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## THE EXPERIENCES OF CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS IN THE MODULAR AND ONLINE LEARNING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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### Abstract

*The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a global shift to modular and online learning, prompting this study to explore the lived experiences of criminology students in these new modalities. This qualitative phenomenological study explored their lived experiences. Using Colaizzi's thematic analysis, eight key themes emerged: Unavailability of Learning Resources, Academic Adversity, Adapting to New Normal, Collaborative Learning, Psychological Distress, Poor Time Management, Effective Time Management, and Resiliency and Positivity. Findings revealed that most students faced considerable difficulties and psychological distress due to the abrupt educational system change. However, they also demonstrated remarkable resilience, often leveraging collaborative learning and developing effective time management strategies. This research highlights the critical need for government investment in digital infrastructure, expanded internet access, collaboration between educational institutions and technology companies, increased teacher training, and continuous monitoring of modular learning's impact to inform future policy adjustments.*

**Keywords:** modular, online learning, pandemic, skills, coping mechanism.

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic brought widespread fear and anxiety globally, significantly impacting the Philippines. As case numbers surged, strict lockdowns were imposed, limiting movement and leading to the closure of public establishments and schools to contain the infection. The year 2020 marked a profound period of

struggle for the Philippines, as the virus severely affected the nation's economy, health, culture, and education. Due to the escalating threat and rising infections, the government enforced a continuous ban on face-to-face classes. Consequently, educational institutions halted all on-campus activities to ensure public safety

(Filho et al., 2021). Despite initial opposition, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) adopted a flexible blended learning model. CHED (2020) defines flexible learning as "learning interventions and program delivery that take into account the learner's unique needs and may or may not involve the use of technology." In the Philippines, this primarily manifested as Online Distance Learning (ODL) and Modular Distance Learning (MDL). Notably, many parents and students favored ODL, hoping that increased teacher-student interaction would ensure effective learning.

Nolasco (2022) differentiates between synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous learning requires students to attend virtual classes in real-time, allowing for live interaction with classmates and instructors. Asynchronous learning, conversely, provides access to online portals with lessons and materials, enabling self-paced study without live discussions, though recorded videos may be available. Amidst the pandemic's uncertainty, CHED commissioned Jose Rizal Memorial State University (JRMSU) in Zamboanga del Norte to develop a novel assessment system for student learning outcomes in the 'new normal.' This system, once finalized, is intended to serve as a national model for other state colleges and universities. Furthermore, JRMSU secured a CHED grant to develop "flexible assessment in the context of Bangsamoro Higher Education" (Laput, 2021).

In a Rappler interview, Anito underscored the timeliness of developing a flexible student assessment system given the significant disruptions caused by COVID-19. He emphasized that these changes align with CHED's initiatives to prepare higher education institutions during the K-12 transition, stating, "Let us use this disruption to adapt to major disruptions to what we know as normal because we never know what will happen after COVID-19. Let's use our experience now." Anito also noted JRMSU's student population of 20,000, with a vast majority (95%) opting for modular classes and only 5% for online. He anticipated a further increase in enrollment due to free education, stressing the institution's responsibility to uphold students' right to quality education and justify the government's substantial investment in their future.

A study by Dargo and Dimas (2021) concluded that learners' academic performance decreased following the implementation of Modular Distance Learning (MDL), suggesting that face-to-face instruction remains more effective and preferred by students. Their findings highlighted more negative than positive effects of MDL. Specifically, the absence of an interactive teacher-learner relationship often led to reduced student interest and a reluctance to independently explore their potential. Students' inability to ask real-time questions to their teachers resulted in insufficient processing of module content and limited explanations. Furthermore, some learners reportedly relied heavily on answer keys within their self-learning modules, sometimes even copying errors, raising concerns among teachers about the authenticity of student work and their genuine comprehension of the material.

Granfon's (2022) study on JRMSU students also illuminated both positive and negative experiences with modular distance learning. Positive aspects included the flexibility to study and work concurrently, fostering self-reliance, discipline, and improved time management skills. Students also appreciated the opportunity to learn independently without excessive reliance on instructors. Conversely, challenges encompassed difficulties in retaining and

understanding module topics, unstable internet connections, issues with laziness and time mismanagement, environmental and social media distractions, and insufficient motivation, assistance, or feedback from instructors. Notably, collaborative learning proved highly beneficial and effective for most respondents.

Nolasco (2022) suggests that while distance learning has a long history in education, its implementation during pandemics presents unique challenges. Despite this, with technological advancements, distance learning holds considerable promise. To fully realize its potential, Nolasco emphasizes the importance of understanding the experiences of students, teachers, and stakeholders within this setup. This includes identifying the specific benefits and drawbacks of this modality during the pandemic, which is crucial for developing effective recommendations to enhance future distance learning offerings.

While modular and online learning offers significant student flexibility, it also introduces various inherent difficulties. To comprehensively understand the circumstances of students who opted for these learning modes, this study aims to explore their lived experiences. Specifically, this paper will investigate the effects of modular and online learning on students, the challenges they encountered, and their overall difficulties and struggles throughout the pandemic period.

## Literature Review

### Cognitive Learning Experiences

*Learning Issues in the Learning Modality.* According to the findings of Olamo et al. (2019), motivation is a challenge for distance learning students. The modular curriculum has not been implemented successfully in Ethiopia's three public universities due to various obstacles. These involve learners who lack basic knowledge and are uninterested in studying, making teaching and learning difficult. Administrators and educators are never committed to performing their roles in the application and operation of the modular course in education.

*Social Learning Experiences. Communication with instructors.* In the report of Adonis (2021), virtual lessons are nothing like the interaction between students and teachers in physical classrooms. Students' problems cannot be completely addressed through an online learning approach. The lessons are difficult for both parents and students to grasp. In-person classes are among the casualties of the pandemic-ravaged educational system. Even parents and experts agreed that face-to-face learning in classrooms is still the best way to learn.

*Communication with peers/classmates.* Meanwhile, Zayapragassarazan (2020), states that any national crisis will always have an effect on education. During times of crisis, students' right to an education is jeopardized. As a result, students must exert increasing amounts of effort in order to learn. Students in the online mode of learning have more options for their learning, allowing them to take more responsibility for their own learning. The author also stated that students learned using Zoom, Google Classroom, e-mail, YouTube, and other online platforms. Furthermore, students formed e-learning circles or groups in which they interacted with one another to discuss various topics via social media.

### Emotional Learning Experiences

*Mental Health Problems.* According to study of Liu et al., (2020), students identified the feelings of stress, anxiety, loneliness and

depression as the mental health effects of the pandemic. Students may experience stress due to increased pressure to perform independent learning and abandoning their usual routines, which can lead to psychological consequences such as anxiety, depression, difficulty sleeping and stress eating. As clinical placements had to be cancelled, this could exacerbate students' loneliness, in addition to setting apart from their usual social contacts in schools or colleges as added by Loades et al., (2020).

*Time Management Concerns.* According to Plaxton (2017), many students regard procrastination as the greatest impediment to time management because it causes them to prioritize what they enjoy over their work. Some students have extremely busy schedules that include school, homework, housework, social life, and/or other extracurricular activities. As a result, homework and schoolwork are frequently neglected, and they will substitute something more enjoyable in order to have more freedom in the rest of their schedule.

### **Adversity Skills**

*Self-Motivation and Coping Mechanism.* Priorities and responsibilities have a very strong relationship. Croyle (2017), states that "responsibility is what is required, and priority is when it is required." Every student should invest more in education. Education was defined in two ways by Welvaert (2018). Education as a consumption good in which you gain knowledge and satisfaction about yourself, and education as an investment good in which he coined that education is the best investment a person can have in his/her life and choosing a course that has a higher percentage of demand in the future would make the investment more worthwhile. He also proposed that education is an investment with a guaranteed return in the future.

### **Adaptation of Modular and Online Learning**

*Affecting the learning of students.* Modular and Online Learning both have positive and negative impact to students. A common thought that most of the students find struggle on adapting this kind of setup, especially those who are under privilege and has a low learning capacity. One of those who are greatly affected to this are those who lived in rural areas because they lack of power supply, internet connectivity, financial difficulties and inadequate technical skills. The learnings during the conduct of modular and online learning to idling students are poor because they always procrastinate. They experienced culture shock in preparing themselves to learning online and inside their house. It was identified that students cannot focus well because of some errands inside their home. Countless students also experienced mental health issues/crisis because of the isolation. As a result, most students only comply to their school requirements without really learning and understanding the lesson. They also copy their classmates' work or paraphrased to make it look that it wasn't being copied.

On a positive note, hard-working and practical students regard modular and online learning as an opportunity by learning alone. They can access to soft copy modules which can be useful to them. They also control the time as to when will they pass their school works without pressuring from the deadline. They can hang out with their friends and family for their well-being. It was also found out that high level of correlation was evident between attitude and performance was done of some students. If they answer their school works keenly, they have a high chance of improving their performance.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of students in modular and online learning during the pandemic. Phenomenology is widely employed in social science research to describe individuals' lived experiences.

### **Participants**

The study was conducted within Jose Rizal Memorial State University–Dipolog Campus in Dipolog City, Zamboanga Del Norte, focusing specifically on student-participant. Ten (10) students from the College of Criminal Justice Education were purposely selected based on their direct involvement and diverse experiences with modular and online learning during the pandemic.

### **Data Collection**

Interviews were conducted one-on-one in a private and agreed-upon setting within the university, ensuring a comfortable and conducive environment for open discussion. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed accounts of students' experiences during modular and online learning. A mobile recorder was used to accurately capture and transcribe the interview data.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All participants provided informed consent, and their confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

### **Data Analysis**

For data analysis, the researchers employed the Colaizzi's Thematic Analysis. This involved transcribing the interviews, thoroughly reading and rereading the transcripts to grasp their overall meaning, extracting significant statements, formulating meanings from these statements, organizing the meanings into clusters of themes, and finally, developing an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study. The researchers then conferred to ensure the validity and reliability of the generated themes based on the common responses from the informants.

## **Results and Discussion**

This chapter presents, analyzes and interprets the data collected. Problems are arranged in accordance with the objectives of the study.

### **Experiences of the Criminology Students on Modular and Online Learning**

After analyzing the data collected, the researchers come up with eight (8) emergent themes that describes the experiences of the informants during the modular and online learning. Subsequently, listed below are the eight (8) emergent themes:

#### **Problems Encountered**

1. *Unavailability of Learning Resources* with cluster themes internet connectivity issues, gadget unavailability issues and financial constraints. The first theme discusses the problems faced by the informants from their experiences on the modular and online learning. It is undoubtedly evident that these problems are encountered by most students who partaken the new normal education. To strongly support this theme, one informant remarked the following:



Participant 3 said:

I experienced difficulties due to having no internet connection in our home (P3:SS3).

Participant 6 added that:

Daghan nag lisud, kay dili tanan naay cell phone dayon ulahi tanan sa mga update sa maestra/maestro. *(There are a lot who faced challenges because there are some who are unprivileged of not having cell phones and they are tend to be outdated with their instructors (P6:SS86)).*

Numerous studies conducted in the Philippines revealed some divergent attitudes toward internet connectivity and the use of gadgets or devices for online learning. A strong internet connection was one of the three obstacles and difficulties that students faced when learning online, according to a study by Fabito et al. (2021). Another related idea from Casillano (2019) stated that only a small percentage of students have access to the internet, which prevents them from using the e-learning platform. According to a different study, underprivileged students have poor internet connections and don't own laptops or desktop computers (Cleofas & Rocha, 2021). According to Jin and Sabio (2018), mobile device use can be utilized and customized for learning.

Students may need to be resourceful even when they have access to the internet away from home, according to Gierdowski (2021). While some students go to great lengths to find a reliable Wi-Fi connection, others are unable to leave and are forced to forgo the service if it is interrupted. Most students have access to a dependable device for school, usually a laptop, but not all of these devices are capable of supporting remote learning. The most frequent device-related issue, according to students, was missing a remote class session or a deadline. One or more of these excuses was that they didn't have access to their main computer, that it wouldn't function, or that their device lacked the capabilities necessary to complete a task for a class.

The abrupt and unanticipated global shift to online education created challenges in a number of areas, including access to online systems, teacher and student competency in distance learning pedagogies, and the demands of particular academic fields (Marinoni et al., 2020). For instance, low- to medium-resource nations like India have experienced significant issues with restricted internet access Dutta (2020), while Toquero (2020) describes the suspension of distance learning in the Philippines as a result of HEIs' lack of readiness to implement online learning systems. Similar financial challenges were reported by HEIs in nations with strong internet connections when purchasing tools and online licenses (Marinoni et al., 2020).

**2. Academic Adversity** with cluster themes learning comprehension issues, reliance of internet information, difficulties of self-learning and lack of learning facilitator. The second theme describes the challenges encountered by the informants as to their learning experiences during the conduct of the modular and online learning. The new normal education made a huge impact to the students' learning abilities. It is discovered that this kind of setup showed dilemmas to students' level of comprehension. To support this assertion, one informant annotated that:

Participant 2 said:

I encountered a lot of challenges because I could not understand the module by myself or by self-study without proper teaching by my instructor (P2:SS22).

Participant 6 added:

Lisud gyud kaayu kay gamay ra gyud atung makat unan unlike sa face-to-face naay motudlo, pasabton ta ug maayo sa lesson. *(It is very difficult because we only learn less, unlike in face-to-face there is an instructor who will teach us and to help us in understanding the lesson (P6:SS116)).*

According to the results of Bustillo and Aguilos (2022) that unstructured interviews revealed that the majority of students struggled to complete the tasks because of numerous obstacles. These include issues with internet connectivity, insufficient learning materials, a lack of understanding of the module's contents and assessment instructions, an unfavourable learning environment, too many remote learning tasks, and mental health issues. This study also showed that as we used this new remote learning system mode, the digital divide in the nation became more obvious.

As previously mentioned, a lack of reliable internet access has occasionally resulted in decisions to postpone or cancel certain academic activities (Toquero, 2020), and it has also made it challenging to offer students the same opportunities for learning in all countries, even those with middle- and high-income levels (Marinoni et al., 2020). Additionally, the closure of schools has had a negative impact on families, increasing the need for technology and the internet while also stressing out parents (Daniel, 2020; Garbe et al., 2020). Similar to this, COVID-19 has caused financial and employment problems for many households (Brooks et al., 2020). Working students also experienced negative financial effects because they reported declining pay, weekly hours, and job offers (Aucejo et al., 2020).

### Challenges on Adapting The New Normal Education

**3. Adapting to the New Normal** with a cluster theme adapting to change in educational system and coping issues. The third theme exhibited the engagement of the informants on the new normal education. It expresses the adaptation of the students who still choose to continue studying despite the widespread of the deadly virus. It also remarked on how the modular and online learning being established.

Participant 1 said:

Paras akua kay ready nalang kay no choice man. makalitan jud ta kay gikan ga face to face dayon nag college ta na online og modular. So less kaayo Ang nahibaw -an. *(For me, I had no choice but to be ready instead. I was surprised that I had to experience online and modular learning and learned less during that time.) (P1:SS21)*

Participant 9 added that:

I just adapted to it in a way and allowed myself to just go with the flow. What I mean was that, if it looked to me as a hard process I just kept reminding myself, "This is just temporary and everything will be fine. So I can do this!" I thought of these words all the time (P9:SS19).

According to the study by Essel and Owusu (2017), the majority of human life is adapting to changes in order to fit the environment and avoid difficulty. This is because we live in a technologically advanced world. Not only do these changes impact people, but also institutions. Computers, the internet, and information technology in general have greatly benefited schools and students in particular. On the other hand, it has also led to issues for some students. The

majority of students are unable to connect to a reliable internet connection or use a computer effectively for academic purposes. And regrettably, the majority of the curriculum in today's schools uses computers, which presents students with a number of difficulties and discomforts that eventually lead to thinking and stress.

Moreover, Essel and Owusu (2017) asserted that an increase in class workload stresses out students because they become frustrated when given more work than they can handle, which makes it difficult for them to concentrate and think clearly. A student's workload can also contribute to their stress levels because they may not have enough time to complete all of their coursework to their fullest potential if they are taking a lot of demanding courses at the same time. And after that, the student starts to think a lot more and becomes stressed out. And this will have a significant impact on the student's academic performance.

**4. Collaborative Learning** with cluster themes learning with peers/friends, guided learning by instructors and equal deadline of submissions. The fourth theme elucidates the experiences of the informants on how they gained and applied their learning. It discusses the different ways of how the informants collect information and on how they deal with their time on studying during the modular and online learning. The discourse revealed that the informants shared the same most of their experiences.

Participant 4 said:

So, it is overwhelming for me as I am able to meet my friends and express and share our thoughts and ideas with instructors and with our classmates (P4:SS94).

Participant 7 added that:

It feels good because you can learn right and there is already the presence of a teacher who will help you can make memories with your classmates (P7:SS97).

As stated by Anselmo et al. (2023) that students and teachers have the chance to work together in the collaborative learning process to explore meaning, comprehension, and solutions to challenging issues or ideas. Through the facilitation of active learning strategies and activities, the instructor can encourage students to engage with one another and share their varied viewpoints in order to explore the course material and their own experiences in a variety of ways. Instructors can support students in articulating and applying their learning alongside course lectures and extending meaningful discussions inside and outside of the classroom by using collaborative learning activities to promote active and emergent work within a course. The amount of time spent on collaboration both in and outside of the classroom varies among collaborative learning activities and approaches.

As stated by Vangie (2020), Google Classroom is a free tool for teachers and students to collaborate. Teachers can set up an online classroom, invite students, and then make and assign homework. Students and teachers can discuss the assignments in Google Classroom, and teachers can monitor the progress of their students. According to Liu and Chuang (2016), Google Classroom was also used to facilitate interactions between a teacher or professor and a student or students in the virtual world.

#### Effects of Modular and Online Learning

**5. Psychological Distress** with a cluster theme mentally and emotionally challenged. The fifth theme describe the effects of

modular and online learning. Actually, it doesn't scorn that most people during the pandemic are being mentally and emotionally challenged. The level of mental issues during the isolation increase and ones being targeted are the students. The media proclaims that it would be of great benefit to the citizens that they can spend their time with their love ones during the pandemic but it turns out the other way round. It only increases their level of anxiety plus the isolation only made it worst.

Participant 8 said:

Internet problems, lisod sabton ang lessons, maka hatag ug stress and anxiety ug walay gana kay agis environment puros sugo sa balay na divide na ang task. (*Internet problems, difficulty of understanding the lessons, having stress and anxiety, and having no energy because of the environment and lots of behest inside the house that was the reason why the task was divided* (P8:SS28).

Participant 3 added that:

I encountered sleepless nights because the allotted time for a project was not enough (P3:SS23).

This theme is corroborated by the study of Lim et al. (2022), the lockdown quarantine protocols in the Philippines have shifted the traditional college classes to online. Because of the constant isolation and lack of interaction with fellow students and lecturers, the abrupt move to online classrooms may have psychological consequences for college students. Some college students are also exposed to the role of social media. Social media exposure to COVID-19 may be a factor in college students' mental health, specifically their stress, depression, and anxiety. Despite these acknowledged facts, little is known regarding the impact of online learning and social media exposure on the mental health of college students in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings of Azmi et al. (2022) also support this theme by finding out that there are three-fourths of university students experienced various depressed symptoms, with half experiencing moderate to severe depression. The study found that a monotonous virtual (online) learning technique, stress, exam anxiety, and decreased productivity were all connected with greater sadness. Approximately half of the kids had greater depression. The findings also revealed that female students suffered more extreme melancholy, stress, and exam anxiety than males.

Due to potential negative effects on children's and youths' mental health (Schwartz et al. 2021), the psychological impact of the pandemic is particularly in the spotlight, and experts in the field of mental health warn about the potential effects of the pandemic on stress-induced disorders (Horesh and Brown 2020). In the context of higher education, the pandemic has a direct impact on learning experiences that are an integral part of students' daily lives, including various difficulties with online learning (Barrot et al. 2021). Despite the fact that distance learning is not a new educational method, the pandemic made it the preferred choice for academic staff and students everywhere. Additionally, according to Filho et al. (2021), both academic staff and students suffer from the effects of social isolation when higher education institutions are locked down. It could be said that this situation, which has been ongoing for almost two years, is a prolonged crisis with potential long-term consequences.

**6. Poor Time Management** with a cluster theme procrastination. The sixth theme had conferred that procrastination is a bad habit which most students commonly practice. Laziness is a top tier on dealing with procrastination. Objectively, distractions

may also affect the student's responsibilities and what satisfies them will always be their first choice instead of doing something on which they think that they can do later on. Most students do not foresee or care about the consequences of their own actions that's why procrastination is being glued to their existence.

Participant 7 said:

The things I have encountered during the modular learning was that the signal was so slow and I was having hard time also in answering the modules because I had many things to do in our house. And also I'm having difficulties managing my time (P7:SS27).

Participant 4 added that:

Because some of the students were prone to temptation especially in using gadgets and playing mobile games which led them to neglect their responsibilities as students. (P4:SS84)

According to Dr. Knaus (2022), lack of sleep, worsening academic performance, chronic procrastination, poor food, and an increased risk of dropping out are the most typical consequences of poor time management skills among college students. Students are late for class, rush through tasks, and produce lower-quality work as a result. This can result in increased stress and worry, as well as low self-esteem.

Based on the findings of Alfonso et al. (2018) academic procrastination is the practice of delaying or deferring academic work until the very last minute. Most university students experience this phenomenon, and it is becoming more common. We investigated whether giving university students more time to complete an assignment encourages or discourages procrastination in order to analyze potential causes and/or solutions. The findings indicated that procrastination was a common trait in both the short- and long-term time-frame groups. Additionally, because procrastination was the same across groups, academic grades did not reveal any differences between them. This study thus demonstrates that even when given more time to complete a task, university students still have a tendency to put it off, which appears to have a negative impact on their assignment grades. Therefore, it seems a current problem and measures should be developed in order to solve it.

### Coping Strategies

**7. Effective Time Management** with cluster themes attained study habits and effective time management itself. The seventh theme focuses on the positive note of the informants' experiences during their time on studying online and in modular. If there is poor time management then there is also effective time management which is only peculiar to student's habits. It's quite surprising that there are also students who are practicing time management during pandemic. To elaborate this one, one informant states that:

Participant 5 said:

Adjust to the new normal in my own way or nag create ug schedule para ma manage ang time ug tanan. (*Adjust to the new normal in my own way by creating schedule to manage my time and everything* (P5:SS15).

Participant 8 added that:

Nag practice ug time management Kay perting ka daghan sa trabahoon ug himuonon kung pa saya-saya ras oras. And also gina divide ang mga task, gi organized

kumbaga. (*I practiced time management because there were lots of household chores to be done. Instead of just wasting my time, I divided and organized all the task* (P8:SS18).

According to Nasrullah and Khan (2015), effective time management is essential because it has an impact on a person's success and general performance. However, all of these are linked by how people organize their time to adapt their daily lives or make it go according to plan. In addition to the excellent instruction they receive from their teachers, students will undoubtedly benefit from supportive environments and surroundings. However, one of the elements that can affect a student's academic performance is time management. For academic success, time management is essential. Some students, however, struggle with time management, which negatively affects both their personal and academic lives.

According to Angkarini (2021), the spread of the COVID-19 corona virus forces traditional face-to-face learning activities to be replaced by virtual meetings in a variety of online applications. Students must modify their learning habits in order to use this new learning system, which differs from traditional face-to-face instruction. The findings showed that female students had better study habits than male students, particularly in time management, being engaged in learning activities, being able to locate learning resources and references, and having a general ability to take notes. Male students, however, are better prepared than female students. This article's discussion also includes a significant portion of the study's implications.

**8. Resiliency and Positivity** with cluster themes resilience despite struggles and foreseeing good outcome. The eighth and last theme presents the positivity of the informants despite their challenges and struggles during the pandemic. The informants chose to be resilient because of their dreams and aspirations. Aside from that, they also want to be successful to be able to help themselves and their love ones. The informants find an inspiration to continue studying despite the situation they had during the pandemic.

Participant 7 said:

I still choose to continue so that the time will not be wasted then I need to study even though it is hard at least I tried (P7:SS127).

Participant 6 added that:

Kay kuan man naa man tay panganduy na ma success ug naay stable na work (*It is because we are aspiring to be successful and have a stable work* (P6:SS126).

The perceptions of faculty and students regarding the transition to online learning during COVID-19 were looked at by Bartusevien et al. (2021). Resources, support, and competencies were the factors that were felt during the transition. The University's transitions and the three capacities—anticipation, coping, and adaptation—were tracked. The most important findings were that building resilience required access to resources, ongoing professional development, constant communication with teachers and students, support networks, adaptation, and knowledge base building.

From a student-centric perspective, Beale (2020) concentrated on academic resilience and identified variables like self-efficacy, coordination, sense of control, composure, and perseverance. It is possible to hypothesize that some of these factors also focus on

institutional resilience. Similar to this, Sánchez Ruiz et al. (2021) examined students' perceptions of a university's educational resilience and discovered that blended learning methodologies aided the university's resilience and enhanced learning quality. Prior to the pandemic, systems where blended learning was implemented had higher student perceptions of resilience and adaptation.

The study by Rahiem (2020) came to the conclusion that these emerging adults were autonomously motivated and dedicated to their studies on both an intrinsic and extrinsic level. The majority of these students were driven by their consequential aspirations rather than by a controlled drive or by a rule, punishment, or incentive that propelled them. The researcher's investigation into the experiences of the students revealed that despite all the obstacles they encountered, the students maintained a positive attitude and continued to advance in their learning (Rahiem, 2020). Despite all the obstacles and difficulties, they encountered, the students continued to eagerly participate in the online courses, work on assignments, and maintain their grades.

It was discovered that the students were facing difficulties during the conduct of modular and online learning. The most common factor that greatly affect students was inadequate learning. Criminology students faced such dilemmas on learning during the pandemic. It shows that learning alone is not enough for them and that having guidance from the instructors is what they need for better understanding of their learning material. It was also discovered that most criminology students are having internet connectivity issues and lack of academic resources like cell phones and laptops which is a need on online classes and passing of requirements. Moreover, being financially unstable makes it more difficult to them as it affects their learning opportunity to gained knowledge. The results revealed that the criminology students are not exempted on having psychological distress because of the isolation. Having poor time management and distractions was a burden to them as it results to procrastination. Even with such puzzled life, the criminology students' instilled thoughts in their mind to achieve their desired goals. They remain resilient and passionate with their dreams and make it as their backbone to continue school despite the struggles they have encountered. Their aspirations draw a significant role to explore greener pastures and for the advancement of their learning opportunities.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study offer a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and adaptations faced by students navigating modular and online learning during the pandemic, as elucidated by eight emergent themes. Unavailability of Learning Resources and Academic Adversity were significant hurdles, indicating that students often lacked essential materials and struggled with the core demands of their coursework in the remote setup. This was compounded by Psychological Distress, highlighting the detrimental impact of the new learning environment on students' mental well-being, likely exacerbated by feelings of isolation and uncertainty. Furthermore, issues with Poor Time Management underscore a common difficulty in self-regulated learning, where the absence of traditional structures made it hard for students to organize their study schedules effectively. Despite these considerable obstacles, students demonstrated remarkable capacity for Adapting to New Normal, indicating their efforts to adjust to the changed educational landscape. Collaborative Learning emerged as a vital coping mechanism and a positive aspect,

showing that peer interaction and mutual support were instrumental in overcoming individual learning gaps and fostering a sense of community. Critically, the theme of Effective Time Management suggests that while some struggled, others successfully developed the necessary skills to navigate their academic responsibilities efficiently. Most notably, Resiliency and Positivity proved to be a powerful underlying factor, reflecting students' ability to persevere, maintain a hopeful outlook, and find inner strength despite the unprecedented challenges. In essence, while modular and online learning presented profound academic and psychological stressors, students exhibited significant adaptive capabilities, with peer collaboration and personal resilience playing key roles in their perseverance through this challenging period.

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