

Kumustahan with Cher Mau: a study on the impact of online homeroom guidance approach to students during Covid-19 pandemic

Kumustahan com Cher Mau: um estudo sobre o impacto da abordagem online de orientação em sala de aula para estudantes durante a pandemia de Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has been a significant challenge to all, particularly teachers, in terms of connecting with their learners. Online homeroom guidance approach was one of the interventions given to support learners in this pandemic time. The main purpose of this study is to explore the impact of Kumustahan with Cher Mau, an online homeroom guidance approach to students in this time of pandemic. Employing a descriptive phenomenological research design, the researcher involved six (6) Grade 11 students in the said online sessions. They participated in an online focus-group discussion. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's method. The results of the study revealed the following themes for the challenges experienced by students: struggles of managing time and difficulty in answering the modules. In addition, developing self-confidence and understanding mental health and its application to self were the salient experiences of students during the online sessions. Moreover, the common changes observed after the Kumustahan with Cher Mau sessions were better understanding of self, planning of daily activities, and taking care of self.

Keywords: Kumustahan with Cher Mau, homeroom guidance, mental health, Philippines.

RESUMO

O COVID-19 tem sido um desafio significativo para todos, principalmente para os professores, em termos de conexão com seus alunos. A abordagem de orientação em sala de aula online foi uma das intervenções dadas para apoiar os alunos neste tempo de pandemia. O principal objetivo deste estudo é explorar o impacto do Kumustahan com Cher Mau, uma abordagem online de orientação em sala de aula para estudantes neste momento de pandemia. Empregando um projeto de pesquisa fenomenológica descritiva, o pesquisador envolveu seis (6) alunos do 11º ano nas referidas sessões online. Eles participaram de uma discussão em grupo focal online. Os dados foram analisados pelo método de Colaizzi. Os resultados do estudo revelaram os seguintes temas para os desafios vivenciados pelos alunos: dificuldades para administrar o tempo e dificuldade para responder os módulos. Além disso, desenvolver a autoconfiança e compreender a saúde mental e sua aplicação em si mesmo foram as experiências mais marcantes dos alunos durante as sessões online. Além disso, as mudanças comuns observadas após as sessões de Kumustahan com Cher Mau foram melhor compreensão de si mesmo, planejamento das atividades diárias e cuidado de si.

Palavras-chave: Kumustahan com Cher Mau, orientação em sala de aula, saúde mental, Filipinas

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges of class advisers in this time of pandemic is to conduct homeroom guidance sessions with the students because teachers are not allowed to have face-to-face engagement with their advisory class.

According to DepEd health guidelines, there should be no face-to-face interaction with the learners. The key considerations of this mandate were the learners' and teachers' health. Despite the critical situation that we are facing, this did not stop the Department of Education to open the class for school year 2020 – 2021.

Through the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) under DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020, different learning modalities were introduced. Schools could select the kind of learning delivery they will adopt. This could be in a form of face to face, distance learning, blended learning

and homeschooling (Pimentel-Tibon, 2020). The schools could have one or a combination of the different learning modalities mentioned depending on the local health conditions, the available resources, and on the parents' preference.

Given this kind of condition, Sta. Cruz National High School opted to adopt the Distance Learning Delivery taking consideration of implementing the combination of modular learning, online, and television /radio- based instruction. With the increasing number of COVID-19 cases within the locality of Sta. Cruz, distribution of learning modules was also disrupted so as the interaction of teachers to students was jeopardized.

As a class adviser, it is one of my problems on how to contact and perform homeroom guidance with my students. I believe that it is necessary to conduct homeroom guidance especially the kind of learning modalities that we had - the distance learning. Students need not to come to school and they just learned the lessons through modular learning. With that, I believe that there was a need for the teachers to connect with their students especially that they are at home without teacher's guidance and to help them cope from the crisis that they are facing. Aside from that, this study was very significant to the students because they will understand the different coping strategies in maintaining their mental health conditions. It was by this premise that I, as the sole researcher, was moved to study the impact of this intervention strategy, the Kumustahan with Cher Mau to my students.

| 2

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative research study examined the impact of Kumustahan with Cher Mau, an online homeroom guidance technique for students, particularly in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, the following topics were investigated in this qualitative research:

1. What are your concerns as a student that you conveyed during the Kumustahan sessions with Cher Mau?
2. What have you experienced in the 3 sessions of Kumustahan with Cher Mau?
3. What changes have you observed in yourself after the Kumustahan sessions?

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This action research was based on three theories, including Jerome Bruner's Scaffolding Theory (2009), which states that if children are given assistance and active help from their parents and teachers at the start of their learning, they will become independent learners as they mature. Second, Jean Jacque Rousseau's Learner-Centered Theory, which states that the learner's cultural capital or life experiences should be used to create the learning process (Henson, 2003). Finally, according to Jean Piaget's Cognitive Learning Theory, cognitive development is a continual process that occurs as a result of biological maturation and contextual influences (Piaget, 1976).

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The design, respondents, and sample, data collection process, and data analysis were all covered in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This action research used a qualitative method. Focus-group discussions (FGDs) were utilized to gather in-depth information on the subject under examination (Patton, 1990).

3.2 Respondents and Sampling

The main research participants were my Grade 11 HUMSS Advisory Class in Santa Cruz National High School, school year 2020-2021. The sole criterion in choosing the participant is that they must have attended the three (3) sessions of the online Kumustahan with Cher Mau. There were six (6) students who participated on the Online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) during the conduct of the study.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedure

Qualitative researchers involved in a range of actions in the data collection process, as described by Creswell (2007). As a result, one of the most important factors I evaluated is the practicality of the materials required, the participants who were included in the study, and the location in which I have conducted my research to gather and gain vital information.

| 3

In collecting the data, I asked permission from the school head to conduct this qualitative research. After the approval, I informed the participants about this intervention program the “Kumustahan with Cher Mau” through Facebook messenger class group chat.

The schedule of the online sessions were set and agreed. There were three (3) series of sessions conducted by the researcher to the participants. The Kumustahan with Cher Mau was conducted in a Zoom meeting in a form of interactive talk – sharing of experiences and discussion of mental health related topics that were helpful for students in this pandemic time.

Each session was recorded with the permission of the participants. After all the sessions were successfully conducted, I informed all the participants that I will conduct an online focus group discussion (FGD). I selected eight (8) students who joined the three sessions, unfortunately only six (6) students participated in the said online FGD.

During the online FGD, guide questions were used. This guide questionnaire was validated by an expert and was translated to Cebuano for the students to better understand each question.

3.4 Data Analysis

After gathering the responses from the participants, I transcribed them and submitted them to thematic analysis using the Colaizzi’s (1978 as cited by Morrow et. al, 2015) method.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participants were asked in an online focus group discussion (FGD) focusing on questions relevant to their experiences during and after the online homeroom guidance, Kumustahan with Cher Mau. With the use of thematic analysis, themes emerged from the responses of the participants.

In the following themes as common students’ concerns during the online homeroom guidance were struggles of managing time and difficulty in answering the modules. In addition, developing self-confidence and understanding mental health and its application to self were the salient experiences of students during the Kumustahan with Cher Mau sessions. Moreover, the themes emerged as the common changes observed after the Kumustahan with Cher Mau sessions were better understanding of self, planning of daily activities, and taking care of self.

4.1. Common Students’ Concerns during the Kumustahan with Cher Mau

Managing time: The participants emphasized that they had encountered problem in managing their time in both personal and academic tasks. One participant stated: “I'm unable to concentrate on my module because my mother has given me tasks to complete at home.” (Informant No. 3)

Work pressure and stress made it impossible for students to properly handle duties, resulting to low academic performance (Mukwevho, 2018). Thus, time management promotes increased activity and motivation (Wright, 2002 as cited by Ahmad, et al., 2019).

Difficulty in answering the self-learning modules: The participants of the study found self-learning modules difficult to answer due to the fact that no teacher will guide and assist them in answering the modules especially those subject areas that require them to solve a particular problem like Math and Science. Participant 4 emphasized, “It's difficult to answer self-learning modules, particularly in areas like math, where instructions are limited.” In addition, Informant 2 said, “When I'm answering the self-learning modules, I felt stressed.” It is critical that students comprehend the difficulties. Problem solving does not only contain and demand computation; it also requires understanding and analysis of the problem (Salma & Rodrigues, 2012 as cited by Dangle et. al., 2020).

| 4

4.2 Salient Experiences of Students during the Kumustahan with Cher Mau

During the online FGD, participants were asked about their experiences during the three sessions of Kumustahan with Cher Mau. The participants expressed their experiences and feelings about this online homeroom guidance. The themes that emerged from the FGD are: (1) developing self-confidence; and (2) understanding mental health and its application to self.

Developing self-confidence: The participants consistently agreed that the Kumustahan with Cher Mau helped them develop their self-confidence when it comes to expressing their thoughts and feelings. Informant 2 revealed, “Kumustahan with Cher Mau gives me some strategies in dealing with myself. With our current condition, our adviser does not put any pressure. I simply express myself without restraint.” More so, self-confidence is something about believing in one's own judgment, one's own talents and abilities.

Understanding mental health and its application to self: Mental health information plays an important role in understanding the challenges that a person is undergoing. Participants learned that relevant topics related to mental health can help them cope from different challenges and problems they experience. Learning techniques and skills on how to deal with stress and other related mental health issues will prepare them to cope with the situation especially now that we are experiencing this COVID-19. This was stressed by Informant 1 who said, “At first, I have a bad impression about the program, but later I realized that it was really good for me especially about mental health and how to cope with stress.” This was also supported with Informant 6 who said “I have learned a lot, it is like a medication about my health, my whole self...”

4.3 Common Changes Observed after the Kumustahan Sessions

Aside from the experiences during the Kumustahan Sessions, participants were questioned about the changes they observed after the Kumustahan sessions. Based from the responses of the participants three themes emerged. These are following: (1) better understanding of self; (2) planning of daily activities; and (3) taking care of self.

Better Understanding of Self: With the different topics they learned from the three sessions, the participants used those things to better understand their own selves especially the things that they underwent in this time of pandemic. They learned that everyone was also experiencing mental health

issues like stress and it is normal. “With the Kumustahan sessions, I’ve learned that there are solutions in every problem we faced and I understand myself better now compared before.” - Informant No. 6. Improving one’s ability to understand his/her own ideas and feelings may also help him/her better understands the thoughts and feelings of others (Nierenberg, 2017).

Planning of Daily Activities: Participants in the study emphasized how Kumustahan with Cher Mau sessions changed the way they handle their daily routine. They make plans for their daily activities including household chores, relaxation, and modules. In fact one participant said, “I know now how to schedule my time. I try to help my parents in the morning and do my modules in the afternoon.” In addition, another participant elaborated that “Because of Kumustahan, I sleep early and know how to handle myself and the things I usually do everyday.” Scheduling is the process of determining how you will spend your time. When you do it correctly, you can increase your effectiveness while lowering your stress levels (MindTools.com, 2021).

| 5

Taking Care of Self: After the Kumustahan with Cher Mau sessions, participants in this study stressed the significance of self-care. One participant said, “Before, I used to struggle in sleeping, but now, my sleep pattern changes... I also try to find some time to rest every time I feel stressed out or when I’m pressured.” Self-care is essential for developing resilience to life's pressures that one cannot avoid. They will be better able to live their best life once they will take consideration of their mind and body (Dorociak, et. al., 2017).

5 CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has put many people's ingenious and creative abilities to test. Like other mental health professionals, teachers are also responsible in providing their learners a safe environment even if learners are studying in the comfort of their homes. In this time of pandemic, teachers should explore and find meaningful interventions that will be helpful for their students like this Kumustahan with Cher Mau, an online homeroom guidance approach which is very timely and relevant.

Based on the findings of the study, participation in online homeroom guidance like the Kumustahan with Cher Mau sessions is really effective in building teacher-student relationship especially now that it is impossible to do face to face interaction with the students. Only through online or through mobile calls that we can possibly communicate with them.

Hence, providing mental health topics and strategies to our learners will have an impact to their lives especially in handling difficult situations in this time of pandemic. With this intervention, Kumustahan with Cher Mau became a tool for the learners to express themselves and be able to address the difficulties they experienced in this time of pandemic.

PLAN OF ACTION

Action Description	Time Frame	Person/s Responsible	Resources/ Materials Needed	Constraints/ Possible Challenges	Monitoring Plan (How to review if the plan of action is achieved or not)
	Date to Begin				

Conduct training workshop on how to conduct the Kumustahan with Cher Mau	September 2021	Principal Guidance Advocates Class Advisers	Powerpoint Slides Printed materials Internet Connection	- 100% Attendance of class advisers of the said training	Narrative report will be submitted after the training-workshop
Implementation of the Online Kumustahan with Cher Mau to Grade 7 to Grade 12 levels	October 2021	Principal Guidance Advocates Class Advisers	Powerpoint Slides Internet Connection	- Internet connection during the conduct of the online sessions. - Not all students will be able to attend the online Kumustahan	Narrative report will be submitted after each session.

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