Readiness to Online Learning of Teachers and Students in a Philippine State University during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT This study was conducted at ESSU main campus during the first semester of school year 2020-2021 following the sequential explanatory mixed method research design and quantitative research descriptive method to determine the readiness of 173 purposely selected students and 102 teachers, on the use of online learning during this time of COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed that the students are not ready with online learning and that teachers moderately agree on their preparedness for online learning. Moreover, the faculty reported that the university is conducting some activities to enhance their capacity in online learning. However, they believed that the university is not yet prepared to embrace online learning because of lack or insufficiency of required resources.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered and affected all sectors of society around the world. In the Philippines, after President Duterte signed Proclamation No. 922 on March 8, 2020 declaring the country under a state of public health emergency, the imposition of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) immediately followed until May 15, 2020 (Simbulan 2020). This ECQ instructed all residents to stay at home. This ECQ also resulted to closure of schools (Viner et al. 2020). According to UNESCO (2020), most countries around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce infections. This closure has affected more than 1.2 billion learners worldwide with more than 28 million learners in the Philippines. Because of this situation, higher education institutions (HEIs) have also had to adjust to the new situation where face-to-face interaction and mass gatherings are prohibited.

In higher education sector, HEIs were given academic freedom in the delivery of instruction to students. As quoted by Casal (2020), "We are promoting a strategy of flexible learning where those who are prepared to offer courses fully online can start immediately. While those that cannot offer fully online might provide offline modes of learning delivery like printed course packets, radio broadcast especially for those institutions with radio stations, and portable learning management systems," said J. Prospero E. De Vera III, chairman

of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). "We are giving flexibility to higher education institutions. CHED is fully supportive of ensuring that their faculty gets the necessary training." In another report, CHED (2020) emphasized that HEIs should implement alternative modes of delivery to students such as distance learning and e-learning or online learning. In fact, to aid online learning, CHED launched a web-based platform, PHL CHED Connect, that provides free learning materials for college students (Magsambol 2020).

But just what are this distance learning and e-learning that CHED has identified as alternative modes of delivering instruction to students? Stauffer (2020) stated that these teaching strategies are the same since both involve students working on computers or digital devices. On his part, Casiple (2020) described distance education as a method of teaching where the learner and the teacher are physically separated from each other and utilize instructional methodologies with the use of technology to help students gain the required skills and knowledge in their area of specialization. Welsh et al. (2003) referred e-learning as the use of computer network technology, principally through the internet, to provide information and instruction to individuals. Moore et al. (2011) shared that e-learning is also called online learning, web-based earning, or internet-based learning. Moreover, Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014) cited Almosa and Almubarak (2005) in describing the two types of online learning as "synchronous" or "asynchronous." Accordingly, the synchro-

nous type allows learners to discuss with the instructors and also among themselves via the internet at the same time with the use of tools such as the videoconference and chat rooms, thus, it offers the advantage of instantaneous feedback. On the other hand, the asynchronous type also allows learners to discuss with the instructors or teachers as well as among themselves over the internet but at different times.

In response to the academic freedom given to HEIs in the delivery of instruction to students, state universities have opted to implement their own policies regarding instruction. The Eastern Samar State University (ESSU) is no exception to this. It adopted the modular approach to teaching as a COVID-response mechanism to the prohibition of mass gatherings this school year 2020-2021. The university is however looking for other approaches for the delivery of its instruction service such as online learning where students can study using a combination of cutting-edge technological resources with no need to travel to attend lectures, exams or in-person discussion sessions. Hence, this alternative mode of learning could be said as an answer to prohibition of mass gatherings and an observance of the social distancing protocols required during this COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Crawford et al. (2020) reported that community lockdown and community quarantine of several countries as responses to COVID-19 pandemic have led students and teachers to study and work from home which led to the delivery of online learning platforms. But the implementation of online learning has posed varied problems and challenges to both students and teachers in HEIs (Bao 2020). Parents are certainly willing to support this alternative mode of learning because of the value education has in our lives. As Sharma (2016) puts it, "Education helps us to acquire new knowledge and skills that will impact our development in life." However, the economic situation nowadays of families where many of them have lost their livelihoods due to the pandemic may prohibit them from buying a laptop, computer or even a tablet or mobile phone for their children's use on online learning. Another is on securing an internet connection or in buying load for the mobile phone of their children. On one hand, the teachers may be confronted with problems on availability of technology or instructional facilities that they are going to use in

the delivery of instruction through online means or may be their capacity. So, an HEI that is planning for the adoption of online learning in response to COVID-19 pandemic should very well consider the readiness of its students and teachers. Such may be is the case of ESSU. Therefore, it is on this premise that this study was conducted to know what would be up against this plan of delivering classes online in this university.

Objectives

This study determined the readiness of ESSU including their students and teachers on the use of online learning during this time of COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the study had three objectives:
1. To describe students' readiness to online learning
2. To determine the preparedness of teachers and the university to adopt online learning
3. To identify and describe practices and challenges in the university to online learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the sequential explanatory mixed method research design. According to the Research Rundowns (2009), the sequential explanatory mixed research method is "characterized by a collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by a collection and analysis of qualitative data."

The respondents in this study came from the 6,959 enrolled undergraduate students and 261 assigned faculty during the first semester of school year 2020-2021. In deciding for the number of participants in this study, the researcher considered the suggestion of Gay (1976: 81) that the "minimum acceptable sample sizes should depend upon the type of research, that is, descriptive research 10 percent of the population; correlational research - 30 subjects; causal-comparative research - 15 subjects per group and experimental research - 15 subjects per group." A purposive sample size of 172 for the students' group and a random sample of 103 from the teachers' group was able to participate in the study. The sample size of the students is way below the suggested sample size of 10 percent by Gay as mentioned above; however, this sample size is in accord with the guidelines suggested by Fraenkel and Wallen (1993: 92) about

the minimum number of respondents needed "for descriptive studies which is a sample of 100."

Two sets of questionnaires were developed by the researcher for this study, one for the students and another one for the faculty. The students' questionnaire to assess their readiness to online learning has 8 items, five of which were answerable by Yes or No, while the three other items asked for answers to explain a No answer. For the faculty, the prepared questionnaire has two sections. Section A asked on the preparedness of teachers and the university along ten items of agree/disagree questions which has answer options on a five-point scale, that is, 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for moderately disagree, 3 for neither agree nor disagree, 4 for moderately agree, and 5 for strongly agree. Section B asked of their response to open-ended questions on specific practices and challenges for the conduct of online learning in the university. These questionnaires were subjected to dry run to determine the comprehensibility of the items among five students and five faculty, then these were self-administered by the researcher directly or personally to the faculty. Whereas both the direct method and the use of messenger and email were done in gathering data from the students because of the suspended face-to-face classes at the time of the study.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequency in the case of the student's responses to selected Yes- No items and responses to open-ended questions soliciting their source of or access to computer and internet as well as the person who can provide them assistance on their online learning endeavor. Whereas the average score (mean) for the responses of faculty on their degree of agreement/disagreement to the ten items on preparedness of teachers and the university to online learning as contained in Section A of the questionnaire was used to describe these responses. The overall mean for the ten items was also computed. The resulting mean was interpreted using the following guide.

Mean	Scale	Interpretation
4.6 – 5.0	5	Strongly Agree
3.6 – 4.5	4	Moderately Agree
2.6 – 3.5	3	Neither Agree nor Disagree/Uncertain
1.6 – 2.5	2	Moderately Disagree
1.0 – 1.5	1	Strongly Disagree

For the faculty response to the open-ended questions, their thematic aspects were determined by adopting the selective or highlighting approach of Thomas (2003). Key words found in the responses were sorted and categorized based on similarities in context and multiple occurrences. The codes recurring most frequently were chosen to assist in identifying the major themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Readiness to Online Learning

It is revealed by the data in Table 1 that there are barriers to students' learning online in their respective homes. More students reported that they do not have a quiet place to study in their homes and do not have a computer and a link to the internet which they can use for online learning in their homes, but the students can access these resources in their places of residence mostly in computer shops and internet cafés (Table 2). In addition, majority of the students responded they could use their own cellphone mobile, phone, android phone, smart phone, or tablet to access a link to the internet. However, they only have the problem of the load for this device; two students also said they even must travel to the city or town to access a computer or internet café. Other students stated they can access computer and can connect to the internet in the houses of their relatives, friends, or classmates. A significant response indicates the efforts of a local government unit (LGU), where one student said he can access the computer at their barangay hall (Table 2). This is a relatively good service for other LGUs to follow. There are also those who said they can access the internet in a public WIFI and the pesonet. This pesonet is like a commercial stand where the clients can pay in pesos in exchange for the use of a certain time for internet access.

Certainly, how the students can access the use of computer and internet for those who do not have these resources at home that are required for online learning will have implication on the economic condition of the families of these students. These students will be charged for the use of these resources, will spend for their travel to the city or town where computer shops or internet cafe are available, and will also spend for the prepaid mobile data for internet connection.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of students' responses to questions on their home conditions and capacity to adopt online learning

Questions		Frequency of response (N=172)	
		Yes	No
1.	Do you have a quiet place to study in your home?	109	63
2.	Do you have a computer that you can use for schoolwork?	83	89
3.	Is the computer available in your home?	72	100
4.	Do you have access to a link to the internet in your home?	107	65
5.	Could you be able to navigate the world of online learning on your own?	82	90

Table 2: Frequency distribution of students' responses on source of access to computer and internet

Identified source of access	Frequency of mention*
Question: If you do not have computer at home, from where can you access it?	
Cellphone, mobile phone, android phone, smart phone, tablet	71
Computer shop, internet café	26
Friend's house	3
Barangay hall	1
Brother's house	1
Question: If you do not have access to a link to the internet in your home, from where can you access it	?
Internet cafe/computer shop	30
Cellphone	32
Friend's/classmates'/relative's house	13
Public WIFI/pesonet	9

*Multiple response

As could be noted in Table 1, there were more students who answered "No" compared to those who answered "Yes" to the question "Could you be able to navigate the world of online learning on your own?" For those who answered "No," their parents and teachers were top on their multiple responses, followed by their friends and classmates (Table 3).

Table 3: Frequency distribution of students' responses on who could provide them help or assistance on online learning

Identified help/Assistance	Frequency of mention*
Question: If you cannot navigate yet the world of online learning on your own, who do you think can help you in this endeavor?	
Teacher	36
Family members	39
Relatives	4
Guardians	3
Classmates	20
Friends	35

*Multiple response

The foregoing findings show that there are conditions at home that pose challenge to students' readiness for online learning as reported by the 172 students who participated in this study. Not everybody has a quiet place for study at home; only about 40 percent have. Not all have access to computer and internet at home; only one half of these students have computer at home, and about 40 percent of them have access to internet at home. Lastly, not all have the capacity yet to adopt online learning. All these can be considered as barriers to online learning, but the students have given initial solutions to these in terms of where they can access these resources and from whom they could ask for help or assistance for this mode of learning as a response to the crisis in education brought about by COVID-19 pandemic. These findings mean that most of the students in this study are not prepared yet for online learning, which is consistent with what Alipio (2020) has found out in his study. Alipio's study was aimed to find out if Filipino college students were ready for e-learning and their e-learning readiness was assessed using a 27-item questionnaire prepared in a dichotomous scale (yes/ no). Most of the student-respondents in Alipio's

study answered 'No' in all the e-learning readiness items, which suggest that majority were not yet prepared for e-learning.

Before any online program can hope to succeed, it must have the students who are able to access the online learning environment, and students' lack of access whether it be for economic or logistics reasons, will exclude students from the program. To possibly ensure every student has access to online learning, even the learners in rural areas or vulnerable households who may lack internet connectivity or devices, this study suggests that teachers provide feedback and support in a variety of ways to the students, for example, through text messages, email, and messages on social media platforms since majority of the students reported they have their cell/mobile phones. In fact, such practices are presently encouraged in the modular approach of instruction that the university is now embracing.

Preparedness of Teachers and the University on Online Learning

As shown in Table 4, the faculty responses in terms of their degree of agreement/disagreement to ten items about their preparedness and that of the university for online learning yielded an over-all mean score of 3.3 that is interpreted as *Uncertain*. This *Uncertain* response means that these faculty respondents believe that the teachers and the university are still neither prepared nor not prepared to adopt online learning as an alternative mode of delivering instruction to the students. It could be noted from Table 4 that the *Uncertain* responses of the faculty were found on eight out of the ten items, which were mostly on availability and adequacy of resources in the university to be used for this online learning as well as the technical staff to assist in this online learning. This probably is the case because these faculty have no idea or information about these conditions. However, their responses are confirmed by the data or report supplied by the Director of the ICT Center of the university. Presently, the university has 122 computers and the university have an internet bandwidth of 4MBPS. This reported number of computers only means that there is one computer available in the university for use by two faculty members, considering the 261 existing faculty strength during this study but there is no mention of how these computers are sufficiently powerful in terms of computing capacity. Likewise, the Director of the ICT Center of the university commented that the existing internet bandwidth of 4MBPS in the university should be stepped up to

Table 4: Preparedness of teachers and university for online learning

Items	Response	
	Average	*Interpretation*[A]
1. The university is well equipped for online learning.	3.4	U
2. There are available computers for faculty to engage in online instruction.	3.3	U
3. The digital devices at the university are sufficiently powerful in terms of computing capacity.	3.2	U
4. The university's Internet bandwidth or speed is sufficient for use in online instruction.	3.0	U
5. Teachers have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in online instruction.	3.7	MA
6. Teachers have sufficient time to prepare lessons integrating digital devices for online instruction.	3.7	MA
7. Effective professional resources are available for teachers to learn how to use digital devices.	3.5	U
8. Teachers are provided with incentives to integrate digital devices in online instruction.	2.8	U
9. An effective online learning support platform is available in the university.	3.2	U
10. The university has sufficient qualified technical assistant staff for online instruction.	3.2	U
Overall Mean	**3.3**	**U**

[A]*SA = Strongly Agree, MA = Moderately Agree, U = Neither Agree nor Disagree/Uncertain, MD = Moderately Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree*

100MBPS so it can serve a fast and reliable internet connection for use on online learning. For the technical staff, ICTC currently has only five personnel. Compared to the number of faculty, this number is inadequate to aid faculty during online classes should technical problem arises.

The two other items were rated *Moderately Agree* by the teachers that has something to do with their conditions, that may be taken to mean that these teachers believe they are somewhat prepared for the adoption of online learning. These items are "Teachers have the necessary technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in online instruction" and "Teachers have sufficient time to prepare lessons integrating digital devices for online instruction."

Specific Practices Adopted by the University Relative to Online Learning

The third objective of this study is to identify and describe practices relative to online learning conducted by the university as reported by the faculty respondents.

Current Practices Conducted Related to Learning Using Digital Devices

As revealed by the data in Table 5, the most frequent response was given equally by more than half the faculty for two practices related to online learning. These are: 1) the regular discussions between the dean and teachers about the use of digital devices for pedagogical purposes and 2) having a scheduled time for teachers to meet to share, evaluate or develop instructional materials and approaches that use digital devices. In decreasing order of frequency, there are also the practices of preparing students for responsible internet behavior through a specific program, about the use of digital devices for online learning that follow formal guidelines, and a program to pro-

mote collaboration among teachers on the use of digital devices. These findings indicate that there are specific practices (regularly scheduled meetings) and formal guidelines and programs that are presently practiced by the university in preparation for online learning.

Two implications, however, can be derived from those faculty who have not identified or confirmed the conduct of the practices presented in Table 5. One is that there may be an issue on the wide dissemination of these activities or program. And since the online instructors play a vital role in developing and maintaining an effective online learning environment, they must possess a unique set of tools to perform successfully in embracing online learning. Thus, if there are activities or program that are already in place or shall be developed in the future towards the successful implementation of online learning, every faculty should be given the opportunity to be acquainted or oriented about the program or better still be required for the compulsory attendance to such activities. Second, is on the attitude of faculty in attending to such activities or in embracing online learning. For example, administrators and/or faculty members who are uncomfortable with change and working with technology, or feel that online programs cannot offer quality education, often inhibit the process of implementation and these people can inhibit its success.

The thematic aspects of the faculty responses to the open-ended questions on actions undertaken by the university to support online learning and implementation challenges to the adoption of online learning are presented next.

Actions Undertaken by the University to Support Students for Online Learning

Table 6 displays the number of recurring words or phrases which support the identification of two themes of the faculty responses on actions un-

Table 5: Current practices conducted to improve learning using digital devices

Practice	Frequency of response (N=103)
1. Regular discussions between the dean and teachers about the use of digital devices for pedagogical purposes	56
2. Have formal guidelines about the use of digital devices for online learning	42
3. Have a specific program to prepare students for responsible Internet behavior	44
4. Have a specific program to promote collaboration among teachers on the use of digital devices	33
5. Have a scheduled time for teachers to meet to share, evaluate or develop instructional materials and approaches that use digital devices	56

Table 6: Themes, frequency of codes in data points, and meaning of actions undertaken by the university to support students for online learning

Theme	Frequency or occurrences in data points	Meaning
Use of new teaching and learning method	61	Adoption of the flexible/blended approach of instruction and teachers' use of social media in monitoring students' learning and in addressing their academic needs
Administration support	55	Development of ARADMAN, the university's Learning Management System and the professional development of faculty for online learning

dertaken by the university to support students for online learning, the use of new teaching and learning method and administration support.

On the first theme, the great majority of the faculty answered in terms of adoption of the distant and flexible method of learning stating further that they were given option to choose the mode of learning. As reported by Magsambol (2020), there are three modes of flexible learning, namely, online, offline, and blended, which he further differentiated as follows: An Online flexible learning mode is electronic-based and uses available online classrooms for the delivery of instruction as well as learning materials in digital format such as webcast, podcast, videos, audio, and other open educational resources or OERs. The Offline flexible learning mode that does not use internet connectivity at all and learning is done through printed modules or uses digital forms such as video and audio placed in storage devices. The third type of flexible learning, the Blended type of flexible learning, is a combination of online and offline modes where online technology is used for delivering lessons, while other classroom activities are done offline using printed modules, video tapes, storage devices, and learning packets. As practiced in the university under study, through the implementation of this distant and flexible means of learning, the students are not required to physically report to their classes. The faculty prepared learning materials or modules that were distributed to the students in their respective towns. If there were problems experienced by the students, the faculty were required to communicate with their faculty or college with such means as text, call, email and online messaging. Hence, based on Magsambol's description, the university is adopting the blended mode of flexible learning. So, in a way, the university is already practicing partly online learning.

The faculty also mentioned that the university partnered with the local government units in the distribution of the learning materials or modules and in setting up drop boxes in town halls where students who do not have access to smartphones can drop off their answers to exams found in the modules. To use the words of Simbulan (2020), this is a demonstration of the *bayanihan* spirit or collective community mobilization which is very typical of Filipino culture in times of crisis and emergency. It may be recalled here that there is a student in this study who reported that he has access to computer in their barangay, another proof of sharing of resources by the LGU.

The faculty stated that they were also encouraged not to limit the provision of educational service to their students with the available resources in their colleges or in the university, and even were allowed to use social media using their own digital resources and the messenger platform in teaching online that consumes a minimum mobile data/load favorable to students as well as in reaching out to the students to address their academic needs. In this regard, series of virtual orientations (students' onboarding) were conducted before the regular classes started. As reported also by some faculty, their class or students created Facebook or Chat groups that supports each of their classmates as they overcome obstacles in learning together as a group.

For the second theme, on administration support, majority of the faculty reported this in terms of their professional development on the proper use of digital devices for online learning and the support they got in their attendance to webinars on online learning. However, one drawback reported here was that not all were given the same opportunity for this professional development ac-

tivity. This professional development of faculty is very important especially that the online learning is a new teaching-learning modality. This finds support in the words of Toquero (2020), "teacher training to online instruction, blended learning and distance learning is also recommended to adjust to the new instructional format."

Another reported action by the faculty on administration support to students for online earning was the development of ARADMAN. This ARADMAN is the university's Learning Management System developed by faculty members of the College of Computer Studies, but its full implementation is not yet in place. Hence, immediate attention and administration support to make this online learning platform of the university fully operational for online learning or even with the blended learning approach that the university currently adopts.

Actions Undertaken by the University to Support its Faculty for Online Learning

Three themes emerged from the faculty responses to actions undertaken by the university to support its faculty for online learning. Based on frequency of occurrence of these themes in the data points (or faculty responses) as presented in Table 7, these are new administration policies, provision of resources for online learning, and professional development of faculty.

These new administration policies are the new scheme of reporting to work as reported by 27 faculty and the policy on flexible learning as reported by 18 faculty. This new scheme of reporting to work is the AWA or Alternative Work Arrangement where faculty were the given the option to select two days for work from home and three days on-campus work. In this new scheme of reporting

to work, the faculty at the same time was given the chance to select schedule to carry out the flexible/ blended learning approach that best fit their AWA.

On the action of providing resources for online learning, most of the faculty reported the internet connection provided for each college, followed next by the "promised" load allowance to faculty members, and the provision of computers in faculty rooms of colleges for the use of faculty without the personal laptop.

On the third theme of professional development of faculty, three categories of responses were determined from the identified actions. Ten faculty identified participation in different webinars pertaining to modular and online distance learning, in developing learning modules, and in monitoring progress of students' learning through distance learning. Three faculty each reported their attendance to the following faculty capability building: the FLMS or the flexible learning management system training hosted by the organization of state universities and colleges of Eastern Visayas Region (EV-SUCs), the use of ARADMAN as the online learning platform of the university, and to workshop/seminar on technical and pedagogical digital instruction and the use of other online platform.

Implementation Challenges/Problems in the University Relative to the Adoption of Online Learning

There were three underlying themes revealed from the faculty responses about the implementation challenges or problems experienced by the University for the Adoption of online learning. These were internet connectivity, capacity of users, and availability of resources in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence (Table 8). The in-

Table 7: Themes, frequency of codes in data points, and meaning of actions undertaken by the university to support its faculty for online learning

Theme	Frequency or occurrences in data points	Meaning
New administrative policies	45	Policies on flexible work schedule and adoption of flexible learning
Provision of resources for online learning	37	Internet connection for each college, and the provision of computers and internet load for teachers
Professional development of faculty	19	Attendance to the FLMS training of the EV-SUCs, the ARADMAN, and webinars on online teaching

Table 8: Themes, frequency of codes in data points, and meaning of implementation challenges/problems of the university to adoption of online learning

Theme	Frequency or occurrences in data points	Meaning
Internet connectivity	43	Unstable internet source/supply in the area and no or limited access of students to internet
Capacity of users	40	Faculty not well exposed on the use of ICT facilities, and the different online platform, and not yet capacitated to use the ARADMAN, while change in teaching process using online method will challenge students' learning
Lack of resources	23	Low internet bandwidth in the university, inadequate resources for digital teaching and learning, and lack of IT personnel/support staff

ternet connectivity has something to do with the poor/unstable internet source or supply in the area for both the faculty and students' use as reported by the highest number of respondents and by one faculty as "digital divide." Twelve faculty mentioned the no or limited access of students to the internet. The limited access refers to students' means of accessing the internet through the use of prepaid mobile data for their phones, while the no access of students to the source or supply of internet is the absence of a digital device such as mobile phone that the students can use to access the internet. This internet connectivity conditions as reported by the faculty involved in this study will greatly challenge the university's attempt to adopt online learning as an alternative mode of delivering instruction to students because as confirmed by Fry (2001), technology-based e-learning encompasses the use of the internet and other important technologies to produce materials for learning, teach learners, and also regulate courses in an organization. Also this is observed by Garcia (2017) stating that, "Since the Philippines has the slowest internet speed in the world, Internet Connectivity Experience (ICE) will clearly play an important role in the e-learning technology adoption of Filipino college students and maybe to other settings with a slow internet connection. Garcia defined ICE as the performance of the internet connection in terms of its speed and reliability that affects user's experience. All these challenges are also found out by Daroedono et al. (2020) that power interruptions, weak infrastructure, and internet costs restricted the students' access to online content in developing countries.

The second challenge was on capacity of users, both the faculty and the students. Most faculty in this study responded that not all faculty were able to attend the training on the use of ARADMAN. This ARADMAN is the official Learning Management System of the university developed by the College of Computer Studies. One related problem experienced during the training was again on the unstable supply of internet as reported by two faculty. There were also some faculty who reported that faculty are not well exposed on using ICT facilities and the lack of training on the use of different online platforms among faculty members. This finding moreover corroborates an earlier reported finding on this study about the preparedness of faculty to onion learning. Hence, this study believes that if the faculty are not properly trained in online delivery and methodologies, then success of the online program will be compromised. As observed by Loeb (2020), "in most online courses, the teacher helps to run virtual discussion among the students, assigns homework, and follows up with individual students. Sometimes these courses are synchronous (teachers and students all meet at the same time) and sometimes they are asynchronous (non-concurrent). In both cases, the teacher is supposed to provide opportunities for students to engage thoughtfully with subject matter, and students are required to interact with each other virtually." As teachers are central to the success of the program, then investing in their professional development is therefore a necessity to meet their needs in the context of online learning.

Seven faculty believed the change in mode of teaching process from the modular approach that

the university is currently adopting to the full on-line mode of learning will challenge students' capability and experiences for learning as this may pose some hassle or difficulty on their part as well as on the part of the faculty. The former situation is similarly found out by Daniels et al. (2019) in their study on students' perception of e-learning where the students in their study claimed they lack knowledge on how to operate the e-learning environment. On the one hand, as reported by the students themselves in the present study, not all has the capacity yet to navigate online learning aside from their lack of access to computer and internet for use at home for the online courses. This capacity of students in the present study finds relevance in the findings of the study conducted by Garcia (2017) who investigated the behavioral intention to use e-learning technology of Filipino college students using predictor variables, one of which was the perceived ease of use defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort. This predictor variable was found to play a critical role in the Filipino college students' acceptance towards e-learning technology, together with internet connectivity experience as mentioned earlier.

The third theme is the lack of resources. To the faculty, this was observed in terms of low internet bandwidth in the university, inadequate resources for digital teaching and learning, and lack of IT personnel/support staff. Currently, the university is wired to the internet, but its current strength of 4MBPS cannot supply the needs required for the conduct of online classes. This finding on lack of resources is really an implementation challenge for online learning. In the advisory of CHED (2020), it suggested to strengthen online platforms and that for blended learning such as but not limited to google classroom, messenger, zoom, edmodo, Facebook and YouTube emphasizing that, in the higher education institutions, new normal would be virtual classrooms. Similarly, this lack of resources was found in the study of Baticulon et al. (2020) as technological barriers to online learning of medical students in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic. These technological barriers in the study of Baticulon and colleagues included lack of devices or limited access due to gadget sharing; unreliable, slow, or no internet access; lack of technical skills; and issues with the online learning platform.

Given the challenges identified above by the faculty in this study and if the university should push for the adoption of online learning, the university should very well consider these implementation challenges for its successful adoption.

All in all, the findings of the present study are consistent with the results of two prior research. It was found out in the study of Chua et al. (2020) regarding the status of the implementation of the e-learning classroom in selected higher education institutions in Region IV-A that "although all the E-learning platforms used by the respondents are free of charge, still, students have encountered problems like lack of resources, difficulty of Wi-Fi connection, and lack of training among the students and faculty members." In the study by Baticulon et al. (2020), the medical students who participated in their study doubted the readiness of their schools to transition to online learning citing the lack of guidelines and unfair policies as among other identified barriers.

CONCLUSION

Sustaining the provision of inclusive quality education is a primordial concern of the education sector. This has propelled academic institutions to adopt alternative flexible delivery of instructions like online learning this time of COVID-9 pandemic. This study determined the readiness of Eastern Samar State University, including its students and faculty, on the use of online learning during this time of pandemic. The results of the study revealed that the students, faculty, and the university are not yet ready or well prepared for online learning. Majority of the students do not have the necessary resources for this mode of instruction as well as the capacity to navigate the world of online learning on their own. The university has already developed an online learning platform or learning management system (the ARADMAN) that could be used for online learning, but there are still issues on its functionality and some faculty were not able to attend the training on its use. There are already efforts to capacitate and support teachers' professional development through webinars to enhance their technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices in online instruction and the use of online platforms, but not all faculty members were given the opportunity to attend these capability building activities. This capacity of us-

ers (faculty and so with the students), together with internet connectivity and inadequate resources (limited computers, low internet bandwidth, and lack of IT personnel or support staff) are big challenges revealed in this study for the university to attend to before the implementation of online learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is expected that the results of this study would serve as a guide or input in planning activities should the university wants to embrace or adopt online learning or e-learning soon. Evidently, the results of the study as highlighted in the conclusions drawn above should need thorough and deliberate discussions during strategic planning sessions, particularly on making the ARAD-MAN operational, on how the IT infrastructure and IT personnel of the university can be enhanced, in designing a capability program catering to faculty and students' assessed needs on digital and computing skills as well as responsible internet behavior. Other intended support program to faculty such as reliable WIFI/internet connection to the colleges and the provision of internet load for faculty using their personal laptops and computers for online learning should be discussed. Alongside with these, relevant quality management or QM mechanisms (written statements, programs, or policies) should be developed that are directed towards achieving an equitable and inclusive quality education via online learning, including the monitoring and evaluation schemes to measure the effectiveness of such QM mechanisms.

LIMITATIONS

The study was only limited to the readiness of both the teachers and students in Eastern Samar State University-Main Campus. Hence, it does not capture the entirety of the university system, considering that there are still five (5) other external campuses that are currently implementing new teaching modality owing to the demands of the current time. Therefore, this study may be replicated using more respondents or including other campuses of the university to validate its findings. Or an in-depth study may be conducted using a structured interview as a supplement to the questionnaire used in data collection to substantiate information offered by the results of the present study.

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