

Online Teaching Experiences of Maritime Professors in the New Normal

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Asia Pacific Journal of Academic Research in Maritime Education

Vol. 7 No. 1, 44-49

June 2021

P-ISSN: 2423-2033

E-ISSN: 2467-513X

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www.apjme.apjmr.com

Abstract – This research intended to shed some light with regards to the experiences of maritime professors of The Lyceum International Maritime Academy (LIMA), towards teaching online in the new normal. LIMA is one of the premier pioneer schools in the Philippines that provides quality maritime education through state-of-the-art facilities and offers suitable training for aspiring maritime cadets with the help of qualified and experienced instructors. As such, LIMA has quickly adapted to current needs and fully transitioned to online learning as early as March of 2020. This study made use of the comparative method of research. This study has a total of 65 participants. They consist of 31 professors teaching Professional Maritime courses at the LIMA and 34 General Education professors. The study found no significant difference on the online experiences of maritime professors when respondents were grouped into profile variables. It was revealed that Online teaching demands reliable technology and innovation in the use of online materials. When teaching online vs in a regular classroom, the respondents disagree that fewer resources are used. A wireless router was used by the majority of the marine professors. It was recommended for Maritime professors y may use this study to develop further an effective online teaching strategy to improve online teaching quality.

Keywords – Innovation, Online Experience, Technology, Pandemic, Professors .

INTRODUCTION

The breakout of the global COVID-19 pandemic has triggered consequential changes in a majority of educational institutions and systems worldwide. With the outbreak of the coronavirus, the need for quarantine measures have forced many countries to adopt social distancing policies which has led to the physical shutdown of businesses and educational institutions. With the lack of physical learning, most schools have turned to online education, inducting a dramatic change through which teaching is shouldered remotely through online digital platforms. For a vast majority of the world, this is a relatively new experience for both professors and students in the new normal.

While the world goes into quarantine, there are 1.2 billion students in about 186 countries that are affected by the pandemic due in no small part to their schools closing physically [1]. The role of technology has played a vital part in continuing the educational learning of students. While the pandemic is ongoing, people are forced to adapt to the new normal of online learning and teaching. Some educators were concerned in using technology to communicate and transmit knowledge to their students. While others had difficulty and low technological literacy in using online tools to

collaborate with their students. However, regardless of technological literacy, everyone was obligated in learning and mastering it for the sake of education.

While some traditional classroom learnings transmit well enough to an online climate, knowledge in usage of current online applications are needed for educators to be fruitful in online learning. Specialists have examined web-based learning capabilities needed for online educators. Notwithstanding, certain requirements are needed to explore the sort of level and skill needed among educators to perform different parts in web-based learnings which are dependent on sound strategies.

The emergence and continuous development of the world-wide web has connected the world in many ways which have made learning online possible. With this, numerous instructors and analysts are keen on finding out the effects of remote online education so that they might augment as well as refine learning outcomes, all the while combating the reduction in resources [2]. Moreover, there has been a significantly recorded increase in the development of online education. This expanding utilization has led various researchers to examine the benefits and advantage of using online modules in educating students compared

to traditional classroom learning. Using profile variables such as gender, age, network connection, gadget used, and faculty status, this research intended to shed some light with regards to the experiences of maritime professors of LIMA, towards teaching online in the new normal. LIMA is one of the premier pioneer schools in the Philippines that provides quality maritime education through state-of-the-art facilities and offers suitable training for aspiring maritime cadets with the help of qualified and experienced instructors. As such, LIMA has quickly adapted to current needs and fully transitioned to online learning as early as March of 2020.

The growth of online education has become increasingly accepted within the last two decades. A growing majority of higher education institutions believe that this method of instruction will be essential for higher education going forward. Growing financial issues that are facing institutions, as well as rising student debt, have compellingly shifted the focus of many colleges and universities towards an increased usage of online modules. Multiple studies have been undertaken to determine the efficiency of online schooling with regards to variegated aspects. These studies have pinpointed and probed crucial issues that have an effect on the quality of remote teaching such as unequal distribution of technology and gadgets, interaction between teachers and students, pedagogy, as well as various assessments. Currently, the online teaching situation is viewed as a necessity in a world under quarantine. But this new form of teaching also faces setbacks with regards to internet connectivity, the lack of interaction, and highlights the unequal distribution of the necessary tools and gadgets needed amongst teachers and students alike.

The researchers observed that students and professors alike sometimes had difficulty with their internet connection, often resulting in a loss of communication and therefore time. Assignments and submissions from students were observed to have been hindered by poor internet connection, often taking several minutes or hours for an assignment to load and for the Learning Management System (LMS) to accept the submission. Time was also a factor, as internet connection seemed to improve later on during the day, with significant and noticeable improvement during later evening hours. During online simulations, the simulators were often unresponsive or lagging even though communication between professor and students were clear, concise, and happening in real-time.

This research seeks to explore the effects and developments of professors' online teaching experiences in the context of a global pandemic. In addition, the researchers believe that through this study, they will be able to gather and correlate data pertaining to the experiences of instructors to help better understand the effects of online teaching in the maritime profession. After the completion of this study, this paper intends to produce a strategy in utilizing a way to improve the interaction between teachers and students using online technology and applications as a medium.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the attitude of maritime professors towards online learning. Specifically, it sought answers to the following: (1) to present the profile of the respondent in terms of age, faculty status, internet connectivity and gadget use; (2) to determine the attitudes of maritime professors towards online learning; (3) to test the significant difference on the responses when respondents are grouped according to profile variable; and (4) to propose plan of action based on the result of the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study made use of the comparative method of research. Comparative research, according to Ethridge [3], is used to make comparisons between two or more variables with the objective of discovering a pattern, or lack thereof, between them. It is a well-known format that utilizes multiple fields of study but runs into problems when used on data sets that may have varying classifications and categories. In this study, comparative research was used to determine the online teaching experiences of maritime professors in the new normal.

Participants

The participants of the study are LIMA faculty members of general and professional subjects who had been teaching since 2019 – 2020. The study has a total of 65 participants. They consist of 31 professors teaching Professional Maritime courses at the Lyceum International Maritime Academy (LIMA) and 34 General Education professors. The questionnaire was distributed to all participants but only 45 respondents out of the 65 participants had replied.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study is a survey questionnaire taken from the study of Curran (2013) at

Robert Morris University entitled Online Faculty Satisfaction. The researchers utilized a two-part online questionnaire. Part 1 included the demographic profile consisting of age, gender, device, network connectivity, and faculty status. Part 2 is the survey questions pertaining to online teaching experiences of maritime professors in the new normal.

Data Gathering Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed via online to forty-five (45) professors in LIMA, teaching Professional Maritime Courses and those teaching General Education Courses. The content of the questionnaire adopted for use in the study was first explained to the respondents before they could begin answering. All completed questionnaires were collected and the responses were tallied and construed.

Data Analysis

The collected data was interpreted using a diverse range of statistical tools such as percentage, ranking, weighted mean, independent sample t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). These were tools used based on the parameters of the research study. In addition, all incoming and received data were treated and computed using statistical software of PAWS

version 1.8 in order to continue analyzing the results of this research study.

Ethical Considerations

In order to observe the strict and confidential nature of the questionnaire used in the study, no specific names were mentioned by the researchers. No trace of the respondents’ identities was divulged except for the fact that they were faculty of the Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas. Personal opinions from the research team were not given or included, with the study only revealing information as well as the results based on the data gathered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, 25 or 55.6 percent of the 45 respondents are male with the remaining 20 or 44.4 percent being female. The age of the respondents varies but a majority of 24 out of 45 were 41 and above. The researchers included an age profile to better ascertain whether younger generations had an increased proficiency with regards to technology and whether or not this translated to better teaching experiences in an online setting.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Respondents' Profile

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	25	55.6
Female	20	44.4
Age		
25 and below	8	17.8
26 – 30	5	11.1
31 – 35	4	8.9
36 – 40	4	8.9
41 – 45	12	26.7
46 and above	12	26.7
Type of Internet Connection		
Wireless Router	36	80.0
Mobile Data	4	8.9
Dial – up modem	5	11.1
Pisonet	0	0
Most Used Gadget		
Laptop	39	86.7
PC	1	2.2
Smart Phone	5	11.1
Tablet	0	0
Faculty Status		
Full Time Faculty at the for-profit institution teaching exclusively there.	23	51.1
Full Time Faculty that also teach at other institutions.	3	6.7
Part Time Faculty teaching exclusively at the for-profit institution.	11	24.4
Part Time Faculty that also teach at other institutions	8	17.8

The type of internet connection that maritime professors used was mainly wireless router, with 36 or 80 percent using it. The next highest was dial-up modem with 5 or 11.1 percent and only 4 or 8.9 percent used their mobile data in acquiring an online connection. This was a vital part of the respondents' profile as online teaching would not be possible without some sort of internet connection. The researchers wanted to find out whether certain types of network connections increased or decreased productivity in online teaching. The gadgets used had 39 respondents or 86.7 percent use laptops to connect online and only one respondent or 2.2 percent using a

desktop PC while the remaining 5 respondents used their smart phone. Gadget usage was included to determine how professors connected with their students. As for faculty status, 23 or 51.1 percent of the respondents are full time faculty teaching exclusively for the institution. The next highest is 11 or 24.4 percent that are teaching part time exclusively for Lyceum. The lowest was 3 or 6.7 percent who were full time faculty that were also teaching at other institutions besides LPU. The researchers included faculty status into the table to see if teaching multiple online classes had a significant impact on teaching experience.

Table 2
Online Teaching Experience of Maritime Professors

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The level of my interactions with my students in the online course is higher than in a traditional face-to-face class.	2.62	A	25
2. The flexibility provided by the online environment is important to me.	3.44	A	5.5
3. My online students are actively involved in their learning.	3.04	A	14.5
4. I incorporate fewer resources when teaching an online as compared to traditional teaching.	2.49	D	28
5. The technology I use for online teaching is reliable.	3.62	SA	1
6. I have a higher workload when teaching an online course as compared to the traditional one.	3.11	A	8.5
7. I miss face-to-face contact with students when teaching online.	3.47	A	4
8. I do not have any problems controlling my students in the online environment.	2.67	A	23
9. I look forward to teaching my next online course.	3.11	A	8.5
10. My students are very active in communicating with me regarding online course matters.	3.04	A	14.5
11. I appreciate that I can access my online course any time it is convenient to me.	3.44	A	5.5
12. My online students are more enthusiastic about their learning than their traditional counterparts.	2.53	A	27
13. I have to be more creative in terms of resources used for the online course.	3.60	SA	2
14. Online teaching is often frustrating because of technical problems.	3.07	A	10.5
15. It takes me longer to prepare for an online course on a weekly basis than for a face-to-face	3.07	A	10.5
16. I am satisfied with the use of communication tools in the online environment	3.16	A	7
17. I am able to provide better feedback to my online students on their performance in the course.	3.02	A	16
18. I am more satisfied with teaching online as compared to other delivery methods.	2.58	A	26
19. My online students are somewhat passive when it comes to contacting the instructor regarding course related matters.	2.91	A	20.5
20. It is valuable to me that my students can access my online course from any place in the world.	3.49	A	3
21. The participation of my students in the class discussions in the online setting is lower than in the traditional one.	3.00	A	18.5
22. My students use a wider range of resources in the online setting than in the traditional one.	3.00	A	18.5
23. Technical problems do not discourage me from teaching online.	3.04	A	14.5
24. I receive fair compensation for online teaching.	3.02	A	16
25. Not meeting my online students face-to-face prevents me from knowing them as well as my on-site students.	2.91	A	20.5
26. I am concerned about receiving lower course evaluations in the online course as compared to the traditional one.	2.64	A	24
27. Online teaching is gratifying because it provides me with an opportunity to reach students who otherwise would not be able to take courses.	3.04	A	14.5
28. It is more difficult for me to motivate my students in online environment than in the traditional.	2.80	A	22
Composite Mean	3.20	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

As shown in Table 2, only one item, item 4, was rated as ‘Disagree’ and two, items 5 and 13, were rated as ‘Strongly Agree’. The rest of the items were rated ‘Agree’ with a total composite mean of 3.20.

Among the aforementioned items, “reliable technology used for online teaching” got the highest rank which is an important and necessary aspect with regards to online teaching. Without reliable technology, there will be no means of communication between teacher and students. The second highest rated was “creativity in terms of online resources” Professors had to come up with new ways to hold the attention of students through distance learning, since traditional classroom methods were ineffective and learning was done in front of a screen, there was very limited interaction between professors and students. Often times, students had their mikes muted and video cameras turned off and professors often wondered if anyone was listening or in class. Teachers had to get creative and get a good gauge of the interaction with students. This was done through assignments and recitations via Learning Management System (LMS) and zoom respectively.

On the contrary, last rank were, “incorporating fewer resources in online teaching compared to traditional teaching” was the only item to have a verbal interpretation of “Disagree”. This shows that maritime professors used the same, if not more, resources in online teaching when compared to their traditional counterparts. Which ties in with how they need to be creative in terms of online resources. Furthermore, item 12, “online students are more enthusiastic about their learning than traditional counterparts” This shows that while students were active and participated in online discussions, there was still a vast majority of students who were less enthusiastic and did not actively participate online.

Lastly, item number 26, “concerns about receiving a lower course evaluation in online course as compared to the traditional one” had a weighted mean of 2.64 and a verbal interpretation of “Agree”. This tied with item 19, “online students are somewhat passive” Respondents were concerned that due to the lack of communication and feedback from students, the course subjects they were teaching were not being fully understood or comprehended in an effective manner. This would in turn translate to a lower course evaluation at the end of the semester. Although the global pandemic has had alarming repercussions on traditional education, major universities are using this opportunity to iron out any insufficiencies as well as accelerate the implementation of online learning education through innovative online content as well as state-of-the-art technology built on top of a supportive network framework. Countless educational institutions

have grasped this pandemic and turned it into an opportunity to further enhance collaboration with international partners. Through this, they can more easily share knowledge and resources to build a worldwide network for education. Instructors are finding the need to become digitally literate in terms of online data privacy and security so that they can be trusted to make sound judgements with regards to online teaching [4]. Consequently, numerous instructors are facing problems when it comes to adapting to online teaching. Instructors in rural areas and those without a strong network foundation are finding it hard to maintain at least a bare minimum of communication to support their students. However, the literature shows that the extent to which instructors have successfully overcome these obstacles as well as which variables are the most relevant remains unknown and would require further study [5].

Table 3
Difference of Responses on Online Teaching Experience When Grouped According to Profile

	F-value	p-value	I
Sex	0.647	0.521	NS
Age	0.722	0.611	NS
Internet Connection	2.949	0.063	NS
Most Used Gadget	5.597	0.555	NS
Faculty Status	0.333	0.801	NS

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05) Not Significant (NS)

According to the results from Table 3, there were no significant relationships on the respondents’ gender, age, internet connection, gadget use, or faculty status. The researchers concluded that the above-mentioned variables had no effects on online teaching experiences. This was the results observed as the obtained p-value of each profile is more than 0.05 alpha level, thus it cannot be concluded that a significant difference exists. Therefore, the age, gender, internet connection, gadget use, and faculty status do not impact the experience of maritime professors towards online teaching and that the responses do not vary significantly. Some literatures have also explored, albeit briefly, the attitude of instructors and students and their experiences with remote learning [6]. While the reviewed studies have investigated the impact of various online issues on educational aspects, a couple of them explored the technological component that is required as a medium to enact effective means of instruction. However, these studies had provided limited details as to these aspects as well as their impact on the current situation.

Table 4. Proposed Plan of Action to Enhance the Online Experiences of Maritime Professors

Key Results Area	Strategy/Projects	Persons Involved
Incorporating fewer resources in online teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An in-depth familiarization with the subject matter and online seminars on how best to incorporate information from sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dean Department Heads Professors
Students are more enthusiastic online than in a traditional classroom setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a variety of interactive and more engaging forms of learning to get students more interested and attentive during classes. E.g., videos, interactive online modules, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maritime Professors Students
Professors are more satisfied teaching online compared to other methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporating more interactive forms of online learning and regular activities, using websites such as Kahoot and Quizlet, that involve concepts being taught so as to gauge the comprehension of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maritime Professors Students
Level of interactions with students are higher online than in a traditional classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professors may ask about the student's day and experience on their subject before starting the class to improve the communication between them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maritime Professors Students
Concerns about receiving a lower course evaluation online.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a schedule and way of communication wherein students will be able to contact professors to voice their questions and concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maritime Professors Students

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The respondents agreed that reliable technology and creativity in utilizing online resources were essential for online teaching. The respondents disagree that fewer resources are incorporated when teaching online compared to a traditional classroom. The majority of the maritime professors were using a wireless router. Most of the respondents were full-time faculty teaching exclusively for the institution. The study found no significant difference on the online experiences of maritime professors when respondents were grouped into profile variables. Faculty status, gadgets used, internet connection, age, and gender turned out to be insignificant. Researchers proposed a plan of action intended to enhance the online experiences of maritime professors in the new normal.

Lyceum International Maritime Academy (LIMA), through the Management Information System (MIS) may provide increased technical support for faculty and staff for the inner workings and familiarization regarding online learning applications. Students of LIMA may use their course evaluation forms as well as schedule consultations with professors to find ways in which to improve online teaching and learning, respectively. Maritime professors may use this study to develop further an effective online teaching strategy to improve online teaching quality. Future researchers

may consider this study using different variables in their profile. The plan of action may be tabled and evaluated for evaluate

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