A new decade for social changes

Preparedness and challenges of the new normal: perspectives of Filipino students in virtual learning

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Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic greatly affected the education sector in the Philippines. From the traditional face to face classroom teaching-learning, schools shifted to flexible learning and virtual classrooms; where learners and educators need to hurdle numerous difficulties such as resources, curriculum revisions and problems in internet connectivity. This is a major concern because the Philippines ranked 77 among the countries with the slowest and least stable Internet connection in the world. This collaborative research among different colleges and universities

in the Philippines explored the prevailing concerns of virtual classroom learning to come up with a program that benefits learners and educators in the country. Utilizing descriptive-correlational design, an online survey using Google Form was conducted in the respondent schools after the implementation of virtual learning. A total of 2,444 students from different levels, private and government schools with varying age and sex participated through snowballing data gathering technique. Results revealed that the respondents' considered themselves physically prepared; but they are not psychological-emotionally and financially prepared in their virtual classroom learning. The students experienced challenges in terms of teacher, curriculum and resources factors. The students perceived that most teachers are unaware that learners differ in terms of capabilities in online learning; thus, they prefer a student-friendly curriculum; and they suggested that the capability of students to have appropriate gadgets and internet connectivity should be looked into by the educators. Significant differences were established between the profile characteristics and preparedness and challenges experienced by the students in their virtual classroom learning. Furthermore, the preparedness and challenges experienced in virtual learning of the respondents are significantly correlated. A proposed program that benefits the students and educators was designed as an output of this research which is recommended for implementation in government and private schools in the Philippines.

Keywords. Challenges, Education, Philippines, Preparedness, Students, Virtual Learning

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic brought enormous effect to all aspects of human life. People were required to maintain social distancing. Malls, churches, and other recreation facilities were closed. Family members are refrained from having the traditional burial of a family member, especially if the cause is Covid-19. Workers lost their jobs, and only those considered are frontliners were allowed to go to work. Students and seniors were advised to stay at home at all times. Hence, one of the most affected sectors is education.

In the Philippines, schools shifted from the traditional face to face classroom teaching-learning to flexible learning and virtual learning. This is a reality that students and teachers need to hurdle. Hence, virtual teaching-learning requires internet connectivity, which everyone is aware that it is not efficient in the Philippines. As a matter of fact, the Philippines placed at ranked 77 among the countries with the slowest and least stable Internet connection in the world (esquiremag.ph, 2020). There are other factors that greatly affect the effective implementation of virtual learning. Such factors include their preparedness, physically, psychologically, emotionally and financially. Given the fact that learners in the Philippines might not that prepared in virtual learning, there are consequences such as the various challenges that they might experience while in virtual classroom learning.

Several studies around the world have been conducted to assess the readiness of students for online classes. In Nepal, Neupane, Sharma, and Joshi (2020), surveyed seven-hundred four students enrolled in Bachelor degree programs at Chitwan Medical College. A descriptive cross-sectional web-based survey was used in the research which revealed that eighty-seven percent of students were ready for online classes during COVID pandemic and eighty-eight percent utilized internet facility at home. The study also established that online class readiness was significantly higher among female than male students; and the same is true in terms of online readiness of students with internet accessibility at home than those who did not have it; but there was no significant association between readiness for online classes according to their academic programs and years. Therefore they recommended that online learning can be considered as a viable alternative method in the academic institutions for the students in Nepal.

In the Philippines, the barriers of online learning due to COVID-19 pandemic were surveyed by Baticulon, et. al (2020). A total of 3,670 medical students from 54 schools in the

Philippines participated and it was found out that students, regardless of geographic location or demographic subgroup, have encountered several barriers as they adapt to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gender, age, year level, annual income, academic standing, internet access, and the number of hours previously spent on online learning affected the medical students' perception of their capacity to learn online. The barriers they identified were: technological, individual, domestic, institutional, and community barriers. Dhawan (2020) study on online learning as a solution during the COVID-19 emphasized the importance of online learning using strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) analysis. The research expounded the growth of EdTech during the time of pandemic and natural disasters; hence suggestions for the academic institutions on how to deal with challenges associated with online learning were provided in the study.

The relationship between students' characteristics and online learning readiness was established by Joosten and Cusatis, 2020. They have proven that online learning readiness mediates the relationships between academic resilience and online learning satisfaction; on the other hand, higher academic resilience increased online learning readiness, then enhance the student's online learning satisfaction (Kumalasari and Akmal, 2020); while the biggest challenge in online learning for college students in Malaysia is internet connectivity and for students enrolled in diploma course, their difficulty was in understanding the content of the subject (Chung, Subramaniam, and Dass, 2020).

The influence of e-learning to the learning readiness and learning interests of students in Surabaya was explored by Sari and Trisnawati (2021). The results revealed that significant relationship exist between e-learning and student learning motivation; as well as e-learning and student learning interests; and significant relationship between learning readiness and student learning motivation was established. The learning readiness of the students is also correlated to student learning interests; on the same manner learning motivation is associated to the students' learning interests; and e-learning and the interest in learning through student learning motivation; and finally learning readiness is correlated to the learning interests through student learning motivation. The students' online learning attitudes are positively correlated to students' online learning readiness (Hergüner, Son, Son, and Dönmez, 2020). Thus, it is necessary to provide the learner with a decent online learning environment, by creating a positive online learning attitude; hence this measures the online learning readiness of the learners.

On the part of the educators in the New Normal, Vitales, Ferrer and Mangahas (2020) established that age, sex, type of school and level of students taught are significant factors in the teachers' and students' teaching-learning process. Barriers to online learning was also identified to include very slow and/or unreliable and unstable internet connection; faculty room that lacks privacy during simultaneous online class; lack of licensed/registered Learning Management System (LMS) for online class; and lack of computers with internet connection. They further explained that educators are physically ready for the New Normal of teaching; but not emotionally ready; hence they preferred classroom teaching than virtual teaching. For them to become prepared in the New Normal of teaching adjustments in terms of students, curriculum, teaching strategies and use of technology is a must.

Similar to the goals of the previous researches conducted, this study examined various factors of virtual learning specifically the preparedness and challenges of learners. With the objective of coming up with a proposed plan or program that benefits the learners and educators in the Philippines.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are the following:

1. To describe the preparedness in virtual learning of the respondents in terms:
   a. Physical,
   b. Psychological-emotional, and
   c. Financial.
2. To describe the challenges experienced by the respondents in virtual learning in terms of:
   a. Teacher factors,
   b. School factors,
   c. Curriculum factors, and
   d. Resources.
3. To establish significant differences in the preparedness of the respondents when group according to their profile characteristics.
4. To establish significant differences in the challenges experienced by the respondents in virtual learning when grouped according to their profile characteristics.
5. To establish the significant relationship between the virtual learning preparedness and challenges experienced by the respondents.
6. To come up with a proposed program to help the learners and educators cope with the new normal of learning.

Methodology

This is a collaborative descriptive-corelational research that made use of online survey using Google form. Six researchers from five different schools in the Philippines, private and government worked together to accomplish this research. Items of the survey questionnaire were conceptualized through unstructured interview with several students who are into virtual learning during pandemic. The survey questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part 1 asked about the demographic characteristics of the students. Part 2 consisted of Likert-type item questions regarding the preparedness of the students for virtual learning. This part is divided into Physical, Psychological-Emotional and Financial Preparedness. And Part 3 of the questionnaire is consisted of another Likert-type item questions regarding the challenges experienced by the respondents. The challenges are categorized into Teacher, School, Curriculum and Resources.

A total of 2,444 students from different levels and different colleges and universities in the Philippines voluntarily participated in the research. Snowballing data gathering technique was employed through the participation of some of the researchers' students. Students' cooperation was sought by informing them to forward the survey link to other students whom they knew. Data gathering was conducted one semester after the implementation of virtual learning, which is from August to December, 2020. The data gathering started in January 2021 to February 2021.

After a period of one month, the online survey was closed. The data gathered was subjected to specific statistical treatment such as frequency and percentages, measures of central tendency, Pearson r and Analysis of Variance through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software.

Results and discussion
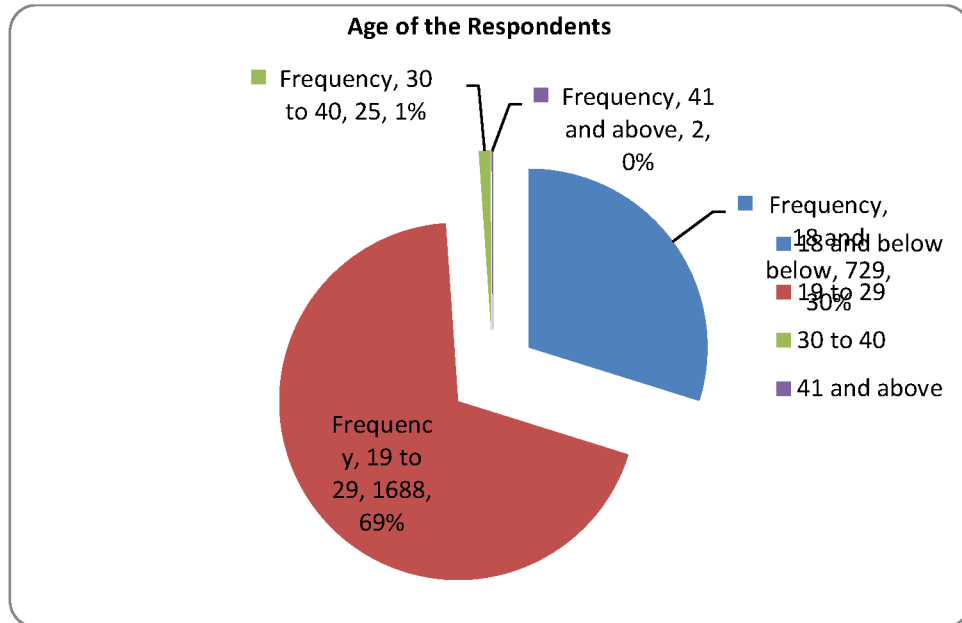
Age. The population of the respondents was dominated by 69 percent of the respondents who are in the 19 to 29 age bracket. The oldest respondent is 58 years old, while the youngest is 17 years old. The mean of the student-respondents' age is 20. This result coincide with the findings that majority of the respondents are first year college students, whose average age is usually at 19 years old.
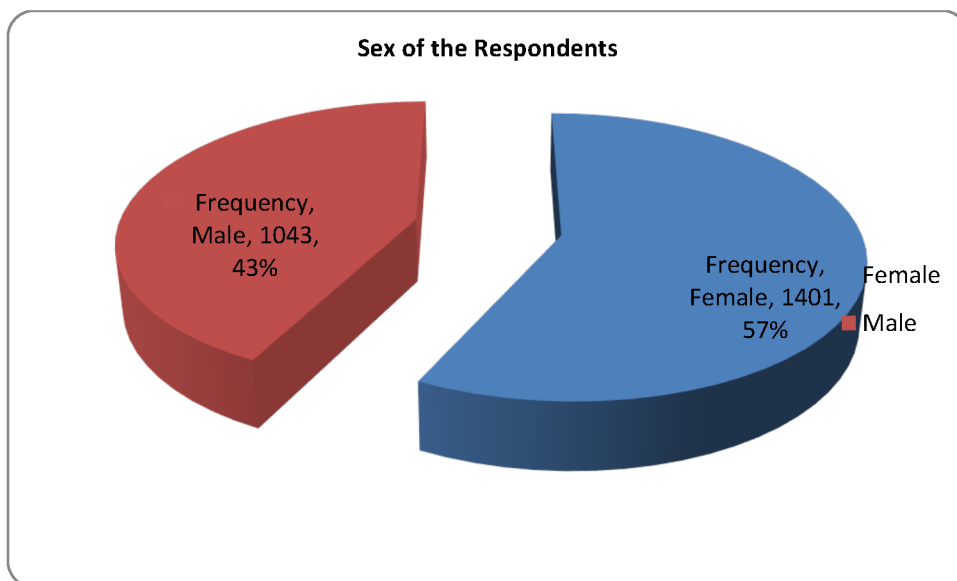
Sex. Female respondents dominated a big majority of the research population with 57 percent; while remaining 43 percent are males. The population of female is still higher than the population of male in the Philippines.
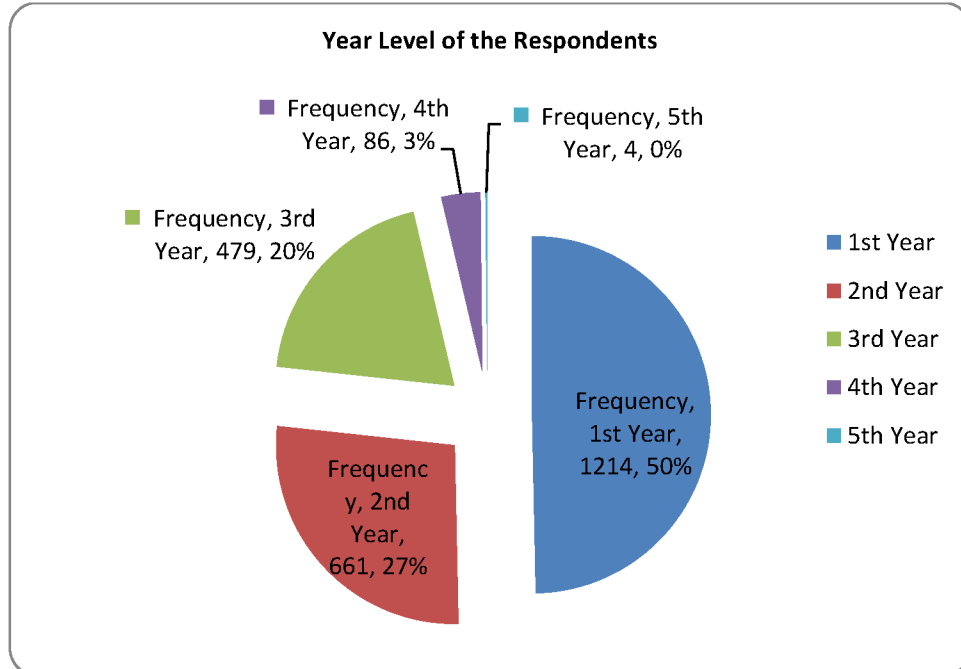
Year Level. Fifty percent of the respondents' population are first year college students; 27 percent are second year college students; 19.6 percent are third year college students; 3.5 are fourth year college students; and .2 percent) are fifth year college students. This result shows that first year students are more enthusiastic in expressing their opinions through their participation in answering the survey compared to other level of students.
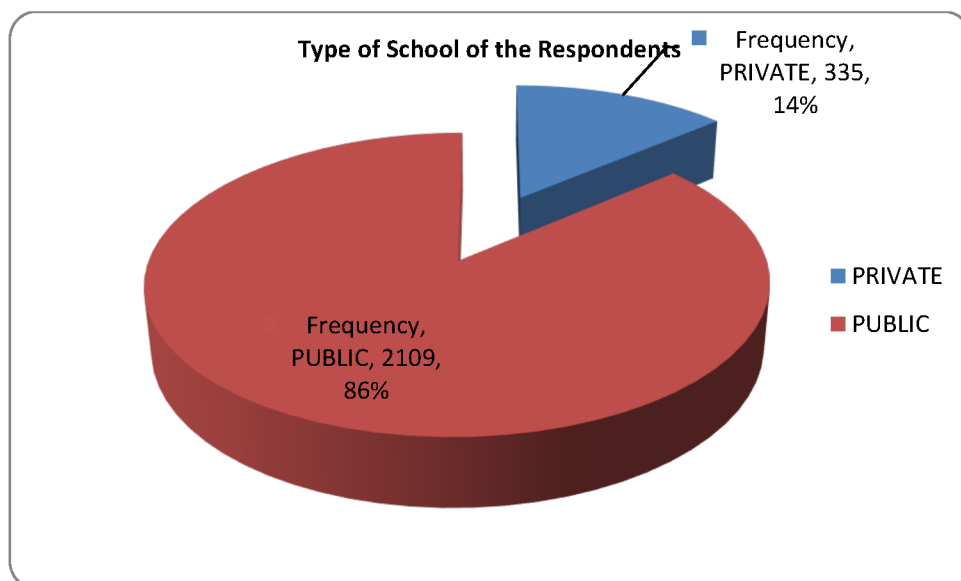
Type of School. There 2,109 (86.3 percent) respondents who are studying in government or public schools; while 335 (13.7 percent) respondents are studying in private schools. The student population in government schools in the Philippines is a lot higher than the number of students in private schools. It was magnified by the free tuition fee law in state colleges and universities that were implemented by government; and the decline in the number of student-enrolees in private schools due to their parents' jobs are affected because of the pandemic.

Preparedness of the respondents in their virtual learning

Table 1. Summary of the Pooled Weighted Mean of the Preparedness in Virtual Learning of the Respondents

Preparedness of the Respondents	PWM	Verbal Description
Physical Preparedness	2.38	Disagree
Psychological-Emotional Preparedness	2.81	Agree
Financial Preparedness	2.74	Agree

Physical Preparedness. The student-respondents considered that they are physically prepared in virtual learning in terms of using the internet, computer technologies and LMS; but they believed that they are not physically prepared in virtual learning because they prefer the traditional classroom teaching-learning environment. This result coincide with the findings of Neupane et al. (2020) in Nepal, wherein they established that female students' readiness in online learning is higher than male students; hence the population of female students in this study is higher than the population of male students. The physical readiness of the students in online learning is also significantly correlated to the presence of internet facilities at home (Neupane, et. al, 2020).

Psychological-Emotional Preparedness. The respondents considered themselves as psychological-emotionally not prepared in their virtual learning because "they feel anxious that they may not excel in my online class"; "they worry about the effects (death of many people) of the pandemic around them"; "they are more comfortable with face to face or physical class than in virtual class"; "they fear the "New Normal" of virtual teaching"; and "they are not prepared due to the drastic change (checkpoints, social distancing, wearing of facemask and face shield, and limited travel) around them caused by the pandemic". The attitude of learners in online learning is vital in their online learning readiness (Hergüner, et al, 2020). If the learners are not mentally prepared with what they are doing in their online class, there is a tendency that they will not learn and appreciate the teaching-learning process. Hence, a positive attitude towards online learning should be inculcated first to the learners for them to become psychological-emotionally prepared in their virtual learning.

Financial Preparedness . The respondents considered themselves as not financial prepared for virtual learning because "of the expensive cost of internet/load to attend their online class"; "due to their parents/family's limited source of income because of the pandemic"; "of the growing expenses, hence they are not the only one at home who needs gadgets and internet for online class"; and "their family suffered from financial crisis due to "no work, no pay" policy in their work." On the other hand, they disagreed that they are not financially prepared because "they need to work and study at the same time (working student)". The Covid-19 pandemic vastly affected the economic sectors because of the lockdowns and limited movement of people; hence financial capabilities of Filipino families to support the school

financial needs of their children were greatly affected. This situation affected the financial preparedness of the students. As expounded in the study of Neupane, et al (2020), learners who never worries about where to connect or access to the internet during online class are more ready compared to those who frequently worry with internet connection during online class.

Challenges experienced in virtual learning

Table 2. Summary of the Pooled Weighted Mean of the Challenges in Virtual Learning of the Respondents

CHALLENGES IN VIRTUAL LEARNING	PWM	Verbal Description
School	2.25	Disagree
Teachers	2.56	Agree
Curriculum	2.99	Agree
Resources	3.06	Agree

Challenges in terms of School Factors. In general, the respondents do not experienced school factors as part of the challenges that they experienced in their virtual class because of the pandemic. The reason why they do not experienced school challenges are mainly because: "their university/school is prepared in providing virtual learning to the students"; "the school administration monitors teachers who just provide activities and videos which students barely understands"; "the school administration have control of the teachers who uses downloadable videos which consumes so much data and money for the students"; "the school administration conducted research that suggest necessary precautionary measures on how to counteract the negative effects of doing online class to the health of the students and teachers"; "their schools show concern to the learners' health and the teachers' situation during this pandemic". One solution that could help teachers and students hurdle the challenges of e-learning is through the utilization of EdTech in their academic institutions (Dhawan (2020). Hence most teachers in the respondent-schools are familiar with Education Technology, this is a required subject for all Education graduates, the schools where the respondents are enrolled are most probably implementing it; hence the students' perception that they do not experienced challenges in terms of school factors.

Challenges in terms of Teacher Factors. The respondents affirmed that they experienced challenges in their virtual classroom in terms of teacher factors. According to the students there are teachers in their school who seems to be inconsiderate in giving requirement deadlines; there are also teachers who are not good with online teaching, specifically the strategies that they are using is not effective; usually the teachers are only good with giving activities/quizzes and never mind whether the students are learning or not; thus the students do not understand the lesson at all. Furthermore, the respondents said, there are teachers who do not understand the situation of the students who cannot be online 24/7 because of the expensive cost of internet (data); another teacher factor that concerns the learners is the fact that teachers do not understand the varying capability of students to learn in an online class. In the teaching-learning process during pandemic, students were not the only one affected; hence teachers who are the primary provider of learning to them, they also faced numerous challenges. In the study of Vitales et al (2020), they found out that teachers are physically ready for the New Normal of teaching; but not emotionally ready. There are certain factors that contributes to their readiness, such as fear of the virus, death that is happening around them due to the virus, the numerous

workloads that they need to perform related to the conduct of their online class and the financial setback that they have to juggle for their family.

Challenges in terms of Curriculum Factors. In terms of challenges in the curriculum of online learning, the respondents experienced challenges because there is a need curriculum that provide proper sequencing which means lecture/discussions should come first before giving activities to the students; the respondents do not see the curriculum in their school as designed for online class because most of the classes are conducted from 8AM to 5PM which is very hazardous to health due to exposures to computers/cell phone and internet; the students find the curriculum of their school for online learning as not student-friendly because of too many requirements and they do not have much time to study; being at home entails that they can devote more time in the studies because most of the students do household chores; and students help their other siblings to cope up in their online class/tasks; and the students find the curriculum on using modules as ineffective because it never ensures that the students are really learning; instead they just accomplish it for compliance. In the conduct of online learning, traditional use of face to face curriculum shifted to virtual classroom that required the use of Learning Management System (LMS), in addition to the extensive use of internet connection and gadgets for the students to access the learning materials online (Vitales, et al, 2020).

Challenges in terms of Resources Factors. Another challenge that is faced by the students in virtual learning are the presence or absence of online learning resources. In the areas were the respondents reside, most of them experienced slow and unreliable internet connections; there are also frequent power interruptions; the students also commented that most of the videos presented in the online class are not clear and barely readable specially to the students who are using cellphones in their online class; furthermore not all the students have the same capability of having appropriate computers and internet connections with specifications for online class; and the use of modules as alternative learning resource for online classroom is not enough to supplement the required knowledge and skills required to the course of the learners. These challenges in resources experienced by the learners from the respondent schools are the same with the challenges explored in other researches; particularly the lack of internet access in addition to other barriers such as technological, individual, domestic, institutional and community barriers (Baticulon, et al, 2020). The biggest challenge in online learning for college students in Malaysia is internet connectivity and for students enrolled in diploma course, their difficulty was in understanding the content of the subject (Chung, Subramaniam, and Dass, 2020).

Significant difference in the preparedness in virtual classroom of the respondents according to their profile characteristics

Table 3. Analysis of Variance for the Significant Difference in the Preparedness of the Respondents in Virtual Learning According to their Profile Characteristics

Preparedness and Profile Characteristics	F-value	Sig	Interpretation
Physical Preparedness and Type of School	2.089	.149	Not Significant
Psychological-Emotional Preparedness and Type of School	3.436	.064	Not Significant
Financial Preparedness and Type of School	19.755	.000	Significant
Physical Preparedness and Age	2.492	.041	Significant
Psychological-Emotional Preparedness and Age	2.271	.059	Not Significant
Financial Preparedness and Age	2.999	.018	Significant
Physical Preparedness and Sex	1.238	.266	Not Significant

Psychological-Emotional Preparedness and Sex	10.775	.001	Significant
Financial Preparedness and Sex	.775	.379	Not Significant
Physical Preparedness and Year Level	3.205	.012	Significant
Psychological-Emotional Preparedness and Year Level	2.206	.066	Not Significant
Financial Preparedness and Year Level	9.902	.000	Significant

p-value= .05

Significant Difference in the Preparedness and Profile Characteristics. The result revealed that significant differences were established between the following preparedness factors experienced by the respondents and their profile characteristics: financial preparedness and the following profile characteristics: type of school (F=19.755); age (F=2.999); and year level (F=9.902). Physical preparedness and the following profile characteristics: age (F=2.492); and year level (F=3.205); and Psychological-Emotional preparedness and sex of the respondents (F=10.775).

The relationship between profile characteristics of learners and their learning readiness was established in several researches (Joosten and Cusatis, 2020); as well as the relationship between online learning readiness, academic resilience and online learning satisfaction (Kumalasari and Akmal, 2020); in terms of barriers to online learning, in Malaysia internet connectivity is their biggest challenge; and for students enrolled in diploma course, their difficulty was in understanding the content of the subject (Chung, Subramaniam, and Dass, 2020).

Significant difference in the challenges experienced by the respondents according to their profile characteristics

Table 4. Analysis of Variance for the Significant Difference in the Challenges Experienced by the Respondents in Virtual Learning According to their Profile Characteristics

Challenges and Profile Characteristics	F-value	Sig	Decision
Teachers and Type of School of the Respondents	12.032	.001	Significant
School and Type of School of the Respondents	13.827	.000	Significant
Curriculum and Type of School of the Respondents	2.899	.089	Not Significant
Resources and Type of School of the Respondents	25.691	.000	Significant
Teachers and Year Level of the Respondents	7.618	.000	Significant
School and Year Level of the Respondents	26.091	.000	Significant
Curriculum and Year Level of the Respondents	2.160	.071	Not Significant
Resources and Year Level of the Respondents	3.633	.006	Significant
Teachers and Age of the Respondents	.343	.849	Not Significant
School and Age of the Respondents	5.554	.000	Significant
Curriculum and Age of the Respondents	.652	.625	Not Significant
Resources and Age of the Respondents	1.509	.197	Not Significant
Teachers and Sex of the Respondents	.093	.761	Not Significant
School and Sex of the Respondents	23.004	.000	Significant
Curriculum and Sex of the Respondents	11.601	.001	Significant
Resources and Sex of the Respondents	8.491	.004	Significant

p-value= .05

Significant Difference in the Challenges Experienced and Profile Characteristics.
Significant differences were established between the challenges factors experienced by the respondents in terms of teacher factors and type of school (F=12.032); teacher factors and year level (F=7.618). School factors and type of school (F=13.827); school factors and year level (F=26.091); school factors and age of the respondents (F=5.554); and teacher factors and sex of the respondents (F=23.004). Curriculum factors and sex of the respondents (F=11.601) are significantly associated; as well as resources factors and type of school (F=25.691); resources factors and year level (F=3.633); and last is resources factors and sex of the respondents (F=8.491).

The significant association between demographic characteristics and barriers to online learning of medical students was established by Baticulon, et al (2020). Gender, age, year level, annual income, academic standing, internet access, and the number of hours previously spent on online learning affected the medical students' perception of their capacity to learn online.

Significant relationship between the challenges experienced by the respondents and their preparedness in virtual learning

Table 5. Correlation Matrix for the Significant Relationship between the Challenges Experienced by the Respondents and their Preparedness in Virtual Learning

Preparedness of the Respondents	Challenges Experienced by the Respondents			
	Teacher Factors	School Factors	Curriculum Factors	Resources Factors
Physical	.278**	.299**	.267**	.396**
Psychological-Emotional	.462**	.409**	.445**	.486**
Financial	.333**	.316**	.359**	.510**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Significant Relationship between Challenges and Preparedness in Virtual Learning. The correlation analysis revealed that all the factors of preparedness (physical, psychological-emotional and financial) of the student-respondents in virtual learning are significantly correlated to the challenges that they experienced in terms of teacher, school, curriculum and resources factors.

The influence of e-learning to the learning readiness and learning interests of students are established in previous studies (Sari and Trisnawati, 2021). Significant relationship exist between e-learning and student learning motivation; as well as e-learning and student learning interests; and significant relationship between learning readiness and student learning motivation was established. On the same manner, students' characteristics are also significantly correlated to the online learning readiness of learners (Joosten and Cusatis, 2020). They have proven that online learning readiness mediates the relationships between academic resilience and online learning satisfaction

Proposed program for the learners to cope with the new normal of learning

Diagram 1. The Proposed Program

Proposed Program for the Learners to Cope with the New Normal of Learning			
Identified Problems/ Concerns	**Objectives**	**Activities**	**Expected Outcomes**
Students prefer the traditional classroom teaching-learning environment Students are more comfortable with face to face or physical class than in virtual class	1. To provide a more friendly online learning environment 2. To make the learners feel comfortable even in online classroom	1. Conduct orientation and seminars among the teachers regarding the students' needs for a more friendly online learning environment 2. The school administration should create a monitoring committee to ensure that teachers are providing friendly and comfortable online environment	Students will appreciate online learning environment and they will feel that they excel in their online class
Students' feel anxious that they may not excel in online class	To minimize the students' feeling of anxiety that they may not excel in their online class	1. Teachers should utilize online teaching strategies that are fun, creative and provides a positive impact to the learners	Students will enjoy online learning environment and they will feel that they excel in their online class
Students' preparedness are affected due to their parents/ family's limited source of income because of the pandemic	To provide online trainings/webinars to parents on how to earn additional income while at home	1. Livelihood training programs 2. Access to government aids to displaced workers	Students' parents will become more productive at home and will have other source of income
Students are not prepared because of the growing expenses, hence other siblings at home also needs gadgets and internet for online class Not all the students have the same capability of having appropriate gadgets and internet connections to do online class Students are not prepared because of the expensive cost of internet/load to attend my online class	To help the students apply for scholarships and/or look for sponsors of gadgets that they can use for online class To collaborate with Government officials to fast track government programs that will provide free Wifi for the students' online class	1. Access to government scholarship programs 2. Source out funds to sponsor gadgets/ Fund raising/ *Pabunuran* 3. Provide other means/teaching strategies that do not require going online	Students who will become more prepared and confident in learning despite the pandemic
Teachers are not aware that not all the students/learners have the same capability of learning in an online class	To reorient the teachers regarding the capabilities of the learners	Introduce Self-paced learning	Learners will have equal chance to learn at their own pace
There are teachers who are only good with giving activities/quizzes and never mind whether the students are learning or not	To come up with a curriculum and teaching-learning strategies that utilizes a more friendly assessment of students' learning	Conduct trainings/retooling of teachers regarding alternative activities/assessment of students' learning	Teachers with improved teaching capabilities
Some teachers do not understand that students cannot be online 24/7 because of the expensive cost of internet (data)	To lessen the time that the students are required to stay online To provide alternative teaching modalities aside from online learning	Revised the present curriculum of instructions used by the teachers	A revised curriculum that ensures the welfare of the learners and the teachers
The teachers should provide a curriculum in which lecture/discussions should come first before giving activities to the students. The curriculum on using modules never ensures that the students are really learning. They just do it for compliance. (Modules are not enough for the students to learn the necessary knowledge and skills) The curriculum is not friendly to the students, because being at home do not provide the students much time to study, students also do household chores and students also help their other siblings to cope up in their online class/tasks. The curriculum was not designed that there should be less requirements, activities, quizzes for students because being at home does not mean more free time to study The curriculum was not designed to ensure that online class should not be conducted daily from 8AM to 5PM because of the health hazards due to exposures to computers/cell phone and internet	To make a proposal for curriculum developers to align the curriculum to the needs of the students To avoid using exclusively modular learning without teacher-learner interaction To provide a more student-friendly curriculum that ensures that the students are learning the necessary skills To revise the curriculum in order to provide a more student-friendly online learning environment To lessen the time that the students are required to stay online	Revised the present curriculum of instructions used by the teachers	A revised curriculum that ensures the welfare of the learners and the teachers

Conclusions

The participants of the research were students whose age are from 19 to 58 years; majority of them are female; mostly enrolled as first year college students from a government school. In general, the respondents still prefer the traditional face to face classroom learning than virtual classroom learning. They considered themselves, physically prepared in virtual classroom, but they are not psychological-emotional and financially prepared in virtual classroom. The challenges in virtual classroom that they experienced were mostly in terms of teacher, curriculum and resources factors.

Significant variations were established between preparedness of the respondents and their profile characteristics; as well as the challenges that they experienced in virtual classroom varies according to their profile characteristics. Furthermore significant relationship was established between the learners' preparedness (physical, psychological-emotional and financial) in virtual learning and the challenges that they experienced in terms of teacher, school, curriculum and resources factors.

A proposed program that will aid the students in their virtual classroom was designed by the researchers as output of this research and it was recommended for implementations in both private and government schools in the country.

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