Development of Preferred Methods of Teaching Online English Questionnaire

Jeremy Reyes, Trinity University of Asia, Philippines
Karmela Castroverde, Trinity University of Asia, Philippines
Ferdinand Panuelos, Trinity University of Asia, Philippines
Serena Gomez, Trinity University of Asia, Philippines

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Abstract
COVID-19 opened new doors for educational institutions to adopt a hybrid system, combining face-to-face and online teaching. While strategies for face-to-face instruction have evolved, researchers are now focusing on developing online teaching methods. This research aimed to create an instrument to identify students' preferred methods for learning English online and to determine the factors influencing online English instruction. Using an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Method design, the study combined focus group discussions (FGD) and a survey. The FGD involved 12 tertiary students who took English online. Their responses revealed key factors influencing online English teaching: interactive activities, varied learning styles, flexible scheduling, modular course content, diverse technology, and effective feedback and assessment. These insights guided the development of an 18-item questionnaire to measure students' preferred online English teaching methods. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 140 tertiary students. Exploratory Factor Analysis showed 89.9% adequacy and a reliability score of 0.8 using Cronbach's alpha. The survey results supported the FGD findings, emphasizing students' preference for interactive activities and the need for teachers to accommodate diverse learning styles. The researchers recommend further validation of the instrument and exploring its applicability to other disciplines.

Keywords: Preferred Methods of Teaching, Instrument Development, Reliability, Validity, Factor Analysis, Online English

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Introduction

This research addresses the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global education, with a particular focus on the Philippines. The pandemic forced a swift transition to online learning, revealing various challenges and inequities in the education system. As highlighted by Lee (2021) and Santoveña-Casal and Bernal-Bravo (2019), this crisis emphasized the need for innovative educational approaches, especially in the context of the modern digital society.

Online learning, defined as the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), witnessed substantial growth, particularly in higher education. With the Philippines being one of the largest English-speaking countries globally (Turmudi, 2020), the impact on English education is particularly noteworthy. The sudden shift to online learning prompted adjustments in the structure of English programs, making them more flexible and accessible, as noted by Toquero (2020). Teachers were required to undergo training in online education to adapt to the new learning environment.

Research indicates a clear correlation between language learning strategies and various variables, such as motivation, attitude, and language proficiency (Habók & Magyar, 2018; Taheri et al., 2020). The study also delves into the strategies employed by university students, emphasizing the importance of metacognitive skills and cognitive strategies (Alhaysony, 2017; Rongdara et al., 2019).

As the transition to online teaching remains an ongoing process, this study aims to evaluate the experiences of faculty, students, and administrators to identify challenges and effective strategies. While some studies have explored educators' opinions and students' perceptions of online teaching during the COVID-19 lockdown, there is a notable gap in examining the preferences within the English Department.

The research objectives are outlined, focusing on the identification and development of an English online teaching preference questionnaire, as well as assessing its reliability and construct validity. The statement of the problem emphasizes the need for a validated questionnaire to understand the English online teaching preferences of tertiary students, specifically in General Education English subjects.

The significance of the study is underscored, addressing the potential impact on students, teachers, administrators, parents, future researchers, and other educational institutions. The scope and limitations are also defined, providing clarity on the target audience and the extent of the study's applicability.

The research objective aims to contribute valuable insights into the development of effective online teaching strategies in English education.

Phase 1: Item Generation

In the initial phase of the research methodology, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted involving two groups, each comprising seven selected students, resulting in the participation of a total of fourteen students. The FGD served as a platform to delve into the perspectives and experiences of students regarding online English teaching. Through this qualitative method, nine key themes emerged from the discussions, namely Interactive,

Learning Styles, Flexibility in terms of Schedule, Pacing, Course Content, Use of Technology, Feedback and Assessment, Traditional Teaching, and Interactive Teaching. These themes provided a foundational understanding of the factors influencing students' preferences in the realm of online English instruction. Subsequently, the identified themes became the basis for the development of the research instrument. Using the transcribed recordings of the Focus Group Discussion, the researchers crafted a comprehensive set of fifty-two items. These items were designed to encapsulate the nuanced insights and preferences expressed by the participants during the FGD. The meticulous item generation process ensured that the questionnaire comprehensively covered the diverse aspects of online English teaching, as revealed by the students in the qualitative discussions.

Phase 2: Item Refinement and Selection

Content and Face Validity were utilized by the researchers on the Item Refinement and Selection phase.

Face Validation

The draft questionnaire underwent a crucial face validation process involving two groups, each comprising seven students selected based on specific inclusion criteria. These criteria included enrollment in the university during the current academic year, completion of basic English courses within the two semesters of online teaching modality, articulateness, and willingness to participate. The face validation was executed through a focused and structured approach, utilizing a framework adapted from Wong and colleagues (2014).

During the face validation, participants engaged in a structured interview framework designed to elicit their thoughts and perceptions about the items in the draft questionnaire. The interview questions were meticulously crafted to address individual items, focusing on aspects such as the wording of the questions, the perceived purpose of each question, the correlation between questions and listed options, and the identification of any missing response options. Additionally, participants provided general feedback on the questionnaire, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses, assessing the logical presentation of the survey, and identifying any potential barriers to completing the questionnaire. This face validation process was instrumental in ensuring the questionnaire's clarity, relevance, and appropriateness from the perspective of the target respondents. The structured interview framework provided a systematic approach to gather valuable insights from participants, contributing to the refinement and enhancement of the research instrument in preparation for subsequent phases of the study.

Content Validation

The draft questionnaire underwent the content validation process involving four experts with expertise in test and measurements, as well as teacher education. The primary objective of this phase was to ascertain the alignment of the questionnaire items with the intended constructs, ensuring that they accurately measured the desired aspects of online English teaching preferences. The experts were specifically instructed to evaluate various dimensions of the questionnaire, including its instructions, demographic information, clarity of each item, applicability, and overall readability.

In addition to the qualitative evaluation, the experts were tasked with providing a numerical rating for each item in the questionnaire, designating them as either relevant (rated 1) or not relevant (rated 2). This systematic approach allowed the researchers to quantify the experts' judgments and calculate the Content Validity Index (CVI) for each item. Following the guidelines established by Polit and Beck (2006), an accepted level of CVI ranging from 0.6 to 1.00 for four raters was considered indicative of satisfactory content validity.

The insights garnered from both the qualitative feedback and quantitative ratings were pivotal in refining the draft questionnaire. The collation of feedback from both experts and students facilitated a comprehensive revision process, addressing concerns related to clarity, relevance, and overall quality. This iterative refinement ensured that the final questionnaire was methodologically sound and effectively captured the nuances of preferred methods of teaching online English, laying the foundation for subsequent phases of the research (Polit & Beck, 2006).

Phase 3: Pilot Testing

A run test was conducted to assess the Preferred Methods of Teaching in Online English Questionnaire. A total of 140 students participated in this test during the Second Semester of the academic year 2022–2023, spanning the dates May 25–26, 2023. When the test run was completed, data was encoded, and all analyses were conducted using JAMOVI Version 2.3.26 software (2022).

Construct Validity – Factor Analysis

To test whether the items included in the questionnaire are suitable for a specific factor preference to Online English teaching, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was utilized. According to Hair and colleagues (2019) and Tabachnick and fellows (2019), "EFA helps identify the underlying factors or dimensions that explain the correlations among items." It helps determine whether the items in the questionnaire are measuring the intended construct or factor.

The process of conducting an EFA involves three stages namely (1) factor loadings (2) communalities and (3) factor structure and interpretation. Factor loadings indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between each item and the underlying factors. Items with strong and significant factor loadings (e.g. above 0.5) are considered good indicators of the underlying factor and are retained. However, items with low or non-significant factor loadings (e.g., below 0.3) indicate poor measurement and are considered for removal or further revision.

Phase 4: Test of Reliability

Internal consistency was determined with Cronbach's alpha for each of the factors identified in the factor analysis.

Conclusion

The Focus Group Discussion was able to bring up different themes that affects the preferences of students when it comes to online English teaching. The following are the variables that was able to extract by the researchers: interactivity, learning styles like visual,

auditory, reading and writing, and collaboration, flexibility in terms of schedule, pacing, course content, and use of technology, feedback, and assessment, and being traditional and interactive teachers.

Interactive

The findings revealed that most of the respondents prefer online teaching English to be interactive. This is in conformity with the narratives of participants in the focus group discussion indicating that the "professors make the lesson more interactive such using other applications to make the lesson more interesting." Which Participant B from Batch 1 also supported that "my professor also used again different modalities to make it interactive using different platforms such as Google Meet and Class In." Participant 2 from Group 2 as opposed to the positive sides of online learning, based on the participant's experience that "it also has negative sides to consider which are like the limited interaction." Through this, in order to make online learning work, it must be interactive.

According to Wart (2020), if teachers are able to introduce high quality interactive teaching, nearly the entire student population will be interested in more online classes. It's also important for teachers and institutions to put in the effort to adjust to the temporary online modality. This can include providing effective and engaging online lesson plans and incorporating interactive activities that promote student engagement and collaboration.

Learning Style

Another finding is based on the Learning Styles like the use of visual, auditory, reading and writing and collaborative learning.

According to our analysis of FGD, *visual learners* prefer to learn through the use of images, diagrams, and videos. This learning style can be particularly effective in the online modality, as teachers can use a variety of multimedia tools to help illustrate key concepts and ideas.

On the other hand, there are students who answered that they are Auditory learners. In the online modality, teachers can incorporate audio recordings, podcasts, and live discussions to help engage and support auditory learners.

Some of the researchers' participants are *reading and writing learners* that prefer to learn through reading and writing activities, such as note-taking, summarizing, and writing essays. In the online modality, teachers can provide students with reading materials, writing assignments, and online discussion forums to help support this learning style.

Finally, according to the results of the FGD, some of the participants are *collaborative learners* who prefer to learn through group work and discussions. In the online modality, teachers can use virtual breakout rooms and collaborative platforms to facilitate group work and peer-to-peer learning.

By considering these different learning styles and incorporating a variety of teaching methods and tools, the researchers believed that teachers could help ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in the online modality.

As stated by Participant C from Group 1, "one of the things that I like in an online set up, is that is more of the visuals, that's why I do appreciate the PowerPoint presentation which have something colorful, something that's moving and wherein at the same time the teacher really explains how learning can be done with those." Participant 3 from Group 2 supported the use videos as the participant stated that, "usually professors used YouTube since there's a lot of free videos that could enhance your English skills it has a lot of free videos." And lastly, Participant 4 from Group 2 stated that "some helpful, appropriate, and relevant aspects of learning English in an online platform includes variety of multimedia resources like video recording, audio recording, and it also has online exercises that allows us to somehow engage in different manner and this makes the learning more enjoyable."

To support this, El-Sabagh (2021) stated that, in light of learning style, it represents an important issue in learning in the twenty-first century, with students expected to participate actively in developing self-understanding as well as their environment engagement. Students with their preferred learning styles are more likely to enjoy learning if they are provided with a variety of instructional materials such as references, interactive media, videos, podcasts, storytelling, simulation, animation, problem-solving, and games.

Flexibility in Terms of Schedule

Another finding revealed that most of the respondents prefer Flexibility in terms of Schedule. This is likely because online learning provides students with more flexibility in terms of when and where they can attend class. As a result, students may have other commitments, such as work or family responsibilities, that may require them to adjust their schedules. Being flexible in terms of scheduling can help teachers better meet the needs of their students in the online modality and create a more effective and engaging learning experience.

Participant F from Group 1 strongly stated that she preferred online classes as she stated that "learning basic English in an online setting is that it was a very convenient, accessible, and flexible option for a face-to-face learning." Participant 2 from Group 2 also gave his reason on why she prefers online learning in terms of flexibility in pacing rather than in normal setting. Participant 2 stated that "the online setting kind of provided a more flexible schedule I had an easier time practicing and enhancing my skills in English language."

To support this statement, Kokoç (2019) stated from his study that Online learning has emerged as a significant mode of education delivery, offering students the flexibility to learn at their own schedule. With the advent of online learning platforms, students no longer need to be physically present in a classroom to participate in learning activities. Instead, they can access course materials, lectures, and assignments at any time and from any location with an internet connection.

The flexibility in scheduling is particularly beneficial for students who have other responsibilities such as work or family commitments that may prevent them from attending traditional in-person classes (Ammenwerth et al., 2019). Online learning enables these students to balance their academic pursuits with their other obligations, thereby enhancing their opportunities for professional and personal growth.

Based on these researches, it has consistently shown that online learning can be just as effective as traditional classroom instruction, and in some cases, even more effective. This is likely due, in part, to the flexibility that e-learning provides, allowing students to tailor their

learning experience to their individual needs and preferences. As such, e-learning is becoming an increasingly popular option for students of all ages and backgrounds.

Flexibility in Terms of Pacing

According to the results of the FGD, flexibility in terms of pacing also adds to their preferences in online English teaching. Based on the interview, online learning allows them to progress through course material at their own pace and in their own way which leads to improved learning outcomes and a more positive educational experience.

Participant C from Group 1 mentioned that online learning became a positive experience since she stated that "the positive experiences that I had in learning English, basic English was it was in my own time and at the same time, it's in my own comfort zone wherein I do not have to travel far just to attend my classes." Participant B from Group 1 also stated that "mixed modalities is also effective for me because I think it's, like in relation to the question earlier in terms of having our own time, having mixed modality is somehow encourages students to think for themselves and act on their own will as well."

In addition to this, Kokoc (2019)'s study also highlights that the flexibility that online learning can provide students with the opportunity to pace their learning according to their individual needs. This means that by allowing students to review material at their own pace, online learning can help ensure that all students have the opportunity to fully understand course content before moving on to more challenging material.

Overall, Kokoc (2019) suggests that online learning can provide a more personalized and flexible approach to learning, which can support student success and improve learning outcomes. However, it is important to note that online learning is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and some students may still benefit more from traditional classroom-based instruction.

Flexibility in Terms of Course Content

Another theme that the researchers found in the Focus Group Discussion is that online learning can provide significant flexibility in terms of course content, which can be a major advantage for both students and instructors. According to the participants, one of the key benefits of online courses is that they can be designed to be highly modular, allowing students to complete individual units or modules in any order they choose. This can be particularly beneficial for students who may need to balance their coursework with other responsibilities, such as work or family commitments.

To support these statements, Participant G from Group 1 stated that "Also I remember one time, our teacher gave us an opportunity to decide which are topics that we think is most essential in the curriculum and if we would like to add something that we think is important in the curriculum."

In the findings of the study of Turan (2022), The study found that the students' flexibility of time management and flexibility of content levels were quite high. The students could structure their learning processes whenever, wherever, and for as long as they wanted in the online learning process. The students' participation in the learning process through the expression of their opinions, the ability to order the topics in terms of the significance they

hold for them, the freedom to decide where they will study, and the opportunity to study topics that pique their interest were all benefits of this factor.

Flexibility in the Use of Technology

The FGD also highlights the teacher's Flexibility in the use of Technology on being a key factor in online learning. According to the participants who experience online learning in basic English, teachers play a vital role in designing and delivering online courses that meet the needs and preferences of their students. The use of technology in online learning allows teachers to create a more dynamic and engaging learning experience, but it also requires them to be flexible in their approach to teaching. One participant from Group 1 stated that they prefer if teachers have the ability to accommodate students with different learning styles and preferences. Participant B from Group 1 stated that "my professor also used again different modalities to make it interactive using different platforms such as Google Meet and Class In. As well as, we also had a textbook that was online." Participant C from Group 1 also stated that "what I like best was there was this time wherein we had to use Class in as our way of having our online classes. So, in Class IN it was easy to give positive feedback to students, especially when there are rewards being shown on screen such as the trophies and everything else." According to the participants, teachers need to be able to adjust their teaching style and content to cater to the diverse needs of their students. This may involve using a range of technology tools and resources, such as videos, interactive simulations, or discussion forums, to provide students with the most effective learning experience possible.

In addition, it should be noted that whereas technology is one of the vital elements for flexible learning, flexible learning refers to more than the use of technologies to minimize constraints in learning environment (Li & Wong, 2018). Overall, teacher flexibility in using technology is also a key preference in the success of online learning. By being adaptable and responsive to the needs and preferences of their students, teachers can create a more engaging and effective learning experience that can improve student outcomes and satisfaction.

Feedback and Assessment

Another theme that is found is the clarity of feedback and assessment by the teachers in an English online learning. It suggests that students value timely and specific feedback on their work, which can help them identify areas of strength and weakness and guide their learning progress.

Participant G from Group 1 stated that "I think it is really helpful in the learning process if every time professors would give out activities, they would give students clear rubrics for review especially since it is hard to ensure communication between the professor and students especially on asynchronous setting." Participant C from Group 1 also commented that, "Maybe what I like best was there this time wherein we had to use Class In as our way of having our online classes. So, in Class IN it was easy to give positive feedback to students, especially when there are rewards being shown on screen such as the trophies and everything else."

Given these findings, it is important for teachers to prioritize the provision of timely and specific feedback to their students. This can be achieved through a variety of methods, such as providing written comments, engaging in one-on-one discussions, or using peer feedback strategies. The preference for immediate and clear feedback and assessment highlights the

importance of feedback in the learning process and emphasizes the need for teachers to prioritize this aspect of their teaching practice.

Teacher Characteristics

Traditional Teacher

Traditional Teacher was also one of the themes identified in the FGD. From the discussions, it appears that the participants also have an attachment to traditional teaching methods and are hesitant to embrace modern technology-based approaches, like online learning. This attachment to traditional teaching methods may be attributed to several factors, such as lack of exposure to modern technology, and a preference for familiar teaching methods, which is the face-to-face set-up. However, it is important to note that the world is rapidly advancing, and the education sector must keep up with these changes to ensure that students are equipped.

Moreover, according to Wang (2022), a student who prefers traditional teaching methods tends to value structure and routine in their learning experience. They may be more comfortable with a teacher-centered approach in which the teacher lectures and provides clear direction for the students. These students may appreciate clear guidelines, assignments, and assessments that are well-defined and consistent. In a traditional classroom, students who prefer this style of teaching may feel more engaged when they are able to take notes, listen to lectures, and participate in class discussions. They may also prefer textbooks and other printed materials as opposed to digital resources. These students may find online learning or other non-traditional methods of instruction to be challenging, as they may miss the social interaction and structure that comes with a traditional classroom setting. They may also struggle with self-directed learning and may require more guidance and support from their teachers.

Interactive Teacher

Another theme identified in the Focus Group Discussion was the Interactive style of Teaching. The participants who prefer interactive teaching methods tend to value active engagement and participation in their learning experience. These students tend to learn best when they are able to explore and discover new information on their own, with the guidance of their teacher, acting as a facilitator.

Interactive teaching methods have been shown to be effective in promoting student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement. According to a meta-analysis of studies on interactive teaching methods by Freeman and colleagues (2014), interactive teaching methods such as group work, peer instruction, and hands-on activities resulted in significantly higher exam scores and lower failure rates compared to traditional lecture-based teaching methods.

Furthermore, interactive teaching methods have been found to promote critical thinking skills and deeper understanding of subject matter. Freeman and colleagues (2011) found that students who participated in interactive teaching methods had greater gains in higher-order thinking skills compared to those who received traditional lecture-based instruction. Students who prefer interactive teaching methods tend to enjoy the opportunity to collaborate with

their peers, to share their opinions and ideas, and to learn from one another. This can lead to increased motivation and engagement in the learning process.

The result of the FGD, the researchers was able to generate 52-items which were later reduced to 22-items. The 30-items that were discarded were rated with very low relevance, clarity, and applicability.

Establishing the Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Table 1: Factor Loadings on Online Teaching Preference in Terms of Teacher Characteristics

Item#	Statements I prefer my online English teachers to…	Factor
1	use simple language and break down complex concepts into smaller, more manageable parts to help students understand	0.846
2	be comfortable in using different communication tools and techniques, such as video conferencing, email, and instant messaging, to communicate with their students	0.845
3	use gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice to convey meaning and engage their students	0.843
4	be sensitive to cultural differences and avoid language and behavior that may be offensive or insensitive to their students.	0.827
5	respond promptly to student questions and comments and provide feedback on student work in a timely manner	0.822
6	actively listen to their students and show an interest in what they have to say	0.783
7	use clear and concise language to communicate with their students	0.776
8	Be where the student is at the center of the learning process, with the teacher acting as a guide and facilitator	0.756
9	makes use of technology, such as multimedia presentations and interactive whiteboards, to enhance the learning experience	0.747
10	emphasizes students working together to solve problems and complete tasks	0.739
11	who emphasizes hands-on activities that engage the student in the learning process	0.684
12	works with students individually to identify their strengths and weaknesses, tailoring the teaching approach to meet the needs of each student	0.673
13	focuses on the student, with the teacher acting as a facilitator rather than an authority figure.	0.692
14	contributes to the conversation (two-way communication)	0.665
15	gives emphasis on discussion between the teacher and the students	0.614

Based on the results, out of the 22 items corresponding to the preference to online English teaching in terms of teacher characteristics 4 items were removed due to low factor loadings and communalities value (i.e. below 0.6). This is about 18.18% of the total items, which leaves to 18 items as shown in Table 1.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.899
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2357
	df	231
	Sig.	0.000

Table 2 shows the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test that measure of sampling adequacy used to examine the appropriateness of Factor Analysis. It also revealed that the data was adequate by 89.9% and was tested significantly. When the test run was completed, data was encoded, and all analyzed. The approximate of Chi-square is 2357 with 231 degrees of freedom, which is significant at 0.05 Level of significance. The KMO statistic of 0.899 is also large (greater than 0.50). Therefore, Factor Analysis is considered as an appropriate technique for further analysis of the data.

Reliability Analysis

Table 3: Cronbach Alpha of the Developed Student's Preference on Online English Teaching

I prefer my online English teachers to…	Cronbach's α
1. use simple language and break down complex concepts into smaller, more manageable parts to help students understand	0.898
2. be comfortable in using different communication tools and techniques, such as video conferencing, email, and instant messaging, to communicate with their students	0.897
3. use gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice to convey meaning and engage their students	0.896
4. be sensitive to cultural differences and avoid language and behavior that may be offensive or insensitive to their students.	0.896
5. respond promptly to student questions and comments and provide feedback on student work in a timely manner	0.897
6. actively listen to their students and show an interest in what they have to say	0.899
7. use clear and concise language to communicate with their students	0.898
8. Be where the student is at the center of the learning process, with the teacher acting as a guide and facilitator	0.897
9. makes use of technology, such as multimedia presentations and interactive whiteboards, to enhance the learning experience	0.898
10. emphasizes students working together to solve problems and complete tasks	0.896
11. who emphasizes hands-on activities that engage the student in the learning process	0.895
12. works with students individually to identify their strengths and weaknesses, tailoring the teaching approach to meet the needs of each student	0.900
13. focuses on the student, with the teacher acting as a facilitator rather than an authority figure.	0.900
14. contributes to the conversation (two-way communication)	0.900
15. gives emphasis on discussion between the teacher and the students	0.896
16 who is an authority figure	0.910
17. who emphasizes habitual memorization of facts and figures	0.910
18 that speaks, and the students listen (one-way communication)	0.914

Questionnaire

The ratings of each items got a Cronbach Alpha of >.8 to >.9 which has a verbal interpretation of GOOD to EXCELLENT which indicate high item homogeneity per factors.

In conclusion, our research followed a systematic process, commencing with a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving fourteen students to discern significant themes influencing preferred methods of online English teaching. The outcomes of this FGD informed the development of a comprehensive 52-item questionnaire. Subsequent content validation by four experts and face validation through two student groups refined the questionnaire, ensuring its clarity and relevance. Pilot testing involving 140 students provided valuable insights and confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire through factor analysis, resulting in the retention of 18 items. The positive outcome of face validation underscored the instrument's appropriateness, affirming its role as a substantive output in comprehending online English teaching methods.

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Contact email: jareyes@tua.edu.ph