

Gadgets and Learning in the New Era

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Abstract

This phenomenological research aims to find out the lived experiences on the use of gadgets in classroom learning among elementary pupils in the District of Makato, Division of Aklan. In terms of lived experiences of student-participants, majority experienced numerous problems on the use of gadgets in classroom learning. Keeping tracked of the lessons is the main advantage observed by the respondents. Most of them experienced the positive impact on using gadgets in their classroom learning. They asserted that aside from classroom teaching, the teacher also sends it through digital platform wherein they can keep track of the lessons from time to time and gave them opportunity to organize their own thoughts. Making use of gadgets helped them to meet, collaborate, share ideas and learn specific skills with peers. In terms of the challenges encountered, lack of internet access emerged to be on top. There were several coping mechanisms that the seven participants developed in order to address the challenges they encountered on the use of gadgets for classroom learning. This only confirmed the participants wanted to overcome difficulties and challenges encountered in a traverse of educational journey using alternative learning materials such as print and non-print materials aided learning.

Keywords: *Gadgets, Classroom Learning, Lived Experiences, Challenges, Coping Mechanisms*

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Introduction

Technology like gadgets had significantly and dramatically changed the educational landscape and it even played big roles in building and promoting quality education. Fatima and Santiana (2017) argued that as the latest instructional media in this globalization era, technology contributes good benefits in the educational sector, especially in teaching and learning process such as, helps the students to have new authentic and meaningful learning experiences, provides more fun and effective learning atmosphere to engage their effort and behavior, allows the students to work collaboratively and easily access the information that can increase their learning experiences.

Students of today's generation are growing up in a time where technology is constantly at their fingertips. The growing world of social media applications and internet sites spike interest among school children. Additionally, cellphones, computers, tablets, free Wi-Fi, gaming systems, and electronic-based toys are all the rage in today's society. Students are growing up in a time when technology is a competitive fad (Klopfer, et al., 2009)

However, relevant researches had proven that technology could change education negatively by dehumanizing educational environments, distorting social interactions between teachers and students, and isolating individuals when using technology. Too much screen time can affect physical health as well as their behavior, social engagement and attention span can also be affected. Manipulation is also rampant on today's social medias whereas people, most especially young people can be easily manipulated by the circulating information around their feeds.

As observed by the researcher, it was very alarming that many students are totally exposed to the use of modern technologies that is certain to cause bad effects most especially if not used properly. But we cannot deny the fact that the use of gadgets and modern technology like cellphone, laptop, and tablets could bring positive academic results to learners. Further, many students who are engaging themselves in modern technology particularly on social media sites, they tend to be influenced easily affecting their behaviors and learning development.

The researcher and as a public-school teacher at the same time felt the pressing needs to conduct a study which will enlighten her on the different lived experiences of learners in relation to the use of gadgets in their education and to propose a program which will benefit the learners.

Methodology

Phenomenological qualitative research design was utilized in order for the researcher to comprehensively capture the research questions appropriately and adequately. According to Moustakas (2009), Phenomenological research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In this process, the researcher brackets or sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 2005).

The researcher opted to use this design for its relevance and appropriateness to the research problem being undertaken most especially in drawing out the participants' first-hand experiences on the use of gadgets in their classroom learning.

The participants of the study were the seven learners of Mantiguib Elementary School taken from Grades 4,5 and 6. The participants were chosen purposively by the researcher based on her inclusion criteria. Likewise, the researcher used pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the participants in this study.

Researcher-made interview guide that was based on the statement of the problem was used to collect the necessary and pertinent information from the learner-participants. Questions included in the interview guide were open-ended or unstructured in nature so that it would enable the researcher to insert follow up questions to extract the most comprehensive and substantial information. The interview guide was divided into three parts.

Part I gathers information on the lived experiences of learners on the utilization of gadgets in classroom learning. Part II generates answered on the challenges encountered of learners while using the gadgets and Part III elicits information on the coping mechanisms of students to address the challenges encountered in using gadgets.

Prior to data gathering procedure, permission was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Aklan and District Supervisor of Makato. Letter of informed consent explaining the purpose of the study and the extent of participation was given to the 7 learner-participant for signature.

Focus Group Discussion was scheduled and arranged by the researcher based on their availability and most convenient time. After the approval of the permits and confirming the availability of the participants; the researcher personally gathered the qualitative data from the 7 learner-participants through the conduct of the Focus Group Discussion conducted on November 10, 2022. During the conduct of Focus Group Discussion; safety procedure and protocols were strictly complied. Wearing of facemask, face shield, washing of hands, using of alcohol and one-meter social distancing were likewise observed.

The researcher ensured the anonymity of the learner-participants by using pseudonyms to conceal their real identity. All the information disclosed by the participants were treated with utmost confidentiality by strictly adhering to the provisions of Republic Act or the Data Privacy Act of 2022.

Findings

1. In terms of their Lived Experiences of student-participants; out of the responses, majority of the participants experienced numerous problems on the use of gadgets in classroom learning. Keeping Tracked of the Lessons is the main advantage observed by the respondents. Most of the student-participants experienced the positive impact on using gadgets in their classroom learning. They asserted that aside from classroom teaching, the teacher also sends it through digital platform wherein they can keep tracked of the lessons from time to time and gave them the opportunity to organized their own thoughts. Bridging Communication Gaps with Peers appeared on the experiences of the respondents. Making use of gadgets helped them to meet, collaborate, share ideas and learn specific skills with peers. The incorporation of technology in communication has made it easier than ever to share information. that they found ease in using communication technology device.
2. In terms of the Challenges encountered; Lack of internet access emerged to be on the top. Lack of internet access can affect a student's performance in classroom. Students without internet can't connect with teachers or classmates, do independent research, or get online homework help. The internet use was very useful in the improvement of the learning outcomes. But lack of internet connectivity ruins the pace and delivery of learning. Most of the respondent showed scarcity in connectivity expenses.
3. In terms of their Coping Mechanisms; Generally, there were several coping mechanisms that the seven participants developed in order to address the challenges they encountered on the use of gadgets for classroom learning. This only confirmed the participants wanted

to overcome difficulties and challenges encountered in a traverse of educational journey. Using alternative learning materials such as print and non-print materials aided learning. Learning materials can significantly increase learners' achievement. The use of classroom resources is important for both children and teachers to maintain an organized environment whilst helping children get the very most out of their learning experience. Most of the respondents were force to borrow gadgets to my classmates, friends and neighbors. There are times that they cannot finish on doing assignments and research works because the owner them me return the borrowed gadget on specified time.

Conclusion

1. The experiences personally encountered by the participants which were both positive and negative had left unforgettable lessons that they will forever remember. It made them resilient and strong that inspite of the limitations and problems they encountered during the height of the pandemic, still they continued their education by becoming more resourceful and productive.
2. Despite of these problems, student-respondents were flexible and open-minded. They were hopeful that the school is showing support for increased levels of technology in the classroom by providing hardware such as tablets and computers, enhancing internet connectivity, and implementing programs designed to improve computer literacy for both teachers and students. Although teachers generally appreciate the benefits of educational technologies, they often find smooth and effective integration of new educational technologies challenging.
3. The participants exhibited the values and character of being flexible, resilient, strong, resourceful and very innovative. They were able to come up with varied solutions to problems they had encountered.

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