

Sipat Edukasyon

UP ERP Research Dissemination Forum

22 November 2024
via Zoom



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
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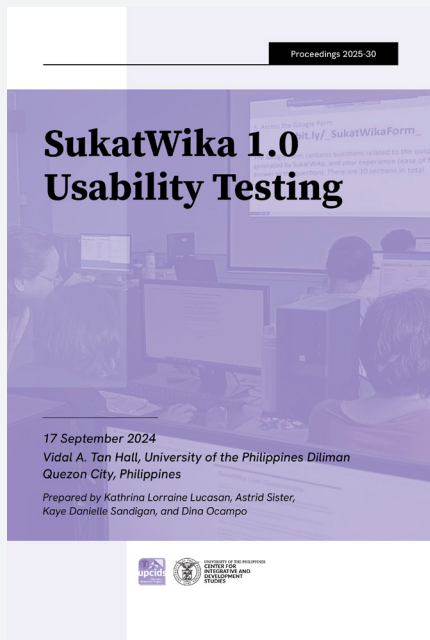
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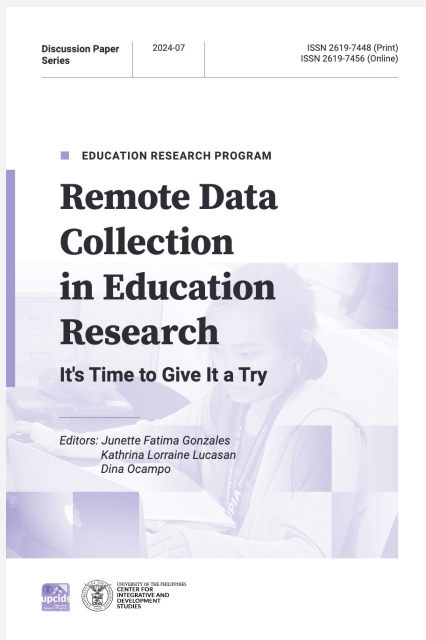
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About the Forum

The Education Research Program (ERP) is one of the 16 programs under the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS), the policy research unit of the University of the Philippines. Visit the UP CIDS Database and download 1,000+ policy papers.

Sipat Edukasyon is the annual research dissemination forum of the Education Research Program (ERP) of the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS). It aims to share ERP's research output with various stakeholders and to generate discussions to encourage future studies. It was broadcast live on Zoom and the UP CIDS official Facebook page. Filipino Sign Language (FSL) interpretation was available to facilitate better accessibility for viewers. The recorded version with FSL interpretation will be uploaded to the UP CIDS YouTube channel.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

After the singing of the national anthem, UP CIDS ERP Co-convenor Dr. Dina Ocampo introduced herself as the moderator of this forum. This is the fifth forum hosted by UP CIDS-ERP for the community of scholars and researchers in education. They held it in honor of Edmund Ocampo, who was a staunch supporter of the research dissemination program of the ERP. Dr. Ocampo then showed the flow of the program.

UP CIDS Executive Director Dr. Rosalie Arcala Hall also gave her welcome remarks through a recorded video. UP CIDS is the policy research unit of the university, conducting studies that address different policy questions in various areas, including education. The ERP is one of the oldest research programs in UP CIDS. Since its establishment in the 1990s, ERP has produced various policy papers related to education. This year's Sipat Edukasyon tackles various themes involving literacy, disinformation, student learning, and online/remote research in education.

Research Presentations

SukatWika 1.0 Usability Testing: Process and Results

Kathrina Lorraine Lucasan

Senior Research Associate, UP CIDS-ERP

ABOUT SUKATWIKI 1.0

ERP and the Digital Signal Processing (DSP) Laboratory collaborated to develop a psycholinguistic analyzer software for four languages—English, Filipino, Ilocano, and Cebuano—called SukatWika 1.0. The development of the software commenced from May to November 2019. When ERP applied for copyright of the software, they were invited to join the UP University Innovation Fellowship from May to August 2021. After the fellowship, the copyright was awarded in October 2021.

As a psycholinguistic analyzer, SukatWika 1.0 is designed for researchers, teachers, writers, and instructional materials developers. It provides word and text-level metrics relevant to the development of reading materials, specifically providing counts on words, lengths, phonemes, and word frequencies. It also has a word search feature, wherein words with specific characteristics (e.g., number of syllables or a specific string of letters) may be located within a given document.

In terms of application, it has been used in several research studies. One such study was the development of the Multi-Literacy Assessments for Filipino Children (MLAF) 1.0 and 2.0, where it was used to refine the word lists included in the assessments. For MLAF 2.0, its word frequency feature was used to determine whether words should be included in the beginning-

of-year, middle-of-year, or end-of-year versions of the assessments. Those found to occur more frequently were put in the beginning-of-year version, while words that occurred the least frequently were included in the end-of-year assessment.

Similarly, the TalkTogether Project used SukatWika 1.0 to refine the Age of Acquisition (AoA) word list. Its word search function was used to refine the word list by locating words with the same roots. In TalkTogether's Corpus Study, SukatWika was used to identify the different derivations of selected roots.

Additionally, SukatWika 1.0 was used to determine the order of the sight words to be included in TuklasBasa, which is a set of literacy packages for community learning. Last but not least, SukatWika 1.0 was used to determine the 200 most frequently occurring words in Filipino texts for Kinder to Grade 3 learners.

Definition and History of Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is a systematic approach to generating information from text and converting textual data into a structured format. This way, the text can be further analyzed to identify key facts, relationships, and patterns. In the 1800s, scholars studied biblical texts by rearranging, classifying, and calculating word frequencies. By the 1940s, textual analysis had evolved to other types of texts. With the advent of the Internet in the 1990s, there was a boom in extensive corpora, which prompted researchers to develop various techniques for information extraction. These techniques have expanded since then, with the development of sentiment analysis, topic analysis, and social media analytics in the past two decades.

In the present time, many text analyzers are available. Common features are the word counter and the capacity for intuitive use, given that all of them are web-based applications with a user-friendly interface. The only differences are how these tools visualize their data, whether it be in detail or visual representations such as word clouds, and how much they can process (e.g., one document or a whole corpus).

What is unique about SukatWika 1.0 is that it is a tool that works with Philippine languages and that it can provide metrics that correspond to

the metrics Filipino educators use in assessing text complexity or reading comprehension.

USABILITY TESTING OF SUKATWIKI 1.0

Usability testing is a means to estimate user performance and satisfaction, and the level of adaptation to users. Subjecting SukatWika 1.0 to usability testing can identify errors impacting user flow, determine if users complete their tasks efficiently, and assess whether users understand how to navigate the site or application.

ERP conducted an in-person usability testing of SukatWika 1.0, wherein testing researchers were onsite as a total of 18 target users accomplished a set of tasks. Eight out of the 18 target users were teachers, with half of them in basic education and the other half in higher education. Some of the participants also held multiple roles, namely in textbook development, research, government, and programming. For those in government, five came from the Department of Education, while one came from the National Library of the Philippines. The usability testing aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What features of SukatWika 1.0 should be retained?
2. What features of SukatWika 1.0 should be improved?
3. What features of SukatWika 1.0 should be added to SukatWika 1.0?

USABILITY TESTING PROPER

After an orientation and instructions, participants were provided with the software and the documents. They chose documents from a total of six languages, and as they analyzed them, they answered a Google Form that consisted of questions that could be answered using the capabilities of SukatWika 1.0. For example, they were asked to identify the number of sentences in the longest paragraph and the most frequently occurring phoneme. The tasks were organized according to the functions of SukatWika 1.0. For each task, they were asked to rate their difficulty and speed in getting the answer. They also had a printed copy of the instructions to guide them throughout the process.

After they completed the tasks, ERP conducted a semistructured focus group discussion (FGD) to further discuss their user experience.

USABILITY TESTING RESULTS

In terms of the results, user experience and difficulty varied based on the participant. The variance could be explained by the different lengths of text used, as well as the proficiency that users have gained from reading the results as they accomplished the tasks. The feedback from the FGD provided context on why users found the tasks difficult or longer to accomplish.

There were also concerns about the presentation of data and the limited ability to manipulate the data. Specifically, there was too much data presented at the same time, and the text size was small. Also, saving the output was confusing because the word “export” was used as a prompt to save data.

However, participants also shared how SukatWika 1.0 can be useful for specific tasks such as determining if texts are appropriate for target students and identifying which words and letters should be taught first. For researchers, SukatWika 1.0 could be used to analyze the complexity, accuracy, and lexical sophistication of text to help track the language development of Filipino Students. It could also be used to empirically measure the language development of children at different grade levels. Finally, SukatWika 1.0 would be valuable in the development of assessments.

What Features of SukatWika 1.0 Should Be Retained?

Features that the SukatWika 1.0 should retain are its ability to process texts in the four Philippine languages and the paragraph length counter, sentence length counter, word length counter, word frequency counter, and the word search.

What Features of SukatWika 1.0 Should Be Improved?

There was a suggestion to improve the presentation of results. As such, recommendations for SukatWika 2.0's user interface include the use of color coding; the ability to adjust texts and display sizes; an even distribution in the presentation of data; and a reset function for the word search. Another

recommended feature is the reduction of data presented at one time, specifically using a drop-down button menu to choose which data to display. There is also advice to test the revised software per target group.

What Features Should Be Added to SukatWika 1.0?

Additional features requested are multi-document processing capacity; database or storage capacity; capacity to manipulate or further refine the results; capacity to process documents in other Philippine languages and other formats aside from “.docx”; use of simpler terminology; and expansion of the search function to sentences. Outside the software, participants also requested a tutorial or explainer video as a guide for its use and features.

With this feedback, SukatWika will be upgraded and a second round of usability testing will be done on 5 December 2024.

OPEN FORUM

The ERP team addressed questions regarding SukatWika 1.0, which revolved around its purpose, capability, and application:

1. Who expressed the greatest interest in SukatWika?

According to Ms. Lucasan, graduate students, researchers, and teachers are the most interested in the tool, even though almost all participants expressed their interest. Specifically, they are interested in knowing whether a text is suitable for their class.

2. Is SukatWika 1.0 available to the public? If we want to utilize or contribute to feedback on the use of SukatWika, who do we approach, and what are the arrangements or requirements needed? If we want to use it for research purposes, where can we download it?

Ms. Lucasan mentioned that anyone interested can email ERP at erp.cids@up.edu.ph or Lucasan at kmlucas@up.edu.ph for access or feedback. She also added that SukatWika is not yet available on the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

3. *What is the purpose of the SukatWika tool?*

ERP used the compilation of Kindergarten to Grade 3 texts downloaded from DepEd's learning resource portal. They used SukatWika to ensure that the script came up with the correct counts. The programmers then used orthography to write the scripts, which were tested using the same texts to check if the counts were correct.

4. *Can participants use it for online texts?*

Participants will have to copy the text and put it in Word since the only document SukatWika 1.0 can process is a ".docx" document. They are currently working on the second version.

5. *Is it a readability test? Can it replicate the function of readability?*

ERP is moving towards that. However, in its current version, SukatWika can provide the paragraph, sentence, and word metrics for texts, but human intervention is still needed to determine whether these metrics are suitable for the target learners in mind.

6. *Have the metrics, for example, phoneme count, been validated as contributing to, say, text readability?*

SukatWika cannot do this yet. It is more of counts, which help describe how complex specific texts are for the age of acquisition. The ERP team has yet to develop this feature.

7. *How is the lexical sophistication of texts measured? What are the criteria, similarity to the sophistication level of training text? What software was used for sentiment analysis?*

Currently, there must be human intervention in determining if it is within the scope of sophistication for a particular class or student in mind. It can provide the counts and metrics, but the processing of information and determining readability requires human intervention or effort. ERP is open to collaborating on this aspect.

8. *How did ERP select materials from the DepEd Learning Resources (LR) Portal?*

ERP used all Kindergarten to Grade 3 learning materials that were uploaded to the portal. They also included Basa Pilipinas readers in the corpora.

9. *Are there any future plans to incorporate additional languages in SukatWika?*

ERP plans to fix the interface first so it is user-friendly, and hopefully, ERP will add more languages in future versions.

10. *Is the project funded? Unfunded projects like this that require a team of various experts tend to fizzle out quickly.*

According to Dr. Ocampo, there is some funding from CIDS for SukatWika. There is little funding, so they're trying to keep it at a manageable level. Eventually, they hope researchers who want to use it will be able to lend their data so that they can have a larger corpus, which can lead to readability or, at least, text-leveling products.

11. *What is DepEd's feedback on how they can use this?*

There were representatives from DepEd during the usability study, so they had similar comments regarding its use. Participants from the Bureau of Education Assessment (BEA) said there is a possible use for the development of assessments.

Dr. Ocampo thanked the participants for their questions and hoped that they could find ways to work with researchers interested in assessing the quality of texts in reading/learning materials in schools.

Countering Disinformation in Education: Roundtable Insights for Stakeholders

Dr. Lorina Calingasan

Co-convenor, UP CIDS ERP

Paulina Regine Miranda

Junior Research Assistant, UP CIDS ERP

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE OF THE RTD

The RTD on interdisciplinary efforts to counter disinformation was held on 28 September 2024. The RTD intended to have a collective awareness of the efforts of different groups on countering disinformation and to provide an opportunity for reflection on how these interventions impact or connect to different audiences, especially educators. Specifically, the RTD was designed to learn about the extent of these efforts, their efficacy, and how educators relate to or make sense of these efforts in countering disinformation. This is aligned with ERP's work on building skeptical resilience among teachers.

For the RTD, ERP invited two experts each for the following areas: media and information literacy (MIL), fact-checking, and research. A panel of reactors, composed of a teacher, a school principal, and an official from DepEd, joined the discussion to draw insights from the presentations and bring up discussion in relation to educational practices and policies.

The audience of the RTD was mostly teachers from public and private schools teaching in basic education and tertiary education.

PURPOSE OF THE RTD

Key highlights from the RTD were the following:

- While the MIL curriculum is mostly associated with senior high school (SHS) programs, it is also present at the tertiary level. The UP School of

Library and Information Studies (SLIS) offers LIS 10 and LIS 50 courses that explicitly teach MIL. These courses are intended to equip students, who will be future librarians, with the critical skills to navigate information.

- The Media Educators of Mindanao (MEM) observed that the MIL curriculum in SHS was focused on content creation rather than analysis. Believing that every student in Mindanao should think like a journalist, they contextualized its implementation using the conflict-sensitive journalism (CSJ) framework. The framework promotes ethical, accurate, and balanced reporting. It minimizes harm, prevents the escalation of conflict, and promotes peace and understanding.
- The Break the Fake Movement focuses on youth empowerment, working with leaders and online content creators to promote democratic participation. Their localization efforts include translating the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) digital literacy toolkit into Cebuano and Ilocano in order to make these resources more accessible to communities.
- VeraFiles, one of the accredited third-party fact-checkers for Facebook/Meta in the Philippines, maintains global standards. The organization developed specialized training for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Europe and Singapore, recognizing that these OFWs rely on social media for news.
- In the research sector, two significant frameworks can deepen the understanding of disinformation. First, the proposed critical media literacy program of the Broadcast Communication Department of the UP Diliman College of Media and Communication (formerly College of Mass Communication) adopts an innovative, reflexive media-making framework to critically examine the complex relationship between technology and human behavior. This framework is particularly valuable as it combines theoretical understanding with practical media-making skills and preparation of students/educators for today's complex digital landscape. Second, the digital vigilantism framework also provides concrete insights into how misinformation spreads using the example of the Christine Dacera case. Specifically, there are three types of contagion in social media misinformation: emotional contagion, surveillance contagion, and the distortion of narratives with the spread

of information. Harmful consequences on social media emphasize the need for a multifaceted response involving media literacy, fact-checking, platform accountability, and public awareness campaigns.

- The reactors proposed several recommendations to facilitate the connection between sectoral initiatives and educators. One of them suggested that MIL must be incorporated into the early grades, perhaps through storytelling or other subjects that can help students develop critical thinking skills. Furthermore, educators and community leaders must take active roles in advocating for and implementing these efforts by collaborating across sectors and involving educators, thus building leadership and stronger frameworks for promoting critical thinking and responsible media use.
- Challenges include dealing with political sensitivities in classrooms, resource limitations (e.g., lack of items for librarians in public schools), and a lack of teacher training. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for collaboration to drive meaningful impact.

OPEN FORUM

Dr. Calingasan and Ms. Miranda responded to questions on how to strengthen these efforts to counter disinformation in communities and how to address emerging issues:

1. *What are the two most important messages that teachers should watch out for so they can prevent the spread of disinformation among their students?*

Dr. Calingasan stated that the most important message is to get the source of information. They have to establish that the source is reliable. If it is not reliable, then they should be skeptical.

2. *Was there a point that emerged in the discussion of the need to extend MIL to the grassroots level? If yes, how should it be done?*

Ms. Miranda emphasized that VeraFiles felt the need to educate OFWs because of the rampant disinformation they were exposed to through social media, which was one of, if not their sole source of news, as per VeraFiles' research. Although they are journalists and not technically educators, they were motivated to provide training at the grassroots

level in order to assist. This was the catalyst for their recognition and promotion of the notion that “there is a teacher in everyone.”

In addition, the CSJ framework of the MEM could be the entry point for teachers to teach how to analyze fake news, given that Mindanao’s diverse cultural landscape and long history of conflict made citizens highly vulnerable to disinformation and misinformation. They published their own teaching guide for teachers in universities and colleges, and they have integrated the framework into MIL subjects so that they can promote ethical, accurate, and balanced reporting. It can also strengthen the media’s role in promoting peace by fighting disinformation.

For Dr. Calingasan, these efforts should be done at the local government unit (LGU) and barangay level. This is being done at the schools, but mothers in communities are also victims of fake news. Therefore, solving and fighting disinformation must be holistic and must include all aspects of society.

3. *Are there resources that teachers can use in integrating MIL concepts into subjects? How early should these concepts be taught (e.g., what grade level)? And how can we start in our schools? Is the Finland model applicable in our country? They start their disinformation education efforts in schools very young.*

Dr. Calingasan stated that when teachers teach research, they can integrate MIL concepts as early as Grade 1. This is because teaching research entails getting information and teaching them where to get reliable information. Aside from the sources, MIL also involves teaching skills on evaluating information, reliability, and online information.

Ms. Miranda shared that it can be done through storytelling to help children understand how to think about these issues and how to be critical, which is needed for artificial intelligence (AI) literacy as well. Finland is also integrating AI at the early childhood levels.

ERP has collected different resources from various groups, which they can share.

4. *What do you think are the implications of AI on these proposed strategies for countering disinformation?*

According to Dr. Calingasan, literature cannot determine whether AI will help combat or will help enhance fake news, given recent developments like deepfake technology. This is being discussed now, so it is up to each individual how AI will help fight fake news because of the complexity of the technological landscape.

5. *How are librarians engaged in MIL?*

UP SLIS is training future librarians on how to fight and deal with fake news. The disconnect is that public schools do not have librarian items in their plantilla, but if it would be given a chance, then librarians would play an important role in basic education.

To end the presentation, Dr. Calingasan mentioned three important steps to fight disinformation and fake news: (1) determine the reliability of the source; (2) evaluate the evidence and how it supports the claims being made; and (3) find out what other sources say. By doing these three steps, they can develop their skeptical resilience as individuals.

Analyzing PISA Data, 2018 and 2022: New Insights

Dr. Geoffrey Ducanes

Faculty, Ateneo de Manila University, Department of Economics

INTRODUCTION

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a worldwide study that targets 15-year-old students who are in Grade 7 or higher in select educational institutions. The 2018 PISA had a sample of around 7,200 Filipino students, with around 6,068 students from 153 public schools and 1,165 from 34 private schools. On the other hand, the 2022 PISA had a sample of 7,193 Filipino students, of which about 6,000 were from 153 public schools and 1,200 from 35 private schools.

The main takeaway, which was the subject of many news reports and commentaries, was that the Philippines still ranked among the bottom performers in the world in Math, Reading, and Science. However, another takeaway that did not receive much coverage was that the Philippines did not suffer a huge decline in terms of student performance in these subjects in the PISA despite the pandemic. Another key finding is that Philippine private schools did well in the 2022 PISA, with their students among the top performers in developing countries in Southeast Asia excluding Vietnam.

Dr. Ducanes' study looks into the factors explaining the PISA performance in the Philippines and the differences in PISA scores across students. Citing three key studies using PISA data, the study looked at the same factors affecting student performance in the PISA—namely, individual, family, and school characteristics—and also considered additional variables. Dr. Ducanes examined whether the factors that were important in 2018 were also important in 2022 after the pandemic, and to what extent the changes could be explained by improvements in the levels of inputs or other reasons. An additional area of the study is to find out why Philippine private schools performed better than public schools, especially in 2022.

The Education Production Function framework views learning as an output, wherein there are different factors that go into the production of that output. Dr. Ducanes cited these factors are the individual student, home/family, and school factors. Using this framework, he explained that any change or differences in learning can occur because of changes in these factors.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses regression analysis to quantify the relationship between a set of explanatory factors (learning inputs) and the learning outcome (PISA scores). It also uses a Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition, a regression-based method that was used to explain the difference in means between groups.

RESULTS IN READING

The preliminary results are only confined to Reading. The average PISA score increased from 348 in 2018 to 363 in 2022.

By running two separate regressions, the study found that there was an actual increase in the average reading scores for the Philippines from 2018 to 2022, although it is a small one.

Individual factors that were found to be statistically significant for reading performance are age, sex (with females usually performing better on average), grade repetition (late starters are at a disadvantage), and tardiness. Interestingly, the coefficient for books at home and economic, social, and cultural status appeared to have declined substantially from 2018 to 2022, whereas the coefficient for computers at home increased.

In terms of school factors, three were consistently significant: (1) the disciplinary climate, (2) the proportion of computers connected to the internet, and (3) being in a private school.

Dr. Ducanes ran full models that combined individual, family, and school characteristics. The previously identified individual, home, and school factors were consistently significant from 2018 and 2022, controlling for other factors. In addition, there appears to be substantial increases in the effects of school Internet connectivity, being in a private school, grade repetition, and being (less) bullied. In terms of bullying, there was significantly less experience of bullying in 2022 compared to 2018, and this contributes to the improvement of the disciplinary climate over the two surveys.

Notably, the proportion of teachers at the mastery level was marginally significant but negative in 2022. This is a strange finding, but Dr. Ducanes has yet to find an explanation for this as it is usually expected to be positive.

According to the results of the decomposition, the change in the levels of the factors can account for 80 percent of the change in the PISA scores. This means that the improvement in these significant factors identified was important in driving the change in reading scores from 2018 to 2022.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The gap widened between public and private schools in terms of Reading scores. There is a 74-point difference in the average reading scores, with the average score of private schools of 422 compared to the average score of public schools of 348.

Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition shows that the large share of this difference can be accounted for by the difference in inputs between public and private schools. Relating this to the previous results, the same factors that drove the improvement were due to the performance of private school students. This makes sense given that private schools have access to equipment and connectivity, which are strongly correlated with learning outcomes.

Thus, Dr. Ducanes highlighted the need to find ways to help students with socio-economic disadvantages and early learning deficits.

OPEN FORUM

1. *Why does age have a negative correlation in the 2018 PISA and a positive correlation in 2022?*

Dr. Ducanes explained that delayed school entry frequently suggested underlying socioeconomic challenges. He suggested that late enrollment was often the result of financial constraints, such as parents' work obligations and caregiving responsibilities impeding their ability to send children to school. Furthermore, he proposed that certain child development factors may have contributed to the delayed commencement of academic studies. These combined factors possibly explain why starting school at a later age historically is negatively correlated with academic performance. Dr. Ocampo added that other reasons include the distance of the school from the home, noting that the limited number of high schools compared to elementary schools in the Philippines created additional access challenges for many students.

Children from indigenous and ethnic groups usually have lower educational attainment. Their low performance in these assessments is a worldwide phenomenon, not just for IP children. Dr. Ocampo recommended looking into the types of assessments being used and if these are consistent with the way IPs construct the world, but this is another study altogether.

2. *Knowing the ranking of the Philippines compared to other countries in Southeast Asia, what action can the government take, especially for public schools?*

It is recognized that public schools are still far behind in terms of inputs. So, what explains the difference is partly the soft and hard inputs. Dr.

Ducanes pointed out that connectivity is ahead in private schools, and the data shows that students performed much better with online sessions rather than students who relied on asynchronous ways of learning.

There is also a gap between public and private schools in terms of learning environment and disciplinary climate for students. The experience of bullying is significantly higher in public schools for some reason.

3. *How did the study define or interpret cultural status? Could you give insights into social and cultural context and its impact on the Reading results? Would the data be able to explain how the disciplinary climate might stem from changes in social dynamics?*

Dr. Ducanes stated that there is a limited scope in answering these questions based on the data and stated that other datasets, like the census data, may provide more answers. However, since this is preliminary, they will look further into data coming from different variables that can substitute for social and cultural factors.

In the study, they used an economic, social, and cultural status index constructed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as part of the PISA dataset. It includes the highest educational attainment of the parents and the household assets owned by the parents.

Doing Education Research Online and Remotely: Cushions, Drivers, and Potential Traps

Dr. Dina Joana Ocampo

Co-Convenor, UP CIDS ERP

Junette Fatima Gonzales

Senior Research Associate, UP CIDS ERP

INTRODUCTION

This study came about because ERP was forced to adjust its research methodologies during the COVID-19 pandemic. It contains four studies by various authors—namely Christine Joy Ballada, Kathrina Lorraine Lucasan, Margaret Mary Rosary Carmel Fua, Marie Grace Reoperez, Dr. Lorina Calingasan, and Dr. Dina Ocampo—and key reflections from Dr. Ocampo, Kathrina Lorraine Lucasan, and Ms. Gonzales.

Research in the education sector is commonly done face-to-face, using methods such as interviews and assessments. However, with the pandemic, collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders was needed to make some methodological adaptations in response to school closures and social distancing measures in place to protect the health and welfare of participants. Naturally, the move to remote modalities and online spaces became a logical solution.

From 2020 to 2023, ERP conducted a total of four studies that used online and remote research methodologies. Ms. Gonzales detailed the methodologies for each one of them:

Study 1: Online Assessment of Literacy Skills During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This study aimed to assess the skills of Grade 3 learners in word decoding, oral reading, fluency, and reading comprehension, as well as to determine the relationships of these competencies across three languages: Sinugbuanong

Binisaya, Filipino, and English. A total of 125 learners from Iligan City, Lanao Del Norte participated in the study.

At the beginning of 2020, the original plan was to conduct face-to-face assessments. However, online means for data gathering had to be devised following the lockdowns and suspension of classes. The assessments were conducted via Zoom, with Facebook Messenger used as a backup for participants with low bandwidth.

During the discussions, the word lists and passages were flashed on screen as the researcher prompted the assessment.

Study 2: Collecting Age of Acquisition and Visualizability Ratings Using an Online Survey

The second study aimed to investigate the “age of acquisition” or when Filipino children get to understand words in spoken language. It also aimed to investigate how difficult it is for adults to picture a word in their mind, called visualizability.

Word cards and paper surveys were prepared because it was originally planned as in-person tasks, but instead, the research team used the Qualtrics platform to develop an online survey. Parents, teachers, and literacy experts were asked to provide ratings of children’s age of acquisition and the visualizability of words through this online survey. Moreover, the study shifted to remote administration, with researchers guiding participants through video calls or traditional communication methods like texts and phone calls.

Study 3: Virtual Assessment of How Teachers Evaluate Online Information

Investigating how teachers perform in assessing online information is the primary focus of this study. Data was gathered through online workshops via Zoom, combining expert discussions with assessment activities during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The workshops used a Zoom Meeting room setup to accommodate up to 500 participants, which allowed for more interaction beyond the typical webinar setup. Each workshop had a plenary and breakout session.

During the workshop proper, participants took a quick survey and completed six online tasks using Google Forms. They also joined discussions led by a team of researchers and facilitators.

The data that were gathered included survey responses, activity answers, chats, and participant feedback.

Study 4: Assessment of Literacy Skills through Remote Modes of Administration (Visual Remote and Telephony)

The pandemic lockdown experience highlighted the need for literacy assessment tools that could be used during school disruptions. The last study aimed to develop and refine the different remote administration modalities of literacy and assessment tools, specifically the visual, remote, and telephony modes.

Both of these modes assess learners in the same literacy components, similar to their face-to-face version. In the visual remote version, assessors use Zoom or Facebook Messenger for video conferencing with a child. An assistant is available with the child onsite to help them view the materials and communicate with the assessor in case of technical difficulties.

In contrast, the telephony mode used the same setup but was conducted using telephone or mobile calls. However, the assessor relies on the assistant to show the child/participant the assessment tools onsite, since screen sharing is not available.

In both modes, it is the main responsibility of the assessor to provide instructions and to lead the assistant from assessment to assessment until all the tasks for the day are completed.

RESULTS OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In terms of showing and providing stimuli to children/participants during assessments, Study 1 and Study 4 utilized video calls and phone calls. On the other hand, Study 2 and Study 3 used an online survey tool with the guidance of a researcher via video, text, or phone call, or a facilitator through an online workshop.

The primary gain of remote data collection, which was common to all studies, is to be able to engage with participants. Remote data collection ensured access and engagement to participants, which included assessment administration, online survey responses, and workshop participation. Most importantly, it allowed participation with risks to health and safety; created venues for social interaction, especially for children; and ensured numbers and diversity among participants.

Remote data collection also improved efficiency and effectiveness in research procedures. It can make data collection processes more manageable, like saving time and money by eliminating travel and onsite logistics.

The available platforms also helped. Compared to in-person workshops, Zoom allowed for better participant management, with features like muting the background noise, unmuting those with questions, and using online breakout rooms for smaller group discussions. An online timer negative during the workshop also helped keep things on track. Furthermore, data management and entry can also be automated through online and remote technologies. This helps minimize and eliminate potential errors, as in the case of Study 2 and Study 3. The use of survey apps also automatically organizes data and visually presents it according to the instrument.

The potential traps that could weaken the use of remote research methodologies are limited access to reliable Internet and digital tools, as well as varying levels of digital literacy. Additionally, the background noise during sessions and disruptions in communication affected the quality of assessments. There were also some unforeseen expenses, such as the provision of prepaid internet access to some participants. Another challenge was the technical security/access and intellectual honesty. Specifically, it was easy to capture screenshots of the material; the research team could not determine whether they could answer the assessments or respond on their own without the help of this feature or with the presence of someone else. One mitigation measure was to send materials through Facebook Messenger with limited access instead of screen sharing.

Support that must be considered includes giving participants time to access, submit, and complete tasks; bringing laptops, phones, Wi-fi, and routers onsite for assistants; and providing prepaid internet access to participants. Participants were also provided with detailed information on how to access the apps before the start of the assessment or data collection activity.

To also check if participants correctly followed instructions, the research team also used a 3rd party camera video. This stemmed from their collective experience from Studies 1 to 4.

DRIVERS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

One is to come up with well-developed and strategic protocols that ensure systemic responses to various scenarios and concerns of participants. Second, there must be pilot or trial testing to get a sense of how sessions will run following the protocols developed during planning. The results of this trial run provided input for researchers to manage issues and technical difficulties, identify the length of sessions, test the visibility of gadgets, manage the behavior of participants, and leverage the assistance of parents/guardians during the assessment.

Equally important is ensuring that ethical practices are in place, such as ensuring the privacy of participants and obtaining consent and assent forms. Two of the studies adhered to these ethical practices and also adopted new protocols, like removing the pictures of minors and requesting the presence of parents and guardians during sessions.

In conclusion, remote methods can enable broader participation, and technologies can simplify data collection and management. However, there are also potential pitfalls that could weaken the use of remote methodologies. To harness the gains, there is a need to ensure that challenges are addressed and issues are properly managed.

OPEN FORUM

Some of the authors were able to give their insights on several questions during the open forum:

1. *If you were to change something in the way that you conducted your study during the pandemic, how would you change it, and why would you change it?*

Ms. Gonzales shared that in their workshops on fighting disinformation, they started with 125 teachers. After opening it up to the public through eight online workshops, they were able to reach a total of more than 500 participants. They leveraged this opportunity not only to bring awareness

about disinformation but also to conduct research and do data collection at the same time. However, she noted that their online questionnaire had a time limit, which was a challenge for participants with low bandwidth, unstable connections, and low digital literacy skills. She would have perhaps explored how to address the time limit and check if participants were answering them on time or not, in relation to intellectual honesty and integrity.

Ms. Lucasan added that the cumulative experience from the first three studies had informed what aspects they wanted to change, and they implemented them in the fourth study. One of the key learnings was to have an assistant on site during assessments.

Margaret Mary Rosary Carmel Fua reflected that this was the time that they were testing the strength of their Internet connection, and they were not familiar with platforms such as Qualtrics. Since the pandemic was unexpected and they had to conduct the study, she wished that they had more time to think about the methodology and reflect on the steps taken, and have more time to improve the procedure and assessments.

2. *What were the inclusion and exclusion criteria in choosing the research studies?*

Dr. Ocampo said that ERP didn't scour the literature for all research done during the pandemic. The objective of the discussion paper was to document and share the experiences of ERP and the drivers, pitfalls, and mitigating circumstances that allowed for greater success in research. She hopes that it will be helpful for others who want to continue with remote and online research, given that it is also cost-efficient. Hybrid or blending of face-to-face and remote methodologies also works based on some of their other studies.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Ocampo thanked all the speakers for the forum. She read out the citation of the text for the Certificate of Appreciation for the speakers and awarded it to them virtually. She also gave a special acknowledgement to UP CIDS ED Dr. Rosalie Hall, UP Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Leo Cubillan, and technical support staff from UP CIDS.

She thanked all the participants for their time and expressed ERP's delight in interacting with such an audience. ERP hopes to partner with others in small and large research projects in the future.

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Established in 1985 by University of the Philippines (UP) President Edgardo J. Angara, the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) is the policy research unit of the University that connects disciplines and scholars across the several units of the UP System. It is mandated to encourage collaborative and rigorous research addressing issues of national significance by supporting scholars and securing funding, enabling them to produce outputs and recommendations for public policy.

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The **Education Research Program (ERP)** conducts studies under three categories: Curriculum and Assessment; Instruction and Teacher Development and Governance; and Finance and School Improvement. It is based on its agenda, "Policy Investigations in Support of the Filipino Learner 2019-2024." To guide these investigations, ERP conducts research on disinformation studies and language and literacy, focusing specifically on multi-literacy assessments and text assessment. These projects are multi-year studies that use mixed methods, employing data derived from assessments and conversations with multiple stakeholders.

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