

**FACEBOOK MESSENGER SYNCHRONOUS (FAMES) INSTRUCTION:
A PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION IN IMPROVING MODULAR DISTANCE
LEARNING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH**



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ABSTRACT

Modular Distance Learning had been the most prevalent learning modality in the Philippines during the Covid19 pandemic. However, as reflected in their test scores and grades, students struggled in this modality due to the lack of student-teacher interaction which is an essential factor in the teaching-learning process. Hence, an intervention must be put in place to foster student-teacher interaction even during distance learning.

This study was conducted to explore the efficacy of utilizing the most widespread and accessible messaging application in the Philippines, Facebook Messenger, as a learning management platform for synchronous instruction in distance learning during the Covid19 pandemic. In this study, a quasi-experimental research design was employed to 40 Grade 7 students of Jacobo Z. Gonzales Memorial National High School for the academic year 2021-2022. A pretest was administered before the intervention. After that, a posttest was conducted. Results revealed that the pretest scores were statistically different from the posttest scores which means the intervention, Facebook Messenger Synchronous (FaMeS) Instruction, improved the academic performance of students compared to those that were taught using pure modular approach. Therefore, the utilization of Facebook Messenger as a synchronous learning platform instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic is beneficial to learners and teachers

Keywords: Facebook Messenger, Synchronous Instruction, Distance Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

In a normal classroom setting, interaction between teachers and their students are crucial to students' academic performance (Quin, 2017). Interacting with students face to face enables teachers to gauge motivation, engagement, and understanding which are facets of learning that are more difficult to determine from a distance (Zweig & Stafford, 2016). However, in March of 2020, schools across the country were forced to discontinue face to face learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and students transitioned from classroom instruction to online distance learning, modular distance learning or a combination of both. This event posted a limitation in teacher-student interaction.

In the Philippines, Modular Distance Learning (MDL) is the most prevalent learning modality. In this modality, the students are provided with self-learning modules in a quarterly basis. They then answer these modules at home on their own or with the aid of their parents.

In a focus group discussion (FGD) conducted by the English Department of Jacobo Z. Gonzales Memorial National High School (JZGMNHS), it was found out that the students were struggling in modular distance learning because the self-learning modules' contents and instructions were not sufficient for them to fully understand the topic and achieve the target most essential learning competencies. This is evident in their summative tests, performance tasks' results and grades in the first and second quarter which are relatively lower than their Online Distance Learning (ODL) counterparts.

In the aforementioned FGD, it was also found out that majority of the students in JZGMNHS have access to Facebook and its messaging application, Facebook Messenger,

since it is free and accessible even without mobile data. This is the main method of communication used by teachers to deliver instruction to their students. However, the researcher noticed that FB messenger is mainly used to give instructions, share files, videos, audio recordings or website links. The use of Facebook messenger as a platform for synchronous classes has not been explored. The researcher believes that maximizing the use of Facebook messenger as a synchronous learning instruction will boost teacher-student interaction. The effective and productive use of technology in delivering a lesson manifests the success of the teaching and learning process (Gepila Jr., 2020).

By conducting synchronous classes in Facebook Messenger, the teacher can assess the utilization of this platform in teaching instruction. The results of the study will allow the teacher/researcher to discover best practices and areas of improvement which are essential in planning lesson delivery in the new normal. Furthermore, it can also determine whether the strategy can be adopted and utilized by colleagues to improve the teaching-learning process.

METHODOLOGY

The participants for this research are Grade 7 students of Jacobo Z. Gonzales National High School. The researcher conducted the research among two MDL classes she is handling for the academic year 2021-2022. Twenty (20) students for the experimental group and twenty (20) students for the control group were used as the subjects of the study. These students are under Modular Distance Learning. They were utilizing self-learning printed modules as their primary learning materials. The students were gathered from regular sections which means they are heterogeneously sectioned.

This research utilized purposive sampling technique. The researcher selected a sample most useful to the purpose of the research. This sampling technique is the most appropriate technique to be used for the conduct of this study as the population is very small and specific.

The research instruments used by the researcher are self-made pre-test and posttest, and Facebook Messenger. The researcher prepared lesson plans that were carried out in synchronous classes using this platform. The researcher focused on the most essential learning competencies covered in the fourth quarter.

After gathering the necessary data, the researcher statistically analyzed the pretest and posttest results through the help of her statistician. To determine the significant difference in the post test scores between the control group and experimental group, the independent t-test was calculated through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Meanwhile, significant improvement from the pre-test to posttest scores of the experimental group was analyzed using the paired sample t-test.

RESULTS

The study sought to explore the effectiveness of Facebook Messenger synchronous instruction in the academic performance of Grade 7 students under the modular distance learning in Jacobo Z. Gonzales Memorial National High School. Specifically, the following results were gathered:

Table 1: t-test analysis of the difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Experimental Group	20	21.8500	3.43779	38	-7.637	0.001
Control Group	20	12.5500	4.22368			

The significant difference between the Post-test scores of the two groups presented in Table 1 shows that there is a highly significant difference in the post-test scores because of the use of Facebook Messenger Synchronous Instruction. Results from the t-test for the dependent population revealed that the p-value (0.001) was less than the α -value of 0.050. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The posttest scores of the students in the experimental group who were taught using Facebook Messenger instruction has a mean score of 21.85 which is relatively higher than the control group's mean score of 12.55. This goes to show the impact of synchronous learning and the importance teacher-learner interaction in education.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the improvement from the pre-test to post-test scores of the experimental group

Experimental Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Pre-test	20	7.6500	2.36810	19	14.447	0.001
Posttest	20	21.8500	3.43779	19	28.424	0.001

Table 2 indicates that there is a highly significant improvement in the academic performance of research subjects who utilized Facebook Messenger Synchronous Instruction in distance learning. Their academic performance is supported by the computed results of the t-test for the

independent population revealed that the p-value (0.001) was less than the α -value of 0.050. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Prior to the intervention, students under the experimental group have a mean score of only 7.65. After the intervention, their mean score increased sharply to 21.85 which displays a huge improvement in scores and translates to better academic performance. It can be ascertained that the students' academic performance has highly improved due to their exposure to the said strategy. Since knowledge sharing via the internet helps learners and teachers switch roles whether in sharing common goals to improve the quality of learning outcomes (Ganapathy, Kabilan, & Devi, 2020), it can be safely implied that teaching using social learning is as useful as the various learning management systems in existence.

DISCUSSION

The results imply the students learn better when they use Facebook Messenger Synchronous Instruction in learning as compared to pure modular learning because of the interactive communication not only with their teachers but also with their classmates. They were able to share insights using the different Facebook Messenger functions such as recording their voice or sending a video message with each other during synchronous instructions which is not present in the pure modular learning. This also reduced the barriers to learning and the anxiety they are experiencing from being isolated by allowing students to work together effectively (Chaka & Govender, 2020).

Furthermore, the experimental group was given more opportunity to

collaborate which is essential in learning. Collaboration provides opportunities such as absorbing different perspectives of knowledge (Woods and Chen, 2010) and simulating more creative ideas (Makransky & Wismer, 2019).

Facebook was not created purposely for educational purposes. However, it can be used as a virtual environment for discussions and knowledge sharing (Kurtz, 2014). This application can be a great tool for learning management system (LMS) because it promotes interaction among the students and teachers through its group functions (Wang et al., 2011). This platform fosters collaborative learning among students and enables sharing of resources and learning materials, helps in developing critical thinking, communicative, and writing skills, encourages active participation, and creates a positive attitude towards learning (Ractham & Firpo, 2011).

Facebook Messenger is found to be one most accessible social media platform in the Philippines. Hence, the use of this platform is highly recommended for teachers and educational instructors. It can be utilized not only as a platform to send materials and post announcements and instructions but also a platform for synchronous instruction wherein the teacher and students can interact together real time.

Although, education in the Philippines has now shifted to face-to-face learning, future disruptions are inevitable such as when a class, a year level, or the school may need to temporarily shift to distance learning due to Covid19 infection. The Philippines is also prone to natural disasters which may disrupt class schedules in the future. The utilization of Facebook Messenger synchronous

instruction will be especially useful in these situations.

Similar studies maybe conducted to further explore the effectiveness of Facebook Messenger on a larger population, different demographics, and situations. Qualitative research is also recommended to examine the students' perceptions on the effectivity if the intervention as well as gather information regarding the issues or problems they encounter in using this platform for learning.

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