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# Students' Issues and Challenges in the Use of the Learning Management System in Davao City

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## *Authors' contributions*

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Aims:** To identify the different challenges in using learning management systems and online payment platforms in the “new normal.”

**Study Design:** Qualitative-Phenomenology.

**Place and Duration of Study:** Davao City, Davao del Sur, Philippines. During the Academic Year 2021-2022.

**Methodology:** The study used purposive sampling in choosing the participants. The target participants were students from different private schools in Davao City. Twenty (20) students gave their consent to participate in this study. The information was obtained through validated semi-structured interview questionnaires.

**Results:** Most of the participants were college students. Four (4) themes were identified in this study, and each theme also identified different subthemes, which will sum up the different challenges experienced by the participants. The themes were (1) thoughts about the online interview wherein participants said they had difficulties, were okay with the setup, and had no

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choice but to adapt to the “new normal” setup. (2) Experiences in online classes wherein they have issues with the teachers, issues with the enrollment process, overloaded submission, issues on the internet connection, online class effectiveness, and health issues. (3) Experiences in the use of learning management systems wherein the participants shared about the issues on matriculation, issues on using the systems, and the positive outcome of using the systems. (4) Challenges in using the learning management systems wherein they discussed the issues they experienced with the systems such as information communication, economic and financial stability, physical health, and mental health.

**Conclusion:** The schools and the students must have always a mutual understanding, especially when facing the pandemic where schools and students faced a lot of challenges such as financial, physical, and mental health. It highlights more on the positive and negative on the abrupt adaptation and implementation of the use of learning management systems. Aside from that, information dissemination both in the school administration and the students must highly be prioritized so that they will be informed of the changes that must be implemented for their continuous learning. Crafting, drafting, communicating, planning, implementing, and evaluating are the keys to having a be more equipped on the adaptation to the use of technology.

*Keywords: COVID-19; mental health; physical health; new normal.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic had affected the educational system all over the world. The change in learning modality has also affected the learning outcomes of the students, especially when lockdowns were implemented and schools are not allowed to conduct classes in a face-to-face setup so they innovate their classes through the use of information, communication, and technology.

Nartiningrum and Nugroho [1] shared that in Indonesia, the educational system has affected their learning modality, from face-to-face classes they shifted to online learning modality where they experience unsteady internet connection, lacking monitoring of the performance of the students, and even issues in teaching grammar.

In addition, Adnan and Anwar [2] share that in Pakistan, students' perspectives, this online learning modality is not applicable to their country especially since they consider Pakistan as an underdeveloped country where students cannot access internet connection due to technical and financial issues aside from that, socialization or teacher-student engagement have also highlighted the issue on the current situation they face.

Amidst the pandemic, achieving quality education in a distance learning modality may have issues and problems not just for students but also for the teachers specifically on the challenges of adopting self-paced learning, pedagogical, technical, and even financial status

especially since they will invest for internet connection and gadgets [3].

In the study of Saha, Dutta, et al. [4] in Dhaka City, the closure of institutions is one of the challenges that they are facing aside from technological inefficiency, pedagogic inefficiency of teachers, and inappropriate study environment but that is not the only concern of the institutions, also the imposing a threat mental health issues, especially the psychological distress.

In the higher education institution in the Philippines are required to implement the use of learning management systems or LMS for a fully online class for continuous learning to all courses offered. They are more focused on the effectiveness of using LMS as a learning platform and where they can have interaction with their students and provide assessments to evaluate the students' performance (Navarro, Prasetyo, et al., 2021).

According to Rotas and Cahapay [5] amidst the pandemic, the educational system all over the world has changed and faced challenges, issues, and problems as they shifted to online learning modality. This phenomenon faced a lot of challenges on the students' learning especially that the Philippines do not have a stable internet connection, insufficient learning resources, electric power interruptions for those who are in the far-flung areas, imprecise learning content, overloaded activities since teachers can have an asynchronous session for the students for them to be able to engage in self-paced learning, limited teacher support especially that online

learning platform is implemented, poor peer communication, conflict with home responsibilities that some of the teachers are working from home and also to the students who are staying at home, poor learning atmosphere, monetary related problems, bodily health compromises, and mental health struggles.

Due to the increasing cases of this COVID-19, students faced a lot of challenges such as internet connectivity especially since some areas do not have a stable connection, overload of lessons and activities since all of the discussions and activities will be uploaded through an online platform, financial related-issues that affects the economic status of each family where students tend to go employment at the same time being a student, lack of resources for online classes specifically on the availability of gadgets, and mental health-related problems especially that students are studying at their homes, there is a division of responsibilities such as being a student, a son or a daughter, or a mother or a father, and somehow as a working student [6].

The study of Villameter [7] shares the struggles of the indigenous peoples specifically the Grade 7 students on their academic performance in facing COVID-19. It states that due to this asynchronous learning, the performance of the students has been affected negatively, and must be developed intervention programs for the students as well as support from the local government unit or LGU.

Paas, Tuovinen, et al. [8] share that Cognitive Load Theory is a multidimensional construct representing the different loads that performing a particular task imposes on the cognitive system. In studying this theory, there are three (3) types of theory that must discuss as the researcher align this to the study; a. the intrinsic cognitive load refers to how much knowledge works the memory that must process simultaneously; b. the extraneous cognitive load which refers to the tasks that influence from learning; c. the germane cognitive load or effective load that indicates separate useful or the demands of learning-relevant on how the memory works from inappropriate or careless forms of mental processing.

This study aimed to identify the issues and challenges experienced by the students on the use of learning management in Davao City, especially since it is more focused on adaptation to the use of technology.

## 1.1 Research Questions

This phenomenological study intends to explore and understand the issues and challenges experienced by the students on the use of learning management systems. Specifically, this study would like to answer the following questions:

1. What is the participants' profile regarding age, sex, and educational attainment?
2. What are the students' main issues in the use of the learning management system?
3. What are the students' main challenges in the use of the learning management system in terms of information communication skills, economic and financial status, physical health, and mental health?

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative design in gathering data and information about the students' issues and challenges for the use of a learning management system. Qualitative research is focused on evidence from first-hand observation, assessments, evaluations, group discussions, participant observations, recordings made in natural settings, gathered data, and objects collected by the researchers [9].

The research method that the researcher will use is the phenomenology study, to identify the issues and motivations of the students about the use of a learning management system. Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that concentrates within a specific community on the commonality of a lived experience. The fundamental aim of the method is to arrive at a definition of the existence of a phenomenon and to provide an important description of the different experiences [10].

An in-depth interview is the type of interview where it collects information in a private one-on-one interview with the participants [9]. Since face-to-face is not yet permitted, the researcher conducted a synchronous or online in-depth interview where it involves virtual one-on-one engagement with the individual participants who will answer the questions. The researcher used this method to know the deep thoughts and perspectives of the participants about the students' issues and challenges of the use of the learning management system.

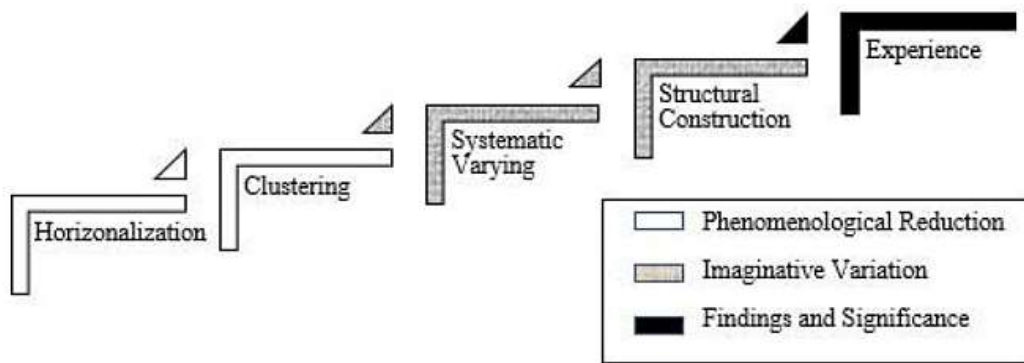


Fig. 1. Moustakas Method of Analysis (1994)

## 2.2 Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were 20 college students from selected private schools in Davao City, Davao del Sur, Philippines. Due to its limitation on the participation of this study, Yawisah, Akla, et. al. [11] mentioned that there must be specific criteria to be part of this study, especially for those who experienced the use of a learning management system. The result of this study will only be applicable for those who participated in this study, there will be another qualitative analysis and investigation that will be used to confirm the findings of this study.

## 2.3 Data Gathering Procedures

In the data gathering, the researchers observed the following procedures. First, connecting to the students who are currently enrolled in a private institution wherein its learning modality is more into an online setup. Second, facilitate and orient the students about Informed Consent (IC), especially for those who are willing to participate in this study. Following the method, the researchers created a link individually to conduct an in-depth interview through google meet. Lastly, the interviewers were transcribed and given to the one who will analyze the data for checking, validating, and using thematic analysis in identifying the themes.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Profile of the Participants

The age group of the participants was mixed, there two (2) age groups for the participants, there are ten (10) participants were 18-23 years

old, and ten (10) participants were 24-26 years old. For sex, there are nine (9) male participants, and 11 female participants. In terms of educational attainment, there are 10 participants who were 1<sup>st</sup> Year College students; four (4) 2<sup>nd</sup> Year College students; four (4) 3<sup>rd</sup> Year College students; and two (2) 4<sup>th</sup> Year College students. Participants were selected based on the school's location since the study focused is about the students. For District 1, the participants were eight (8) students, in District 2, there were five (5) students, and in District 3, there were seven (7) participants. These participants were living and studying in the City of Davao. The geographical location wherein the students were located was in Davao City. The City of Davao is composed of three (3) districts from Districts 1, 2, and 3. It is located in Southern Mindanao in the Philippines wherein they are rich in cultures, traditions, and practices from the Indigenous Peoples, Moros, and Christians.

### 3.2 Issues of the Students in the Use of Learning Management System

The issues of the students in the use of the learning management system refer to the experiences on the use of the so-called "new system" which had developed different circumstances faced by the students such as the issues in teachers, issues in internet connection and gadget used, issues in communication, health, responsibilities, and even the effectivity of the learning management system as an educational tool.

#### 3.2.1 Issues in teachers

Most of the participants shared that this online class had issues, especially for the teachers

such as laziness and not being considerate in terms of the late requirements. S1 expressed dismay toward the teachers which must be a motivator, saying:

*“During this online class, I observe that most of the teachers do not have the motivation to teach, they always give us activities and we are only in self-paced learning. There are also times that we will have problems with our internet connection and some of the teachers will not accept our reason especially if it is already the deadline they will just tell us that they will not accept it.”*

As mentioned, S3 expressed about experiencing hassle towards their teachers due to the slow internet connectivity that they will postpone their discussion due to its problem on the connection, saying:

*“In the online class, it’s quite a hassle for us because some of the instructors do have a problem with their internet connection and for us students, we cannot learn also then they will stop the class and continue by the next meeting unlike in the personal the discussions are very challenging compared now they will just post activities in our class then that’s it.”*

In line with the issues on an internet connection, S6 expressed about teachers who forgot the principles of teaching as being considerate on the submission of their requirements, saying:

*“My experiences in this online class are first for the teachers, the principles of teaching are not the same some teachers will considerate if you are late submitting your requirements there are some teachers also that will pressure you in submitting the requirements on time even though that requirements that they are giving to us is not just for one day, it needs time for us to finish the activities, we can say that he or she does not know the experience of being a student.”*

S9 also expressed the overloaded submission of requirements that made them more stressful to finish and submit it on time, saying:

*“For me, online is very tiring because of overloaded submissions then there are a lot of requirements like if you are done with the other requirement there will be another requirement you need to finish. You cannot focus on this*

*setup. That’s what we felt during the classes like every day there is a submission.”*

S11 agreed with the response of P9 that there is a problem with the setup such as the overloaded requirements, saying:

*“I think there is a lot of requirement in the face-to-face but I think now in this setup it is an overloaded requirement and now they must focus on slowly giving us the requirement and slowly do and submit it.”*

Because of the change in the education learning modalities, teachers are also overwhelmed by the transition from face-to-face to online discussions which has developed confusion and adapted its practice. In the study of Gonzales & Quiroz [12], electronic online education platforms offer a large number of technological resources but are different from the face-to-face process and have special processes for conducting classes and even pedagogical practices. In the results presented, teachers must have developed skills in preparing their classes although they are more equipped with the use of a face-to-face modality since online or virtual classes exist, teachers must also be prepared or planned for the virtual environment.

### **3.2.2 Issues in the internet connection and gadgets used**

Aside from the issues with teachers, there are also existing issues that students and even teachers are currently experiencing, especially since the use of an internet connection is one of the important things that the family must have since, in the household, families are already connected anywhere. S4 expressed the preferable for the face-to-face setup, saying:

*“I would still prefer face-to-face because, in this online class, we do not have any learning it is somewhat a design aside from that, I did not feel that I am already in 3<sup>rd</sup> year. That’s what I observed it’s like watching a movie.”*

In addition to S4, S7 expressed the unstable internet connection and its everyday expense to avail or bought data load to attend online classes and submit requirements, saying:

*“Unstable internet connection, for my case, every day I am buying a load for 55.00 because it can easily decrease my Mbps*

*because I am only using a data connection. Also, I do not have available gadgets since 1<sup>st</sup> year I am using a cellphone I can provide my gadgets it's just that instead of buying them I will just prioritize our meals every day rather than starving for hunger."*

Also, S8 specify about the issue in the internet connection such as if there is an issue with the connectivity, they will automatically leave the class link provided by their teacher, saying:

*"In terms of negative, there are times that I would be left in the class because of the internet connection especially if there is rain then on the positive side, it is not required to write all the details since you can request a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and sometimes there is a video recording of the class that you can check again after."*

S18 agreed to them since the impact of internet connection on an educational system must be prioritized, saying:

*"Lack of internet connectivity has a big impact on our studies especially in our engagements in online learning especially if there is rain, internet connectivity will slow."*

Internet connection had been one of the problems in the educational system since data nowadays are on the use of soft wares or applications and even in the classes as part of the technological skills of the students mentioned in the study of Abel [13] emphasized that due to COVID-19 pandemic and response to continuous learning that the implementation of emergency remote teaching or ERT had been a problem, especially that there is no stable internet connection, lack of technological devices, and financial issue. Based on the results, internet connectivity in the Philippines is already a problem in which the adaptation of virtual environment is somehow challenging, especially that there is a used of applications or software for online classes. The government must create or draft policies or programs that will enhance the internet connection in the country, especially in the far-flung areas wherein they experience more issues there. Aside from that, local government unit or LGU should have programs intended for students or youths to provide them gadgets depending on their qualifications so that they will continue with their studies and will not increase the number of out-of-school youths.

### **3.2.3 Issues in communication, health, and responsibilities**

Communication in times of pandemic has a positive and negative impact, especially on its use as an educational tool. In terms of health, it also impacted the change of lifestyle of the students such that they are just staying at home. And, the responsibilities they faced during the pandemic that they need to balance their studies and their duties at home. S2 expressed the issue of communication and interaction towards group activities, saying:

*"In terms of interactions with my class during classes and also a class activity that you will be engaging to your classmates compared to online class the only engagement that we have is in the messenger some of them will just see our messages. That's what I miss in the face-to-face class especially since you will see each of your classmates and also the recess. Sometimes, in the online class, if you have something to share or voice out, you will be shy compared to the face-to-face class you are confident in answering questions."*

Aside from communication, health also matters wherein students are just staying on their computers to do their tasks and requirements, S5 expressed it, saying:

*"Most of what I experience in the online class is more spending a lot of time on my computer like I will feel mind grind so I think the biggest challenge, especially on the online class but I feel comfortable because it is easier but since I was diagnosed with astigmatism so for me this is one of the challenges that I faced in the online class aside from that I'll be sick."*

In addition to the mentioned above, even responsibilities in their homes are affected by the "new system" in education, S10 expressed it by saying:

*"The disadvantage also is that we are in our house, divided responsibilities like there is a favor then we tend to out of focus online class is still okay but there are some points that I will not agree with, especially on washing plates."*

Communication, health, and responsibilities are the three (3) of the most common responses of the participants which impacted the students in being the ability to choose where and when to

prioritize things, Alea, Fabrea, et al. [14] shared that the educators and students are still in the stage of coping and adjusting on the implementation of distance learning which affected the educational system in each country. It also emphasizes that institutions should create an institutional plan in preparing or being ready for things that are unexpected to happen like the pandemic. As the results presented, communication, health, and responsibilities hit the pandemic. Communication was a problem in the pandemic although we can easily to our love ones but the interpretations of the messages could lead us to miscommunication. Health was also a problem since a lot of students experienced physical issues due to the hours of sitting, screen time, and even focusing more on the requirements rather than exercising. And, responsibilities, due to poverty, some of the students may consider also working while studying to sustain their needs and also to their families. In these problems, there must be programs intended for the youth who will give them prioritization into the needs for continuing studies at the same time programs that will sustain their finances that will not lead to health issues such as training based on their skills.

### 3.3 Challenges of the Students in the Use of Learning Management System

#### 3.3.1 Information, communication, and technology

Information, communication, and technology had been created impacts to the students as such as it is useful to conduct online classes, answer activities, access to information, and the use of learning management system. S13 shared concerning about the use of gadgets saying:

*“Gadgets are okay but the problem is I am still using it even if it is charging, it can cause damage to the gadget that I have.”*

In connection to the response of S13, S19 also shared about the difficulties of the gadget used to join online class, especially that it only has limitation such as the use of applications and graphics saying:

*“I am only using a cellphone for my online class, in that case, I have difficulties in terms of inserting some graphics since cellphones are limited to that sometimes I’ll ask my classmates to do my favor but in the same*

*situation they are also busy but I understand it. I have no choice but to cry but still, I look for ways how to solve my problem like going to Piso net.”*

Aside from the availability of gadget, S16 also shared that as a student, there are some activities that they cannot work on due to the lacking of applications to be used and even in submitting their requirements saying:

*“My main problem is the gadget specifically a laptop, I badly needed it for online classes especially since I am an Education student because there is some requirement that we can only do on a laptop.”*

S20 shared that Vendo machine has been useful during the pandemic because it creates a useful access to information in answering activities, doing requirements, and joining to online class saying:

*“When it comes to the gadget I have mine and in terms of internet connection we have a Vendo machine but this Vendo machine is only rented on our space and we have a separate router that is only for us so our monthly payment is only for the bill that usually costs 2,000+.”*

In the study of Khan [15] the challenges of using of learning management system had been impacted to the discussion of pedagogical perspectives of every institution that affected worldwide. Also, it discussed the teaching-learning process during the pandemic but it caused problem because of the limitation of interaction and the availability of gadgets and their technicalities. Information, communication, and technology is one of the issues and challenges experienced by the students wherein they do have lacking of gadgets to be used, limited access to school facilities, and even finance their internet connectivity. Government should create a free use of computers who are unable to buy or rent for it since education system are slowly developing in terms of technology. Not just by the government, but also the participation of the parents or guardians to support them in their needs towards continuing education.

#### 3.3.2 Economic and financial

Economic and financial concerns had been created impacts on the students welfare that



somehow develop problems and issues in the learning process of the students. S12 expressed the struggles experience, especially on buying promo for data connection saying:

*"I am struggling for buying a load since I am using prepaid WiFi. Every week I bought a load of 120.00 then aside from that, it is always unstable."*

In connection to the response of S12, S17 also expressed on the limited data promo most especially when submitting files and requirements saying:

*"I have to buy load costs 55.00 every day and if I will be running out of data I will be loading again because I cannot submit my requirements if I will not buy a load."*

Aside from that, S15 expressed on working while studying to sustain the needs of loading data connection promos saying:

*"For the load, I can spend 50 good for 2 to 3 days in terms of finances since I have a job like being a volunteer or responder they gave us allowance but we can only get our allowance I think it takes a month like allowance is intended for January but it will be released on June or February then releasing will be on July."*

S14 shared working while studying that considered as a concern during pandemic especially that the finances of paying tuition fees is a must and at the same time maintaining the responsibilities in their family saying:

*"Since I am a working student I am responsible for paying my tuition for every examination like I am responsible since I am working at the same time continuing my studies in terms of load I have difficulties with that since I have to lack in my budget if I am in the office I can connect to WiFi which I can lessen the expenses if in the house I have to look for a store just to buy for a load or I have to borrow from my Ate so that I can buy a load aside from the budget I also have a problem in my signal."*

According to Simamora [16], economical and financial problem had been impacted on the students learning capabilities as experienced during online classes, especially that it is limited to the used of different online learning

applications that requires internet connectivity. On the results above, data connectivity had been used majority of the participants wherein they will be loading it everyday to attend classes, submit requirements, and even researching for their activities, assignments, or projects. The problem is that, they need to be employed to supplement the needs to finish their studies such as buying gadgets, buying loads, or paying internet subscription. Government should be involved into participatory involvement wherein there is a Free WiFi Zone in the City so that students can avail the internet free for their classes and activities.

### 3.3.3 Physical and mental health

Physical and mental health was one of factors that considered as one of the issues experienced by the students during pandemic. S1, S3, S8, S10, and S15 shared about the pressured and having sleepless nights towards submitting the requirements saying:

*"I am so stressed, with lots of sacrifices and sleepless nights. Some teachers will upload activities today then the deadline will be automatically tomorrow or 11:59 pm not unless they will give us time like 2 days or a deadline that is the same as their class schedule."*

*"Sleepless nights sometimes because I need to finish my activities especially if it is more on video recording because it will take time for editing."*

*"I can feel stressed because some of the teachers will give us overloaded activities and somehow it will divide our responsibilities in our home."*

*"Maybe it affects my mental health somehow since I can still experience being pressured and I was shocked by all the overloaded requirements that I need to finish since this is my first year."*

*"There are a lot of sleepless nights since there are also a lot of worksheets that need to be submitted."*

In terms of mental health, S16 also shared about the experienced of being diagnosed with brain stroke and informed to stop studying saying:

*"Last vacation, I got sick and was diagnosed with a brain stroke and does have a blood clot"*

*then the doctor informed me that I have to stop studying because it will trigger the clotting and I am not allowed to be stressed."*

Pandemic had also affected businesses that was closed because of a lack of financial stability to support their needs every day and even taking advantage of working while studying, S10 and S17 saying:

*"Since the start of the pandemic, our income was down since the business of aunt was closed abroad and also that is the only way that we can support our needs every day, especially for my academics."*

*"Honestly, there is some point that I can feel tired especially I am working and you always think especially during examinations but I have to keep on fighting because this is also an opportunity for the online class to continue studying as long as I can manage my time just think that this is also for yourself."*

*"In terms of health, I have issues like I am not feeling well so I need to rest I do not open my gadgets or social media accounts, even activities I will not do it yet. We also have a small store which I am also taking good care especially if my parents are not around since I have a younger sister and brother but I am trying to catch up so that I can comply."*

Drained and being depressed were also experienced by S9, S11, and S14 because of the activities they need to submit, what will be their scores, and a lot of requirements that they need to submit, saying:

*"We are so tired since the online class started that it tends to be draining like something is pushing us to go into the dark side of life. We do not know if it is right. We are so down especially about scores when we get low scores."*

*"Last year, my mother told me that I am fat but now I go back to being thin I think I am also the reason why I get this again, especially in my mental stability that I get dizzy, I forgot to eat because I have to attend class, and also being late in sleeping just to finish all my requirements and sometimes I tend to forget my requirement then I procrastinate."*

*"I can feel depressed not just me because there are teachers that would give us overloaded tasks like a discussion than after that activity and submit it immediately there is no time or preparation, quizzes need time then somehow we will have sleepless nights not unlike face-to-face that they will give us activities then the submission will be tomorrow we can still review it."*

In the study of Sharma [17] shared that students during the pandemic they experienced physical and mental health problems such as moderate stress, mild depression, and mild and moderate back pain, especially on the online and remote learning setup because of the used of gadgets and exploring different digitalized platforms such as the learning management system and even exploring new applications that will be used for their activities. Based on the results, one of the issues and challenges experienced by the students in the use of learning management system was the physical and mental health since this is new to them and they need enough attention on how to do things in the software. Government in partnership with the direct government agencies towards students could create programs that will let the students express what they want without even judging. So that, they will not feel that they are alone and will not experience different forms of bullying. Aside from that, strengthening health care facilities and benefits is highly needed to lessen the burden of the families in paying hospital bills or medicines that they need to take [18].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The students must have always enough understanding, especially when facing the pandemic where students face a lot of challenges such as financial, physical, and mental health. It highlights the positive and negative on the abrupt adaptation and implementation of the use of learning management systems. Aside from that, information dissemination was highly required in adapting and reinforcing the use of learning management systems. These issues and challenges experienced by the students will help them understand that the development of adapting technology in the classroom already exists and must be practiced. Still, there must be enough information to discuss and give more details on the adaptation of the development of education such as the use of learning management systems. Although this study was

conducted during the pandemic, the researcher would want this to be conducted in the future to increase the number of participants suggesting that it would be compared to the issues and challenges of the use of the learning management system during and after pandemic.

## CONSENT

As per international standards or university standards, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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