



STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ON REMOTE AND DISTANCE LEARNING (RAD) MODALITY: BASIS FOR ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The shift to Remote and Distance (RAD) Learning Modality has significantly transformed the educational landscape, presenting both opportunities and challenges for students at PHINMA University of Iloilo. A mixed-method research, integrating quantitative analysis to assess the opportunities provided by RAD learning and qualitative analysis to explore the challenges encountered by students found that students generally experienced moderate to high opportunities in RAD learning, but faced challenges like poor internet connectivity, difficulty understanding lessons, time management struggles, and low motivation. To overcome these issues, students used coping strategies like self-motivation, time management, peer collaboration, and technological adaptability. To improve RAD learning, strategies include improving internet accessibility, integrating engaging instructional methods, offering flexible deadlines, strengthening student engagement initiatives, and providing academic support programs.

Keywords: *Remote and Distance Learning, learning opportunities, enhancement strategies*

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in December 2019, has significantly transformed the educational landscape, prompting a shift to remote learning across all levels of education (Hodges et al., 2020). This transition, termed emergency remote education (ERE), encompasses various methods such as distance learning and online education, providing temporary solutions for educators to deliver instruction amidst the crisis (Bozkurt et al., 2020). Statistics from the National Center for Education

Statistics (2022) reveal that in fall 2020, 60% of students at private for-profit institutions were enrolled exclusively in distance education, compared to 46% at public institutions and 34% at private nonprofit institutions. In the Philippines, a survey indicated that 30% of respondents found the distance learning model to be 20-50% effective, while 14% rated it 80-100% effective (Statista Research Department, 2021).

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Philippine government introduced the "Basic Online Learning and Distance Education Act of 2020," amending the Enhanced Basic Education Act to include provisions for distance education (Eighteenth Congress, 2020).

At institutions like PHINMA University of Iloilo, the transition to remote and distance (RAD) learning has presented both opportunities and challenges for students. While some have benefited from the flexibility of RAD learning, others have encountered issues such as internet connectivity and lack of face-to-face interaction. This study aimed to assess the

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opportunities and challenges presented by RAD learning and ultimately contributing to an enhancement program that would benefit not only the students but the institution as a whole.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the underlying processes of the mixed- method approach and discusses the parts namely: Research Method, Research Design, Participants of the Study, Sampling Design, Research Instrument, Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument, Data Gathering Procedure, and Data Analyses

Research Method

The study employed a mixed-method research approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively examine the opportunities and challenges of the Remote and Distance (RAD) Learning Modality as a basis for an enhancement program. The descriptive research method was utilized to systematically present and interpret the experiences of students using RAD learning, while qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews to explore their personal insights, struggles, and benefits in this mode of education.

In line with this, the study explored the students' opportunities and challenges in utilizing the RAD learning modality. The findings served as a foundation for developing an enhancement program to improve the implementation of remote and distance learning, ensuring a more inclusive and effective educational experience.

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Research Design

The study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the opportunities and challenges of the Remote and Distance (RAD) Learning Modality as a basis for an enhancement program. The quantitative component focused on identifying the opportunities students experienced in using the RAD learning modality, utilizing a structured survey to collect numerical data that could be statistically analyzed. This approach allowed for an objective assessment of the benefits students gained from remote and distance learning.

Meanwhile, the qualitative component employed a phenomenological approach to explore the challenges encountered by students in using RAD learning. Specifically, the study utilized the Husserlian phenomenological approach, as proposed by Edmund Husserl (as cited in Christensen, Welch, & Barr, 2020).

Participants of the Study

The study had a total of 35 respondents from PHINMA University of Iloilo who were enrolled in the Remote and Distance (RAD) learning modality for the Academic Year 2024-2025. Five (5) students were selected from each course, namely: Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BSBA), Bachelor of Elementary/Secondary Education (BEED/BSED), Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT), Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM), Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM), Bachelor of Science in Psychology (BSPsych), and Bachelor of Science in Criminology (BSCrim).

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Inclusion Criteria:

1. The respondent must have been enrolled in PHINMA University of Iloilo for the Academic Year 2024-2025.
2. The respondent must have been enrolled in the Remote and Distance (RAD) learning modality.

Sampling Design

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique used in research to select specific individuals or cases for inclusion in a study based on their unique characteristics or because they possess information essential to the research objectives. Unlike random sampling methods, purposive sampling relied on the researcher's judgment and expertise to choose the participants or cases that best served the research goals. This approach was particularly useful when the researcher aimed to explore specific, targeted populations or gain in-depth insights from experts or individuals with particular experiences.

Research Instrument

The researcher employed a self-made questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide as research instruments to collect data on the opportunities and challenges of the Remote and Distance (RAD) learning modality. The questionnaire was designed to assess the opportunities students experienced in RAD learning, while the interview guide aimed to

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explore the challenges they encountered. Both instruments served as the basis for developing an enhancement program.

The researcher-developed questionnaire consisted of two (2) sections. Part I focused on the demographic profile of the respondents, including their course, mode of work, type of work, and place of work. Part II contained structured questions designed to measure the challenges provided by RAD learning.

Validity of the Research Instrument

The validity of an interview guide refers to whether it accurately measures what it is intended to measure. Ensuring validity is crucial in research to obtain reliable and meaningful results (ResearchMethod.net, 2023). The research instrument underwent a validation process to eliminate ambiguities in the questions and to maximize the possible responses from the participants.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher identified the respondents of the study based on the established criteria. A total of 35 students enrolled in the Remote and Distance (RAD) learning modality at PHINMA University of Iloilo for the Academic Year 2024-2025 were selected using a purposive sampling technique.

Only consenting volunteers who completed the informed consent form after reading the research information sheet were permitted to participate in the study. The participants were informed about the nature, purpose, benefits, and potential risks associated with their

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involvement. Additionally, their rights as respondents were clearly stated, including confidentiality and the option to decline or withdraw from the study at any time.

Since the study employed a mixed-method research design, data collection involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher-administered questionnaire focused on assessing the opportunities of RAD learning, while an in-depth interview guide was used to explore the challenges encountered by students. The questionnaire was distributed to the selected respondents, and their responses were collected for statistical analysis. Meanwhile, the qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, which were recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed for thematic analysis.

The responses provided by the participants were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including frequency distributions, percentage distributions, mean, and Kruskal-Wallis test. All data collected were treated with strict confidentiality and were systematically organized, analyzed, and interpreted by the researcher. The findings were then discussed to derive meaningful conclusions and recommendations for the proposed enhancement program.

Data Analyses

The data collected in this study were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods, aligning with the mixed-method research design. The quantitative data, which focused on the opportunities of Remote and Distance (RAD) learning, were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including frequency distributions, percentage distributions, mean, and Kruskal-Wallis test. These statistical analyses allowed the researcher

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to determine patterns, relationships, and variations in the opportunities presented by RAD learning. For the qualitative aspect, the data gathered from the in-depth interviews on the challenges of RAD learning were transcribed, interpreted, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2021), is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was conducted to determine the opportunities and challenges of Remoted and Distance Learning (RAD) Modality as a basis for enhancement program.

The research method utilized in the study was a mixed method; a combination of quantitative and qualitative design.

The study used phenomenology under qualitative research design.

The participants of the study were 35 students from PHINMA University of Iloilo under the remote and distance learning (RAD) modality.

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made survey and interview guide.

The information gathered was analyzed using statistical tool and thematic analysis.

The following are the findings of the study:

The transition to Remote and Distance Learning (RAD) Modality has reshaped the educational landscape, offering both opportunities and challenges for students at PHINMA University of Iloilo. This study aimed to assess the students' experiences, focusing on their level of opportunities, encountered challenges, coping mechanisms, and potential

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VI, Issue III

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enhancements to improve the implementation of RAD learning. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, the research provides valuable insights into how students navigate this learning environment.

The findings highlight the varying levels of access and preparedness among students, the common obstacles they face, and the strategies they employ to adapt to remote education. Furthermore, recommendations for improvement are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of RAD learning and support students in achieving academic success despite the limitations of online education. The following summary presents the key results derived from the study.

The study found that students at PHINMA University of Iloilo generally perceive Remote and Distance Learning (RAD) as offering high opportunities despite challenges like internet connectivity and time management. Students value online learning for its flexibility, allowing them to balance education with other responsibilities. Psychology students reported the highest perceived opportunities, while Criminology and IT students had the lowest, likely due to the hands-on nature of their courses. Employment status also influenced perceptions, with full-time workers and those in the service industry seeing greater opportunities compared to those in BPO or virtual assistant roles, suggesting that structured work environments positively impact learning experiences.

No significant differences in perceived opportunities were found based on course, work mode, or job type, indicating that RAD learning provides equitable opportunities across different demographics. However, students faced challenges such as internet issues, difficulty understanding lessons, time management struggles, and lack of motivation. To address these,

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they relied on self-motivation, time management, peer and teacher support, technological resources, and problem-solving strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study have significant implications for the continuous development of Remote and Distance Learning (RAD) at PHINMA University of Iloilo and similar institutions.

The high perceived opportunities across different student demographics suggest that RAD is an effective and inclusive mode of education, particularly for working students. However, the challenges identified—such as internet connectivity issues, difficulties in understanding lessons, and time management struggles—underscore the need for institutional interventions to enhance student support systems.

The lack of significant differences in perceived opportunities across courses and employment conditions implies that online education can be an equalizing force, but this does not mean that all students experience it in the same way. Skill-based courses still require innovative solutions to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical learning, while students in high-demand jobs need better accommodations to manage their workload alongside their studies. Institutions must invest in technological infrastructure, flexible learning policies, and interactive teaching strategies to maximize the benefits of RAD while addressing its limitations.

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Insights

Students in Remote and Distance Learning (RAD) face challenges such as internet connectivity issues, difficulty understanding lessons, time management struggles, and lack of motivation. To cope, they rely on self-motivation, effective time management strategies, peer and teacher support, technological resources, and problem-solving skills. Limited internet access remains a barrier, emphasizing the need for stable and affordable services. Understanding lessons is another struggle, highlighting the importance of engaging instructional strategies like multimedia content, recorded lectures, and real-time academic support. Time management difficulties suggest that institutions should provide flexible scheduling and workload adjustments, while lack of motivation calls for interactive learning environments through gamification, virtual collaboration, and regular instructor check-ins.

Students' ability to adapt, develop critical thinking skills, and utilize digital tools indicates the growing need for flexible and well-supported online learning. The findings emphasize the importance of improved infrastructure, instructional enhancements, and engagement strategies to make RAD more effective. To address these concerns, the implementation of the RAD Enhancement Program at PHINMA University of Iloilo aims to improve internet accessibility, instructional methods, time management support, and student engagement. Through institutional collaboration and continuous assessment, RAD can become a more inclusive, efficient, and student-centered educational approach.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Equitable learning experiences remain essential, and institutions should tailor instructional strategies accordingly for different work environments. For students with high screen time demands, shorter lessons, audio-based learning materials, and offline resources can help reduce screen fatigue and maintain engagement.

To enhance RAD, institutions should prioritize internet connectivity, adopt diverse teaching strategies, and provide guidance on optimizing study environments. Regular student feedback mechanisms should be established to continuously refine learning strategies. To enhance students' learning experiences and success in RAD, institutions should integrate self-motivation and resilience-building programs into their curriculum, offer time management and productivity training, encourage collaborative learning through peer mentoring programs, ensure easy access to digital learning tools, and design activities and coursework that develop problem-solving and adaptability skills.

A structured enhancement program should be developed to improve digital infrastructure, train faculty on innovative teaching strategies, and establish continuous feedback mechanisms for refining RAD learning practices. The full details of this enhancement program can be found in the appendix of the study for further review and implementation.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of RAD learning on students' academic performance, skill development, and overall well-being, and focus on a broader population with diverse academic institutions, geographical locations, and socioeconomic

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backgrounds. Qualitative research can also provide insights into students' struggles and coping strategies.

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VI, Issue III

February 2025

Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



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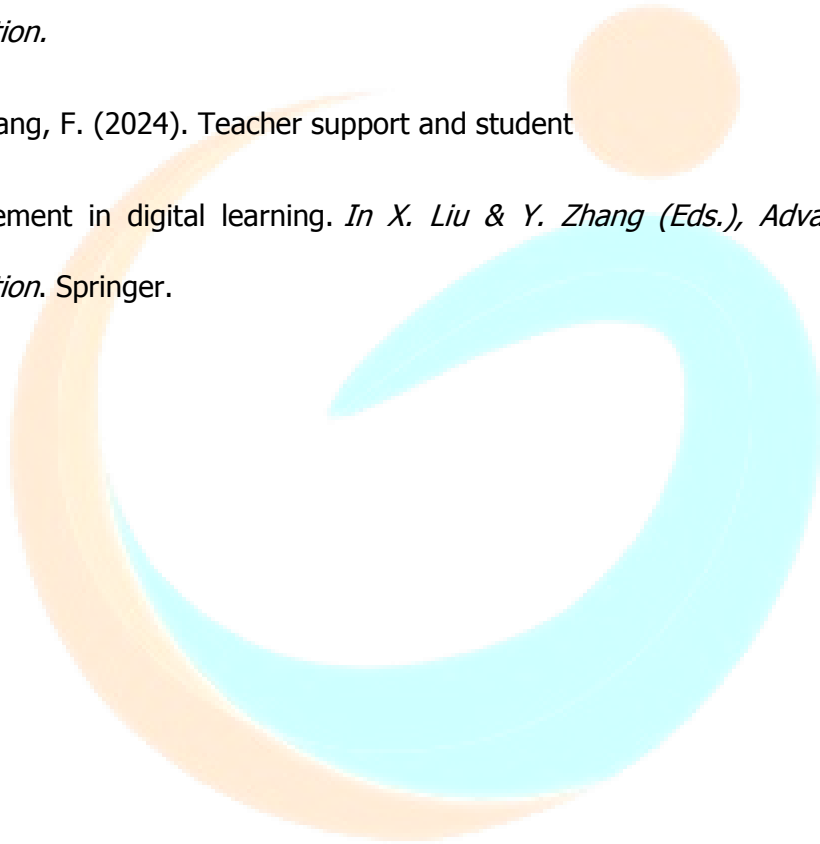
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