

# Students' Level of Communication Skills in the Context of Distance Learning Amidst Covid-19

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**Abstract**— COVID - 19 is an infectious disease which causes extreme acute respiratory syndrome. It has resulted in a global crisis and health emergency that has impacted and brought changes of the world and daily lives. Communication skills is one of the essential elements for the students to enhance and develop their practical and deeper understanding about the subject they are learning in the context of distance learning. This study determine the students' level of communication skills in the context of distance learning amidst COVID-19. The research employed the mixed-method research design where the student and teacher respondents were purposively selected. The findings revealed that the students' level of communication skills had found overall weighted mean of 2.26 and interpreted as "Satisfactory". The distance learning delivery modality affects students' level of communication skills with overall mean of 2.97 and interpreted as "At all times". The findings revealed that teachers help their students to improve their communication skills by means of integrating interactive activities whereas the students were challenged on modular learning modality due to limited student-teacher interactions that really affects their communication skills. Continuous study related to distance learning and communication skills are recommended.

**Keywords:** COVID- 19, Distance Learning, Oral Communication Skills, Listening Reading, Speaking, Writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is an infectious disease which causes extreme acute respiratory syndrome. It has resulted in a global crisis and health emergency that has impacted and brought changes of the world and daily lives. Due to the rapid growth of infections and cases and the need to eradicate the disease and flatten the infection curve, it has also gained international attention, (Guo, et al., 2020).

According to Tria, (2020), every country is currently putting in place plans and procedures to break continues rise of the virus. And one of the most affected institutions was the educational sense, the new standard should be considered in the preparation and implementation of the new normal educational policy in order to maintain and provide quality education despite of lockdown resulting to no face-to-face classes and adopted the new normal educational settings into distance learning delivery modalities to combat the spread of COVID-19 virus and maintain and ensure safety of all.

Mensah, et al. (2020) stated that distance learning has evolved from a "anywhere" to a "anytime" education delivery system in principle and practices. Distance learning, also is a form of

education in which teachers and students are separated physically during the teaching and learning process such as e-learning, mobile learning, modular learning and the like. It's also an instructional strategy that make efficient use of variety of resources and technologies to enhance students' learning and promote contact between students and faculty. Students can now receive instructions and learn from their own paces at their own homes based on the mode of distance learning delivery modalities they were chosen like modular, online, and or either of the two, communicate and interact with their teachers thru text messages, messenger, phone calls, and all possible platforms available.

In the study of Alawamleh et. al (2020) revealed that distance learning like online classes results a decrease in communication levels between the students and the instructors and their feeling of isolation caused by the online classes.

Communication in any form like speaking, reading, listening and writing is very important especially in education sectors that needs a good base and foundation of students to have a good communication skills and acquire fluency.

During the pandemic, measuring the level of communication skills of the students is quite difficult because of this diverse learning scenarios since no face-to-face interactions.

Hence, even before students' have facing difficulties in terms of developing their communication skills and how much more this trying times of COVID-19 pandemic. It is the best time to receive, provide and exchange information, sharing emotions and thoughts and interact with others.

Communication skills is one of the essential elements for the students to enhance and develop their practical and deeper understanding about the subject they are learning in the context of distance learning.

According to Rajab et. al (2020), revealed that students' challenges in distance learning in terms of communications are online classes, technology equipment in communicating and interacting with others, students and teachers, time management, anxiety and stress that brought by coronavirus disease.

In addition, Wolfinger (2016), results revealed that teachers' role and parents' involvement revealed that could promote students' level of communication skills and academic achievement in the context of virtual learning.

To this notion, the researcher aims to determine the level of students' communication skills in the context of distance learning amid the COVID- 19 pandemic.

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II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Generally, this study aimed to determine the students' level of communication skills in the context of distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic in Senior High School at Restituto B. Peria National High School, Aliaga Nueva Ecija, Philippines. This study aimed to answer the following:

1. Determine the level of communication skills of the students in the context of distance learning in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
2. How does the different distance learning delivery modalities affect the students' level of communication skills?
3. How does the teacher help the students' improve communication skills in the content of distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic?
4. Describe the challenges encountered by students in communication in distance learning delivery modalities amid COVID-19 pandemic.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher used mixed method research design in this study. It involves senior high school teachers and students who were selected as respondents of the study using purposive sampling. The instrument used to gather the needed data were survey questionnaire and interview guide questions. The survey questionnaire consisted of Likert scale with verbal description of "Most of the times", "At all times", "Sometimes", and "Never" and "Poor" as choices. And the same way "Outstanding", "Very Satisfactory", "Satisfactory" and "Need Improvement". Thus, all the data gathered were analyzed and treated using data analysis like, frequency, weighted mean, logical and thematic analysis.

Range of scores and its verbal interpretation is shown below:

Table 1. Range and Verbal Interpretation Equivalent

Point	Range	Verbal Description	Level of Communication Skills
4	3.25 – 4.00	Most of the times	Outstanding
3	2.50 – 3.24	At all times	Very Satisfactory
2	1.75 – 2.49	Sometimes	Satisfactory
1	1.00 – 1.74	Never	Need Improvement

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The level of communication skills of the students in the context of distance learning in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

Table 1. Students' Level of Communication Skills

Communication Skills	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Listening Skills	2.34	Satisfactory
Reading Skills	2.53	Very Satisfactory
Speaking Skills	1.76	Needs Improvement
Writing Skills	2.42	Satisfactory

Overall Weighted Mean	2.26	Satisfactory
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Table 1, the results revealed that students' that students' level of reading skills resulted as "very satisfactory" based on the assessment made by teachers and students as respondents. Students and teachers agreed that students' reading skills developed and enhanced at all times while speaking skills found "needs of improvement" and "never" used by the students in communicating and interacting with others and teachers in the context of distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic.

The results mean that students' level of communication skills decreases in the context of distance learning because of limited interaction in the teaching and learning process. Students were always communicating with other students and teachers by means of reading and writing in text messages, messenger and comment box in any online platform and also they are simply reading directions, instructions and lessons in modules before answering modules in writing form. Also, the students more like to participate in distance learning in reading and writing and less like to participate through speaking because they feel anxious, low confidence and stress to speak in virtual online learning set up.

2. Different distance learning delivery modalities affect the students' level of communication skills

Table 2. Distance Learning Delivery Modalities

Distance Learning	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
Online Learning	2.55	Sometimes
Modular Learning	3.66	Most of the Times
Blended Learning	2.75	At all times
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>At all times</b>

Table 2 shows the summary and tallied results of the survey about the effects of different distance learning delivery modalities in the level of communication skills of the SHS students. It shows that the overall weighted mean is 2.97 and meant that "At all times". Modular learning found out the highest weighted with verbal description of "Most of the times" while online learning got lowest mean of 2.55 and interpreted as "Sometimes".

The results implies that distance learning using modular, online and blended learning affects students' level of communication skills. Modular learning found the most influential distance learning that affects students' level of communication skills in all forms specifically speaking and listening skills because of limited interaction with the teachers and other students. Students learned at their own pace based on the level of their understanding dealing with topics and lessons.

3. How does the teacher helps the students' improve communication skills in the context distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic?

Based on the data gathered in the interview, the teacher-respondents help their students to improve and enhance communication skills in the context of distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic by means of creating and developing interactive activities like debate, spoken poetry, Q and A, story-telling and many more. And also constant monitoring through phone calls, video calls that could really help in motivating students to actively participate in virtual online class discussion resulting to improved communication skills. Moreover, the teachers also seek help from parents in monitoring, supporting and guiding their children in their learning progress especially this trying times of COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4. Describe the challenges encountered by students in communication in distance learning delivery modalities amid COVID-19 pandemic.

Majority of the student-respondents were challenged in developing their communication skills in terms of speaking and listening in distance learning because of limited interactions with the teachers. They were also challenged and experienced difficulties in understanding of modules, limited learning resources and materials being used at home, limited student-teacher interaction, limited learning space and environment, poor internet connectivity and low technology gadgets.

### V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusion

The following conclusions are drawn:

1. Students' level of communication skills in the context of distance learning amid COVID-19 were found satisfactory.
2. Distance learning delivery modalities in online, modular and blended learning had resulted always affects students' level of communication skills.
3. Teachers help their students to improve the level of communication skills in different ways such as using of interactive activities, constant monitoring through the use of any means of communication platforms and by asking help and supports from parents in monitoring and supervision of student's learning progress
4. Students were challenged during distance learning in improving communication skills in terms of understanding of modules, limited student-teacher interactions, limited learning resources and materials being used at home, limited learning space and environment, poor internet connectivity and low technology gadgets.

#### Recommendations

1. Teachers may understand the individual differences and capabilities of the students as to help them to improve communication skills by means of application and integration of appropriate teaching-learning strategies.
2. More communication between students and teachers as well as teachers and parents.
3. Parents may support and guide their children by means of providing not only basic needs but also learning needs especially in providing technology gadgets used in online learning.

4. Teachers may attend seminars, webinars and workshops in improving teaching strategies during distance learning.
5. Teachers may maintain constant communication to help students improved level of communication skills at all levels.
6. Teachers may continue to develop and create interactive activities and used differentiated teaching strategies for the improvement of students' achievements and level of communication skills.

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