

Importance of Community-Based Learning (CBL) in Teaching Locals About Online Selling Platforms

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the importance of community-based learning (CBL) in teaching locals about online selling platforms. Since the start of the pandemic, many physical businesses slowly transitioned selling online. They had even kept doing so even when they were able to transition back to physical selling. However, many online businesses had yet to effectively make use of these online selling platforms. Anchored on Pawson's idea of community-based learning, the study focused on the relevance of CBL in involving the academe to help solve the dilemma of effectively teaching locals about utilizing online selling platforms effectively. In the conducted survey and focus group discussion (FGD), the study revealed that CBL is indeed highly important in making the transfer of relevant e-Commerce knowledge to the different stakeholders involved. In conclusion, community-based learning (CBL) is indeed a significant avenue in teaching locals about online selling platforms.

KEYWORDS: *community-based learning (CBL), e-Commerce, online selling platforms, teaching, locals*

INTRODUCTION

Since the start of the pandemic, many localities experienced a halt in their physical business operations and shifted to online selling. Although businesses slowly transitioned back to physical selling, many businesses were still adamant to keep their online selling alive since it offered more reach and opportunities. This posed yet another challenge since operating online with little to no experience can become more stressful than operating a physical store. After all, online selling can both be a decent opportunity and a challenging endeavor (Nolasco, et al. 2022).

With the rapid increase of Internet usage, online shopping also reached new heights (Özdemir & Çam, 2016). In general, shopping is a social interaction wherein all consumers interact with one another for the purpose of buying goods (Godes et al., 2005). Bearing the same concept in mind, many online platforms rose and the same are dedicated in selling goods so that people can directly buy them online. Moreover, people who utilize different online platforms to sell their products are also growing in number (Dungo, 2021). People would also choose to

buy online for their necessities in order to avoid crowd, hassle and to protect their health since the pandemic was running at the time. Concurrently, these online platforms are not limited to social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram. Other platforms are also being used specifically to sell products ranging from consumer goods and wearables to other forms of services like Shopee, Lazada, Maxim, Grab and many more.

Accordingly, Google's e-Conomy Southeast Asia 2020 reported that the Philippines' e-Commerce market for consumer goods value rose from US\$ 3 billion and is projected to even grow more up to US\$ 15 billion in 2025 (Google et al., 2020). This goes to show that Philippines shows a promising run in the e-Commerce industry. In addition, more than 73 million Filipinos are internet users and 99% of them are active on one social media or other online platforms (Masigan, 2020). The statistics alone shows great potential for booming online markets- and Filipinos should take advantage of it.

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To this day, many Filipinos still do not know the wonders of these online platforms, and some are even reluctant to know about it. Filipinos have also not been swift in adapting to e-commerce (Masigan, 2020). By effectively learning and using these online selling platforms, one would be able to promote his business in a larger market and target, retarget and source more potential customers (Ferreira, 2024). More so by encouraging others to learn the same, you can solve the problem at hand by providing solutions based on its core issue and be able to involve more participants in the process (White, 2013). This would mean more people will be engaged in finding more opportunities online and be up to date on how they can keep up in the industry. But where and when is this process of learning going to start?

In the effort to boost e-Commerce awareness and functionality of the Philippine market, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) launched a webinar entitled “E-Commerce 101” on July 19, 2019 (Youtube, 2019). The said webinar was open to everyone who can access it from Youtube and was focused on the status of the e-Commerce industry in the country and the advantages of pursuing a business in the online market. Furthermore, in an online speech given by Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, he stated the importance of e-Commerce as a bridge in strengthening the relationship between Indonesia and Philippines (DTI, 2021). Such measures are only the beginning of making people aware on the scope of e-Commerce, specifically how different online selling platforms can boost the national and local economy, and pursue greater inter-state relations in general. Consequently, some institutions also launched different partnerships with large corporations to boost eCommerce learning and awareness. An example would be Ateneo de Manila University-Graduate School of Business (GSB) which partnered with Shopee for the conference and forum entitled “Driving Growth with eCommerce” on late 2018 to educate future business leaders and empower small and medium enterprises (GSB, 2019). Of course, these learnings would not be put into good use if not translated well towards grassroots level, which is to the locals.

Learning about different online selling platforms on how they operate and function can be daunting, especially when one is not so acquainted with the digital world. However, it is not too late to get to know about these online selling platforms. In fact, from the conference that GSB had led, it highlighted the importance of translating valuable knowledge on choosing the right eCommerce platform in starting one’s own business- and such should be the highlight of making sure that Ateneo would be able to prepare

their students and alumni to be able to share their knowledge and experiences alike to their community. This is where the concept of working together with the community comes in, making community-based learning a good place to start.

Whilst the institution is focused on generating such knowledge to be able to prepare its students and alumni on the undertakings of different business ventures, the latter also aims to pass down such knowledge and help the locals to also make a living of their own. In a more general sense, community-based learning or “CBL” is a broad set of teaching/learning strategies that enables both youth and adults to learn from any sector of the community (Owens & Wang, 1992). Community-based learning is a broad framework that encompasses service learning, experiential learning, and volunteering. Nonetheless for this paper, it focused on the aspect of CBL being a comprehensive platform of problem-based learning which enables both students and faculty to work together with different community partners to solve different issues inside the community (Pawson, 2015). In this way, issues regarding continued effective online operations would be addressed. This could also make way for the surge of local goods being sold at almost any part of the country whether there is a pandemic or not, which could in turn pave the way to a more stable regional and national economy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper aimed to examine the importance of community-based learning (CBL) in teaching locals about the different online selling platforms. Specifically, this paper aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is an online selling platform?
2. How can an online selling platform invigorate selling local products?
3. What are the advantages of selling in an online platform? What are its disadvantages?
4. Is educating locals about different online selling platforms important? Why or why not?
5. How can community-based learning (CBL) serve as an avenue in educating locals about these online selling platforms important?
6. Why is community-based learning (CBL) important in educating locals about these online selling platforms important?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section presents the essential elements of the research process and procedures employed in the study.

Design

This paper employs a qualitative approach which makes use of data mining, focus group discussion and a survey of the locals in Simala, Sibonga, Cebu.

Environment

The study specifically covers the entire barangay of Simala in which a population of more than 3,300 resides. Fishing, selling fruits, manning sari-sari stores, tending to livestock, selling consumer wearables and offering services such as motorcycle or car repair are the primary livelihood of the people in the locality. There are 25 identified people who are doing online business within the same locality.

Respondents

The study utilizes purposeful sampling in which respondents are key persons in community-based learning (CBL), namely: college students and teachers residing within the locality who are active in different community drives, and those who have an existing online business. There are 10 students, 5 teachers, and 15 people who had an existing online business. In total, there are 30 people who participated for this study.

Instrument

This paper makes use of credible research sources from the internet such as 'Google Scholar', 'CORE', and 'Directory of Open Access Journals' (DOAJ) for data mining, the online application 'Zoom' for the interview online and 'Google Forms' for the short survey which is also online.

Data Gathering Procedure

The respondents are asked of their permission to participate in the study via letter. After giving their consent, the respondents were subjected to a short online meeting in which instructions were given on how the study will go. Afterwards, they were given a short talk about what is eCommerce and the different online selling platforms available. Subsequently, a talk was given about community-based learning and how it can help in educating locals about the mentioned online selling platforms. An open forum was held after the talks to clarify any points regarding what was discussed earlier. Later, an interview was conducted with the participants after which the answering of the short survey was followed.

Ethical Considerations

Before collecting any type of data, the respondents are informed about the nature and purpose of the study and about the respondents' participation being entirely voluntary. Informed consent will be obtained prior to the conduct of the study. Furthermore, the researcher will ensure that all data that will identify the respondents will be kept private and confidential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the short survey conducted, 28 out of 30 or 93.33% agreed that community-based learning or CBL is important in teaching locals about different online selling platforms. The main motivation behind this answer is how CBL connects all of the members in the community for the common good, especially when educating locals about different tools that can help them with their living.

Table 1. Is Community-Based Learning (CBL) Important in Teaching Locals About Online Selling Platforms?

Respondents	Yes	No
Students	10	
Teachers	5	
Online Business Owners	13	2
TOTAL	28	2

"Mas nindot jud nang nay platform ang mga pareha namo nga namaligya bisan ginagmay pampuno sa among kita kay lisod na kayo karon. Nindot sad nga mas tudluan pami about aning online selling kay para kaantigo sad mi bisan hamtung-hamtung nami labi na karon nga pandemic."(It's good to have a platform for people like us to sell our goods . It's also good that we are educated on how to use it even with our increasing age, especially with the pandemic.)

The response given above by an online business owner just shows how important it is to be able to learn about online selling. It also reiterated the fact that the members of the community, specifically the academe, is directly involved in solving the different issues that the community faces; a true co-learning experience (Le Heron, Baker, & McEwen, 2006).

"Ang sa curriculum man gud nakabantay ko, product-centered kayo siya, like mas gi-focus jud niya ang paghimo ug product in comparison sa pagkat-on ug mga avenues to sell the products. Naa siyay advantages ug disadvantages jud, so nindot ang CBL na way to make us students, be helpful and productive in the society."(I've noticed that the curriculum we have focuses more on creating products, rather than also teaching students on how to sell the products. It has both advantages and disadvantages. Hence, CBL is a great way to make us students, be helpful and productive in the society.)

Recognizing the importance of students in actively participating with other community members enables a smooth transition of the former from being a student to becoming productive member in the society (University of Canterbury, 2014). More so with how

students will see the community as not only a resource for knowledge and learning, but also a place where they should exercise cooperation in learning (Shah & Treby, 2006).

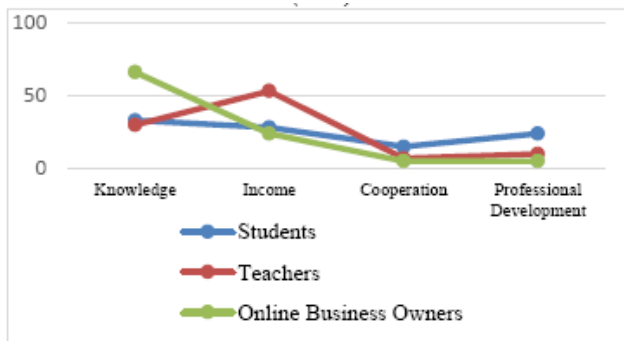


Figure 1. Motivations in Doing Community-based Learning (CBL)

The data above shows the responses of respondents when asked about the different motivations why they want to do community-based learning (CBL). Online business owners had the highest percentage of 66% in regarding CBL as their main source of having knowledge in doing online business and knowing different online selling platforms, while students came in second with 33% and teachers, 30%. After all, the very nature of learning e-Commerce requires people to be involved and experience the same by doing it (Shenker et al., 1996). It can be observed that most people who were driven to learn in doing CBL are the online business owners themselves, hence, being directly involved in experiencing what online selling is all about. At the same time, people driven by thirst of having knowledge especially when such knowledge is essential in solving the issue or crisis at hand, would naturally drive them to involve themselves in learning (Mooney & Edwards, 2001).

Additionally, teachers had the highest percentage of answering income with 53%, followed by students with 28% and online business owners with 24%. As though quite contrary to what might people would normally expect, the reasoning behind such difference were explained in the interview conducted.

“Motivated ko as teacher na magkat-on through CBL sad kay kahibaw man ko nga daghan kog makat-unan and once ma apply na nako akong makat-unan, modako akong kita, so para sa income jud siya. At the same time if mahanas nasad ko sa akong gibuhad ug in practice pud ko maka-share sa akong mga experience, mas confident nasad ko mo lead puhon ug mga lectures regarding online selling.” (I’m motivated to do CBL because I know I’ll learn many things and I can apply the same to increase my income. At the same time, if I’ll be knowledgeable and competent enough in the

future, then maybe I can confidently lead lectures regarding online selling.)

The response basically debunked the thought that most online sellers or business owners in general are only after the profit when they do online selling. Moreover, factor such as income being the end result of doing CBL definitely motivated the majority of the teachers being aware of their income and economic status.

“Online selling for me is not only about selling products online because the act of selling itself promotes what you want to be sold, too. Say if you want to sell your handmade products or products from your locality, it’s a great avenue to gather more potential buyers, create trust among customers and at the same time, establish a stronghold for income. But it’s not always a bed of roses. One must be prepared to understand that while there will be gains; there are still losses when doing online business—especially when the competition is already high and the online presence of your competitors overpower your own. Such circumstances are unavoidable and there are other risks to consider as well.”

A response above from a local online business owner emphasized the importance of understanding the importance of online business, not only in generating profits but also in establishing mutual trust and connection. Moreover, understanding that there are advantages and disadvantages of doing online selling at its very core would prepare prospect online business owners and those who are already in the online business scene to foresee any possible gains and losses in the process. One might profit while doing online business because he or she does not need to spare expense for property rent and the likes, but he or she may be disadvantaged when trying to establish community presence by question of physical business legitimacy.

Whilst it is important to consider the benefits derived from learning through community-based learning (CBL), it is also empirical to understand the importance of doing the same. After all, the core function of CBL considered for this paper is about community-based learning as the platform of finding ways through study, lectures and research in solving issues within the community (Pawson, 2015). With the economy facing crisis from the pandemic, it is important to consider possible measure that can benefit the community as a whole.

Cooperation as a motivation is also considered in doing community-based learning (CBL).

Accordingly, students got the highest percentage with 15%, followed by teachers with 7% and online business owners being last as 5%. The percentages are relatively low compared to other motivations, especially on the part of online business owners. Nonetheless when students were asked about why they also give consideration to cooperation being a motivation in doing CBL, most of them answered that cooperation is important since everyone has to work together to achieve the results that they want.

“Cooperation is definitely a drive for doing community-based learning. In this case, it is since *di man ko kahimo nga ako ra isa*, especially if I want to achieve something and it involves the help of many stakeholders.” (Cooperation is definitely a drive for doing community-based learning. In this case, it is since I can’t do it alone, especially if I want to achieve something and it involves the help of many stakeholders.)

Community-based learning (CBL) does not only empower the community but also the educational institutions that join themselves in the process of doing community-based education. Afterall, the purpose is to promote learning and have high-impact educational practices which include questions that matter beyond the classroom (Kuh, 2008). Students in this learning scenario will have a high impact in doing research to solve the problems faced by the community at the same time, involve its stakeholders. Concurrently, professional development is also highly considered in students who immerse themselves in different community drives, as they are also preparing themselves for more educational growth (Shumer, 1994).

“*Di ka batan-on pirmi, unya di sad sa tanang panahon mahatagan kag oportunidad para makat-on*. As much as possible *basta di lang ma-busy sa schoolworks*, I really find time to immerse myself in different community drives. *Daghan man gud kag makat-unan nga wa gitudlo sa textbook or module*. *Makahatag sad nag experience nimo puhon ig ganahan naka magtrabaho o mangitag laing kakuhaan ug experience*.” (You will not be forever young, nor will the opportunities keep on coming. As much as possible, I really find time to immerse myself in different community drives if I’m not busy. You can learn so many things that are not taught in the textbook or module, and it can also give you experience should you wish to gain from other sources of learning as well.)

Professional development was also greatly considered by students, having the highest percentage of 24%,

followed by teachers who had 10% and online business owners who had 5%. Having ranked the highest, students are deemed to be preparing for the future as well when they will formally be a part of the society. Afterall, when community-based learning (CBL) will formally become part of their curricula, institutions are surely going to see that there is clear alignment of course objectives, intended outcomes, assignments and assessment (Blouin & Perry, 2009). This will make learners more engaged with CBL and at the same time, be more objectified in their goals to help the community. Accordingly, the opposite is considered by business owners since they are likely to become community partners of the students with little to no pursue of professional development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, community-based learning (CBL) is indeed important in teaching locals about different online selling platforms and e-Commerce, in general. Pawson (2015) reiterated the importance of combining service learning and internship to make a new pedagogy that aims to solve problems arising from a crisis, which is what the current paper had described.

With knowledge ranked as first in motivating locals to learn through community-based learning (CBL), it supported the thought of Mooney & Edwards (2001) that people are naturally driven to learn and get knowledge to propose a solution of the problem that they are faced with. In the issue of physical businesses closing down and migrating to an online selling platform, majority of the respondents agreed that community-based learning (CBL) is indeed a necessary and an important avenue in learning e-Commerce-or different online selling platforms to be specific, in order to combat the adverse effects of limited physical contact during this pandemic. Moreover, it provides different benefits for each respondent as their priorities and overall concerns also differ from one another. While students and teachers opted to learn through community-based learning for knowledge and professional growth, online business owners opted to learn through CBL mainly because they want to know different e-Commerce techniques that would help them thrive in their online business.

At the end of the day, further research may be pursued on the different platforms in educating locals regarding how to take advantage of online selling platforms in relation to demand or demographics. Additionally, an action plan may be formulated to help solve the minimal learning opportunities of locals regarding different online selling platforms and how to operate the same. With the integration of

internet in the realm of selling, physical business will surely find way to sustain themselves despite the disadvantages brought by the pandemic.

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