

Lived Experiences of Social Studies Students in the Post-Pandemic Learning Landscape: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of Social Studies students in the post-pandemic learning landscape, where Philippine higher education has shifted toward hybrid and increasingly digital learning environments. As traditional classroom structures resumed, many learners continued to navigate the lasting academic, technological, and psychosocial effects of pandemic-era distance education. Using a phenomenological approach, the study examined how students made sense of these long-term transitions and how their previous exposure to modular and online learning shaped their current study habits, confidence, and resilience. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive method to derive themes reflecting students' evolving learning realities.

Findings revealed that students developed greater autonomy and digital adaptability, yet continued to struggle with residual challenges such as technology fatigue, uneven digital skills, and difficulty re-adjusting to face-to-face academic demands. Participants highlighted how pandemic learning cultivated self-regulation, resourcefulness, and digital competence—skills they now rely on in hybrid settings. However, they also emphasized the need for stronger institutional support systems to bridge learning gaps that persisted beyond the pandemic. The study underscores the importance of responsive educational policies that address long-term learning recovery, promote digital resilience, and strengthen students' overall readiness for the transformed post-pandemic academic environment.

Keywords: Digital resilience; post-pandemic learning; hybrid education; student experiences; phenomenology; learning recovery; autonomy

INTRODUCTION

The post-pandemic period has transformed educational systems worldwide, prompting deeper inquiry into how learners navigate evolving instructional modalities. As higher education shifts from emergency remote teaching to more intentional hybrid and flexible frameworks, examining students' lived experiences becomes essential in understanding long-term academic resilience and learning recovery. International reports highlight that the effects of COVID-19 extend beyond temporary disruptions, influencing digital competence, study habits, wellbeing, and equality of access (UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2022). These global patterns demonstrate that

students continue to grapple with academic, technological, and psychosocial adjustments even years after the return of face-to-face instruction.

In the Philippines, the abrupt transition to modular and online learning reshaped traditional learning environments and intensified pre-existing inequities in connectivity and educational support. Higher education institutions such as Samar State University adopted distance learning modalities to ensure continuity, yet the long-term consequences of these changes remain visible in students' current learning behaviors, motivation, and digital adaptation (Tria, 2020; Joaquin et al., 2020). For Social Studies students—whose discipline emphasizes contextual analysis, civic understanding, and interpretation of social realities—post-pandemic educational conditions provide a unique lens for exploring how learners reinterpret past disruptions and integrate them into their present academic lives.

Recent scholarship foregrounds themes such as digital resilience, hybrid learning readiness, and the development of self-regulated learning skills as crucial to post-pandemic educational reform. Studies suggest that students' pandemic experiences accelerated digital literacy but also produced gaps in comprehension, academic confidence, and socio-emotional functioning (Dela Cruz, 2022; Kebritchi et al., 2017). Although emerging literature examines post-pandemic learning transitions in the Philippines, few studies focus specifically on provincial universities where resource disparities and local socio-cultural factors shape learning experiences in distinct ways. Moreover, limited research investigates how Social Studies students make meaning of their pandemic-era learning experiences now that face-to-face and hybrid modes have resumed.

Given this gap, the present study seeks to explore the lived experiences of Social Studies students within the post-pandemic learning landscape. It specifically aims to answer the following questions: (1) How do Social Studies students describe their lived experiences in the post-pandemic learning environment? (2) What lasting impacts did pandemic-era distance learning have on their current academic engagement, learning behaviors, and adaptation to hybrid or face-to-face modalities?

Through grounding the inquiry in students' reflections and narratives, this study contributes to ongoing discourse on higher education recovery. Theoretically, it enriches discussions on digital resilience and learner autonomy in post-pandemic contexts. Methodologically, it highlights the value of phenomenology in capturing the complexity of student experiences. Practically, it offers insights for educators, institutions, and policymakers in developing responsive strategies that support learning continuity, equity, and student well-being in a rapidly evolving academic environment.

METHODOLOGY

This study explored the lived experiences of Social Studies students in the post-pandemic learning landscape. Given its focus on meanings, personal interpretations, and subjective reflections, a qualitative phenomenological research design was utilized. Phenomenology is specifically suited for examining how individuals make sense of significant educational experiences, allowing the researcher to uncover the essence of their reality as lived and described by them (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

This approach enabled a deep exploration of how students understood and navigated the long-term impacts of pandemic-era distance learning and their transition into hybrid and face-to-face modalities. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews served as the primary data-gathering method, as they allow participants to articulate their perspectives openly while giving the researcher room to probe emerging insights (Kallio et al., 2016).

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Samar State University, located along Arteche Boulevard in Catbalogan City, Samar. The institution offers teacher education programs, including the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Studies. The post-pandemic learning environment at SSU—characterized by a gradual return to face-to-face classes supplemented by digital and hybrid learning practices—provides an appropriate context for exploring students' evolving academic experiences and adaptations.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possessed direct and meaningful experiences relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. The study involved 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year Social Studies students who experienced both pandemic-era distance learning and post-pandemic instructional modalities.

Inclusion criteria included:

- Must be officially enrolled in the Social Studies program at Samar State University;
- Must have experienced at least one year of distance learning during the pandemic; • Must currently be engaged in post-pandemic face-to-face or hybrid learning;
- Must voluntarily agree to participate.

The final number of participants was determined based on data saturation, or the point at which no new themes or insights emerged (Guest et al., 2020). Recruitment was facilitated through coordinated invitations and peer referrals, ensuring that participants met all inclusion requirements.

Table 1. Demographic information of each of the participants

Participant	Age	Sex	Year level	Residential location	AFI (monthly)
1	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	4,000
2	35	Female	3rd	Lowland	35,000
3	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	1,500
4	21	Male	3rd	Lowland	50,000
5	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	4,000
6	22	Female	3rd	Lowland	16,800
7	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	5,000
8	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	10,000
9	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	10,000
10	20	Female	3rd	Lowland	3,500
11	19	Female	2nd	Lowland	15,000
12	19	Female	2nd	Lowland	15,000
13	20	Female	2nd	Lowland	9,000
14	21	Male	3rd	Lowland	7,000
15	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	3,000

16	21	Male	3rd	Lowland	6,000
17	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	32,000
18	20	Male	2nd	Lowland	20,000
19	20	Female	2nd	Lowland	10,000
20	19	Male	2nd	Lowland	10,000
21	20	Female	2nd	Lowland	12,000
22	20	Male	2nd	Lowland	15,000
23	22	Male	3rd	Lowland	9,000
24	20	Female	2nd	Lowland	10,000
25	21	Female	3rd	Lowland	12,000
18	20	Male	2nd	Lowland	20,000

Note: AFI (monthly) = Average Family Income Monthly

Data Collection

Data were gathered using semi-structured, in-depth interviews, allowing participants to narrate their experiences while enabling the researcher to explore emerging themes in depth. The interview guide focused on (1) students' reflections on pandemic-era distance learning, (2) their present experiences in post-pandemic learning modalities, and (3) the long-term academic, emotional, and digital impacts of the pandemic on their learning.

Interviews were conducted in secure, confidential settings, either face-to-face or through online platforms depending on the participant's preference. Prior to interviewing, participants received informed consent forms outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality assurances. With permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy.

Field notes were taken to supplement interview data and capture contextual cues, emotions, and non-verbal expressions relevant to the analysis.

Data Analysis

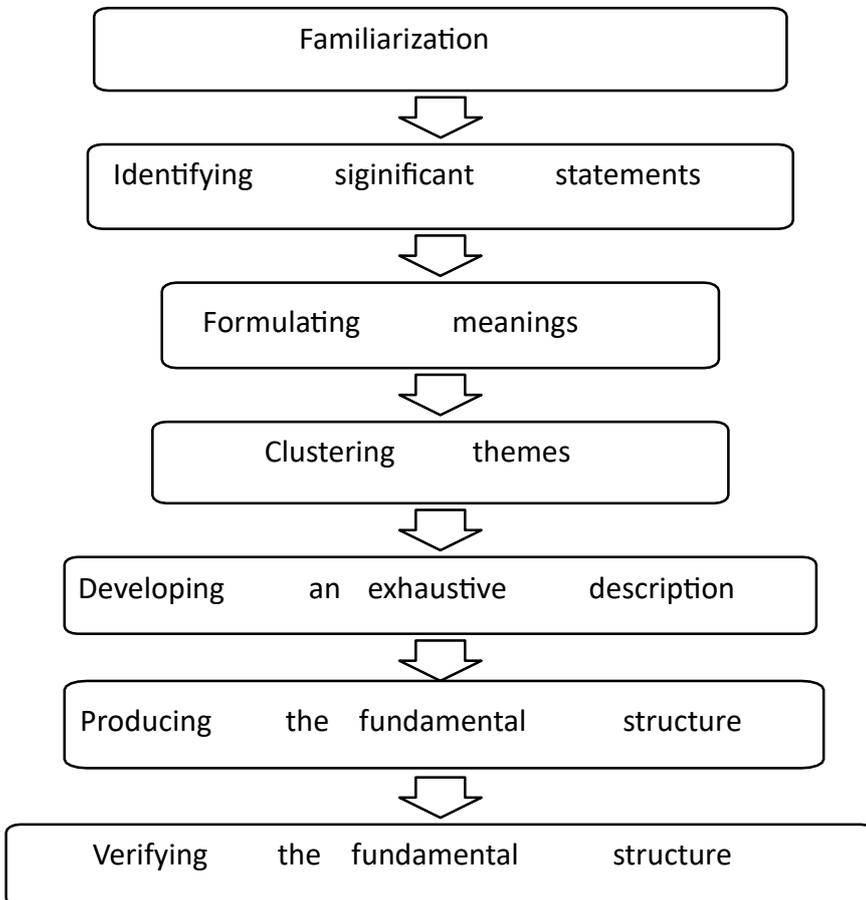
The study adopted Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological analysis method, which provides a systematic and rigorous framework for interpreting lived experiences. The analysis followed these steps:

- Familiarization – Reading participants' transcripts multiple times to gain holistic understanding;
- Extraction of significant statements – Identifying statements directly related to the phenomenon;
- Formulating meanings – Interpreting essential meanings from significant statements;
- Organizing meaning units into theme clusters – Grouping similar meanings into organized themes;

- Developing an exhaustive description – Creating a narrative description that reflects all emergent themes;
- Formulating the fundamental structure – Summarizing the essence of the lived experience;
- Member checking – Returning the findings to participants to validate accuracy and authenticity.

This analytic strategy ensured that the themes were grounded in participants' actual narratives while maintaining phenomenological rigor

Figure 1: Illustrates the descriptive phenomenological method of Colaizzi (1978)



Each of the prevailing themes identified were analyzed so as to come up with a specific recommendation for it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section articulates the results, interpretation and analysis of the study. The results presented includes the accounts of the Social Studies students of Samar State University under distance learning modality during COVID-19 pandemic. This presents the (120) significant statements, (32) formulated meanings extracted to derive (4) formulated themes clustered into (12) themes.

The participants engaged are specifically the 2nd and 3rd year Social Studies students which have shared their responses and statements about their views and experiences on distance learning modality during COVID-19 pandemic.

Social Studies Students' Views on Distance Learning Modality

The researchers asked the participants about how they view distance learning modality. While there are several viewpoints on learning achievement and teaching perspectives, students' perspectives are especially important because they constitute the educational endeavor's reason for existing (Chickering & Gamson, as cited in Van Wart, et al., 2020). The views of students provide significant firsthand information about their experiences and expectations (Dawson et al., 2019, as cited in Van Wart, et al., 2020). Analyzing students' views on distance learning can provide insight and recommendations for higher education institutions considering the use of

distance learning as a permanent mode of instruction (“Students’ perceptions,” 2020). According to Loveless (2021), students receive instruction through online classes, video recordings, video conferencing, or any other audio/visual technology medium in distance learning. It allows people to get an education without having to go to a classroom. With this, hearing the views of the students allows the uncovering of potential blind spots and explore on new things necessary for decision-making.

Based on the data gathered, the researchers were able to come up with two (2) emergent themes based on the responses of the participants about how they view distance learning modality. These emergent themes are: Theme 1: Distance learning as an alternative learning modality and Theme 2: Distance learning as an independent learning.

Table 1: Thematic map on the Social Studies Students’ Views on Distance Learning Modality

Distance learning as an alternative learning modality	Distance learning modality as an independent learning
Distance learning modality is an alternative way to continue education in the time of pandemic Learning continues despite teachers and students are physically separated	Independent learning among students Same knowledge is provided, but learnings are gained through self-study.

Table 2: Theme 1: Distance learning modality as an alternative learning modality

Respondents Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
“... pero mas maupay nala liwat hin sugad hini nga gincontinue la kaysa igstop an pageskwela.” (P3; L5152) <i>(“However, it is way better to have distance learning and continue rather than halting education.”)</i>	Despite the struggles in distance learning, it is still viewed as a better way for the students to continue education.	Distance learning modality is an alternative way to continue education in the time of pandemic
“Para ha akon an distance learning modality is a new way of educational system which help students to reach out specially during this pandemic situation.” (P6; L9495) <i>(“For me, distance learning modality, it is a new way of educational system that continually provide quality education for the students in this time of pandemic.”)</i>	Distance learning is a new and an alternative learning modality to face-to-face set-up which identified by educational institutions in order continue education amidst pandemic.	
“An distance learning is an alternative way para makaaram la gihap, makacontinue la gihap an mga students pag aram.” (P7; L109- 111) <i>(“Distance learning also serves as an alternative way for students to continue education.”)</i>		
“Para akon an distance learning modality an masisiring ko la o an nakikita ko la is another way of learning para ha mga students nga bisan may pandemic or bisan mayda mga nangyayare we can still learn something nga kahit diri magka urugpod basta may nababaruan kita ngan usa hiya nga way para mahibaro ghap kita.” (P11; L171-174) <i>(“Distance learning modality is another way of learning for students that even in these times of pandemic and even there's a distance between the teacher and students we can still manage to learn. And it is a way for us to learn.”)</i>		

<p>“Kuan, bagat nagseserve hiya as an alternative ha faceto-face kay kailangan man ipadayon an pag eskwela bisan ada nala ha balay.” (P20; L353-354) (“Distance learning modality served as an alternative to face-to-face set-up, since we still need to continue studying even at the comfort of our homes.”)</p>		
<p>“Distance learning modality is kind of educational setup hiya kun diin limited an face-to-face hiya kun diin ma-continue la ngahaw an learning han students.” (P16; L293-294) (“Distance learning modality is a kind of educational set-up where face-to-face is limited and education still continues.”)</p>		
<p>“Para ha akon an distance learning is an alternative way of educational system na gin palunsad para ma provide an learning needs han mga studyante dara na dire man allowed an face-to-face na setup han yana na pandemic.” (P21; L371-373) (“For me, distance learning is an alternative way of educational system that was implemented to provide the learning needs of the students, due to face-to-face setup are not allowed because of the pandemic.”)</p>		
<p>“Distance learning, in my opinion is a form of studying in which we, as students do not need to go to school to take any classes, instead, we do it at home or at a different place in correspondence of course of the internet.” (P19; L333-335)</p>		

As seen in Table 2, it can be gleaned that based on the participants’ views on distance learning modality during COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers were able to come up with twenty (20) significant statements, seven (7) formulated meanings and two (2) theme clusters that derived to an emergent theme which labelled as “Distance Learning Modality as an Alternative Learning Modality”. The information below presents the exhaustive description of the first theme that emerged in the data.

Theme 1: Distance learning modality as an alternative learning modality

The current educational system has experienced difficulties in distributing basic education brought by COVID 19 Pandemic, where face to face classes were prohibited to follow the implementation of General Health and Safety protocols. Thus, the school year 2020-2021 educational system rapidly changed and it turns to distance learning set-up in order to continue the classes despite of the treat of COVID-19 pandemic (Bagood, 2021). The closure of schools had far-reaching economic and sociological ramifications for students, faculty, and their families. It has also raised awareness on a variety of social and economic issues, such as student debt, digital learning, food insecurity, and homeless people, as well as childcare, healthcare, housing, the Internet, and disability services. And so, the authorities took various steps to combat the virus outbreak (Elfirdoussi, et al., 2020). To prevent the infection from spreading, the Philippines' Commission on Higher Education (CHED) recommended HEIs to continue using "available flexible learning and other alternative modes of delivery in place of on-campus study" (Commission on Higher Education, 2020). These affirmations are meant to motivate people to keep learning.

Authorities guaranteed that all students would be provided to have an access to distance learning whether via radio, television, modular or online resources (Dollanganger, 2020). As stated by Participant 6, “...distance learning modality, it is a new way of educational system that continually provide quality education for the students in this time of pandemic.”. Participant 19 also stated “Distance learning, in my opinion is a form of studying in which we, as students do not need to go to school to take any classes, instead, we do it at home or at a different place in correspondence of course of the internet.”. Kember (1989) argued that poor time management

leads to challenges such as learners’ inability to integrate the demands of off campus study with family, work and social commitments (Musingafi, Maxwell, et al., 2015). However, as stated by Participant 3, “... *it is way better to have distance learning and continue rather than halting education.*”. Thus, studentparticipants view distance learning modality as an alternative to the traditional face-to-face classes which help them continue learning in this time of pandemic.

In addition, according to Simonson (n.d.), distance learning, also known as distance education is a form of learning in which teachers and students are physically separated during instruction and emerging technologies are used to facilitate student-teacher and student-student communication. It allows students and teachers to communicate in a limited way. Students may receive their learning materials by e-mail, or the internet in a distance learning setting. Written exams or assignments, performance activities, or portfolios are all examples of learning assessments. Students can also seek assistance from their lecturers via the telephone, snail mail, email, or instant messaging applications. But, in distance learning modality, there is a minimal role of teacher for they cannot immediately accommodate to queries because of time. It is stated by both Participant 12 and 13 that, “*the teacher has a minimal role in distance learning.*”, “...*you are not immediately accommodated by the teacher if you have some questions because of their time.*”. Also, Participant 15 shared that, “...*there are times or instances that we are not learning because of the limited interaction and collaboration between the students and the teachers and there is a lack of guidance and instructions by the teachers*”. The lack of in- person classes has a significant impact. Distance education would not be able to solve these geographical disparities (Santos, 2020).

Distance learning is an alternative to face to face learning according to some student-participants since COVID19 pandemic disrupted widely the cultural educational system. This make sense after all since students cannot have face to face classes while virus keep on spreading anywhere that treats to their health. Further, according to an article on Viewsonic library (2020), the greatest advantage of distance education is its adaptability. By choosing the time, place, and medium for their education, students can pick when, where, and how they learn. There are video conferencing possibilities for people who desire direct, live access to teachers. However, for students who must fit their training around a job or other obligations, a more casual timetable may be preferable.

Student-participants view distance learning modality as an alternative to traditional learning since it is what they are currently experiencing as compared to previous years of studying in Samar State University. They see it as an alternative learning modality that is brought by the need of education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the views of the students provide significant firsthand information about their experiences and expectations (Dawson et al., 2019, as cited in Van Wart, et al., 2020).

The following table present the detailed information of the second theme that emerged in the data.

Table 3. Theme 2: Distance learning modality as an independent learning

Respondents Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
Kinahanglan mo gud talaga mahibaro kay self-enhancement na gudla... (P2; L31-32) <i>(“You need to learn on your own”)</i>	Distance learning is like a self-learning wherein you need to work hard on your own, instead of depending to professors for guidance.	Independent learning among students
Kumbaga self-study ka la. (P3; L53) <i>(“It is somewhat a self-study learning.”)</i>		
“Nagiging independent lugod ako. Ngan na dire na umasa pa ha teacher para la mabaro. As in magsisikap kagud na maintindihan ngan maka answer ka han mga module na waray gin dedependehan kundi imo la gud kalugaringon.” (P21; L378-380) <i>(“I become more independent. And to stop relying to teachers to be able to learn. As in you will really strive to understand and be able to answers modules all by yourself without relying to others.”)</i>		

<p>Quite good because kapot ko akon oras, it's up to me when to answer the activities and thesis. I have a lot of time to answer the lesson or do some research about the lesson for further information. (P1; L4-6)</p> <p>("It is quiet good because I manage my own time, I am not pressured and I handle myself well.")</p>		
<p>...kay bisan ano nga oras puydi ka mag answer, bisan nakahigda ka pag answer. Katin ko an akon oras. (P4; L79-80)</p> <p>("because I am in control of my time, and I decide when and where to answer the activities.")</p>		
<p>...kasi imo kasi kapot an time, ikaw mismo mag ha handle paano mo hiya, ig ma manage an imo time para pag answer, kuan kasi pag dako imo time pag answer, ikaw nala mismo, an imo nala kalugaringon an kalaban an willingness ba kun gugustuhin mo mag answer yana o diri. (P15; L271-274)</p> <p>("because I handle my own time, you are the one who handle on how you are going to manage your time in answering, your willingness to answer it or not.")</p>		
<p>Students are learning at their own pace. (P19; L337-338)</p>		
<p>...mas makuri ko hiya, kay kailangan kasi mag self-study. Para ha akon based on experience, makuri ko hiya kay kailangan mag self-study, baga't independent, distance learning is somewhat like independent learning. (P12; L190-192)</p> <p>("distance learning modality is more difficult because you need to self-study. Distance learning is somewhat like independent learning.")</p>		
<p>Bagan self-study la, kay di ba diri man kita nakukuan han teacher, waray face-to-face learning, so, an pag-study ha aton la. (P13; L217-218)</p> <p>("It is somewhat a self-study since we are not guided by teachers, no face-to-face learning so, we just learn on our own.")</p>		
<p>...distance learning modality enable us to learn in our own self and discover our own skill so that we can be able to learn and acquire knowledge from the lessons and it give us the freewill. (P14; L238-239)</p>		
<p>...we are still guided by the lesson and we are still learning even in this kind of situation. (P1; L8-9)</p> <p>("we are still guided by the lesson and we are still learning even in this kind of situation.")</p>		
<p>...they are both beneficial to students and the teachers and also there is a continuous learning process. (P6; L96-97)</p> <p>("both of them are beneficial to the students and aside from that, there is also a continuous teaching learning process.")</p>		
<p>...nagdedeliver la gihap han knowledge ha students. (P7; L112-113)</p> <p>("they both deliver knowledge to students.")</p>		

<p>An pagkakapareho niya ha face-to-face, kuan although an module adto na tanan di ba? (P13; L219) (“The similarity of it to face-to-face is all the information are already stipulated in the module, right?”)</p>		
<p>...nga mayda la ngahaw kita nahihibaruan (P11; L175) (“The similarities between distance learning and face-to-face is that we can still learn.”)</p>		
<p>...the same naghahatag liwat hin mga learning. (P15; L268) (“...they offer the same learning”)</p>		
<p>...parihas hiya kay learning. (P17; L312-313) (“The similarity of the two is that they are both learning”)</p>		
<p>...nakakaaram la gihapon an students. (P20; L355) (“students are still learning”)</p>		
<p>...both of them are a system of education and that they also provide learnings to students. (P21; L374-375)</p>		
<p>...we can still somehow grasp knowledge from the lesson (P25; L457)</p>		
<p>Nagkakapareho hira kay bisan ano nga activity ngan requirements nga ighatag han teachers ma-comply gudla gihap an estudyante. (P8; L121-122) (“They were similar in terms of the activities and requirements that are given by teachers that the students needed to comply.”)</p>		
<p>...same man la an mga lesson pati mga activity. (P9; L136) (“the lessons and activities are likely to be the same.”)</p>		
<p>Students are engaged to study their lessons and must complete their activities, outputs and quizzes within the certain amount of time. (P19; L336-337)</p>		
<p>...an mga lessons pareho la. (P18; L328) (“Both distance learning and face-to-face have the same lessons.”)</p>		
<p>An pagkakapareho han distance learning ngan face-to-face learning para ha akon, pareho hira nakakaprovide hin learning ngada han estudyante, pareho an content nga ginahatag. (P23; L416-417) (“The similarity of distance learning and face- to-face set-up, is they both provide same learning towards students, and they provide the same content.”)</p>		

As seen in Table 3, it can be gleaned that based on the participants’ views, the researchers were able to come up with twenty-five (25) significant statements, six (6) formulated meanings and two (2) theme clusters that derived to an emergent theme which labelled as “Distance Learning Modality as an Independent Learning”. The information below presents the exhaustive description of the second theme that emerged in the data.

Theme 2: Distance learning modality is an independent learning modality

According to Hasper (2020), the traditional learning environment has undergone significant modifications as a result of COVID-19. Young learners have had to learn remotely and alone from home, rather of being surrounded by their peers in a classroom. The process of fostering learner independence entails advancing along a continuum. The learner at one end of the spectrum relies substantially on an instructor; at the other end, the learner is self-sufficient of following the instructions without constant supervision. As stated by Participant 21, *"I become more*

independent. And I stop relying on teachers to be able to learn. As in you will really strive to understand and be able to answer modules all by yourself without relying on others." And Participant 13 also states that *"It is somewhat a self-study since we are not guided by teachers, no face-to-face learning so, we just learn on our own."* Moving across this continuum takes time and is accomplished in small steps. Glaxton (2002) explained that even learners as young as six can start moving along this continuum. It is all about teaching the skill of "learning to learn" and creating the right conditions. As stated by Participant 2, *"You need to learn on your own."* In that, learner autonomy refers to the idea that students should assume as much responsibility as possible for what they learn and how they learn it (Richards, J.C, 2021).

Based on Ggis (2019), in terms of location, learning has gone a long way in the last decade. Since the internet's inception, people have begun to learn via the internet. However, it was most popular among older students, particularly those who combine work and school. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the learning process further more to stop the spread of the deadly virus, millions of schools around the world were ordered to close. Children began attending classes from the comfort of their own homes, over the internet and modules. Online learning, it has been found, is also playing a crucial role in pushing learners to think independently. The students are inspired to conduct their own study, gather references from the vast online database, and prepare at their own pace. As stated by Participant 1, *"It is quiet good because I manage my own time, I am not pressured and I handle myself well."* Participant 4 also stated that, *"I am in control of my time, and I decide when and where to answer the activities."* When opposed to face-to-face classrooms, a remote learning context for language acquisition presents learners with unique demands and opportunities. Learners are significantly more interested in self-management and environmental management in particular. (White, 1995).

An autonomous learner is one who is capable of taking charge of their own education. These are pupils who can work independently and make sound decisions without the assistance of professors. It is critical to help kids become autonomous learners in order for them to improve their academic performance and remain motivated. Students frequently have more control over their time when they switch to independent learning. They have the ability to choose when and where they spend their time, and with the correct care, they will choose to spend it wisely. Participant 15 shared that, *"...I handle my own time, you are the one who handle on how you are going to manage your time in answering, your willingness to answer it or not."* When you become an independent learner, you have a greater sense of responsibility and accountability for your own success and failure. This is especially motivating since kids may feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment when they witness positive academic improvement. (InnerDrive, 2021)

Online, module and face-to-face instruction, both modes of teaching are able to deliver a high-quality learning experience to students. As stated by participant 7, *"They are similar because they both deliver knowledge to students."* In that case, these learning modalities could help the students to learn even in this time of pandemic because it delivers the same knowledge and content that stipulated in the learning material. Participant 6 also stated that, *"In terms of their similarities, both of them are beneficial to the students and aside from that, there is also a continuous teaching learning process."* Both online and traditional learning necessitate a significant amount of effort. In both situations, giving and receiving feedback is critical. Assignments are an important element of the learning process. As stated by a participant, *"They were similar in terms of the activities and requirements that are given by teachers that the students needed to comply."* Students can learn at their own pace, complete assignments on their own time, and gain the same knowledge as they would in a typical, classroom-based course by taking online and modular classes. (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004).

Lived Experiences of Social Studies Students on Distance Learning Modality

The researchers asked the participants about their experiences on distance learning modality. Fura, et. al. (2020) shared that COVID-19 Pandemic has been affecting the living of university students. And so, determining the experiences of the students on distance learning modality is significant for enables institutions of higher learning to consider the role of students and teachers in the distance learning environment, particularly when making decisions about distance learning programs. Hebebcı, et al. (2020) added that the perception of the students' experience in distance learning have been put forward to using it for improvement and in-service training in order the distance education will be more effectively in the future. This also encourages students, professors, and institutions of higher learning to provide ways of designing ways to deal with the problems of distance learning. Rush (2015) explicitly asserts the student experiences dimension to existing theories as well as suggest the need

for new theory relating to the student experience of distance education and, more specifically, how that experience may change over time due to varying life conditions, in order to gain a better understanding of the distance education picture.

Based on the data gathered, the researchers were able to come up with two (2) emergent themes based on the responses of the participants about their lived experiences on distance learning modality during COVID-19 pandemic. And these themes are: Theme 3: Problems Encountered and Theme 4: Coping Strategies.

Table 4. Thematic map on Lived Experiences of Social Studies Students on Distance Learning

Problems Encountered	Practiced Coping Strategies
Unstable internet connection Inevitable environmental learning distractions Difficulties in learning the lessons Lack of guidance by the teachers	Late night studies Self – study Searching information from the internet Teacher consultation

The table presented above is the summary of the emergent themes and their respective theme clusters about the lived experiences of the participants on the distance learning modality during COVID-19 pandemic. Table 5 below presents the detailed information of the third theme that emerged in the data.

Table 5. Theme 3: Problems encountered

Respondents Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
Damo akon experience. Especially han signal danay maluya. (P1; L17) <i>(“I experienced a lot. First, the slow internet connection.”)</i>	Difficulty to access stable internet connection is experienced most of the time.	Unstable internet connection
Whereas kun adlaw na ngani, yay kaluluya. (P2; L45) <i>(“In daytime, the connection is so slow”)</i>		
Danay kasi liwat makuri it signal... (P4; L70) <i>(“And also my internet connection is sometimes unstable.”)</i>		
Aside han makuri nga connection... (P7; L118) <i>(“Aside from the poor internet connection...”)</i>		
It’s hard for me to access the signal. (P8; L128)		
Internet connection problem. (P10; L167)		
...han signal which is super common na... (P11; L184) <i>(“Aside of internet connection problem which is very common”)</i>		
Actually makuri talaga hiya, an access han internet diri maupay labi na ha didi ha amon lugar... (P13; L228)		
<i>(“Actually, it is really difficult because it is hard to access the internet here in our place.”)</i>		

<p>an problema talaga an kamaluya han signal... (P14; L263-264) (“the main problem is the poor internet connection...”)</p>		
<p>An pinaka makuri talaga an connectivity, kuan an wifi sugad hito... (P15; L282-286) (“One of the experiences I face during distance learning is the unstable internet connection, the wifi just like that...”)</p>		
<p>Makuri hiya especially didi ha am area kon diin 12:00 am nagkaka ada maupay na signal. (P16; L304) (“It’s hard to deal with especially here in our area where only at 12:00 am the internet is stable”)</p>		
<p>Na-eexperience ko example an struggle han internet. Ini nga modular nga klase ngan online class. (P18; 323-324) (“I have experienced it for example, the struggle of internet connection for my modular and online class.”)</p>		
<p>Pinaka naeexperience ko talaga ini nga agi han slow network connectivity. Sugad hini maluya an signal han network, diri ka dayon nakakuan pag aram. (P3; L61-62) (“I always experience slow internet connection. Just like at this very moment, the internet is poor so you cannot study well”)</p>		
<p>Makuri, kay an amon didi makuri an internet, makuri maka access han mga soft copy gin dadownload online. (P5; L85-86)</p>		
<p>(“Since the internet here in our place is difficult, it is also difficult to access the soft copies because they need to be downloaded online.”)</p>		
<p>Makuri ig access pag virtual na, pag ada na online platform. Mga pagsesend gin mga output, kailangan load, kailangan signal since dire man mga stable an mga lugar. (P9; L144- 145) (“Difficulty to access if it's virtual or in online platforms. As to sending outputs, it requires a load or stable signal because the signal or internet is not stable in the area.”)</p>		
<p>I’m having a hard time answering my modules because of poor internet connection. (P19; L350-351)</p>		
<p>Ikaduwa, an maluya nga internet. Diyos ko kailangan ko pa magpiniraw ngadat kaagahon basi la makaaccess internet. Asya iton mostly, ha mga online quiz tas exams, di ngani alas dose, mga alas dos or alas tres kagahon ak nagaanswer basi makasubmit ak hin maupay, iton waray glitch or kun ano man ito. (P20: L366-369) (“Second, the poor internet connection. My God, I needed to be awake until midnight just to access good internet connection. So that most of the time, I take online quizzes and exams during twelve midnight or 2 to 3 o'clock in the</p>		

<p>morning so I can submit it without experiencing glitches or what”.)</p>		
<p>An akon mga experiences is una an dire maupay na internet connection, pag maluya ngani an signal maihan ngan makuri mka download soft copies han module pati liwat han Pag sesend na han mga outputs. (P21; L383385) (“My experiences are, first, the unstable internet connection. If the internet connections</p>		
<p>are slow it difficult to download soft copies of the modules and also in sending the outputs”.)</p>		
<p>Tungod nga naukooy ako ha upland barangay kinukurian ako kay an signal maluya. kuan perme ako kinukulba Kay danay kuan dire ako maaram kon an amon instructors mayda ba gin sent na quiz. (P22; L405-407) (“Because of the low signal, living in an upland barrio was difficult. I was always concerned since I had no idea if our instructor had sent us a note or whether we had quizzes”)</p>		
<p>Kadadamo han ak mga na experience hine nga pagtaga distance learning, sugad nala han unstable internet connection, permi gud in asya an ak problema kada mayda quiz or exam kay kailangan gud nga ha google form (P23; L429- 431)</p>		
<p>(“I experience unstable internet connection, and this is always my biggest problem I faced during distance learning, because every time we have a quiz or exam it needs to be in a google form where it required stable internet connection”.)</p>		
<p>...internet connectivity is another problem so I wake up early when there are quizzes or examination online so that I can access it easily and with no more internet disturbance”. (P24; L451-452)</p>		
<p>An kaaringasa han balay wherein diri ka makakafocus han imo mga ginbabasa ha module, an mga sugo nga bagan ikaw la an nakikita pirmi, ikaw la an natatawag. (P1; L19-20) (“Our noisy home, wherein I cannot focus to what I am reading because I am always instructed to do the chores and to do this, and do that stuffs.”)</p>		

<p>Makuri danay kay ha balay kasi diri tanan nga oras nakafocus ak pag answer hin module. Damo it sugo, asya nga makuri gud danay. (P4; L75-77)</p> <p>("I am having a hard time to focus in answering my modules at home because there are lot of instructions needed to follow like doing the household chores and many others.")</p>		
<p>Distraction ha outside and inside the home. Kunwari may mga family conflict sugad iton. It focus dri la hiya nakada ha pag-aram, it focus nahihingadi pa ha iba na mga butang labi na kun mayda gud problema ha mga pamilya sugad iton. Tapos plus the fact nga waray gud ako kalugaringon nga study room. (P10; L156- 159)</p> <p>("There are so many distractions in the environment. Distraction outside and inside the home. For example, if there's a family conflict, sometimes we lose focus to our study. Plus, the fact that I don't have my own study room.")</p>		
<p>...maaringasa, grabe maaringasa an neighbor, mageexam ka sige an patukar harani ha imo o harani ha iyo balay. Tapos kuan ngayan, ha kuan pa ha household chores sugad hito, kailangan mo muna unahon kay pagiinisan ka han parents masiring kay ano pirmi nala ito hiya, sugad hiton. Pati liwat an parents maaringasa na didistract liwat, nakaka distract pati pa an mga kabugtuan maaringasa (P15; L282-286)</p> <p>("...noisy, very noisy neighbors, during exams they play music near you or near your house. Then the household chores, you need to do it first because your parents will get mad at you for always prioritizing your modules, something like that. My parents are also noisy and my siblings too which distracts me.")</p>		
<p>...ada household nag-aanswer so first challenge is pagbabasa kay maaringasa an imo surrounding dere parehas ha school mamingaw tapos may-ada ka pa mga responsibilities ha house nga kailangan mo igsabay mo... (P17; L319-321)</p> <p>("...in our home there is a struggle in reading our modules because of some distractions unlike in the school that it is conducive and peaceful to learn and in our home we have a lot of responsibilities that we have to do.")</p>		
<p>...tapos an environment, labi na an mga kapitbahay nga mahilig mag videoke, an ak kabugtuan nga magliya, ngan an mga sugo ha panimalay. (P23; L875-876)</p> <p>("...and in the environment, especially with the neighbors that are fond of singing, my siblings, and the household chores")</p>		
<p>...modular learning, bisan waray ka danay magets kailangan mo piriton ngan intindihon. (P1; L15-16)</p> <p>("...in modular learning, even you cannot understand a certain lesson, you still have to understand it in any way you can.")</p>		

<p>...asya la adto nga diri talaga ak nakakaintindi han module. (P4; L82-83) (“it such that I cannot understand or comprehend the lessons completely.”)</p>		
<p>there are some instances na mayda talaga diri ak naiintindihan na topic. (P8; L128-129) (“there are some instances that I cannot understand the topic”)</p>		
<p>Tapos may mga term ha module na dri gud hiya understandable. Taposmay mga confusing na mga sentences na dri ko gud hiya carry ma gets. (P10; L167-168) (“And there are terms in the module that is not understandable and also there are some confusing sentences that I can't able to comprehend”)</p>		
<p>...discussion diri nakukuan, diri naiinitindihan (P13; L224) (“discussions are cannot easily be understood”)</p>		
<p>My personal experience in distance learning is that first and for most actually, makuri talaga hiya ma intindihan an instruction... (P14;</p>		
<p>L256-257 (“My personal experience in distance learning is that, the instruction difficult to understand...”)</p>		
<p>Experience, an struggle han pagkahibaro han lesson... (P18; L331) (“My experience in distance learning is that the struggle to learn about the lessons”)</p>		
<p>Siyempre pinaka una an challenge kahibaro ha lessons. Kay honestly, diri talaga ak maaram kun tama nak nababaruan hini yana. Waray guidance naman la ha tikang ha teacher. Labi na ha mga subject like economics tas kakukuri niya intindihon kun pagbibinasahon mo la, iton waray ka idea kun asya na ba nim pagkaintindi or ano ba. (P20; L362-365) (“The very first thing I experienced in distance learning is the challenge to learn the lessons. Because honestly, I don't know if I am learning the right things, because there is no guidance from the teacher. Especially with our subject in economics, I am really having the hard time understanding it if I just solely depend on my readings. I have no idea if I am understanding right or what.”)</p>		

<p>I have been facing difficulties in answering my modules especially the subject Production of Social Studies Instructional materials and Integrative Methods in Teaching Social Science Discipline in Basic Education because both of this subject requires to make a lesson plan and I'm having a hard time understanding how to integrate the subject social studies to other discipline. (P25; L462-465)</p>		
<p>Napipressure ako kun sakto an imo answer or diri, an anxiety aada kay parang naghahabol ka pirmi hit sakto nga answer... (P2; L40-41) ("I feel pressured because I am uncertain of my answers, I feel like chasing for correct answers...")</p>		
<p>...diri ka liwat sure kun asya na ba an ginstudy mo. (P7; L118) ("...you are also uncertain with the things you studied.")</p>		
<p>...mag ask ka ngani imo classmate, then it turns out magkaiba ngayan kamo view... (P12; L205-206) ("if you ask your classmates, it turns out you have different views and interpretations about the lesson")</p>		
<p>Disadvantage because it limits my learnings. (P1; L7)</p>		
<p>Parang it distance learning kasi an imo knowledge contain la kun ano lat ada ha imo mga maintindihan without han intervention han mgaa professor ngan instructor, parang limited la liwat hiya. (P2; L27) ("In distance learning you only learned through your own understanding without the intervention of the professor and instructor it's like learning is limited.")</p>		
<p>An didi kasi may distance learning, diri mo makukuanan an imo knowledge kun hain gud tubtob an imo learning kay limited manla. Experiences is the best teacher. (P2;38) ("Whereas in distance learning, your knowledge is limited. I believe that experience is the best teacher.")</p>		
<p>...ha distance learning guti la nim nababaruan. (P3; L53) ...in distance learning, you have less amount of learning</p>		
<p>...diri naman hiya maupay kay guti la tat nababaruan, or waray gud ada. (P4; L70) ("Distance learning is not okay because there is minimal or no learnings at all.")</p>		
<p>Ha distance learning it limits the learning that we gain from the topic or from the lesson. (P10; L152) ("In distance learning, it limits the learning that we gain from the topic or lesson.")</p>		



<p>...ine nga limited face to face classes, bagat kulang an learning. (P16; L303) (“...this limited face to face classes is somewhat lacking with learning”)</p>		
<p>50/50 hiya nga may learning ansya an makukuha, Sugad hito huh 50/50 in a sense na kay kun ano an imo mababaruan based han mga activities amo la liwat an imo igaanswer. (P17; L307) (“In distance learning, the learnings that we can get is 50/50 because the learning that we can learn based from the activities are also the answer in your assessment.”)</p>		
<p>Makuri. Diri kita nahihibaro gud hin maupay compared kun aadto kita ha eskwelahan. Guti la an learning. Pero mas maupay nala liwat hin sugad hini nga gincontinue la kaysa igstop an pageskwela. (P3; L50-51) (“Distance learning is hard. The learnings are limited and we cannot learn fully compared if we were at</p>		
<p>school. However, it is way better to have distance learning and continue rather than halting education.”)</p>		
<p>Siguro dire gad masisiring na dire. Nagkakamayda gihap hiya input ha aton, nakakabulig hiya limited la, kailangan la reinforcement ba tikang ha mga teacher. (P9; L139) (“Maybe it can't be said that it doesn't help, it still has an input to us, it can help us but only to a limited extent. We only need a reinforcement from the teachers.”)</p>		
<p>Oo gad kay napapadayon la gihap niya an akon paglearn, although diri hiya sugad kadamo nga learnings, pero atleast nakakalearn lak gihap. (P20; L357) (“Of course, because it continuously provides learning, although the amount of learnings gained is way different, at least I still learn something.”)</p>		
<p>...ngan kuan an knowledge na nababaruan kuan dire sugad dan una ngan damo pa. (P22; L400-401) (“...the knowledge gained is lesser as compared to old days.”)</p>		
<p>“distance learning is not good as face to face classes because there is just limited knowledge that you will receive.” (P24-L440)</p>		
<p>...makuri ko hiya kay basi han ak situation Dre ak nakakaaram hin maupay ngan makuri ko maintindahan an mga learning Packet nga ginhahatag ha akon. (P23; L413) (“Distance learning is difficult, because based on my situation, I can't really focus on my studies and I have a hard time understanding the learning Packet that sent to me.”)</p>		
<p>“I'm having a hard time understanding how to integrate the subject social studies to other discipline.” (P25L463-464)</p>		

<p>makuri lagi kun imo la sarili an sasarigan iba gihapon an mayda teacher, nakakapakiana ka direkta tas an learning baga han direkta dayun nga nahihingada ha imo so baga dre gud talaga as in maupay o dire nakakabulig as in an modular learning. (P5-L90-92)</p> <p>(“there is no direct contact or the student and teacher are separated by a large distance. In addition, in face-to-face teaching, you can really understand what is being taught, while in modular learning, all we have is our own interpretation.”)</p>		
<p>So bagan ha distance learning liwat hin nakukurian ka mag reach out han imo instructors which is may time hin</p>		
<p>nagkakamay ada han hinder han imo learning. (P6L105-106)</p> <p>(“It seems that, in the distance learning, it is difficult for you to reach out to your instructors</p>		
<p>wherein there is a time that it can hinder to your learning.”)</p>		
<p>Ha distance learning bagan kuan la minimal la hiya, mostly ngani an mga teachers marereach out mo la hira kon may pakiana ka, tapos mostly dire about han lessons, pero about la han pagpasa, diin ig-papasa, kon ano an igparasa, sugad la hito. (P12-L194-196)</p> <p>(“Compared to face-to-face, the teacher has a minimal role in distance learning. Oftentimes, teachers can only be reached-out if you have something to ask, and mostly are not related to lessons.”)</p>		
<p>“For me, distance learning has a high risk of distraction because there are no teachers available for face-to-face contact and no classmates to assist with daily updates about pending assignments.” (P19; L340-342)</p>		
<p>makuri ko maintindahan an mga learning Packet nga ginhahatag ha akon, kay kulang hin presence ngan guidance han teacher. (P23- L413-414)</p> <p>(“I have a hard time understanding the learning Packet that sent to me, due to the reason that there is a lack of guidance by the teacher.”)</p>		

As seen in Table 5, it can be gleaned that based on the participants’ experiences, the researchers were able to come up with fifty-seven (57) significant statements, thirteen (13) formulated meaning and four (4) theme clusters that derived to an emergent theme which is the “Problems Encountered”. The information below presents the exhaustive description of the third theme that emerged in the data.

Theme 3: Problems Encountered

One of the problems faced by social studies students in distance learning modality, is unstable internet connection. As to their given statements, they are always experiencing unstable internet connectivity during daytime, and somehow is affecting their ability to access online platforms necessary to comply the requirements given by the teachers. As stated by Participant 3, *“I always experience slow internet connection. If you have unstable internet, you cannot study well because you can’t access information needed to further understand the lessons. Slow internet connection affects my studies because I always search and check information in the*

internet before I answer my modules. In addition, according to the findings stated on the article of Michigan State University (2020), There are a lot of ways where a poor internet connection can affect the students' performance. Students with poor access to internet finds difficulty to communicate with teachers, classmates and to do independent learning. One of the most significant issues that students without internet access at home face is their inability to complete homework.

Students never find time to do online learning because it requires so much time and flexibility. Personal attention is another major issue with online learning. Students want two-way interaction, which can be difficult to implement at times. The learning process will not be fully realized until students put what they have learned into practice. Online content can be all theoretical at times, making it difficult for students to practice and learn effectively. A major issue is also the poor quality of the course content. Students believe that the main barriers to online learning are a lack of community, technical issues, and difficulties understanding instructional goals (Song, et al., 2004). Students are not adequately prepared to balance their work, family, and social lives with their study lives in an online learning environment. Students were also found to be underprepared for a variety of e-learning and academic-type competencies. In addition, students have a low level of preparedness when it comes to using distance learning modalities (Parkes, et al., 2014).

Inevitable environmental learning distractions is also one of the problems that social studies students encountered in distance learning, where in, most of the student-participants have experienced environmental distractions such as noise distractions, household chores, and the quality of study area. As stated by Participant 1, *"My environment is not conducive for learning. It is noisy, and I cannot focus to what I am reading because I am always instructed to do the chores and to do this, and do those stuffs."* According to (Eyla with Li, 2019 as cited by Schmidt, 2020) *"In a world where distractions prevail, we have a golden opportunity to teach our students and ourselves how to manage our acts and concentrate on what is really important to us. of the most important life skills for the twenty-first century may be learning how to become indestructible"*.

In this time of pandemic, students have been affected to this new form of learning. Many have been facing challenges under distance learning such as difficulties on comprehending the lesson due to lack of lecture and presence of the teacher. As Participants 20 and 25 argued that they are having difficulties in understanding their subjects especially the major subjects that they knew nothing about. Although some of the participants finds it hard to learn in distance learning but preferred to continue the education than to learn nothing at all. As stated by Participant 3 *"Distance learning is hard. The learnings are limited and we cannot learn fully compared if we were at school. However, it is way better to have distance learning and continue rather than halting education"*. In addition, distance learning has an impact on them. However, it only limits their ability to learn as stated by Participant 9 *"Maybe it can't be said that it doesn't help, it still has an input to us, it can help us but only to a limited extent. We only need a reinforcement from the teachers"* According to Fox (1998), what is in dispute is not whether distance education is ideal, but whether it is good enough to merit a university degree, and whether it is better than receiving no education at all. He alludes to an argument that states students learn far too little when the teacher's personal presence is not available because the student has more to learn from the teacher than the texts.

Lack of guidance by the teacher is also a problem that encountered by the social studies students in distance learning modality. In distance education teachers and students must have a reliable means of communication during the learning process. As the Participant number 5 stated, *"Of course, the learning systems vary because in face-to-face learning, the student and instructor communicate verbally or physically, while in distance learning, there is no direct contact or the student and teacher are separated by a large distance."* As (Fox 1998) states, he makes an argument that students learn even less when the teacher is not present because the students has more to learn from the teacher than the texts. It is also described by (Gerland 2007), that distance learning is one of the situational difficulties for students. Bad learning conditions and a lack of time are two examples. In addition, (Santos 2020), also stated that, the lack of in-person classes has a significant impact. To obtain printed modules, some of the teachers must travel by motorized boat to the nearest urban center. It can take up to two hours to complete the journey. In that, distance education would not be able to solve these geographical disparities. The following table presents the detailed information of the fourth theme that emerged in the data.

Table 6. Theme 4: Practiced Coping strategies

Respondents Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme Cluster
<p>Pero sugad ngani iton nga magkiquiz o mag eexam, aadi ka ito pirmi ha alas onse hit gab'e kay diri na damo an intervention. (P2; L44) (<i>“But, I always take exams and quizzes during night time because the internet is more stable whereas in daytime, the connection is so slow.”</i>)</p> <p>Nasaka ak ha amon igbaw basi makakuan makusog na signal, tas kaurugan ha gab'e ak nagkukuan. (P3; L66) (<i>“I went upstairs in order to have strong internet, and oftentimes it is during night time where internet connection stable so that I answer my modules at night.”</i>)</p>	<p>Internet connection is stable during night time, so they prefer answering modules and taking online exams and quizzes during that time. Some are needed to stay up late to access stable internet connection.</p>	<p>Late night studies</p>
<p>Pero diri man talaga maluya an internet, bagat mayda la niya time like kaagahon or alas dose sugad hiton, asya nga sugad hiton nga time ak nagsesearch tas nagpapasa, pero danay la. (P13; L231) (<i>“However, it is not really a poor connection, it is somewhat stable in times like twelve midnight or dawn so that, I send and search the internet in those times sometimes.”</i>)</p>		
<p>An akun ginhihimo para ma cope up ko ba ito gab-e ako nag a-answer, kay mas okay man an connectivity hin gab-e, sugad mga 1:00 AM, 2:00 AM. (P15; L287) (<i>“What I did to cope this kind of situation is I studied and answer my modules at night because it's the only time where the internet is stable like at 1:00 AM, 2:00 AM.”</i>)</p>		
<p>Makuri hiya especially didi ha am area kon diin 12:00 am nagkaka ada maupay na signal so kailangan talaga namon mag piraw tapos nag kakawara-wara pa habang nag send. (P16; L304) (<i>“It's hard to deal with especially here in our area where only at 12:00 am the internet is stable so we really need to stay up late and internet interruption while sending the files.”</i>)</p>		
<p>...Diyos ko kailangan ko pa magpiniraw ngadat kaagahon basi la makaaccess internet. Asya iton mostly, ha mga online quiz tas exams, di ngani alas dose, mga alas dos or alas tres kagahon ak nagaanswer basi makasubmit ak hin maupay, iton waray glitch or kun ano man ito. (P1; L369-372) (<i>“My God, I needed to be awake until midnight just to access good internet connection. So that most of the time, I take online quizzes and exams during twelve midnight or 2 to 3 o'clock in the morning so I can submit it without experiencing glitches or what.”</i>)</p>		
<p>...An akon nala ginbubuhay pag unstable ak internet lalo na pag may deadline an quiz sugad hito alas dos hit kulop, nakikiisturya gud ak han ak teacher nga kon pwede midnight nala ak mag answer kay asya la talaga makusog an signal haamon, ngan pag gab-i. P23; L441- 443) (<i>“So what I do is, every time I faced this problem like unstable internet connection, I talk to my teacher about this</i></p>		

<p>matter if there's a deadline, that if ever I can take the quiz or exam at midnight because that's the only time that the internet is stable. “)</p>		
<p>Also, internet connectivity is another problem so I wake up early when there are quizzes or examination online so that I can access it <i>easily and with no more internet disturbance</i>.(P24; L457-459)</p>		
<p>...asya nga kailangan talaga mag self-study kay waray iba nga makakabulig kon dire an akon lagihap kalugaringon. (P21; L389-390) (“so I really need to do self-study habit, because there’s no one who will help me in my studies but myself.”)</p>		
<p>...a self-learning wherein kailangan ta maniguro han aton la instead of going to school. (P1; L9-10) (...it’s like a self-learning wherein we need to work hard on our own)</p>		
<p>...is self-study, kailangan ikaw mismo mo an maniguro para mahibaro pag intinde kay waray man magyayakan ha imo nga sugad ine hiya, sugad hito. (P12; L196-198) (“...is self-study. You need to study and understand the lessons by yourself because no one is going to guide you.”)</p>		
<p>...self-study la talaga, ikaw mismo an maghihimo paagi paano mo maintindahan an mga lessons. (P23; L 425426) (“...you really need to find ways on how to understand the lesson through self-studying.”)</p>		
<p>...magsesearch information ha internet kay makuri kasi maintindihan pag ha module la ma basi. (P21; L388-389) (“I need to search information from internet, because it is hard to understand the module.”)</p>		
<p>I also search from the internet some examples on how to make a lesson plan, because I am having a hard time understanding the lesson about this subject. (P25; L475477)</p>		
<p>...kay kailangan mo ig-search, kay diri ka pa man dayon makukuan han teacher natatagan han answer pag nagtatanong ka ha ira, because time. (P13; L220-222) (“ ...you need to search for it in the internet since you are not immediately accommodated by the teacher if you have some questions because of their time.”)</p>		
<p>Ada naman ha internet tanan pwede ko la ig search an mga lesson o topic nakakag-aram gehap bisan waray na instructor. (P18; L229- 230) (“...all of the information are in the internet and I can be able to search the lessons or topic easily and I learned even though there is no interaction between me and my instructor.”)</p>		

<p>...Asya nga an ak nala ginbubuhath nagpapaconsult ak han ak mga subject teacher nga mostly kinukurian ak kay para mas maklarohan ak han mga lessons, like nagsesend ak message through messenger, ngan mostly liwat nakadto kami ha school for consultation. (P20; L366-369) (“That’s why, to cope up with this problem, I consulted my subject teachers mostly those subjects that difficult to understand, I reach to them through messenger, and if</p>		
<p>they are not available, we mostly go to school for consultation.”)</p>		
<p>So sometimes I asked my seniors how do they understand it and sometimes I visit my instructors to consult my work. (P24; L456- 457)</p>		

As seen in Table 6, it can be gleaned that based on the participants’ experiences, the researchers were able to come up with eighteen (18) significant statements, six (6) formulated meaning and four (4) theme clusters that derived to an emergent theme which is the “Coping Strategies”. The information below presents the exhaustive description of the fourth theme that emerged in the data.

Theme 4. Practiced Coping Strategies

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread all over the world and has had significant impact in schooling. As a result, modular distance learning has been implemented reaction to ensure educational continuity. The Philippines is currently adjusting to a new normal type of education, which requires continues innovations and active participation from other stakeholders. The teacher is responsible for keeping track of the students’ progress. Learners can contact the teachers via e-mail, phone, text messaging, among other methods stated on the study of Llego (n.d.). As stated by the Participant 20, “...*That’s why, to cope up with this problem, I consulted my subject teachers mostly those subjects that difficult to understand, I reach to them through messenger, and if they are not available, we mostly go to school for consultation.*”. Some of the students go to their professors to get help with the lessons they don’t comprehend. The instructor provides resources, monitoring and guidance, as well as timely and accurate evaluation, for collaborative learning and interactive discussion. To improve individual learning, teachers support students during distant learning.

Coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID–19 has had a significant impact on how students learn. A study conducted by Gore, Bloem, Patton, Ferguson, and Joseph (2014) on coping strategies employed by distant students indicate that student use diverse coping strategies including seeking social support and making changes to improve the stressful situation. This is in consistent with the students in this study which use multiple strategies to cope up with these rapid changes, it was difficult for them to deal distance learning because of their location, where the internet is only stable at midnight. As stated by Participant 16, “*It’s hard to deal with especially here in our area where only at 12:00 am the internet is stable so we really need to stay up late and internet interruption while sending the files.*”. In that, Participant 3 said that “*I went upstairs in order to have strong internet, and oftentimes it is during night time where internet connection stable so that I answer my modules at night.*”. Some of the participants specified that they strategized in dealing with the learning distractions through finding place or time where internet is much stable.

Distance learning modality is a new set-up of classes in this time of pandemic. This means, students are left with no choice but to adjust themselves in this modality. Students have been utilizing coping strategies to support their needs. As stated by the Participant 21, “...*so I really need to do self-study habit, because there’s no one who will help me in my studies but myself.*”. Some of participants stated that they used the internet to help them with their self-study. As stated by the Participant 25 “...*I also search from the internet some examples on how to make a lesson plan, because I am having a hard time understanding the lesson about this subject.*” Module provides self – directed learning. The accusation of better self–study or learning skills among student is one of the advantages of using modules or instructions. Students actively participate in learning the module’s concepts. They gain a sense of accountability by completing the module’s task. The students’ progress on their own with little or no assistance from other. They are learning how to learn and are becoming self-sufficient (Nardo, MTB,2017).

University students lives have been impacted according to the study of Fura, et al., (2020). They’ve had difficulties, and COVID 19 has had an effect on their psychological, social, and academic functioning. This is in consistent with the findings of this study where in due to the problems of students encountered brought by distance learning, they devised a variety of technique to deal with the many challenges of distance learning period.

Table 7. The Final Thematic Map

Social Studies Students’ Views on Distance learning modality	
Distance learning modality as an alternative learning modality learning Distance learning modality is an alternative way to education in the time of pandemic Learning continues despite teachers and students are physically separated gained through self- study.	Distance learning modality as an independent Independent learning among students continue Same knowledge is provided, but learnings are
Lived Experiences of Social Studies Students on Distance Learning Modality	
Problems encountered Unstable internet connection Inevitable environmental learning distractions Difficulties in learning the lessons Lack of guidance from teacher	Coping strategies Late night studies Self – study Searching information through the internet Teacher consultation at School

Table 7 illustrates the summary of the emergent themes and theme clusters of how the participants view and experience distance learning modality.

Fundamental structure

The pandemic has introduced distance learning modality to the students, specifically to Social Studies majors. It brought them to experience learning at their own pace, practice independent learning which they believe to be resulting to a limited learning. It has affected the conditions of students to focus on their modules due to environmental distractions occurring at their home. In this chapter, it shows the overall phenomenological situation of the Social Studies students under distance learning modality during COVID- 19 pandemic which brought changes and challenges for students to adopt to this new form of education.

Distance learning modality has greatly impacted the Social Studies students in their ways and ability to learn. They experienced unstable internet connection, difficulties in learning and inevitable learning distractions occurring at home. It affected their psychosocial, social, and academic functioning for it offers them only limited learning. Despite the difficulties they experienced, they still view it as an alternative way to continue education amidst pandemic. It allows them to learn at their own pace, spend lesser for they no longer needing allowances and pay the boarding fees and they learn at the comfort of their homes. Yet, they still preferred face-to-face setup over distance learning modality because they want to learn by experience and feel the presence of the teacher for it leads them to focus more on the lessons.

Furthermore, students had been using coping mechanisms to adapt to this new form of learning. They find ways to study and answer their modules effectively. Most of them are using the night time as an opportunity to access a stable internet and a distraction-free environment.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of findings

This study has specifically aimed in addressing how the 2nd year and 3rd year Social Studies students view distance learning modality and what are their lived experiences towards distance education in Samar State University. This is for the purpose of utilizing the gained ideas which will help improve and develop distance learning modality in case another educational disruption will happen in the future. The researchers employed a qualitative approach and a phenomenological methodology for the reason that the research question is about the

participants' experiences, and phenomenology is about "the meaning of several individuals' lived experiences about a concept or phenomenon" and "exploring the structures of consciousness in human experiences" (Creswell, 1998). In gathering the data, semi-structured interview was utilized using an interview protocol through a phone call interview. And, the participants were determined by a snowball sampling technique. The gathering of data was held during the month of April, 2021.

To sum up the results obtained from the data analysis method of Colaizzi (1978), prevailing themes were taken into account. Each theme is provided with an exhaustive description to comprehensively discuss the phenomenon. The researchers were able to come up with two (2) emergent themes on the views of the social studies students on distance learning modality and another two (2) emergent themes on the lived experiences of the participants, which in a total of four (4) emergent themes across all the data.

The obtained results from the views of the participants are the; Theme 1: Distance learning modality as an alternative learning modality, which was extracted from the two (2) theme clusters, which are: distance learning modality is an alternative way to continue education in the time of pandemic, and learning continues despite the separation of students and teachers physically. Theme 2: Distance learning modality as an independent learning, this theme was extracted from the two (2) theme clusters which labeled as: independent learning among students, and same knowledge is provided, but the learnings are gained through self-study.

Furthermore, the results from the responses of the participants about their lived experiences on distance learning modality are: Theme 3. Problems encountered, which was derived from the four (4) clustered themes, namely: unstable internet connection, inevitable environmental learning distractions, difficulties in learning the lessons, and lack of guidance from the teachers. Theme 4. Practiced Coping strategies, a theme which was extracted from the four (4) clustered themes. These are; answering at night, self-study, searching information through the internet and teacher consultation.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has made all the academic institutions' closure to stop the disease from spreading. This means that the students are prohibited to have face-to-face classes. And so, this has brought the Higher Educational Institutions to provide provident plans in continuing education amidst the crisis. Distance learning modality was then implemented. This does also mean that there is a need of determining how the students view distance learning modality and their lived experiences under the modality whose been implemented for the 1st semester of school year 2020-2021. It is for the reason of gaining information that will help improve and develop the newly implemented modality in the perspective of the Social studies students.

It was concluded that Social Studies students view distance learning modality as an independent learning mainly because of the experiences they encountered. First, the practice of self-study which allow them to learn at their own pace. Secondly, the absence of teachers' guidance. It was stated by some of the participants that teachers' role in the teaching and learning process is nonexistent. They no longer depend on the guidance of teachers even they are having hard time comprehending the lessons. They reasoned out that it is because they were not immediately accommodated whenever they needed something to clarify about the lessons. This has brought them to have limited learnings gained from the lessons.

The student-participants had encountered problems towards dealing with distance learning modality. This includes the inevitable environmental learning distractions like the noise coming from inside an outside their home, household responsibilities, lack of learning space and the unstable internet connection. This has brought them to make coping strategies to survive the school year. Knowing that modules are distributed electronically, they needed a stable connection of internet to download the files. Since the availability of a stable internet only occurs at night time, some of them are utilizing those times on answering the activities, quizzes and exams, also to search information that will clarify things out through the use of internet. It can be said that the people in the community should take conforming actions needed by the students in the community.

In coping with noisy environment, mostly are also utilizing the night time to have peaceful and silent environment, where most people are asleep. It also during night time or free time where they answer their modules because of the number of responsibilities at home, one of which is the household chores. With this, the need to provide learning spaces and actions for the control of noises in the environment is ultimately imperative.

Despite the adversities to survive in the pandemic, distance learning modality is essentially a need in this trying times. This has been an alternative to traditional face-to-face learning modality. In consideration to the lived experiences of the social studies students, it is evident that it is an ineffective learning modality as for this time. There is a needed improvement and development to provide the needs of the students and also to cater another educational disruption in the future. Because if these information will not be considered, institution can continually have produced graduates with theoretical knowledge and skills but lack the necessary competencies needed in the practice of their chosen career paths.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations were formulated: Firstly, to the students. As students, you have to be flexible in managing your time and the same time, maximize your resources. Creating coping strategies is helpful to survive in this crisis in education. Secondly, to the teachers. All stakeholders of education institutions are affected in the health crisis that the world is facing. However, it is the students that are affected the most. They gained limited learnings mainly because of teachers' lack of guidance. And so, it is important that as teachers, try to reach out to students by giving them your time for advices and clarifications about the lessons. It will be of great help for them to have excellent guided theoretical learnings. Thirdly, to the parents and guardians. As a result of this study, students become distracted by having too many responsibilities at home, causing them to run out of time to study and answer their module. In distance learning, parents/guardians must assist and support their children throughout their academic pursuit. Limiting the amount of household task and allowing enough time and space for them to respond to their modules are two of the many helpful ways to support children in their studies.

Fourth, to the education institutions. Providing a developed and improved strategies accompanied with considerate adjustments on implementation of a learning modality would be a great help both to teachers and especially to the students. Fifth, would be to the local government units. Provide necessary ordinances in helping every student in the community to have enough materials in learning and the comfort of studying without the distractions of loud noises coming from outside of home. Finally, for the future studies, it is recommended to include all the stakeholders in the College of Education to be the participants of the study. Specifically, the students that are in all majors both in BSED and BEED programs. Moreover, considering a wider scope of participants would lead to more accurate data. Consider also to develop strategies that would help education institutions to have options to successfully provide a modality that suits to the students' and teachers' needs amid educational disruption.

Declarations

Author Contributions (CRediT Taxonomy):

Alegro, J.D. and Cananua, M.E.: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Investigation, Formal Analysis

Angay-angay, J.B and Dolendo, L.N.R.: Methodology, writing – Review & Editing

GODIO, W.L. and jabeguero, S.M.M. : Visualization, Validation

Labay, J.G. and Quiña, C.R.: Project Administration, Supervision

Aramateo, P.L., Carcellar, N.C., and Bordios, J.M.L and Casama, M.N: Data Gathering

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The study *“Lived Experiences of Social Studies Students in the Post-Pandemic Learning Landscape: A*

Phenomenological Inquiry” was reviewed and approved by the Samar State University Institutional Research Ethics Review Committee (SSU-IRERC) under Protocol Code: SSU2025-042. The ethics application was submitted on March 29, 2021, and formal approval was granted on May 10, 2025. In accordance with institutional, national, and international research ethics standards, the researchers are authorized to conduct data-gathering procedures for a period of two (2) years from the date of issuance, valid until May 10, 2027.

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy protection, and the freedom to withdraw from the research at any point without penalty.

Competing Interest:

The authors declare no competing interests.

Data Availability Statement:

Data will be made available by the corresponding author upon request.

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Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT in order to improve clarity and readability. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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