

Journey of academe survivors amidst educational turmoil in the time of COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives, our status, our situations, and other aspects of our daily lives. Education is still persistent and determined to fulfill their duties and responsibilities to sustain the needs of the learners and provide a productive individual. Even if this pandemic strikes our lives, this will not matter because giving education and teaching the students matters most. The point of this paper is to trace the journey of the great survivors, who represent the students who face a tough battle amidst this pandemic and can continue dreaming and pursuing their goals in life. This was a tough battle for every one of us. This article is also written to discuss the realistic circumstances encountered by a student and a future educator in living through the sudden educational changes in the school system at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The article highlights the identification and specification of (a) the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and students' scholarly endeavors; (b) the challenges faced by students and educators; and (c) the strategies they utilize to adapt, adjust, and cope with the current changes happening in society and the educational system due to the abrupt emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is important to determine the current circumstances with all their opportunities and struggles to be able to find appropriate ways to survive and get through our present challenging times.

Keywords: Academe survivors, Challenges, COVID-19, Education, Educational turmoil, Goals

1. Introduction

COVID-19 changed the world. The emergence of COVID-19 was abrupt and unforeseen. It wasn't predicted, and in almost all countries and their people, it was totally unanticipated. And because of this event, many of us were unprepared and very startled in the first place. The normal school days turn into a new normal. The whole society is still adjusting to this situation because this pandemic has a big impact and teaches us more lessons.

Along with the arrival of COVID-19 was the rise of many issues affecting all people, including us, our educational institution, and society as a whole. One of the major issues with this happening is the health and protection of the people. And this includes parents, children, students, teachers, workers, principals, and all other people. Health is one of the most pressing issues arising in the world as a result of a disease-causing virus that is gradually spreading throughout the globe. And in light of this reality, we should take practical steps to address the looming problem. This event affected us in a way that we realized how important it is to prioritize our health and follow the health protocols established by our government in order to avoid being infected. And there is a real extra effort that should be made by students, teachers, and everyone in the educational system.

Also, this greatly affected our educational institution. Since they're also not expecting any of this to happen, but as with the major policies mandated by our government, our educational system and even society as a whole are following general rules and protocols to minimize the effect and damage caused by the virus. And this eventually results in our educational system changing the setup of classes from face-to-face to online. It is a major shift in our educational system where everyone, including instructors and students, is struggling to adapt and find effective solutions to the current situation (Fedina et al., 2017; Toquero et al., 2021). This pandemic is a great one, which challenges our capacity and ability in educational matters. It is a matter of surviving or failing because of this tough battle that we are facing. It also affected us as students because the

present setup of classes is far too different from what we had before. There are a lot of adjustments that we have to make.

Many factors have been determined to affect our mental, emotional, and physical health; sleepless nights; and many more. However, the great survivors never surrender easily. We, the students, are great survivors who face a tough battle and are still fighting because we want to achieve and become great survivors of this pandemic. We must take good care of our mental, emotional, and physical health because it is very important in achieving our life goals. To all educators out there, keep on aiming and soaring high and be determined in your studies. We know that at the end of this journey we will be great survivors. We know that our journey as students was a long one to take, many tears to fall, and many battles to take, but at the end of this battle is a fulfilling achievement and a victorious one.

2. The struggles in the current paradigm shift

Limited home support: It is indisputable that this sudden paradigm shift in our educational system has created tension and pressure on students and even parents. To learn effectively, children, in particular, require assistance and guidance from older peers and teachers. But with the current educational system where they just study and learn at home, the factors that influence their learning become different. The child's learning at home will depend on how much support they will get, what available resources they have, and what kind of monitoring they are getting. We cannot deny the fact that some parents cannot give enough support and help to their children due to a lack of background in education (Guan & Benavides, 2021). This is a reality present in our society. And some learners don't have siblings to help them in their learning. Every family differs, and every struggle is also different. These are some of the realities of the difficulties encountered by our students nowadays.

Yet, there may be lots of struggles, but we are still thankful that in the midst of these difficulties, our government, educational and school system, and teachers are doing their best to cope with the changes and find the best ways to aid the students in their learning (Toquero, 2021; Toquero, Calago & Pormento, 2021). They are doing their best to conduct virtual meetings, send modules, and even follow up and monitor their students' situations (Dangle & Sumaoang, 2020).

Online learning difficulties: As the setup of classes was altered to virtual classes, our ways of doing certain kinds of stuff were also changed. The way we conduct our meetings, submit projects, collaborate for school, and answer quizzes and tests is already very different. Everything was switched to online. The event affected our scholarly endeavor in many ways. First, it changed the way we learned because we were able to directly ask our classmates questions and discuss personally and interact in a very freeway setting. But in this situation, we are practicing how to be more independent learners. What we do at these times is persevere in self-educating because sometimes, due to other problems in the connection, we cannot meet our instructors, and that implies an extra effort for us to solely grasp and understand the lessons in our modules. Second, it also affected the way we study, because before we could just read our notes and other reading materials. But now, we are just always looking at our cellphone and laptop screens, which is a bit tiring sometimes and unhealthy. Third, our scholarly endeavor was also affected in terms of internet connection, because even though we have the internet at home, there are times that it becomes unstable and the signal is very poor. When this happens, we get disconnected from our virtual meetings, and then we'll miss the online discussion.

This pandemic helps us to realize that whatever the situation we are facing, let's stand and work with it and pursue our education. And because of this pandemic, our academic performance was affected because of many factors, such as learning materials, the environment, the people around us, and our mental, emotional, and physical health. In dealing with it, we can say that it is hard because sometimes we can't understand what the topic is all about and what the point of the discussion is with the teacher, and that's because of the low connection. Then, sometimes we lose interest in doing our module because of the idea that no one will help us but only ourselves. Furthermore, this kind of situation makes us bombarded all the time, so even on weekends, we are still doing modules. Saturdays and Sundays were our rest days, but because of this new normal, we don't have one. However, despite these struggles, we can still manage our studies by submitting on time and proceeding to the next one.

3. Coping in the new normal learning

The secret to making things happen is determination, courage, and trust in God with all your heart and mind. The journey of the great survivors facing a tough battle amidst COVID-19 has many strategies to take and mechanisms to partake in. Like us, the strategies we used were: making a list of what activities and tasks we

needed to finish now; setting a deadline; planning and doing the task ahead of time. Then, after finishing one or more modules, we rewarded ourselves by purchasing food, going out to a place where we could find comfort and relax, and breathing some fresh air. After that, we will proceed to the next activity so that at the end of the day and the remaining days, we can be able to sleep early. It's a matter of time management and self-discipline. Trusting ourselves is one of the strategies, and connecting and communicating with your friends and family helps to motivate us.

Moreover, in coping with this, we set a schedule. When we can't understand the lesson and we find it difficult, we'd search on the internet, and sometimes when the instructions in the module are not clear to us, we respectfully chat with the professor and get some clarifications and questions. Furthermore, believe in yourself that you will conquer it, and most of all, believe and pray to God that whatever may happen, he will be there at your side to guide you and love you.

Furthermore, the best way to survive is to adapt and be flexible to the current shifts in our society. And by that, we ought to learn some techniques and strategies that would help us sustain our scholarly endeavors. First, the strategy we use to survive in this condition is to make sure that we have enough resources like gadgets and internet connections to continue our online class. We think that there are basic needs in doing an online class. Second, we make sure that we manage our time well. Online classes let us decide and manage our own time as to when we would like to answer our modules. And effective and efficient time management results in less cramming and less pressure on our part. We are always reminding ourselves to stop procrastinating and maximize our time well. The third strategy we use to adapt to this condition is to watch our health because in this setup, we are always using cellphones and gadgets, looking at the screen for many hours. So, we have to keep an eye on our health and do healthy practices like wearing anti-radiation glasses, avoiding answering modules too late at night, avoiding sleep deprivation, and avoiding procrastination for less cramming.

Looking at the bright side of the pandemic, we realized that it taught us a lot of things. That we all need a break, a self-time, and quality time for our loved ones. In this world full of hustle and bustle, the world paused for a moment. Everything stopped and many things were prohibited because we were just told to stay at home.

During the early months of quarantine, we were able to have free time to rest, do the things that we love, and explore new kinds of stuff, things that we weren't able to do during face-to-face class. In our free time, we were able to write and draw again, to write poems and short stories, draw portraits and scenery, and anything that tickles our minds at any moment. We also had an opportunity to meditate and finish multiple books, which are some of my favorite parts of the quarantine, and to simply enjoy quiet moments and lonely times.

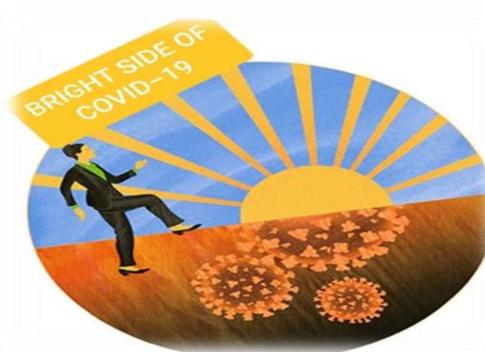


Figure 3: The bright side of COVID-19

4. Conclusion

Everyone plays a vital role, so amidst this pandemic, let's be united and work together for the triumph and success of everyone. Our journey of being great survivors is not yet done, so let us help each other face this tough battle and give our best all the time. Never surrender, don't let this battle pull us down, and don't allow this to destroy our goals in life. Be constant in our law of attraction, and be the best version of ourselves. So, to all students and teachers, cheers for more challenges. Whatever may happen, we must care for our mental

and physical health because these are the most important keys to surviving this tough battle. Indeed, this pandemic time is such a surprise to all of us. It affected all corners of the world. It also brought many hardships and challenges, yet all these difficulties also brought worthwhile lessons. That no matter what problems we face and any paradigm shift we experience, when we are all together, we can live and get through it.

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