies are maximized.

### **On the coping strategies**

According to William et al., 2010 in Kwaah, 2017 coping strategies helps reduce stress, and it is a necessary condition for preventing the harmful effects of prolonged stress. Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts that people use to master, reduce or minimize stressful event and is multi-dimensional and involves various strategies.

Student 3: "I only have Cellphone for class. (Sounding sad and somehow needs empathy.) I really tried to do my modules and pass my requirements through cellphone. It's a good thing that a close friend lent me his laptop so I can encode my modules."

Student 6: "I resort to private messages if worse comes to worst or when things go beyond my control. When there is total blackout for example and even the city hall has no power what I do is I inform through PM or chat that I couldn't really make it in class due to these circumstances."

Student 1: "I had to go to a computer café during the time we needed to have a video presentation in class because of power outage

in the whole of Bacolod. I was just hoping that the teacher would be considerate enough. Another example of a challenge is when there is a typhoon which affects very much the connectivity even if I do have internet connection at home. It happened one time when we had our exam and the weather was terrible. It was really a stressful experience since it was not simply a quiz but an exam. I really had difficulty forwarding my responses to the exam because of the unstable connectivity due to the bad weather.

Student 1 further added that:

Student 1: "We should learn how to communicate our situation to the teacher. As students we also have the responsibility to inform the teacher of the rea situation and not simply say that we have no internet".

Student 6: "I am private messaging my teacher when things are really beyond my control such that I won't be present in class. For example, if there was a city-wide or province-wide power outage."

Student 5: "When problems in connectivity happen, I privately message my teacher since I know she is understanding enough."

In the study conducted by Walinga (2013) in Kimotho (2018) it pointed out the significance of coping mechanisms employed by students in distance learning in order to respond to varying challenges posed by this online platform. In the study conducted by Cahapay, M & Rotas, E (2020) that the respondents were

looking for a good space and time as one of their coping mechanisms. Moreover, since the internet connection is also dependent on time, in the study conducted by Cook (2019) in Cahapay, M & Rotas, E (2020), it was found out that students are doing their task and submitting them even until midnight because it is the only time that they have a fast internet connection. In the case of marginalized families, a stable internet connection is a big challenge but at the same time it was also identified as a need. In the study conducted by Matswetu et al. (2020) in Cahapay, M & Rotas, E (2020) where students who do not have an internet connection look for every possible alternative to pass their requirements.

Another coping strategy that students use when remote learning becomes too difficult for them is directly approaching their teachers. They turn to this strategy, especially when they have internet connection concerns. These students narrated that since they have no control over internet connection, so they message my teachers for their submission concerns or when they have queries about the requirements and ask questions to the teachers if they are having difficulties in the class requirements. Approaching the teachers is also one way of coping with bulks of lesson activities. This may be attributed to a successful online or telephone assistance system as part of institutions' e-learning initiatives aimed at providing venues for students to peer-tutor and communicate with their teachers regarding concerns in subjects learning (Barrett & Lally, 2000) in Cahapay & Rotas, E (2020).

### **On the recommendation for on-line classes**

To improve the quality of online teaching and learning, Keengwe and Kidd (2010) Chen and Sun (2016) suggested that teachers in the online platform may see to it that their teaching strategies may be clear in realizing the educational objectives taking into consideration the different resources and appropriate sequence of activities. Among all of these, direct instruction must be given the topmost

consideration to include curriculum design and development, course content, materials and assessment, schedule of activities for students to include deadline of submission of student requirements, and suggest relevant technologies that could assist students in the facilitation of their online learning. It was also pointed out that online instructors need to balance pedagogy and technology in designing and delivering course content (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010) in Chen and Sun (2016)

Many researchers have defined what a learning community looks like in an online environment and have stressed its importance from different perspectives. Yuan and Kim (2014) in Chen and Sun (2016) stated that a learning community was the creation of a sense of belonging by a group of learners, where learners trusted one another, constructed knowledge, shared useful information, established connections by getting to know one another, set up common objectives for learning, and believed that their needs would be fulfilled. Cox and Cox (2008) in Chen and Sun (2016) contended that asynchronous, threaded discussions can be effective in creating a collaborative learning environment as well as interpersonal and group dynamics. Online learners benefit greatly from online learning communities in the following ways: (1) because of their connectivity with one another, they are able to share knowledge and fulfill common goals, which can reduce students' dropout rates; (2) the relationship and interaction between the instructor and learners and among peer learners can increase student performances and their satisfaction of the course; and (3) learners can receive supports and help from their peers, and at the same time they can add their knowledge base through their interactive actions (Yuan & Kim, 2014 in Chen and Sun (2016) . Yuan and Kim (2014) in Chen and Sun (2016) provided the guidelines for the development of an online learning community. These were: the effort to build a learning community should start at the beginning of a course and continue throughout the term; both students and instructors should be

involved in building the learning community; asynchronous and synchronous technologies should be both used to create a shared space in which students and instructor interact; Various strategies should be employed to stimulate discussions; both task-oriented discussions and social interactions should be encouraged and students should be assigned tasks that require collaboration.

Student 1: “Recording the class is not yet recommended which will be helpful for us students because we can review the lesson through this. I observe this practice in other schools, other departments and through the experience of my boyfriend. The class is recorded and uploaded in Facebook where the students can view again and go back to the part of the lesson which they find difficulty in. We just have to play, pause and replay.

Student 2: “The students need also to feel engaged in order to stay online. Usually, the case is that it is only the teacher who keeps on talking without students interacting. Sometimes the students would simply let the teacher do the talking as long as their attendance is already checked. This has become the mind set of students now since there is no interaction during class.”

Student 2 further explained that:

Student 2: “My expectation for teachers is that they should be more understanding of their students considering that they know that there are differences among students especially when it comes to financial resources. I

also expect that teacher at this time will be more approachable since we can easily talk through personal messages. Unlike when it is face to face since we might find it awkward to approach the teachers out of respect.”

Student 1: “My expectation from teachers is that they follow the schedule of classes in order not to confuse us students since we too have our personal work schedule and other responsibility.”

Student 6: “My expectation is that the teachers should be more accommodating, especially in responding to the personal concerns of students because sometimes it is the reason why students flank. Another suggestion is to have the class recorded since we don’t know the real reason why students are not able to connect. We who want to study more can just access the recording.”

Student 6 further explained that:

Student 6: "The recording is very important because anyone can just access it. We can simply access it any time, we can take down notes at the same time it also helps us recall our lesson. Recording it will also enable us to review our lessons wherever we are ... whether we were sweeping the floor or doing other home chores."

## VIII. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

In the course of learning English through the online platform, the students encountered a

variety of experiences that affect their learning to some degree, both in the positive and negative. These include the financial concerns, ability to manage the time with flexible learning autonomy, teacher factors, accessibility to the technology and connectivity, self-motivation, learning styles, coping mechanism strategies and the recommendation to improve the online learning.

## **IX. CONCLUSIONS**

The studies taken together suggest that students have different experiences in English using online platforms in time of pandemic. These are the financial concerns, ability to manage the time with flexible learning autonomy, teacher factors, accessibility to the technology and connectivity, self-motivation, learning styles, coping mechanism and the recommendation to improve the online learning are the essential factors to influence the success and failure of the conduct of online classes.

Financial concern in the time of pandemic is a big factor that influenced the learning process of students. With the economic repercussions of the pandemic and the limitation of movements, access to specified technology for learning and internet services proved to be daunting. This consequently means limited access to learning and lesser engagement with the class. Somehow this also underlies a larger concern on how the educational system of a country responds to these perceived needs, especially of the financially challenged students.

Teacher factor is another important consideration in the learning process of online learning. The sharing of students revealed teachers who are not yet well adjusted with this particular platform of learning. Seemingly, there is the challenge of how the principles of teaching can be practiced consistently even in the online platform. The teacher cannot remain in the traditional classroom setting. When dealing with new realities, there is a need for creativity in order to be relevant and effective. In the same way the students pointed out the limitation of

online platform for teachers and students to interact in a more personal way, which could address the individual concerns of students with regards to the learning process.

In the online platform much of the weight in the learning process is placed on the students. They are afforded a certain autonomy in the learning process that allows them to practice time and activities management while studying at home in the midst of other concerns. Motivation is an important factor that enables the students to persevere and survive the rigors of online learning. The vision of a diploma and future employment that will enable the students to live better lives define the motivation of most the student respondents. Likewise, the challenges that students encounter in online learning revealed their preferred learning style as well as the coping mechanism they employ. The students are forced to be creative and utilized their network of friends and support systems in dealing with the limitations brought by the online platform. At any rate, students preferred learning to be more experiential and actual rather than the virtual platform they found themselves now.

The recommendations of student respondents poses a challenge to the society at large, for government to make online learning readily accessible to the citizens especially to the less fortunate, improve connectivity of internet service providers which can be a disruption rather than help, for teachers to be fully prepared in terms of teaching strategy in this new platform so that there would be a more personalized engagement with online students in spite of the limitation of technology so that they could elicit more participation and engagement from students.

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