



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Helping Students at-Risk through E-Kamusta-H.A.N. (Honing Attendance Notion)

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ABSTRACT

This action research aimed to increase the attendance rate of at-risk learners in Gen. Tiburcio de Leon National High School. Specifically, this study identified how the conduct of E-kamusta-HAN created a positive effect on the online engagement of the at-risk learners. The learners were exposed to a mini series of E-kamusta-HAN with different performance tasks graded by rubrics. The experimental group was given pre-test before the conduct of E-kamusta-HAN and post-test after the conduct of E-kamusta-HAN. Mini-series modules of E-kamusta-HAN were used during the conduct of the session. Teacher made instrument, questionnaire interview, reflective journal and rubrics were used by the researchers. Learners expected post-conferencing for clarification. E-kamusta-HAN denotes (positive or negative) impression to the learners. However, they appreciate the conduct of E-kamusta-HAN that created an increase in their online engagement, boost self-confidence, freedom of expression and better understanding and efficiency in their online classes. The study recommends the conduct of E-kamusta-HAN in increasing the attendance of at-risk learners during online classes. Positive guidance from teachers, parents and stakeholders were also expected to be given to our learners. In addition, additional series of modules for more engaging tasks, more activities such as deepening on the learners' background that may be employed in further research.

Keywords: E-kamusta-HAN, online engagement, at-risk learners, attendance rate

INTRODUCTION

Learning is the topmost priority of every school and it is a big challenge for every school head to sustain learning among learners which boosts greater difficulty as we are facing the new normal. Aside from sustaining the learning process, the school's next priority is to consider solving problems that lead to an increasing number of drop-out learners.

An increase in the drop-out rate of learners at risk is one of the biggest problems faced in Gen. T. de Leon National High School since S.Y. 2016-2017. Last S.Y. 2016-2017 data drop-out rate percentage is 4.4 %, S.Y. 2017-2018 it decreases to 3.39%, S.Y. 2018-2019 it increases to 3.99%, and in S.Y. 2019-2020 it decreases to 0.44%.

When it comes to drop rate per year level Grade 7 got 2.51% in S.Y. 2017-2018, 4.25% in S.Y. 2018-2019, 0.39% in S.Y. 2019-2020. Grade 8 got 5.081% in S.Y. 2017-2018, 4.13% in S.Y. 2018-2019, and 0.49% in S.Y. 2019-2020. In Contrast, Grade 9 got 3.56% in S.Y. 2017-2018, 4.22% in S.Y. 2018-2019, and 0.52% in S.Y. 2019-2020. Wherein, Grade 10 got 3.39% in S.Y. 2017-2018, and 3.99% in S.Y. 2018-2019, 0.44% in S.Y. 2019-2020.

According to the current teachers of Gen. T. de Leon National High School, they are struggling with ways on how to encourage learners who are lacking interest in school which adds up to another burden while instead of just focusing on the delivery of lessons only. But the school wants to achieve a zero drop-out rate by S.Y. 2020-2021.

Based on the result of 0.52% drop-out rate last school year 2019-2020 it was noticeable that there is an increase in the drop-out rate of the learners. Wherein, grade 9 got the highest no. of drop-out rate. Also, based on the interview with the teachers from different grade levels, one factor that was identified for students' who are lacking interest is poor parental guidance and motivation. Most of the learners with a lack of interest were not given proper guidance and motivation from their parents since they belong to a lower class. Their parents focus more on their job and do not attend to the needs of their children because they are already tired from their respective work. Some do not have the chance to be together since their parents are staying at their job. Also, based on the learners' feedback, they cannot understand the lesson well and their parents do not have time to help them with their homework. As we read some journals and articles, I found out that parents must be involved and participate in the educational process. Cole (2017) stated that if parents will give their full potential and involvement to their child, they will be likely more productive as well as excel in their academics. Moreover, Catalano and Catalano (2014) stated that programs focused on increasing parental involvement in education have positive impacts on children, families, and schools which is also similar to the idea of Jeynes (2012).

The drop-out rate is evidently influenced by varied interacting factors which are truly different for each learner. It was concluded that drop-out is seen as a process and not just an event for learners with different stories that are definitely hard to produce. It is also stated that poverty influences school retention that makes things harder because of schooling demand and school supply. Moreover, a learner from less fortunate areas is suffering from struggle issues for their parents to send their child to school, which causes greater pressure and leads to withdrawing decision from schooling Hunt (2008).

As the school head, the Guidance Counsellor, and one of the Teachers, we think about the correct implementation of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* will be of great help to Parents as they will be guided with the idea on how to help improve the academic performance of their child in school and at the same time lessen the no. of drop-out rate in Gen. T. de Leon National High School. Parents undergo a series of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* on how they could help their child in improving their academic performance as well as their attraction and motivation to continue schooling. Moreover, the school guidance counselor will help these parents to be informed on different strategies on how to handle their child's difficulties in school. With the help of the Parents' Teacher Association, they will be involved in the ongoing *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* for the parents to feel that they have their voice through PTA Officers. The School Head will always be visible in conducting the session with the help of guidance counselor, PTA officers, and AR focal person.

ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* helps in lessening the drop-out rate among Grade 9 Junior High School learners in Gen. T. de Leon National High School?
2. What are parents' and learners' perceptions in the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.*?

PROPOSED INNOVATION, INTERVENTION, AND STRATEGY

E-Kamusta-H.A.N., an Electronic Kamustahan (**H**oning **A**ttendance **N**otion), is a strategy in solving the growing number of at-risk learners in Gen. T. De Leon National High School. A series of virtual Kamustahan to Learners with the Principal through the cooperation of the Guidance Counselor, PTA Officers, and Grade 12 Teachers. This led to a series of strategies and steps on how to help learners in school activities, to motivate their children as they enjoy learning while answering the learning packets, and to provide quality time and harmonious relationships with the teachers as well as classmates.

Since teachers find difficulty in engaging at-risk learners, it is best to tap their deep engagement to learning and motivate them by providing *E-kamusta-H.A.N.* to learners, will mold them as they were provided with strategies and techniques on how to encourage themselves, be motivated and be engaged to school and perform well even in an online class. In engaging the learners there must be a good relationship in the form of communication with the principal, guidance counselor, and teachers.

A series or virtual Kamustahan was designed for 45 to 60 minutes but in the session proper it occurred for about 120-150 minutes since all the learners were actively participating and excited every session which is the purpose of the researchers were to deliver the different strategies and ways to get engaged and perform well in the class. It will also serve as a voice to be heard for the learners to voice out their problems and be given proper guidance by the guidance counselor of the school.

The mini-series was done in six sessions via Google meet. **First Session** on the E-Kamusta-H.A.N. was a 30-60 minutes session that aims to familiarize the researchers with the family background of our respondents. The session was recorded in order for the researchers to study the approach to be used on the topics that will be facilitated to them. Gathering information based on their family set-up, economic, relationship, discipline style, and others are important factors for the success of this study. The **Second Session** was 60- 120 minutes of Focus- Group Discussion on the learners. The aim of this session is to discover their study habits as well as their struggles during the school year that led them to be a respondent to this study. The **Third Session was 60-120 minutes** focused on the respondent's opinions and reaction to the short clip that will be shown as well as the facilitator will focus on the issues of the learner's respondents tagged as Students at risk of Dropping- out (SARDO). The **Fourth Session was a 60-120 session that showed** the positive side of completing one's education and its advantages. The **Fifth Session** was planning on themselves 5- 10 years from now. The facilitator will perform Focus Group Discussion on learners' dreams. In the **Last session**, researchers gave recognition to our respondents who have successfully survived this quarter as well as respondents who were reported to make achievements in terms of their academic and attendance. The researcher will give recognition to the respondents who cooperatively participated in our study. The contract will be continually monitored through their teachers.

This strategy will not only end virtual Kamustahan but also provide *E-MeAchievement* at the end of their session for at-risk learners to be given an award together with their parents to acknowledge both parents' and learners' hard work.

Through this E-Kamusta-HAN strategy, it created a positive impact on learners' attitude towards learning and engagement to attend online classes even in the most difficult times and be motivated again to come back to E-learning. These E-kamusta-HAN sessions help ensure that the cooperation of the school head, guidance counselor, teachers, parents, and learners will surely lead to success in achieving learning progress and building trust and motivation for everyone.

METHODOLOGY

A. Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

The researcher selected 17 Parents with an at-risk grade, 12 students, in Gen. T. de Leon National High School who are currently supervised by the researcher during the school year 2021-2022. There would be 17 students from one section in grade 12 where they belonged as a heterogeneous class with the greatest number of absences since June of the current year.

Before the conduct of research, the researcher conducted a virtual meeting with the parents and learners. Parents were asked to sign a parent consent form to ensure that every information are kept privately. They agreed that their child will undergo a series of *E-kamusta-H.A.N.*

These learners undergo a series of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* that will lead them as they face the challenging task given by online classes at this pandemic time. Each session slowly teaches the learners how to value what they have right now, be thankful for whatever their parents brought to them, value their studies beyond anything else, balance school tasks and resting time to regain strength, and be ready for the next challenging task in school and even at home. Through these sessions, learners were equipped with strategies and information on how to help to be motivated in attending ONLINE CLASS. Purposive sampling was used since the target participants are learners at-risk in Grade 12 for the S.Y.2020-2021.

B. Data Gathering Methods

A **diagnostic test** was given before as a material to use in identifying the subject for the research. Learners who got the lowest score ranging from 5-15 serve as the subject of the study. The test consists of 3 questions per subject such as English, Filipino, Math, Science, AP, TLE, Filipino, and Mapeh in multiple-choice format with 4 choices in every question. Questions given were from the previous quizzes, activities, or summative tests since the target participants are students who are not always present in their follow-up session there would be a possibility that they have not answered the given questions before.

Checklists for self-assessment were also given to the learners and parents to answer. Another set of Checklists for the researcher to answer while doing the research.

Observations through Google Meet will also be used by the researcher to further understand the problem of each learner in dealing with their issue of not being motivated and eager to go to school or even finding online classes boring because of these difficult times.

The **Pre-test and post-test** of the selected students will be used to identify the significant difference between the academic performance of respondents before and after the *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* session of their parents. It consists of the same performance task questions for both Pre-Test and Post Test in a Performance Base Task with guided rubrics. The Pre-Test and Post- Test will be of the same skill in a performance-based task to identify the effect of E-Kamustahan on the learners of grade 12 in Gen. Tiburcio de Leon National High School. In addition, learners will be given enough time to come up with their output in a video tape format so it will not only enhance their creativity but also their self-confidence in taking videos of themselves as they share their own stories, views, and perceptions, and motivation to continue learning.

The researcher will use the **structured interview** to know the different strategies of learners to be motivated to attend online classes. An open-ended question was given to the learners for them to answer which serves as an avenue to hear their voice as learners. This will be done through Google Meet. The researcher will ask both the parents and learners how *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* helps the learners/child to become motivated and engaged to come to online class again.

C. Data Analysis Plan

The study used a Quantitative Method in which Pre-Test and Post-Test were given to Grade 12 At-risk Learners. A pre-test was given to the respondents and recorded. Post-test was given to the respondents after. The researcher used an independent t-test to compare the result before and after learners undergo *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* The results were checked, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study on the impact of E kamustahan on the At-Risk Learners as the strategy to increase the number of attendances is presented below:

1. What is the effect of E-kamusta-Han in the online engagement of learners?

Table 1

Test for Significant Difference Between Pre-Test and Post-Test

Variables Measured	z	Sig. value	Interpretation	Decision to Ho
Pre-Test and Post-Test	3.823	0.00014	Significant	Reject the Null

There is a significant difference between the pretest scores and post-test scores since the z-value is 3.823 with a significant value of 0.00014 which is greater than $\alpha=0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. It indicates that there is a greater improvement in the level of performance during online class

and excitement to attend every session which can be associated with the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* as used as a strategy in improving the attendance of At-Risk Learners.

2. What are parents' and learners' perceptions in the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.*?

SELF CONFIDENCE

Most of the students reported the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* which boosted their self-confidence.

"The advantage of using E-Kamusta-H.A.N. is that we can see and communicate with our teachers and classmates. It also boosts our self-confidence. In my opinion, E-Kamusta-H.A.N. has no disadvantages. I learn so much; it's entertaining and relieves our stress from schoolwork."

"For me, one of the advantages of E-Kamusta-H.A.N. is that it boosts my self-confidence in front of other people."

"The advantages of E-Kamusta-H.A.N. to me as an online learner is I got my communication skills a lot better and I got to know my classmates more. It also helps me boost my confidence"

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Some of the students reported that the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* allows them to have the freedom of expression to share what they feel.

"The advantage for me of E-Kamusta-H.A.N. is that I can express my feelings to others and I feel better when I share my stories with others. And for me, the disadvantage of this is that I never attend a session because I was at work."

"It helps us to talk about our experiences and we can tell what the needs are and we will have good thoughts."

BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND EFFICIENCY

Some of the students reported the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* help them for better understanding and efficiency in doing their tasks in school.

"One of the benefits of taking the E-kamustahan is that I better understand the tasks given to us by our teachers to other subject teachers."

"One of the advantages of taking E-Kamusta-H.A.N. is that I am able to perform more efficiently the tasks given to us by our teachers in various subjects. The other day our compound lost its internet connection, so I was nervous that I might not be able to attend our online class. But with the help of the load given to us, I became reassured because I was able to join our online class immediately. I found no disadvantage to E-Kamusta-H.A.N."

Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* in the increase of the attendance in the online classes of the learners. The following are the summary of findings found in this study:

1. The findings of this study provided clear evidence of the reduced level of boredom during online class and excitement to attend every session which can be associated with the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* as used as a strategy in improving the attendance of At-Risk Learners. An engaging and motivated attitude of learners in every task increases academic performance and reduces the level of anxiety.
2. There is a greater improvement in the level of performance during online class and excitement to attend every session which can be associated with the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* as used as a strategy in improving the attendance of At-Risk Learners.
3. There were three emerging themes that have surfaced from the interview conducted to the learners- self-confidence, freedom of expression, better understanding and efficiency.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it shows that the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* has implications in teaching and learning which can be observed. Since the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* as a strategy in increasing the level of at-risk learners in attending the online class is found to be helpful in increasing the learners' engagement in online classes; it is highly encouraged that the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* is executed in every class as a strategy of the advisers to increase the motivation and engagement of learners in attending online classes.

E-Kamusta-H.A.N. is a way to reach out to our learners and create a more engaged and motivated attitude towards online classes which should be organized in a Learning Action Cell. It should be introduced to teachers as a new strategy to engage learners in meaningful learning. Another LAC should be initiated to capacitate teachers to carry out another action research that will enhance the module in the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* in their class. Moreover, taking advantage of the Academic Ease Implementation, teachers should use this strategy to lessen the difficulties in encouraging learners to attend their online classes.

The conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* should be done to increase the number of learners in attending their online classes. This kind of activity unleashes the potential of learners for a better understanding and efficiency in their online task. It will also boost their self-confidence as they have the freedom of expression to share their thoughts and ideas to their classmates with a non-pressured ambiance that they can carry as they indulge with their classes in each subject thru online class.

Reflections

From the result of this action research, I learned that with the extended effort of teachers for the learners in conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* has a positive impact in shaping the attitude towards online class reduced level of boredom during online class and excitement to attend every session which can be associated with the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* as used as a strategy in improving the attendance of At-Risk Learners. The bond that they have created gives them the opportunity to learn and grow from each other's experiences in every session.

The researcher realized this with the conduct of *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* sessions as a strategy to increase the number of learners in attending their online classes is really an effort since the researcher created an unusual bond to each learner that created an increase in online engagement. However, after a month of conducting *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* with 5 sessions, it is surprising to see the output of the students which are beyond the expectations of the researcher. It is noticeable that the learners gain self-confidence while conducting the *E-Kamusta-H.A.N.* Furthermore, it created a bond that is truly amazing for the learners' emotional aspect as a memorable experience.

The reflective aspect of this action research contributed to its success. This has given the opportunity for the researcher to dig into the deeper part of the researchers to reflect and ponder that everything must be clear, and logical to meet the criteria for success. The aspect of the study that needs to be improved in this study is the additional sessions for deeper understanding towards learners' experiences.

Summary of Expenses

ACTIVITY	ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES	QUANTITY	COST
1. Communication expense	LOAD	17	PHP 3400.00
2. Communication expense	LOAD	3	PHP 1000.00
3. Communication expense	LOAD	17	PHP 1700.00
4. Supplies and Materials	USB	1	PHP 470.00
5.Reproduction, Binding, and Printing Cost		5	PHP 2000.00
TOTAL			PHP 8570.00

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