



Factors Affecting Students' Attendance During the Limited Face-to-Face Classes

Rheamy N. Baliber*

Biliran Province State University, P.I. Garcia Street, Naval, Biliran Province, 6560 Philippines

ABSTRACT

Durden & Ellis (1995) states that attendance is a very controversial concept in high school. Students are expected to take accountability and to make choices about attending classes. It has always been seen as an essential factor in academic success, but attendance is so much more. The study was designed to determine the factors affecting students' attendance during limited face-to-face class among Grade 9 students. It employed a quantitative epistemological research design. The study was conducted in Almeria National High School (ANHS) for the School Year 2021-2022. A random sampling method was used in this study. The respondents of this study were Grade 9 students. There were 22 Grade 9 students involved in the conduct of the study. The findings shows that most of the respondents were 15 years old, and the vast majority were female; all of them were Grade 9 students and were fully vaccinated. There were identified external factors affecting students' attendance during the limited face-to-face class. One of them is their part-time jobs, responsible for paying their study fees, travel time going to school, means of transportation, and primary motivation in attending classes. Heavy load of the subjects, complex subjects, and online support benefited the success of the limited face-to-face classes, and the motivation to study are the various identified internal factors based on the data gathered. Both the internal and external factors significantly affect the students' attendance and academic performance during the limited face-to-face class. Teachers should give utmost priority to the psychosocial support for the students in addressing the external and internal factors affecting students' attendance during limited face-to-face class. Furthermore, teachers should have close monitoring and supervision of the students.

Keywords: *Students Attendance, limited face-to-face classes*

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the educational system worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, early childhood education and care service, universities, and colleges. Most governments decide to temporarily close educational institutions in an attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The educational pedagogies were modified during the COVID-19 pandemic to minimize interruption to teaching. Face-to-face learning was barred, and learners adopted modular distance learning.

In support of this, the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 045, series of 2021, ensures to provide quality self-learning modules for all students. Moreover, the latter assured the public that around 26 million enrolled learners would receive enhanced quality self-learning modules. But after two long years, the percentage rate of COVID-19 cases decreases in the country. The return of limited face-to-face classes was decided by DepEd to go back to traditional face-to-face learning. The Department of Education (DepEd) has proposed the progressive expansion of limited face-to-face classes in areas placed under Alert levels 1 and 2 but added that they would seek input from other agencies and students' parents before allowing in-person classes in more schools.

However, during the implementation of limited face-to-face classes, it was then observed that a minimal number of students attended the classes in school. According to Durden & Ellis (1995), attendance is a very controversial concept in high school. Students are expected to take accountability and to make choices about attending classes. It has always been seen as an essential factor in academic success, but attendance is so much more. Furthermore, the latter claims that attendance is, in reality, a representation of a student's motivation.

In addition, attendance is vital for various reasons. Attendance assists student learning in different ways. It brings theory to life and opens the opportunity for discussions, explanations, and collaboration on topics. Attendance also contributes to students developing self-management, teamwork, customer awareness, marketability, and problem-solving; these aspects are nurtured in class. Students fine-tune and practice communication and literacy skills with the application of numeracy and information technology in class, and all these aspects enhance a student's employability (Manchester Metropolitan University: Careers & Employability Service, 2012).

Very few studies have been undertaken to explore the factors affecting students' attendance regarding the implementation of limited face-to-face classes in a developing country such as the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this light, the researcher would like to investigate the factors affecting Grade 9 students' attendance in the limited face-to-face classes in the Almeria National High School (ANHS). Thus, the results of this study would greatly help improve the implementation of limited face-to-face classes in the said school. Moreover, contribute literature on students' attendance, which may provide insight for other developing countries.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This generally aims to explore the factors affecting students' attendance during the limited face-to-face classes. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following:

1. Determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of;
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Sex;
 - 1.3 Grade Level;
 - 1.4 Vaccination
2. Identify the factors affecting student attendance in a limited face-to-face class, to wit:
 - 2.1 External Factors;
 - 2.2 Internal Factors
3. Develop an intervention plan for the improvement of students' attendance in the limited face-to-face class.

1.2 Methodology

The study employed a quantitative epistemological research design. The quantitative methodology will be used within the context of a post-positivistic paradigm. The research problem will be investigated using numeric results. Data is collected and translated into statistical figures, from where conclusions will be drawn (Alzheimer Europe, 2009; Crotty, 1998). The chosen research design was applicable in attaining the research objectives of the study.

The study was conducted in Almeria National High School for the School Year 2021-2022. A random sampling method was used in this study. The respondents of this study were Grade 9 students. There were 22 Grade 9 students involved in the conduct of this study which served as the respondents of the study.

In order to attain the objectives of the study, a standard survey questionnaire by D Braak (2015) is utilized as a research instrument to be able to collect further information needed to explore the factors affecting students' attendance during limited face-to-face classes. The survey questionnaire is a combination of closed-ended questions and a small number of open-ended questions used to clarify and give more information to the closed-ended questions. In some instances, a Likert scale is used to measure a student's attitude and opinions, thereby giving students the opportunity to show how much they agree or disagree with a statement.

This study utilized a standard survey questionnaire as one way in the data gathering procedure. Before conducting the study, a letter asking permission is sought to conduct the study from the Principal of ANHS and the Class Advisers per section. After which, an interview and/or survey will immediately follow.

The research analysis will consider the five major themes. The researcher analyses the data collected according to biographical information, external factors were influencing class attendance, motivation, respondents' perceptions, and internal factors to the institution. The data gathered during the survey were coded, analysed, and presented in tabular form using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentage were used in determining the profile of the respondents, and external and internal factors affecting student attendance is limited face-to-face.

2. Results and Discussion

This chapter includes the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data based on the objectives of the study. Data are presented as follows: demographic profile of the respondents, factors affecting student attendance in a limited face-to-face class, the challenges encountered by the grade 9 students, and coping mechanisms employed by the grade 9 in addressing their challenges.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The respondents considered in this study were the Grade 9 students at Almeria National High School. Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, grade level, and vaccination.

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Indicators	f	%
Age		
14 years old	8	36.4
15 years old	14	63.6
Total	22	100
Sex	f	%
Male	3	13.6
Female	19	86.4
Total	22	100
Grade Level	f	%
Grade 9	22	100
Vaccination	f	%
Yes, Fully Vaccinated	22	100
Yes, with Booster Shots		-
No		-

Age. As gleaned from the Table 1, 14 or 63.6 percent of the respondents were 15 years old, and 8 or 36.4 percent were the age 14 years old. This indicates that most of the students were young and would imply that Grade 9 students were young and vigor.

Sex. Table 1 manifests that the number of Female Grade 9 students was more significant than the Male respondents, 19 or 86.4 percent. This connotes that Female Grade 9 students throughout Grade 9 Level were female-dominated.

Grade Level. Looking back at the table, most of the respondents' grade levels were all Grade 9 students with a frequency of 22 and a percentage of 100%. This means that all respondents were Grade 9 students.

Vaccination. As disclosed in Table 1, 22 Grade 9 students were all fully vaccinated with a total of 100 percent. This shows that Almeria National High School (ANHS) abides by the standard health protocols during the opening of the limited face-to-face classes that no students should be allowed to enter the premises of the school if they are not fully vaccinated. Furthermore, it means that the grade 9 students abide by the rules and policies of the school.

External Factors Affecting Students' Attendance during Limited Face-to-Face Classes

In the precedent table, it can be gleaned the different external factors that affect the student attendance during the limited face-to-face classes.

Table 2

External Factors Affecting Student Attendance in Limited Face-to-Face Class

Indicators	f	Rank
*What is your motivation for studying?		
Family	16	1
- Friends	6	2
- Study Hard	3	3
- God	1	6
- Relatives	1	6
- By getting my future dream	1	6
- Internal Drive	1	6
- External Reward	1	6

Do you have a part-time job?	f	%
- Yes	0	-
- No	22	100.0
- If Yes, what part-time job	0	-
*Who is responsible for paying your study fees?	f	Rank
- Parents	20	1
- Yourself	3	2
- Trust I	1	3
How does your trip to high school take?	f	%
- Less than 10 min	14	63.6
- Between 10 & 20 min	4	18.2
- Between 20 & 30 min	3	13.6
- Between 30 & 40 min	0	-
- Between 40 & 50 min	1	4.5
- Between 50 and 60 min	0	-
- More than 60 min	0	-
Total	22	100
How do you travel to school?	f	%
- Car	0	
- Motorcycle / scooter	19	86.4
- Bicycle	1	4.5
- By foot	2	9.1
Total	22	100
What is your primary motivation for attending class?	f	%
- I paid for the classes.	0	-
- It is a time to be social with my friends.	9	40.9
- I listened and paid attention to the lecturer; this exposed me to the theory in a different way.	11	50.0
- My parent/ fee payer expects me to attend	0	9.1
- I am able to contribute and ask questions to help me understand the theory	2	
Total	22	100
What reasons do you think are justified for not attending classes?	f	%
- The lecture is too early in the morning	0	-
- Lecturer is boring	0	-
- Students in a class are disruptive	0	-
- Students in class do not contribute	4	18.2
- Work is too easy, I can study on my own	2	9.1

- Work is too difficult; I waste my time in class	1	4.5
- I am sick		
- Family Commitment	15	68.2
	0	-
Total	22	100

*Multiple Response

As shown in Table 2, family is the primary motivation of the students in studying which got the rank 1 with a frequency of 16, friends come the second with a frequency of 6, followed by studying hard as rank number 3 with a frequency of 3, and fourth would be God, relatives as the fifth in rank, by getting my future dream is sixth, seventh in rank is internal and external reward is the eight in rank which receives a frequency of 1. This could imply that the grade 9 students' primary motivation is their family in studying.

For the question, if they have a part-time job, the Grade 9 students who answered no garnered 22 or 100 percent. This connotes that the students were focused only on their studies and were not working.

The question of how does your trip to high school take, most of the students answered between 10 and 20 minutes, with 14 or 63.6 percent. Some students answered that it takes between 20 and 30 minutes for them to travel to school with 4 or 18.2 percent, others said that between 30 and 40 minutes it takes to trip to high school with 3 or 13.6 percent, and one student answered that it takes for him between 50 and 60 minutes to reach the school with 4.5 percent. This implies that most of the grade 9 students were far from the school location.

For the means of transportation, most of the grade 9 students traveled by motorcycle or scooter with a frequency of 19 or 86.4 percent, two students answered that they walked to go to school with 9.1 percent, 1 student said he used a bicycle to travel to school with 4.5 percent. This connotes that there is a large number of students who travel to school using motorcycles or scooters.

As for the student's primary motivation in attending their classes, 'to listen and pay attention to the lecturer expose me to the theory in a different way' garnered 11 or 50.0 percent, 'it is a time to be social with my friends' got 9 or 40.9 percent and 'I am able to contribute and ask questions to help me understand the theory' got 2 or 9.1 percent. This simply shows that students were more eager to learn if they could listen to the discussion of their teachers.

The Grade 9 students were asked what reasons are justified for not attending classes, and most of them answered family commitment with 15 or 68.2 percent, followed by 'students in the class do not contribute' with 4 or 18.2 percent and 'work is too easy, can study on my own' got 2 or 9.1 percent and lastly, 'work is too difficult, I waste my time in class' got 1 or 4.5 percent. This implies that they commit absences because of family affairs. Moreover, this only proves that the grade 9 students have a strong bond or ties with their families.

Internal Factors Affecting Students' Attendance during Limited Face-to-Face Classes

Table 3 presents the internal factors affecting student attendance during limited face-to-face classes, which is composed of the following questions: Do you find the subject heavy?, Do you find the subject difficult?, How motivated are you to study?, Do you think there is a correlation between attendance and academic performance?, and Which online support would have benefited your experience and success in this module?

Table 3

Internal Factors Affecting Student Attendance in Limited Face-to-Face Class

Indicators	f	%
Do you find that subject heavy?		
- Strongly Agree	0	-
- Agree	6	27.3
- Neutral	16	72.7
- Disagree	0	-
- Strongly Disagree	0	-
Total	22	100
Do you find that subject difficult?		
- Strongly Agree	0	-
- Agree	9	40.9

- Neutral	13	59.1
- Disagree	0	-
- Strongly Disagree	0	-
Total	22	100
How motivated are you to study?		
- Very Motivated	17	77.3
- Somewhat motivated	5	22.7
- Not motivated	0	-
Total	22	100
Do you think there is a correlation between attendance and academic performance?		
- Yes	20	90.9
- No	2	9.1
Total	22	100
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If Yes, why? ➤ Because it's about learning, teaching children for them learn new things ➤ Because we are able to learn more ➤ Because if you do not attend the class, you will not be able to learn ➤ Because attendance is useless if your academic performance is poor ➤ Because attendance is always qualified in school 		
Which online support would have benefited your experience and success in a limited face-to-face class?		
- Discussion Forums		
- Journal Writing	9	40.9
- Blogs	2	9.1
- Glossary Online	0	-
- Self and Peer Assessments	2	9.1
- Wikis	5	22.7
- Podcasts / video clips	1	4.5
- Online Tasks	2	9.1
	1	4.5
Total	22	100

As shown in the table, for the question "Do you find the subject heavy?" most grade 9 students had answered neutrally with 13 or 59.1 percent, while there were 6 or 27.3 percent who agreed that they find the subjects heavy. While the question "Do you find the subject difficult?" grade 9 students answered as neutral with 13 or 59.1 percent, and 9 or 40.9 percent of students agreed that they find it difficult. This shows that most grade 9 students viewed the subject as easy and light for them to handle.

With regard to how motivated were the grade 9 students to study, there was 17 or 77.3 percent of students that are very motivated to study, and some students were somewhat motivated with 5 or 22.7 percent. This implies that the respondents are very motivated to study even in these trying times with the covid-19 pandemic on its way.

Additionally, as depicted in Table 3, the question if there is a correlation between attendance and academic performance, most of the respondents answered yes with 20 or 90.9 percent with their justifications that it is about learning, teaching children to learn new things, we are able to learn more, if you don't attend the class, you will not be able to learn, and attendance is useless if your academic performance is poor and attendance is always qualified in school. Some students believed that there is no correlation between attendance and academic performance, with a frequency of 2 or 9.1 percent. This proves that attendance affects the academic performance of the students.

Anent to this, the online support that the students benefited in their experience and success in their module is discussion forms with 9 or 40.9 percent, self and peer assessments with 5 or 22.7 percent, journal writing, glossary online, podcasts/video clips with 2 or 9.1 percent, wikis and online tasks with 1 or 4.5 percent. This shows that the respondents have varied online support during their limited face-to-face classes.

3, Conclusion

After a thorough analysis of the findings of this study, the following conclusion was drawn.

Both the internal and external factors significantly affect the students' attendance and academic performance during the limited face-to-face class.

4. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. Teachers should give utmost priority to the psychosocial support for the students in addressing the external and internal factors affecting students' attendance during limited face-to-face class.
2. Teachers should have close monitoring and supervision of the students.
3. It is highly recommended that further studies be conducted looking at different concepts and variables to establish more accurate data for more reliable and valid results similar to the present study.

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