Phenomenologizing the Experiences of Social Studies Teachers in Modular Distance Learning Among Indigenous Peoples (IP) Students

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Abstract

This study explored the experiences of social studies teachers in conducting modular distance learning among Indigenous Peoples (IP) students. A transcendental phenomenology research design based on the Moustakas Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen process was utilized to generate the themes that emerged based on the findings. Six social studies teachers deployed in the indigenous communities of Tarlac were purposively selected through inclusion criteria. Four themes emerged following the statement of the problem: (1) lived experiences in conducting modular distance learning among IP students; (2) support given by stakeholders to social studies teachers in conducting modular distance learning among IP students; (3) reasons behind social studies teachers' persistent dedication and commitment to modular distance learning; and (4) recommendations participants would offer to improve modular distance learning among IP students. Based on these findings, the study recommends that teacher education institutions provide pre-service teachers with the required skills and understanding of new normal education trends. Similarly, educational leaders should provide an opportunity for pre-service teachers to contextualize lesson plans, instructional methods, and assessments. It also suggests that local government units and non-governmental organizations collaborate to provide more resources and equipment for module reproduction and distribution.

Keywords:

COVID-19 pandemic, indigenous people, modular distance learning, social studies

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a significant transformation in educational practices, leading to a paradigm shift in learning modalities. For most Filipinos, the Department of Education revealed that the printed modular learning modality is highly favored among all other distance education approaches. A contributing factor to the phenomenon is the limited internet accessibility in households. This approach is highly practical as it eliminates the need for parents and learners to purchase gadgets or devices, especially if their financial situation cannot support it. Modular distance learning (MDL) allows students to utilize printed self-learning modules (SLM) and modules that can be accessed digitally or through electronic devices, depending on the learner's needs, along with additional learning resources such as learner's materials, textbooks, activity sheets, learning guides, and other study materials (DepEd, 2022).

In the context of modular distance learning, the concept of a physical classroom has been replaced by the notion that every home has become a center of learning. Hence, a significant transformation has occurred in the role of teachers, wherein they have transitioned from teaching in a traditional face-to-face setting to conducting remote instruction, which involves new roles such as producing, disseminating, and retrieving self-learning modules and monitoring students' progress (Nacar, 2021).

Although efforts have been made to ensure that education may continue despite the pandemic, the sudden shift in teaching roles has challenged teachers. Several studies found that teachers struggle to produce, disseminate, and retrieve self-learning modules (Acala & Castroverde, 2021; Cabardo & Mabida, 2022). Moreover, teachers faced challenges in ensuring learners' achievement of subject competency and mastery. Research revealed that there are malpractices of parents answering their children's modules, which results in uncertainty in learners' attainment of learning goals. This phenomenon shows that teachers' experiences in modular distance learning should be understood to equip prospective teachers with better delivery of the modality (Alcala, 2021).

Of great challenge are the teachers deployed among IP communities since, even before the pandemic, non-IP teachers assigned to Indigenous communities were already experiencing difficulties and challenges. Despite the increased interest in exploring the experiences faced by teachers deployed in Indigenous Peoples communities, more research needs to be undertaken. For instance, Dilla et al. (2020) explored that the teachers deployed in far-flung communities of Nueva Ecija experienced struggles with transportation and work shifts. Palicte (2020) described the challenges faced by the teachers reaching out to the schools of Indigenous Peoples' communities. Although these studies focused on teachers' experiences working in Indigenous Peoples communities, these were not conducted in light of the COVID-19 modular distance learning setup. This study, then, shows that more empirical research needs to be conducted and analyzed.

Hence, this study explored the lived experiences of social studies teachers in modular distance learning among Indigenous peoples' students. Through this exploration, the study shed light on the challenges and opportunities teachers face in delivering education to Indigenous students through modular distance learning. This process contributes valuable insights to the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal No. 4, which aims to achieve inclusive and equitable educational quality for everyone. Also, the findings prompt educational leaders to look into the challenges encountered by teachers sent to remote places. Hence, this study will serve as a basis for developing a framework for re-evaluating and refining teacher education programs.

Purpose of the Research

This study explored the lived experiences of social studies teachers in conducting modular distance learning among IP students. Specifically, this paper sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of social studies teachers in conducting modular distance learning among IP students?

2. How is the support given to social studies teachers by the stakeholders in conducting modular distance learning among IP students?

3. How do Social Studies teachers describe their persistent dedication and commitment to modular distance learning?

4. What recommendations would the participants offer to improve modular distance learning among IP students?

Framework of the Study

This phenomenological inquiry argues that social studies teachers' experiences in modular distance learning are manifestations of challenges, implying the need to improve the learning modality and gearing up prospective teachers' essential skills to facilitate the indigenous peoples' students better. This argument is anchored on the theories of distance learning and instruction. Distance Learning theory is characterized as a patchwork of concepts and practices borrowed from more conventional classrooms and imposed on students who are geographically isolated from

their teachers (The Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 2001). On the other hand, Instructional theory is employed to understand mechanisms for promoting improved educational instruction. The inquiry is centered on the lens of the teachers and how they uphold relevant ways to facilitate learning and make the instructional process more beneficial for students (Wiesen, 2022).

In this study, Distance Learning theory is utilized to understand the dynamics of modular distance learning, specifically in its implementation, checking, and monitoring by social studies teachers among IP people's students. Given the geographical distance inherent in modular distance learning, teachers may encounter more challenges than traditional face-to-face classes, demanding further exploration and analysis. Meanwhile, instructional theory plays a crucial role in understanding how social studies teachers deliver effective instruction through modular learning, particularly by aligning it with the distinct learning needs of IP students, which includes exploring how teachers integrate culturally relevant content and utilize personalized instruction to address the learning styles of IP students.

Methodology

This study utilized transcendental phenomenology, a systematic data analysis approach that aims to achieve a deeper understanding and depiction of the significance of lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994, as cited in Creswell, 2013). The design attempts to depict participants' experiences regarding the phenomenon rather than relying on the researcher's interpretation. This research design allowed the study to discover more participants' experiences and perspectives in modular distance learning among IP students.

Following Moustakas' principle of employing a limited number of participants in transcendental phenomenology, the researchers purposively selected six social studies junior high school teachers of indigenous peoples in Tarlac. The participants were selected for the study based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) currently employed as a junior high school social studies teacher; (2) must be in service in pre-pandemic; (3) must have at least one (1) Indigenous People (IP) student; and (4) utilizing a printed modular learning modality for teaching social studies.

The data-gathering procedure, instrument validation, and interpretation were conducted between February and April 2022. The researchers utilized focus group discussion, which allowed them to gather in-depth information about participants' experiences. Three experts validated the questionnaire instrument used to ensure the reliability and validity of each question. Adhering to the safety procedures set by the Inter-Agency Task Force among COVID-19 Alert Level 1 areas, the researchers conducted a face-to-face and online focus group discussion among six identified social studies junior high school teachers in the mountainous region of Tarlac.

In line with the ethical duties necessary in the data collection of this study, the researchers asked for consent from the participants in the study. Before participating in the study, participants are provided with information regarding the research, followed by their decision whether to participate or decline. They are asked to consent to recording the interview and are informed that all data collected will be used exclusively for research purposes. The participants' information is kept confidential by maintaining anonymity throughout the data collection, analysis, and disclosure of the study findings. The researchers provided each participant a pseudonym to keep their identity confidential since participation is entirely voluntary, and no incentives would be provided.

The researchers secured and protected all the recorded interviews, private information, and participants' identities through an encrypted file. Hence, the information that is gathered is not manipulated.

In terms of analyzing the data, this study examined the gathered data by analyzing the focus group discussion transcripts from the finished sessions with the study's participants. The study employed Creswell's (2007) simplified Moustakas's (1994) Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen process to analyze the collected responses. This process encompasses several vital steps, including the description of participants' experiences with the phenomenon, bracketing, the identification and listing of significant statements, the coding and clustering of these statements to identify common themes, the creation of textural descriptions to capture the essence of the experiences, the development of structural descriptions to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, and

the integration of these descriptions to form an in-depth description of the essences. The study findings were sent to the participants to cross-examine the interpretation and validity of the gathered data.

Findings

Following the interpretative phenomenological analysis, four themes emerged following the statement of the problem: (1) lived experiences in conducting modular distance learning among IP students; (2) support given by stakeholders to social studies teachers in conducting modular distance learning among IP students; (3) reasons behind social studies teachers' persistent dedication and commitment to modular distance learning; and lastly, (4) recommendations participants would offer to improve modular distance learning among IP students.

Table 1

Codes, Sample Verbatim Responses, and Clustering of Themes

Codes and Sample Verbatim Responses	Subthemes	Main Themes	Description of Themes
"It gets to the point that we also actually provide for module printing." (Divine Grace)	Burden of Cost	***Theme 1: Social Studies Teachers Lived Experiences in Conducting Modular Distance Learning among I.P. Students.***	Printing self-learning modules requires fully functioning printers, which, in the case of the Social Studies Teachers, were not.
"Most of the time, about the printer, we use our personal printer because the printers in the school are not working properly." (Little Dreamer)			
"Some students' parents passed modules five weeks after the deadline since they were distant from the school. That is why we were forced to deliver the modules, which are approximately 30 minutes of travel if you are riding a tricycle." (Little Dreamer)	Distance as a hindrance		The distance of the school from the I.P. community contributed to making the dissemination and retrieval of the self-learning module an additional challenge among teachers.
"Sometimes, there are parents who cannot get the modules because they are living far away from the school." (Divine Grace)			
"Even though we want them to get digital, they also have no signal and no means of load allowance." (Little Dreamer)	Poor Network Connections		
"They either have slow or no connection in their area, so they cannot pass."(Lovely Stellar)			Due to the poor internet connection, Social Studies teachers find communicating difficult among I.P. students.

"If it were only done here at school, there'd be a real lack of time for checking, especially now that there are face-to-face classes." (Little Dreamer)	Lack of Time		Lack of time is due to the overwhelming demands of checking the students' activities that they are required to accomplish at home.
"We are unsure if they really learn or if their parents learn from the modules." (Earnest Bright)	Malpractices of Students		Students are reliant on their parents to answer the modules.
"I cannot finish answering questions from students on my messenger, especially when they see that I am active." (Earnest Bright) *"There are some cases that are unavoidable, even at night, where there are students who will ask. Even at midnight, someone asks. We still entertain them." (Sunshine Joy)*	Working Beyond the Call of Duty		Teachers will have to entertain questions about the modules even after school hours.
"Although parents are busy, they find time to go to school and raise their concerns. "(Lovely Stellar)	Parental Support	***Theme 2: Support given by the stakeholders to social studies teachers in conducting modular distance learning among IP students.***	Parents' active roles are essential for the learners and teachers. It is the task of the parents since they are with their children most of the time.
"Regarding the reproduction of the self-learning module, the Local Government Unit donated a photocopier machine, and there are also bond papers." (Lovely Stellar) *"The Local Government Unit has a continuity plan. The projects of the LGU, like the scholarship, are a huge help, especially for our I.P. students. They have given educational supplies and transport assistance" (Earnest Bright)*	Provisional support		It is the assistance the Local Government Unit provides to I.P. students and the implementation of modular distance learning.

"Many people are telling me to stop teaching, but I don't mind them because I know deep within my heart that I enjoy being a teacher, and I feel fulfilled seeing my students improve." (Earnest Bright)	Teaching as a Passion and Happiness	***Theme 3: Reasons behind Social Studies Teachers' Persistent Dedication and Commitment to Modular Distance Learning.***	Passion and happiness serve as fuel for teachers to pursue their careers.
"Students' smiles illuminate their determination to learn and their dedication to finish their studies despite the challenges they may experience. I draw inspiration from them." (Lovely Stellar) *"Even if life were so poor, learners would still attend school regardless of having no allowance." (Sunshine Joy)*	Persistent Dedication of I.P. Students to Learn		Students' consistent dedication inspires teachers to remain steadfast despite the challenges posed by the learning modality.
"The I.P. student can better understand the lesson when you relate the lesson to their culture or their way of living." (Lovely Stellar)	Localization of Curriculum for the I.P. Students.	***Theme 4: Recommendations participants offer to Improve Modular Distance Learning among IP Students.***	It is making the curriculum close to the heart and culture of the I.P. learners.
"Whenever we do home visitations to our I.P. learners who live in the mountainous area, I always motivate them to persevere on their studies- to read and finish their modules. I, myself, have already witnessed how hard their life is daily. That is why I try my little way to keep them motivated despite their life struggles." (Hopeful Merry) *"Teachers should be motivated, too. Like our students, we also experience many challenges in this pandemic. We risk ourselves to fulfill our duties and to serve the learners. Apart from that, we also share the burden of adjusting to the new learning setup." (Lovely Stellar)*	Moral Support for I.P. Students and Teachers		Moral support is as important as financial support. Giving the learners and teachers motivation and inspiration helps them cope with the circumstances.

"To our I.P. community, please continue and do not get tired of providing assistance and necessary support to our I.P. learners. Also, continue the partnership and communication established with the teachers." (Lovely Stellar)	Community Partnership and Communication	Community partnership in supporting and assisting enables I.P. students to continue their education as a basic right.

The study identified 22 significant statements, from which 13 formulated meanings were derived. The 13 formulated meanings were grouped into four, which emerged as four themes.

Based on the responses, participants experienced a lack of resources for printing self-learning modules. Distance has been identified as a problem teachers face in disseminating and retrieving self-learning modules. Also, teachers often run out of time to check off the activities they need to finish the rest of their work at home. In addition, the queries they receive from their students are not heavily time-bound, so they need to work beyond the call of duty.

Nonetheless, there has been support identified among the stakeholders. The parents are responsible for communicating concerns regarding the modules, giving the utmost guidance, and monitoring the students' progress. In the case of distance as a hindrance in reaching the IP learners, the community has been very active in deliberating modular distance learning. Meanwhile, the local government units provide photocopier machines among identified schools to support the reproduction of learning materials.

Regarding the reasons behind the persistent dedication and commitment to modular distance learning, teacher-participants consider teaching a passion and a source of happiness. That is why they look at their current situation on a positive note. Despite their current challenges in the learning setup, they could see the brighter side of it. They feel more motivated when their students strive toward their education.

Discussion

This section discusses the findings and data analysis from the focus group discussion administered to the six Social Studies junior high school teachers deployed in the Indigenous communities of Tarlac. For confidentiality, participants were given code names or pseudonyms (Earnest Bright, Little Dreamer, Hopeful Merry, Divine Grace, Sunshine Joy, and Lovely Stellar).

Social Studies Teachers Lived Experiences in Conducting Modular Distance Learning among IP Students

Lived experiences describe an individual's engagement and knowledge of their society. The shift from traditional face-to-face learning to distance learning has significantly impacted the lived experiences of teachers, especially those currently deployed to far-flung areas.

Burden of Cost

The sudden shift to modular distance learning has prompted the deficit in the equipment needed to provide modules, which obliges teachers to carry the cost of producing modules. Three study participants experienced providing their way and means to print the self-learning modules since the available printers at their school are no longer working properly. Bernardo (2020) reported that the Department of Education had been bombarded with complaints that teachers needed funds to prepare for the implementation of modular distance learning. Consequently, some teachers have covered costs from their pockets, while others have asked for donations on social media (Arroyo, 2020). Hence, it necessitates stakeholders' involvement and support in providing materials and equipment needed to produce modules to alleviate teachers' burden (Herrera, 2022).

Distance as a hindrance

One of the significant challenges faced in modular distance learning is the distance and transportation going to Indigenous communities since they are simply hard to reach. The participants said that although parents are responsible for receiving and returning the modules to school, they are forced to deliver the printed self-learning modules to the indigenous communities, which takes 30-40 minutes to travel from their school. The findings indicate that the delays in disseminating and retrieving self-learning modules stem from the problem of transportation and distance. Estella Cariño, director of the Department of Education's office, mentioned that one of the most difficult challenges for the teacher during modular distance learning is the distance between students' homes and the type of road they must travel. Thus, the collaboration between stakeholders and teachers is crucial in addressing the challenges and concerns encountered in the new normal in education (Guiamalon et al., 2021).

Poor Network Connections

Technology has become helpful in distance learning since it provides many platforms on which teachers and learners are not required to be physically present to communicate. For most of the participants of this study, while they want to digitalize the modules for easier dissemination, retrieval, and monitoring, network signals on IP communities are weak. This disparity makes it impossible for indigenous people to communicate with their teachers in times when they need guidance. Hence, Khateeb et al. (2020) purport that effective communication is crucial in delivering education, especially in distance learning. By fostering strong communication, students can be well-guided in answering their modules.

Lack of Time

In modular distance learning, teachers are bombarded with many tasks, from teaching and assessing to printing, disseminating, and retrieving the modules, monitoring, and checking the activities. Four participants of this study have experienced doing overtime and even taking home to check the Learning Activity Sheets, especially since the Department of Education started the limited face-to-face classes. News (The Manila Times, 2021) found that the majority of teachers, or 85.2 percent, said workloads had increased. Consequently, time deficiencies in more critical tasks, such as monitoring and facilitating the learning achievements of their students, might give little attention. Hence, teachers must employ various methods to address the difficulties. Castroverde and Acala (2021) found that teachers employed diverse strategies to address the difficulties associated with modular distance learning during the pandemic. These strategies include effective time management, innovative teaching approaches, flexibility, and provision of alternative plans, optimism, patience, and acquiring the requisite skills for the new normal educational practices.

Malpractices of Students

Malpractice is the incompetent, wrong, or unethical behavior of someone executing a task (Britannica Dictionary). When the participants were asked about their experiences with checking the Learning Activity Sheets, they said they were uncertain whether the students answered the modules. Fernando (2020) found that many parents agree to answer their children's modules because they cannot wait for them to work. In these circumstances, the value of honesty is wholly overlooked. The behavior of relying on parents is encouraged. Laziness is encouraged, and a lack of learning drive needs to be addressed. The statements shared by the participants indicate that there is no concrete approach to ensure the performance of students in modular–based assessments, which calls for a concrete policy and guidelines (Arzaga, 2023).

Working Beyond the Call of Duty

Because of the pandemic, there is a greater need for flexibility and more time for student-teacher interactions. According to the participants, they have set a schedule for a consultation where students can freely reach out to them through social media sites or text and call. However, there are instances in which the students reached out even beyond the schedule. This instance is evident that even though teachers faced challenges in their profession, their persistent dedication and hard work in the new learning setup sparked a different kind of appreciation among them. Hence, it also indicates the need for proactive measures to be taken to ameliorate the excessive workloads of teachers, as they are often observed to go above and beyond the call of duty (Tarraya, 2023).

The stakeholders support social studies teachers in modular distance learning among IP students.

In education, stakeholders typically refer to anyone invested in the welfare and success of the school and its students.

Active Role of Parents

In modular distance learning, teachers are the parents, and home functions now as the school. According to some participants, parents play an essential role in the success of this new learning modality and possess a great responsibility to ensure the continuity of learning even at home. Although they are working, they still find a way to support their child and the school. Teachers have identified parents' active communication with the teachers as the key to the success of Modular Distance Learning. Malabarbas et al. (2022) found a correlation between parents' involvement in modular distance learning and their children's academic performance, thus implying that parents should be heavily involved in modular learning activities. Their guidance is crucial to the success of distance education.

Provisional Support by the Local Government Unit

Most participants shared that the Local Government Unit has been very supportive and provided aids that help them reproduce the modules. Meanwhile, five participants mentioned a scholarship program provided and offered by the Local Government Unit. In addition, most of the study participants said that the Local Government Unit had provided transport services to reach the IP community, particularly those students who were delayed in disseminating and retrieving Self-Learning Modules. Department of Education reported that there are initiatives that were taken by the local government units (LGUs) in response to the new learning modality, which involved the identification of appropriate learning modalities tailored to specific locations, the provision of printing machines to facilitate the production of learning modules, and the establishment of partnerships with internet providers to ensure improved connectivity (DepEd, 2021).

Reasons behind Social Studies Teachers' Persistent Dedication and Commitment to Modular Distance Learning.

Teaching as a Passion and Happiness

Teacher participants have acknowledged the challenges associated with modular distance learning. Despite these obstacles, they remain unfazed by pressure to quit teaching IP students. Instead, facing these challenges increases their fortitude, offering them a sense of happiness. Moreover, they perceive it as an opportunity to make a difference in their student's lives while being passionate about teaching.

Salary dissatisfaction and heavy workloads are nothing compared to the incomparable fulfillment gained from seeing students achieve their dreams. The swift transition from physical classrooms to different learning modalities demands sacrifices and additional effort (Baloran & Hernan, 2020). However, handling these challenges becomes easier with burning passion and a positive attitude towards teaching. Without a doubt, a teacher's passion affects both teaching and learning. Motivated teachers are dedicated to helping their learners reach their full potential in learning (Celik & Yildiz, 2017; Mustafa, 2017). Thus, love for the profession is substantial for continued commitment to successful teaching and modular learning implementation (Mart, 2013).

Persistent Dedication of Learners

The unwavering dedication of learners in learning positively impacts teachers' motivation to uphold modular learning. Based on the study results, most participants asserted that students struggle to pursue modular learning due to their challenging living conditions, limited means, and adversities brought about by the pandemic. They face limited access to schools, receive lower-quality education, and lack the same opportunities as non-indigenous students (Wodon & Cosentino, 2019). Many struggle to meet educational demands due to low income, with some working at a young age merely to support their studies. Consequently, as per Buenaflor et al. (2023), despite limited resources among IP students, they are eager to learn and find ways to continue their studies. Witnessing students improve academically inspires teachers to stick to their profession, finding it extremely encouraging when IP learners continue their

education despite obstacles. Therefore, students must receive financial assistance and emotional support to meet their needs and ensure a high-quality education (Pidgeon et al., 2014). More committed, driven students will result from this, impacting the teacher's dedication to their work.

Recommendations the participants would offer to Improve Modular Distance Learning among IP Students

Localization of Curriculum for the IP Student

Localization is making something local or making it relevant to a particular place; it is the entire process of adapting content to a specific location, market, or audience. In this study, participants all emphasize the necessity of a localized curriculum for IP students, ensuring the relevance of curriculum content to their unique needs. James et al. (2013) revealed the importance of content rooted in teachers' cultural and geographic contexts. Hence, curriculum developers working in IP Education should consider including input from Indigenous Peoples' representatives, as they have the primary knowledge about their history, cultural background, and identity. Moreover, they must ensure the IP community participates in localization processes (Nataño, 2023).

Furthermore, universities and colleges should consider creating teacher education programs, training, and seminars focusing on IP education. These resources would serve as an essential preparatory venue for future educators to be fully equipped to handle multicultural classes and provide them with knowledge of the pedagogical approaches required for effective instruction utilizing culturally responsive methodologies (Reyteran, 2021). Similarly, the postcolonial approach to education burdens IP students as both learning materials and methods of teaching and instruction were not culturally adaptive to their language. This necessitates an urgent need to start the process of pedagogical liberation to address these disparities and ensure quality education for Indigenous students (Eduardo et al., 2021)

Moral Support for IP Students and Teachers

The success of modular distance learning relies not only on the deliberation and retrieval of modules but, more importantly, on teacher-learner cooperation. As mentioned, their cooperation plays a significant role in improving modular distance learning. Hence, motivating the learners to continue striving for learning and remain steadfast despite their challenges is crucial.

According to Joseph (2023), teachers must recognize that the living conditions of Indigenous students often differ significantly from those of students in more mainstream families, and most of them undergo challenging and unfavorable situations. This highlights the need to show students empathy, consideration, and motivation to feel included and inspired rather than burdened. Lei et al. (2018) underlined that teacher support can be vital to students' academic development, including learning and affective or emotional outcomes. Likewise, the emotional well-being of teachers is also essential. They have been experiencing more difficulties since the implementation of modular distance learning. From merely evaluating academic achievement and assessing student performance, they also had to constantly seek students' engagement and provide them with emotional support. Hence, the study suggests the need for moral and emotional support for IP learners and teachers among educational leaders through integrating mental health programs led by counselors or professionals.

Community Partnership and Communication

Communication and cooperation are integral to modular distance learning, especially for the local government and local community of IP. The cooperation of these two is indeed needed for the improvement and success of modular distance learning (Guiamalon et al., 2021).

The majority of teacher-participants have encountered a plethora of challenges in the implementation of modular distance learning among Indigenous People (IP) students. To effectively address these difficulties, it is imperative to establish and maintain continuous partnerships, assistance, and communication between the local government unit, community, and teachers. Constant communication with community partners is essential, particularly concerning the students' limited resources that hinder their ability to engage comfortably with their studies (Gross et al., 2015).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study explored the lived experiences of social studies teachers in conducting modular distance learning among IP students. With the findings and suggestions of this study, educational leaders will have a research-based framework on how to deal with modular distance learning among indigenous students in the advent of any related situation that calls for the modular distance learning modality. This is accurate, notwithstanding the gradual change away from fully face-to-face instruction toward implementing modular distance learning. Specifically, the study's findings can be used to improve modular distance learning among IP students and as a framework for re-evaluating and enhancing teacher education programs.

The significant findings derived from this study indicate that although teachers face challenges in modular distance learning among IP students, they remain persistent and committed to their work. These findings confirm and contribute to instructional theory, which entails different ways they employ to make modular distance learning more beneficial for IP students.

Moreover, the restriction of face-to-face interaction forced the need for distance learning, dramatically affecting social studies teachers' instruction, checking, and monitoring among Indigenous people (IP) students' achievement of desired learning outcomes. This finding is linked to the theory of distance learning, which emphasizes the need to understand the dynamics of modular distance learning to better cater to the needs of IP learners.

From these findings, some necessary recommendations can be drawn. Since there are many changes and adjustments in the educational system, which creates various challenges among teachers deployed in far-flung areas, academic leaders and institutions should provide teachers and pre-service teachers with the required skills and understanding of new normal education trends. They should incorporate new trends in education into subjects in professional education. Pre-service teachers should engage in topics that focus on utilizing modules, developing instructional design, and effective communication strategies.

More significantly, tertiary educational institutions that offer teacher education courses must place equal emphasis on enriching educational content about indigenous people's culture. Thus, they must provide an opportunity for pre-service teachers to contextualize lesson plans, instruction methods, and assessments.

This study focuses solely on the lived experiences of social studies teachers deployed in indigenous communities using a modular distance learning modality. The data was gathered from the six participants currently deployed in the indigenous communities of Tarlac. This study did not consider the teachers not included in the population. Given the limited focus on social studies teachers in this research study, it would benefit future researchers to expand their participants to teachers from various fields. This would offer a more comprehensive understanding of different perspectives and provide valuable insights. Moreover, for future researchers who might have the same interest, it is highly recommended that they do a similar or relevant study determining the effectiveness of modular distance learning modality among IP learners utilizing quantitative research design. The gaps that must be filled for its effective delivery will be bridged even more successfully.

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