

# Learning Engagement of Food and Beverage Services (FBS) Students' of Matanao National High School during COVID-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents the learning engagement of Food and Beverage Services (FBS) students of Matanao National High School in distant learning. Phenomenology was used to collect data from 20 junior and senior high school students in the Food and Beverage Services curriculum at Matanao National High School, Poblacion, Matanao, Davao del Sur, who were divided into three groups of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII). Results revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students' learning engagement in distant learning resulted in negative and positive experiences. Results identified three core themes related to negative experiences: Learning environment barriers, lack of understanding and knowledge on task, and unstable internet connection. One positive experience showed that students with distant learning still have a positive attitude for doing hands-on activities in the FBS subject. Furthermore, results revealed that lack of understanding and knowledge on task about the topic and unstable internet connection was the most challenging one, especially in doing the hands-on activities in FBS. Moreover, they overcame the obstacles, problems, and roadblocks they encountered while learning remotely by using self-motivation, discipline, and proper time management and focus.

**Keywords:** Learning engagement; Food and beverage; Students; COVID-19; Pandemic; Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid spread of the Coronavirus pandemic has expanded global educational gaps. It has caused educational disruptions and global health that has proven challenging for global health systems to deal with. Education, research, sports, entertainment, transportation, worship, social gatherings/interactions, economy, businesses, and politics are all examples of human activities. The entire planet was in peril as a result of pandemic threats. The reality of the situation was challenging to face, and the school sector continues to be one of the worst-affected by the Coronavirus [1-3].

One of the most affected sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic is the hospitality and tourism industry higher education that helps produce future industry leaders. Also, to prepare the students working in various teams and leading departments, lessons and activities in hospitality students are designed to be highly interactive in face-to-face interaction. However, more emphasis has been placed on student participation in these learning platforms in recent years. They are culminating in a transition to predominantly online and modular course delivery, which includes games, online asynchronous discussion, video feedback, and podcasts in addition

to traditional lectures [4].

The study's findings of Macaraeg, et al. and Anzaldo show that as education transitions to a new normal, teachers make the required preparations to equip themselves with remote learning [5,6]. Despite problems that may impede their job, individuals cope with the new normal and complete their tasks. During the implementation of distance learning, it possesses challenges to the learners and parents, such as time management [7-9], limited parental understanding of module subjects, learning independence, and access to alternative learning resources [10-14].

Despite the challenges encountered during the crisis, studies show a positive response from individuals. Further, the problem provided a timely snapshot of hospitality and tourism students' engagement experience, academic satisfaction, and loyalty intention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, it offered a hope-centered framework to guide educational programs' engagement and student success efforts in the future.

Zhong, et al. further, Orlowski, et al. finding emphasized that although students did not have as many opportunities to interact with one another as they had wanted, the ones they did have were

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important [4,15]. Added by Pascual, et al. study, it does not matter what specific approach is used as long as they enjoy and have fun during the class [16].

Notwithstanding the pandemic's devastation, this global catastrophe has presented an extraordinary learning opportunity, particularly for TLE teachers specializing in food and beverage services. This subject focuses on teaching students how to master each of the life skills included in the subject's framework by imbibing the competency through direct execution of the competencies [17]. Transitioning from a hands-on activity in students' engagement, especially in beverage laboratories, into an online format posed severe new challenges, particularly regarding the outcome and student engagement questions. Nevertheless, students are taught to have faith in their abilities and spread their knowledge to their classmate's Fields [18]. Hence, the urge to conduct a qualitative study in the learning engagement of Food and Beverage Services (FBS) of students in Matanao National High School during the pandemic is necessary. Also, the result of this study may create a better opportunity for innovation amidst difficulty and eventually offer helpful suggestions to the TLE Department of Matanao National High School and Food and Beverage Services students.

## Theoretical framework

The study is primarily anchored to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (1980) by Fishbein and Icek Ajzen. Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are the three primary antecedents of behavioral intention (PBC). The first factor in TPB is "the individual's attitude toward liked or disliked behavior, or a judgment of that behavior" [19].

A good attitude, in general, will result in a change that is appropriate for that conduct [20]. Subjective norms are the second determinant. This is defined as "drawing the inference that a significant individual or someone important to them will desire them to engage in the targeted conduct" [21].

Further, the study is also taken from the self-determination theory developed by Deci and Ryan of 1985. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is an empirically based theory of motivation and personality in social contexts that classifies motivation as autonomous or controlled. Experiments investigating the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation sparked the work that resulted in the concept [22].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Learning engagement

Learning engagement is considered a crucial aspect of academic progress. It is evidenced that students' engagement results in attention and class participation, and learning motivation [23]. Further, learning engagement is viewed as a catalyst in the learning process, enhancing a student's capacity for learning and performance [24-26].

According to Millican's (2014) study, educators' heightened concern with enhancing student engagement to enrich their learning experience demonstrates the need for educators to be inventive and think outside the box when it comes to classroom instruction [27]. Further, Parveen, et al.'s study say student engagement is critical

in education since it helps predict students' academic performance [28]. Additionally, Hirsh, et al. Hughes, et al. Cao, et al. and Wang et al. emphasized that previous research has demonstrated a positive effect of students' participation on their academic achievement [29-31].

Conversely, according to Çevik and Husin, et al. studies, educators encounter low student achievement; one advised cure is improving the teaching process and learning environment to increase student involvement [32,33]. Also, Larrier, et al. stressed that learning is erratic without prolonged and direct engagement, and academic progress is slowed for medium and lower-level classroom learners [34].

In addition, the changing character of home economics based on Black's findings has been well documented by the researchers [35]. They concluded that market forces and the more competitive nature of education provision had forced such institutions to rethink their strategic management and student-centered approaches [36]. Furthermore, implicit in this thinking is the apparent increase in the opportunities for greater participation that high schools currently provide their pupils. Researchers have identified student engagement as a critical topic in home economics regarding student accomplishment and learning. Many schools are focusing their efforts and resources on this area [37-39].

### Food and Beverage Services (FBS) students

Food and Beverage Service (FBS) Management is a study program that teaches students how to perform professionally in the restaurant and other food service industries. Students in the FBS Management program concentrate on this subject [26]. There have been empirical studies on the levels of satisfaction with on-campus food service operations, including services supplied by contracted firms, restricted food service operations, and food services with multiple locations and options on campus.

The research findings of Smith and Costello have found that the quality of the food and beverages offered has a significant impact on student contentment [40]. Further, it was suggested by El-Said and Fathy that food and beverage quality can be measured by several different characteristics such as scent, taste/flavor, and texture as well as physical aspects such as color, shape, sheen, and freshness [41]. They concluded that the most important factor affecting customer satisfaction was the overall quality of food, which resulted in good word-of-mouth referrals for foodservice providers. According to Imram and Ng, et al. reaching or exceeding consumer satisfaction and intent to return, general food quality elements such as taste, freshness, and appearance are more significant than other aspects such as convenience, affordability, cleanliness, and value [42,43].

Added, according to Cousins, et al. study, Food and Beverage Services (FBS) are responsible for the quality of food and beverage services, food expenses, and restaurant and bar management, among other things. Smith and Costello emphasized in their study that to communicate with and serve the customer or visitor effectively, F&B servers must be able to speak effectively in their native language, ensuring that there is no miscommunication between the server the customer [40,44].

Similarly, the Philippines created standards for food and beverage

services to receive national credentials. According to the Republic Act of 1994, RA 7796, section 22, Food and Beverage Services NC II requirements specify the skills required to provide food and beverage service to consumers in hotels, motels, restaurants, clubs, and canteens resorts, and luxury cruise liners. Further, the Act establishes national occupational skill standards for TESDA. Moreno, in his paper, emphasized that the Authority must develop and implement a certification and accreditation scheme through which private industry groups and trade associations will be accredited to conduct acceptable trade testing activities in their respective fields following the Authority's criteria [45].

At the moment, the hospitality industry's focus is on the issue of skills and job mismatch. Hospitality students who graduated during the epidemic encounter numerous obstacles in their job search due to the situation surrounding the spread of COVID-19. There are concerns about how education is adapting to industry. Academic hospitality programs are designed to educate students on the necessary skills to succeed in the field. These abilities should equip graduates to meet the rapidly changing needs of today's hospitality sector, including growing competition, shifting consumer attitudes, and changing employer expectations [46].

## METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative approach based on the phenomenological tradition. The study focused on the phenomenon of Matanao Junior High School students' learning engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The phenomenological method is appropriate because it investigates the lived experiences of persons intimately involved in the phenomenon under investigation [47]. The research made use of the Systematic Random Technique and Snowball Sampling. Furthermore, potential volunteers were encouraged to recruit others to collect data. One-one interviews were performed. A saturation level is attained when the number reaches at least 10, according to Boyd and Creswell [48,49].

A Key Informant Interview was used to collect the material (KII). Health safety precautions were followed by wearing facemasks, face shields, and social distance. KII was the appropriate approach because the participants reflected the types of people who were directly touched by the situation. They were educated on the phenomenon, had firsthand experience with it, and were able to provide knowledge and data that other methodologies would not have been able to provide [50].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 summarizes the learning engagement experiences of Food and Beverage Services students at Matanao National High School when engaged in distant learning activities related to Food and Beverage Services.

Transcripts and codes of the documented interviews were created. After categorizing categories into negative and positive experiences, emergent themes were identified. The findings found three core characteristics associated with bad experiences: impediments to learning, a lack of understanding and knowledge on task, and an inconsistent internet connection. One positive experience demonstrated that students enrolled in distance education still had a favorable attitude toward engaging in hands-on activities in the FBS topic.

Typically, participants stated that lack of understanding and knowledge on task about the topic and unstable internet connection was the most challenging one, especially in doing the hands-on activities in FBS. Google meet and Voice Recording were done as Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants and Key Informant Interviewees. They said:

Kuan Ma'am internet connection lang pod usahay jud Ma'am. Kanang inig edit sa video Ma'am especially sa CapCut ma mali mali so makababag jud inig send nimo sa video.

"Internet connection Ma'am especially when editing and sending the videos of the activities." FGDSE

Ang mga hadlang ko ay ang wifi namin kasi may oras o araw na mahina ang wifi sa amin.

"Unstable internet connection. There are days that internet is prolonged in our area." (Tables 1 and 2).

Another challenge that FBS students have, particularly while completing practical activities in FBS subjects, is the task's lack of knowledge and understanding. Participants detailed it by saying: My challenges in distance learning in doing hands on activities in FBS is kanang lack of knowledge jud ug kanang confidence. Mao jud na kanunanay akoo ma sagubang inig kanang muabot ang mga activities.

"The challenges that I have encountered in distant learning in doing hands-on activities is lack of knowledge and confidence. " P1S2

Kung paano po ba gawin itong activity. "How to do the activity."

**Table 1:** Learning engagement experiences of food and beverage students with distant learning modality.

Learning engagement experiences	Frequency of occurrence	Emblematic quotes
Unstable internet connection	Typical	Kuan Ma'am internet connection lang pod usahay jud Ma'am. Kanang inig edit sa video Ma'am especially sa CapCut ma mali mali so makbabag jud inig send nimo sa video.
		"Internet connection Ma'am especially when editing and sending the videos of the activities."FGDSE
		Ang mga hadlang ko ay ang wifi namin kasi may oras o araw na mahina ang wifi sa amin.
		"Unstable internet connection. There are days that internet is prolonged in our area." P3S3
		Internet connection pod Ma'am kay hinay siya diri sa amoa barangay.
		"Internet connection also, Ma'am, especially here in our Barangay, the connection is not good." FGDSD
<b>Note:</b> General-50% up; Typical - 25%-40%; Variant-20% down; FGDSE - Focus Group Discussion Section- E; P3S3-Person 3 Section 3; FGDSD - Focus Group Discussion Section- D		

**Table 2:** Food and beverage students' continuous learning engagement experiences with distant learning modalities at the same table.

Learning engagement experiences	Frequency of occurrence	Emblematic quotes
Lack of knowledge and understanding on task	Typical	My challenges in distant learning in doing hands on activities in FBS is kanang lack of knowledge jud ug kanang confidence. Mao jud na kanunanay akoo ma sagubang inig kanang muabot ang mga activities.
		"The challenges that I have encountered in distant learning in doing hands-on activities is lack of knowledge and confidence. " P1S2
		Kung paano po ba gawin itong activity."How to do the activity." P6S7

**Note:** P3S3–Person 1 Section 2; P6S7- Person 6 Section 7

P6S7

"Doing activities without actual demonstration by the teacher is hard to perform. There are many instances that instruction may not be easy to understand". P4S4

The study's findings revealed that most FBS students had trouble connecting to the internet, particularly while uploading videos to the teacher while doing hands-on activities. Furthermore, students' lack of knowledge and understanding about the task is one of their struggles as no teacher is there to guide them technically.

Another learning engagement experience that FBS students had in distant learning was learning environment barriers such as noisy environment and conducting home chores, making it difficult to focus on the tasks at hand. Participants detailed it by stating below:

Hmmm, kuan maam compare nimo ang face to face ug

kaning through online lang dili kaayo ka focus gani sa mga himuunon tungod sa kasaba pod sa environment nga nag surround sa imoha.

"I can't focus on the activities because of the noisy environment" FGDSA.

Yes Ma'am naa Ma'am. Kananng usahay gani Ma'am kanang mga buhatunon sa balay Ma'am ingon ana. Dili ka focus.

"Yes, Ma'am, there is. I can't focus, especially when I am doing household chores" FGDSC.

Participants also experience inadequacy of resources. They detailed it by stating below:

Ang challenge and trials nga akoo na experience maam kay kanang kulang ko ug mga gamit especially sa performance unlike sa face-to-face po nga makatabang ang akoo classmates or grupo para ma perfect akong performance.

"The challenges that I have encountered, Ma'am especially doing performances, are the lacking of materials" FGDSE.

Despite the difficulties encountered during the pandemic, there are still students who have a favorable attitude toward participating in the activities, particularly those requiring technology. This is evident in participants statements below:

Wala Ma'am kay sayon raman sabton then naa dayon koy idea nga makuha.

"No, Ma'am. I don't encounter any problem doing hands-on activities since it is easy to understand" FGDSJ.

For me, Ma'am wala may difficulties. Kay unang una gitudluan man mi nimo unsaon pagbuhat sa mga activities.

"For me, Ma'am, I don't encounter any difficulties in doing the FBS activities since you have instructed us already on how to do it" P1S1.

The COVID-19 epidemic has created numerous problems to education, most notably the transition from traditional face-to-face to distant learning, which has impacted teaching and learning globally. While remote education appeared to benefit children from affluent households, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds encountered additional obstacles, such as a lack of money to attend online programs and finish their education [51]. Alvarez's study found that remote learning is complex in these challenging times because rising concerns about financial security and affective support contributed to interrupted learning engagement in addition to existing issues with access and pricing [52].

Similarly, Galusha's study concluded that remote education is appropriate for teaching adult learners, who require the flexibility to balance competing demands [53]. However, learners' enthusiasm has waned due to a loss of face-to-face interaction with teachers and classmates, possibly exorbitant startup expenses, and a lack of faculty support. Along with these barriers to distance education, it was discovered that distance learners are most likely to have insecurities regarding learning, self-evaluation difficulties, a lack of support services such as tutors and technical assistance, feelings of isolation, and inexperience with this mode of learning, all of which contribute to academic difficulties. However, Elkhayma's findings contradict the report, which highlighted that most students have negative opinions regarding distance education, which contributes to their demotivation for their classes (Table 3) [54].

In can be gleaned in Table 2 the summary of the responses of FBS students regarding the difficulties, obstacles, and impediments they encountered while learning remotely. The survey discovered that FBS students overcame self-motivation, discipline, effective time management, and attention.

Another recurring motif was the family's aid. Participants stated that one factor that helps them cope with distance learning is their family, as they do not have direct contact with the lecturers. They elaborated by mentioning the following:

Kuan Ma'am kanang same pod sa ilaha Ma'am gina motivate ko sa akoang Mama ug Papa. Buhaton jud nako para dili nako mag kara kara inig abot sa deadline.

"Same with them, Ma'am. I am motivated and guided by my parents." FGDD

My Mama and Papa help me. "My parents helped me." P8S8



**Table 3:** Functional capacity of paretic upper limb and nature of stroke.

Interventions	Frequency of occurrence	Emblematic quotes
Focus	Variant	Ako Ma'am kay usahay naga cram man jud ko Ma'am, pero nag focus lang ko Ma'am ug gina enjoy lang nako ang akong ginabuhay.
		"I just focus and enjoy while doing the activities, Ma'am." FGDSA
		"Focusing and reminding myself about my ambition and my future" P4S4
		By answering the modules deretso Ma'am. Dili na nako ginapa dugay dugay pa. Para inig mapasa na okay na tanan problema.
		I overcome my worries by responding to the modules without delay when completing practical activities. FGDSB
Time management	Typical	I manage nako akong time Ma'am kay para kani nga time kay mabuhay ko ani tapos household chores sunod. Time management lang jud ma'am ug salig sa sarili.
		"I manage my time Ma'am. I set time for this certain activity than doing household chores. Time management and belief in yourself." FGDSE
		Time management lang jud. Kay naa sad mi other subjects to answer. "Since we have other subjects to answer also, so we need to

**Note:** FGDSA - Focus Group Discussion Section- A; P4S4 - Person 4 Section 4; FGDSB - Focus Group Discussion Section- B; FGDSE - Focus Group Discussion Section- E

Additionally, participants stated that attention is critical if we want to achieve FBS activities during this age of digitization learning. Without focus, you will be unable to do or complete the task assigned to you.

Ako Ma'am kay usahay naga cram man jud ko Ma'am, pero nag focus lang ko Ma'am ug gina enjoy lang nako ang akong ginabuhay.

"I just focus and enjoy while doing the activities, Ma'am" FGDSA

"Focusing and reminding myself about my ambition and my future" P4S4

Amid the coronavirus disease pandemic of 2019 (COVID-19), remote learning, particularly in impoverished countries with little resources, adds unnecessary stress on students, particularly FBS students who are forced to complete practical exercises. Despite the obstacles associated with distance education, students strive to make the best of their circumstances [55-59].

## CONCLUSION

Similar to Rotas' findings, results revealed that students used the following coping strategies to succeed in remote learning during a global crisis: Seeking suitable space and time; borrowing learning resources; seeking peer support; approaching teachers; practicing time management; planning; extending the time for learning tasks; diverting attention; regulating the self; taking extra jobs; crying, and praying. Further, Jadric study discovered that student qualities such as computer literacy, academic abilities, learning abilities, learning strategy, and time management all have a significant role in their success in online courses. Lastly, Gopalan and Rizaldi findings revealed that motivation is the force that propels pupils on in the face of adversity and difficulty. The role of parents in aiding children in utilizing technology while learning at home is critical, particularly in sustaining and growing children's motivation to

continue learning.

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