

Perceived Educational Barriers in the New Normal Among Nursing Students

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ABSTRACT

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sudden shift from face-to-face lectures to online learning created barriers to students' learning process. These issues have prompted researchers to explore the perceived educational barriers in the new normal, especially among nursing students. This study aims to identify the perceived educational barriers of the new normal among the 200 nursing students at the University of Bohol. This is a quantitative-descriptive research design aided with a self-constructed questionnaire distributed using the online platform, following the ethical guidelines. The tool was pilot-tested and garnered a Cronbach's result of 0.721, which passes the acceptability standard. The gathered data were



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subjected statistically. Results have shown that respondents have been moderately affected by personal and technological barriers. Socioeconomic barriers were present but rarely affect the respondents. The study concludes that the demographic profile of 200 nursing students did not fully influence their perceived educational barriers. These

perceived barriers only moderately affect the respondents; it reveals that distractions, lag devices due to multitasking, and noisy environments primarily affect the students.

INTRODUCTION

Education is viewed as the baseline of knowledge directed towards the holistic development of an individual to promote understanding (Timperley, Wilson, Barr & Fung, 2007). Educational systems are affected by different factors that bring about significant changes to such systems. One of these factors was the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was crucial and has affected the global academic systems. The COVID-19 pandemic has also severely impacted higher level education such as colleges and universities closed their premises and countries shut their borders in response to lockdown measures. Although higher education institutions quickly replaced face-to-face lectures with online learning, this sudden shift has created more barriers to student learning. According to UNESCO, as of April 14, 2020, 188 countries worldwide have closed schools affecting over 1.5 billion students nationwide, accounting for more than 91 percent of all enrolled students. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) conducted a survey that included questions about households' ability to adopt new learning strategies. According to preliminary data released in July, most families – or 8.8 million parents polled – prefer modules. Only 3.3 million chose online learning, and 1.4 million favored education via television and radio. The survey also showed parents' primary concern in adapting to new learning modalities such as inadequate gadget availability, insufficient mobile data allowance,

and unstable internet connection. At the end of the month-long enrollment period, only 14.5 million students had signed up, a decrease of nearly 40% from the previous year's student population of 22.57 million. The school year 2020-2021 would be a make or break for DepED Bohol, which the current pandemic has forced to improvise to stay true to its mission of universal education where no one is left behind. The new education system has challenged the students regarding access to technology such as the internet and electronic gadgets. Another challenge is how a teacher would manage and follow up on a struggling student when these kids could be far from each other. The support of parents, siblings, or neighbors of learners whose parents cannot facilitate learning is likewise essential (PHILPAR, 2020). With the current situation that forced educational institutions to close abruptly, educational systems have shifted, dominantly affecting skill-based courses such as nursing.

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) is a four-year degree program that helps students learn essential skills and knowledge for health care. It has at least four main components: health promotion, disease prevention, risk reduction, and restoration. Its mission is to mold nursing students capable of providing holistic care to individuals from different walks of life. But because of recent happenings, nursing education has entered a new normal state. The significance of the human touch in clinical teaching-learning cannot wane away, but the opportunities for students will be far less in the pre-COVID-19 era. The primary goals of nursing education in the Philippines remain the same: nurses must be equipped to engage with diverse patient needs, function as leaders, and learn advance science that is good for the welfare of the patients and capacitate health professionals to deliver safe, quality patient care. Nursing students must transition smoothly from academic preparation to various practice environments (Johnson, 2021).

The Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education in the Philippines has enacted various responses to adapt to the new reality and guarantee educational continuity. It is in their interest to redevelop standards to cope with the changes. As a result, the education sector has leaned towards online platforms, especially at the tertiary level. Despite these efforts exerted by the government, specific problems have emerged. One is the availability of resources in different parts of the country, and many households were unprepared for this new normal. Internet access is not possible in some parts of the country. Which prompted the researchers

to explore the perceived educational barriers in the new normal, especially among nursing students.

The pandemic has created a considerable shift for both learners and teachers. Online classes have presented multiple educational barriers, maybe because most have not yet adapted to the new normal. The challenge to be patient and resilient during the pandemic has been testing people's capability, students' learning extent, and teachers' extent of teaching. The practice of self-control from distraction, impulses, and urges will prepare the individual for future challenges in life, maybe from another health disaster (Iwai, 2020). Dropout rates increase as educational barriers increase. The worldwide use of technology as a form of education struggles students and teachers with only basic knowledge of technology use. School administrations and organizations are creating solutions to recuperate from the rising educational problems, helping teachers and learners to understand and adapt to the educational use of technology as part of the new normal, and having to evolve and support online education more effectively.

Nursing programs require 75% face-to-face education, but nursing schools have concluded that simulated methods are needed for their clinical coursework with the pandemic. An online petition was created seeking attention from the Board of Registered Nursing regarding simulated learning to lighten its restrictions. The freezing of clinical training progression has been stressful for most nursing students. Nursing students want to be a part of the health workforce, but due to global health precautions and public safety, they are not allowed to participate in the hospital setting. Innovative solutions are needed to make the simulation experience more effective and give students time to do clinical training during the pandemic. A new clinical placement plan to continue the nursing students' clinical training with academic credit is possible by assigning them as virtual assistants in healthcare facilities. This will help them address the national crisis while fulfilling their clinical-hours needs (Redden, 2020).

The importance of e-learning and its use in the workplace is critical to understand the barriers that hinder the successful adoption of such technologies (Becker, Newton, & Sawang, 2013). In the study by Dr. Becker et al. in 2013, the barriers to e-learning adoption and their relative impact on learners were identified and categorized. Many others have raised questions about effectiveness, access, and flexibility among the benefits of adopting e-learning and similar claims. Studies have identified

various success factors, typically issues relating to the individual and the technology. Three key barriers to e-learning emerged from the said research. The first factor relates to the nature of e-learning as a learning approach. This includes the lack of a “personal touch” compared to more traditional forms of learning and development. It also represents that e-learning doesn’t suit some learning styles and less interaction with other learners and facilitators.

These theories support the study; The first theory is the study of Alberta Bandura’s Self Efficacy Theory which focuses on the ability and belief of an individual’s potential to overcome every challenge in his life and personal achievements. The theory provides factors that may trigger an individual’s self-efficacy, including behaviors, environment, and cognitive factors. The Theory of Bandura is applied because students’ efficacy may be affected due to the new normal and its barriers to education that challenge them to comprehend and adjust to the new environment, which may result in low self-efficacy. In this study, the researchers will see how the students can grasp this new normal, shows their performance in education, and how they manage. The theory of Betty Neuman’s System Model also supports this study. The theory focuses on the person as a system and its response to stressors (Alligood, 2014). A stressor is defined as a threat to one’s well-being or status, specifically if the challenge of dealing with it exceeds a person’s perceived available resources. Currently, the new normal education is considered one of the stressors, and the students must respond positively to continue learning. Lastly, the theory of Callista Roy, named the Adaptation Model, also supports this study. Roy viewed that the concept of adaptation supposes that a person is an open system that answers to stimuli from both inside and outside of a person; environmental stimuli are categorized as focal, which define as the center or the main point of interest, setting, and residual stimuli (Roy, 2011). As new challenges occur, it is always important to face them positively to stay adapted. The pandemic causes a lot of burden to people, especially students. The sudden shift of the Philippine educational system from the old to the new system of modular and virtual classes entails many changes for the students. Plenty of stimuli can be seen that can cause either a positive or negative response from the students.

This study aimed to determine the barriers to new normal education among Nursing students starting from their demographic profile, which includes the Parent’s highest educational attainment and financial support.

The researchers aim for the respondents' level of educational barrier in the new normal regarding technological, Personal, and Socioeconomic barriers. In addition, the researchers will also determine the relationship between respondents' profile and their perceived level of educational barrier, specifically, the relationship between Sex and level of educational barrier, Age and level of educational barrier, Year level and level of educational barrier, Father's and Mother's highest educational attainment and level of educational barrier, Parents' monthly income and level of educational barrier, and Financial support and level of the educational barrier.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative-descriptive research design using researcher-made questionnaires to determine the specific educational barriers that nursing students encounter during the new normal. The tool was distributed online to two hundred (200) randomly selected nursing students of the University of Bohol enrolled in the 2nd semester of 2020-2021. The study excludes nursing students with irregular status. The sample size was computed based on a margin error of 4.86% at a 95% confidence interval.

The questionnaire has two parts. Part I contains the respondents' demographic profile, which includes sex, age, address, year level, father's highest educational attainment, mother's highest educational attainment, parents' monthly income, and financial support. Part II contains the respondent's educational barriers in terms of technological, personal, and socioeconomic. A Likert Scale was the rating used to measure the respondents' educational barriers in the new normal and obtain their perceptions, opinions, or attitudes toward their educational barriers in the new normal. The respondents were asked to rate the questions in the questionnaire using a Likert Scale ranging from 4,3,2,1. The tool was pilot-tested first to ten respondents and subjected to Cronbach's alpha test with a reliable result of 0.721 for technological, 0.773 for personal barriers, and 0.70 for socioeconomic barriers indicating an acceptable result.

Permit to conduct the study was secured and signed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the College of Nursing Dean, and the research subject adviser. After the signed approval, the researchers stated their identity, purpose, and instructions to the respondents using

Google forms sent to their email addresses. The researchers gathered the needed data and maintained privacy and confidentiality throughout the study, ensuring that the information acquired was only used for research purposes. The study underwent an ethics review, and the researchers practiced ethical considerations throughout the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results have shown that out of two hundred respondents, one hundred sixty-four (82%) were female, and thirty-six (18%) were male. Age revealed that one hundred five (52.5%) were between 20-24 years old. Most respondents lived in rural areas (73.5%), and only one-fourth (25.5%) resided in urban areas. The geographical location of the schools is significant in the learners' performance. A study by Laguador in 2021 showed that those living in rural areas have significantly higher problems, especially those related to the inadequate power supply and lesser people with technical capabilities than those students living in the city. Students living in the province have encountered significantly higher challenges with resources and communication, while students from suburban regions expressed significantly higher challenges regarding the environment. Meanwhile, moderate challenges in economic, instruction, and learning outcomes are being experienced regardless of their location.

Regarding the Parent's Educational Attainment, the data showed that most were college graduates (65.0% for Fathers and 62% for Mothers). Filipino families value the educational achievement of their children. The primary goal of Filipino parents is to send their children to school; conversely, children consider academic success as how they can meet their obligations and parental expectations. Interdependence in Filipino families is such that education-related decisions and behaviors reflect on family rather than individual welfare (Alampay & Garcia, 2019).

The data also indicates that fifty-two (52) or twenty-six percent (26.0%) had a monthly income of Php 31,000 or above, while twenty-two (22) or eleven percent (11.0%) have a monthly income of Php 16,000 - Php 20,000. The capacity of families to meet their most basic needs is an essential factor for economic stability and well-being (Allegretto, 2005). Children from low-income families and low-educated families usually face many educational barriers. A more stimulating environment offers more opportunities for children to learn (Sirin, 2005; Thomson, 2018). Parents

with adequate finances and good educational backgrounds can provide excellent psychological support for their children (Evans, Kelley, Sikora, & Treiman (2010).

Data have found that one hundred thirty-four (134) or sixty-seven percent (67.0%) currently relied on their parents for financial support. In comparison, four (4) or two percent (2.0%) were supported by scholarship grants and their significant others. According to Pestano (2020), students are more active when their parents financially support them, especially for educational purposes. Thus, parental financial support affects the students' motivation to learn. In contrast, households with lesser income would mean lesser educational materials, like textbooks, games, and interactive learning materials in the home. From the beginning, parents of higher socioeconomic levels can provide their children with financial support and home resources for individual learning (Sirin, 2005).

The data revealed that the respondents were moderately affected by some personal barriers. The data showed respondents were easily distracted during online classes and stressed out due to immediate changes in online schedules and instructions. Filipino children struggled in their study at home during the COVID-19 pandemic due to a lack of motivation and social media and gaming distractions. 'Digital distractions' make the students lose focus and eventually take them away from learning (Africa, Cortez, & Gamara, 2017).

Data also have shown that the respondents sometimes had difficulty understanding the instructions and materials provided by the clinical instructors. The sudden migration of educational platforms from traditional on-campus learning to online and modular learning has disadvantaged students remarkably. While some universities have succeeded in establishing online classes, most university's new educational platform has not been well-planned, adequately organized, and implemented (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020).

Regarding technological barriers, the study reveals that the respondents were moderately affected. They were moderately affected by the lagging of devices used in online classes and their unstable internet connectivity, which affected their academic performance. A study suggests that slow internet access hampers willingness to advance to comprehensive development and improve information society. The Philippines had a poor Internet speed of 2.8 Mbps, putting the country at 104 among 160 nations (Salac, Romeo & Kim, Yun, 2016). In addition to poor internet connectivity,

the struggle with lag devices and the difficulty navigating online materials have been barriers to attending classes. Research from Barrot, Llenares & del Rosario in 2021 shows that lack of preparation for the transition to online platforms, limited infrastructure, and poor Internet service would contribute to the foreseen challenges to online learning among students. This data highlights the need to provide serious attention to the mediating effects of mental health, restrictions in mobility, and preparedness in delivering online learning.

Data revealed that respondents were seldom affected in terms of socioeconomic barriers. A noisy background at home and their responsibilities moderately affected the respondents. These findings suggest that high home noise levels lead to higher annoyance rates and may hinder home learning affecting both young and adults. A long-term effect of in-home noise on adolescents affects task performance (Chere & Kirkham, 2021).

The data further shows that the respondents were seldom affected by working for an extra income. This is related to the fact that most of the respondents' parents had adequate monthly income to support their family's needs. According to a study by Bekova, Terentev, and Maloshonok, 2021, students from low-income backgrounds were more likely to have technological and self-regulation issues and a lack of expertise needed for successful remote learning.

Table 1. Level of Educational Barriers in the New Normal (N=200)

Category	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value	Interpretation	Rank
Personal Barriers	2.87	Sometimes	Moderately affected	1
Technological Barriers	2.72	Sometimes	Moderately affected	2
Socioeconomic Barriers	2.32	Rarely	Seldom affected	3
Overall Mean	2.59	Sometimes	Moderately affected	

Legend:

Scaling	Descriptor	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.74	Never	Not affected
1.75 – 2.49	Rarely	Seldom affected
2.50 – 3.24	Sometimes	Moderately affected
3.25 – 4.00	Always	Highly affected

The study revealed that the respondents were moderately affected by personal and technological barriers during the implementation of the new educational platform. They are less affected by socioeconomic barriers. A similar study states that students in the Philippines face personal, technological, institutional, societal, and household barriers as they adjust to the educational system, which uses online platforms. A holistic method is essential to address these educational barriers (Baticulon, Sy, Alberto, Baron, Mabulay, Rizada, & Reyes 2021).

Table 2. Relationship between Profile and Level of Educational Barriers (N=200)

Variable	Statistical Treatment	Statistical Result	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Sex and Level of Educational Barriers	Chi-Square Test Value	2.39	0.50	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	There is no significant relationship between respondent's sex and educational barriers
Age and Level of Educational Barriers	Spearman's rho	-.10	0.14	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	There is no significant relationship between respondent's Age and educational barriers
Year level and Level of Educational Barriers	Chi-Square Test Value	6.83	0.67	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	There is no significant relationship between the respondent's year level and educational barriers
Father's Highest Educational Attainment and Level of Educational Barriers	Chi-Square Test Value	18.08	0.41	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	There is no significant relationship between the respondent's father's educational attainment and educational barriers

Variable	Statistical Treatment	Statistical Result	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
Mother's Highest Educational Attainment and Level of Educational Barriers	Chi-Square Test Value	18.08	0.24	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	There is no significant relationship between the respondent's mother's educational attainment and educational barriers
Parents' Monthly Income and Level of Educational Barriers	Chi-Square Test Value	12.02	0.69	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	There is no significant relationship between the respondent's Parent's monthly income and educational barriers
Financial Support and Level of Educational Barriers	Chi-Square Test Value	10.83	0.53	Failed to reject the null hypothesis	There is no significant relationship between respondent's financial support and educational barriers

The gathered data were treated statistically and revealed a P-value higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This further means that the respondent's age, sex, year level, parent's educational status, monthly income, and financial support were not associated with the level of educational barriers of the respondents.

The result of this study is in contrast to the findings of Richardson & Woodley (2003), which revealed that despite these barriers, online women learners persevere more and are more engaged than men). Males tend to have a more positive outlook on online classes (Nistor, 2013). Females are more self-regulated than males, but males have better technical skills than females (Alghamdi, Karpinski, Lepp & Barkley, 2020).

A study by Alstete & Beutell (2004) revealed that Age and experience enhance performance in online courses as older students are more committed to completing online courses successfully. Despite all the challenges in e-learning, these students tend to complete and academically excel in their studies.

Furthermore, Khan, Iqbal, and Tasneem (2015) revealed a significant positive relationship between parents' education levels and students' academic achievements. Studies describe that parents' education plays a vital role in parental involvement, and most of this research has been done with secondary school students (Sui-chu & Williams 1996).

Contrary to the results, a study indicates that increases in parental education decrease the likelihood of children dropping out, even when controlling for financial resources and other family-level characteristics. Mothers' teaching appears to have distinct and additive effects on their children's educational persistence (Alcaraz, 2020). Regarding economic status, studies have shown that children from low-SES households have lower academic skills than those from higher-SES families (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, & Maczuga 2009). Poor households have less access to educational materials, contributing to a high literacy environment (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & García Coll, 2001). Children from economically deprived families have spent minimal time studying at home during the lockdown due to inadequate study spaces and inadequate digital educational materials.

Students' family support, including family socioeconomic status, parental support, parental expectations, family social and material resources, etc., affects the development of learning competencies and learning motivation (Elliot, Dweck, and Yeager, 2017; Ericsson, Hoffman, Kozbelt, Williams, Ericsson, Collins, 2018). This significantly denotes that financial support would affect the level of perceived educational barriers to online learning.

CONCLUSION

Almost all educational institutions face many challenges due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sudden shift in the teaching and learning modality added burden and pressure to the students. The College of Nursing students has perceived educational barriers. The respondents were moderately affected by personal and technological barriers, while they were seldom affected by socioeconomic barriers. The educational barriers correspond to Alberta Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, which revealed that implementing the new educational platforms affects the student's efficacy. These educational barriers challenge the student's academic performance, which may result in low self-efficacy. It also

corresponds to Betty Neuman's System Model and Sister Calista Roy's Adaptation Model. The new educational platform is considered one of the stressors the students are required to respond positively to continue learning. As new challenges occur, it is always vital for the students to face these challenging situations completely to stay adapted. The sudden shift of the Philippine educational system from the old to the new system of modular and virtual classes entails many changes for the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were crafted:

1. In coordination with the class advisers, the guidance office should plan activities to help the students identify the perceived educational barriers they have experienced and are experiencing.
2. This study has only identified the problem. It provides evidence that the respondents are affected by several educational barriers due to the new normal. Further research should be done to determine what specific factors influence the barriers they face.
3. The nursing students of the University of Bohol, the study's respondents, should find a room or, if not, a corner where they can minimize distractions during online classes.
4. The researchers of this study would also recommend that the respondents should avoid opening multiple assignments or materials at once to prevent the lagging of gadgets.
5. Further study should be conducted on a broader scope, including different types of personal barriers, anxiety levels, coping strategies employed, and the student's mental status.

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