
Lived Experiences of Parents Supporting Their Children in Printed Modular Distance Learning: A Case Study of an Elementary School in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a sudden shift from traditional face-to-face learning to printed modular distance learning or home-based learning. As a result, parental involvement became essential to facilitate their children's education at home. This study examined the experiences of parents acting as teachers or facilitators for their children using printed modules in an Elementary School in the Philippines. A descriptive qualitative research design was employed, involving 18 Grade 1 parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The study explored the challenges faced by both parents and children during home-based learning, the support provided by the school, and the strategies used by parents to support learning. The findings revealed that common challenges included disruptions to children's daily routines, difficulty in teaching learning activity sheets, and children's struggles to stay focused during home learning. The school offered significant support, including providing information and health kits for COVID-19 awareness, conducting home visits, and maintaining a consistent schedule for distributing and collecting modules. Parents commonly used strategies like enforcing strict schedules and offering rewards to motivate their children. The study recommends developing an action plan to enhance parental support in their role as partners in their children's continuous learning during the pandemic.

KEYWORDS CoVid-19, printed modular distance learning, home learning, parent's lived experiences

Introduction

Parental involvement is a critical factor to ensure quality education be given to school children in their most secured and safe environment, their own homes specially in the time of pandemic. Several studies show that there is an increased academic achievement with learners that have engaging and supportive parents (Topor, et al., 2010). Likewise, studies show that parental involvement is most effective when viewed as a partnership between educators and parents which will result to a better understanding on the effective parental involvement practices in promoting learner's achievement (Yulianti, et al., 2020). With such, parents are vital partners in educating learners. This is especially true today since face- to-face classes are not allowed amidst the CoViD-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has caused many changes in patterns when it comes to interaction and activity in almost all aspects of human life which includes the education sector. With this concern, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused disruptions in students' lives in various ways which have been a particular challenge for the learners as well as their parents. The students were not taught in the usual way of mode of teaching and the students were deprived in socializing with their peers.

Furthermore, the government have responded to the closure of the schools concerning the National Education Policy during the Covid-19 emergency period. In this circular period, it is explained that the teaching and learning process is carried out at home through distance learning whether printed or online. For learners without resources to attend online classes and as indicated in the LESF given and answered by the parents they are provided with printed modules or learning activity sheets as a mean of continuing learning which they will use to continue in school for this School Year 2020-2021. DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones and the education ministers from SEA nations shared their education frameworks and innovations to frame the new normal in education and laid out their preparations for the opening of classes within their respective countries. Like the Philippines, other Southeast Asian countries have also adopted modular systems to deliver education while prioritizing the safety of the learners (DepED, 2020).

In line with the above-mentioned mandate, the an elementary school in Eastern Visayas conducted a survey among the parents using the Learner Enrollment and Survey Form (LESF) and results show that 99% of the parents preferred printed modules as the mode of learning delivery to make learning possible for their children. In a modular learning delivery, parents or guardians will be actively involved in their children's learning and will act as facilitators. The parents or guardians will guide and support the learning process of the children at home such as in accomplishing given home learning tasks in the learning modules. Before the actual implementation of home-learning, an orientation was conducted by the school

explain the flow of teaching and learning process, adjusted class schedule and the parameter of their participation as learning facilitator. The school has also provided Home Learning Plan which is flexible as to the time of submission of the academic requirements.

Several studies have been conducted which discussed the experiences of teachers and students in using distance learning as instructional modality during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, little studies have been conducted discussing this topic in the perspective of the parents of students. Moreover, most of the studies were conducted in foreign countries. Hence, this study was conducted.

The study focused on exploring the lived experiences of 18 parents with children enrolled in an elementary school in Eastern Visayas, Philippines in the use of printed modular distance learning of home- learning using descriptive-qualitative research design. The findings were the basis for the development of an action plan that will strengthen the role of parental support as partners in the continuous learning of children in situations when face to face classes with teachers are not possible.

1. Objectives

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of 18 parents with children enrolled in an elementary school in Eastern Visayas, Philippines in the use of printed modular distance learning of home- learning.

2. Scope and Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive-qualitative research design to delve into the experiences of parents managing home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. As outlined by Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2020), the qualitative approach was chosen for its strength in capturing detailed, contextual insights into participants' lives. Unlike quantitative methods, which focus on measurable data, qualitative research allows for a richer understanding of complex human experiences, making it ideal for exploring the nuanced challenges and adaptations parents faced. Through this design, the study aimed to shed light on parents' perceptions, the support provided by schools, and the strategies employed to facilitate home learning, especially given the unprecedented nature of the pandemic.

The study population included eighteen parents of Grade 1 pupils from an elementary school, chosen through purposive sampling to ensure relevant and meaningful insights. The selection process was guided by specific criteria, including parents' voluntary participation and experience with printed modular distance learning, the primary learning method used during the pandemic. Purposive sampling allowed the researchers to focus on individuals who could provide direct, personal accounts of their experiences. Following the concept of data saturation, data collection was stopped once participant responses became repetitive and no new themes or insights emerged, ensuring a thorough but efficient approach to capturing the data.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which combined socio-demographic questions with three open-ended questions that explored the challenges parents faced, the support they received from schools, and the strategies they used to facilitate home learning. This interview method allowed flexibility, enabling participants to freely express their experiences while giving researchers the opportunity to probe deeper into relevant areas. Interviews were conducted either in person or by phone, depending on each participant's preference, and were recorded (with permission) to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality, were strictly observed to protect participants' privacy and autonomy. For analysis, the researchers employed thematic analysis to manually identify and categorize recurring themes, enabling a detailed understanding of parents' experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in supporting their children's home learning during the pandemic.

3. Literature Review

Research conducted globally during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the significant role of parents in supporting distance learning. Delgado (2017) emphasizes that family involvement is the strongest predictor of student success, fostering motivation and a love for learning. Parental involvement, as Yulianti et al. (2020) note, is most effective when viewed as a partnership between parents and educators, where both share the responsibility of achieving educational goals. This collaboration creates a supportive environment for children both at home and through school activities. According to the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (Brooks, 2019), students with engaged parents, regardless of socioeconomic status, tend to have higher grades, improved behavior, better social skills, and consistent school attendance.

Studies by Topor et al. (2010) and White (2018) further demonstrate the positive impact of parental involvement on academic performance and student engagement. Lara and Saracosti (2019) found that parental engagement correlates strongly with children's academic success. Similarly, research by the National Education Association underscores that active family participation boosts academic outcomes and strengthens parents' confidence in their children's education. Collectively, these studies underscore the critical role of parental involvement in creating a positive educational environment and supporting student achievement. Parents struggle to manage their domestic duties since they have taken on the job of pseudo-teachers for their children, according to Garbe et al. (2020). In order to maximize support for their child's education, parents and instructors should actively participate and collaborate, as this change has unintentionally addressed the requests of every educational institution. Although the idea behind this arrangement is great, parents and students were a little confused.

There are currently no pertinent studies on the lived experiences of parents in the Philippines helping their children learn in distance education, particularly those who chose alternative learning delivery modalities in public schools

where the virtual conference is not accessible to them, because the pandemic is a persistent threat that has affected the lives of people worldwide (DepEd, 2020).

Parental involvement has a direct and long-lasting effect on a child's cognitive development, according to an article by Dimatulac (2020); yet, there is a discrepancy between the ideal and actual scenario if parents are not ready and equipped to fulfill the role. It is necessary to comprehend the predicament of the impacted parents who only care about what is best for their child, particularly when that child engages in online or modular learning. Parents must deal with this circumstance and assume a role for which they may not have been prepared, especially when it comes to taking on instructional responsibility for their child's education in these extraordinary times (Liu et al., 2010; Bhamani et al., 2020). Schools, therefore, should simplify communication systems between parents, teachers, and administrators to further enhance family engagement and ensure students receive the support they need for academic success.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to the global education system, highlighting the critical role of parents in supporting distance learning. Numerous studies conducted during this time underscore the importance of parental involvement in ensuring the continuity of education amidst school closures and the shift to alternative learning modalities.

Delgado (2017) asserts that family involvement is the strongest predictor of student success, as it fosters not only academic achievement but also a love for learning and enhanced motivation. This underscores the significance of parents' active role in creating an environment conducive to learning, especially during the pandemic when home became the primary learning space. Parental involvement, as Yulianti et al. (2020) emphasize, is most effective when viewed as a collaborative partnership between parents and educators. This collaboration allows both parties to share the responsibility of achieving educational goals, ensuring that children are supported both in school and at home. By working together, parents and teachers can help bridge any gaps caused by the sudden transition to distance learning.

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (Brooks, 2019) reinforces this idea by stating that students whose parents are actively engaged, regardless of socioeconomic status, tend to perform better academically, exhibit improved behavior, develop stronger social skills, and maintain consistent school attendance. In line with this, Topor et al. (2010) and White (2018) highlight the positive correlation between parental involvement and academic performance, suggesting that such engagement increases student motivation and reduces the risk of disengagement from learning.

Research by Lara and Saracosti (2019) further corroborates these findings, revealing that parental engagement is a strong predictor of children's academic success. Similarly, the National Education Association (NEA) underscores that active family participation not only boosts academic outcomes but also strengthens parents' confidence in their ability to support their children's education. The NEA stresses that parents' involvement is essential in ensuring students' academic and emotional well-being, especially during periods of educational disruption like the pandemic.

However, while parental involvement is beneficial, it is not without challenges. Garbe et al. (2020) found that many parents struggle to balance their domestic responsibilities with their new roles as pseudo-teachers. This shift has placed considerable strain on families, as parents, often untrained in educational methodologies, must now facilitate their children's learning. Although the increased parental involvement has partially addressed the needs of educational institutions, both parents and students have experienced confusion and stress due to the rapid changes in learning environments.

In the Philippines, where many students rely on printed modular learning as an alternative delivery mode, parents face unique challenges in supporting their children's education. The Department of Education (DepEd, 2020) acknowledges that the pandemic has significantly impacted public schools, particularly those where virtual learning options are not feasible due to a lack of resources and technological infrastructure. Despite this, there is

a lack of relevant studies that explore the lived experiences of Filipino parents supporting their children in modular distance learning, especially in rural areas where online access is limited.

Dimatulac (2020) highlights that parental involvement has a direct and long-lasting impact on a child's cognitive development. However, the ideal scenario, where parents are well-prepared and equipped to support their child's education, often differs from the reality, especially during the pandemic. Many parents are thrust into roles they are unprepared for, lacking both the time and the pedagogical skills needed to guide their children through modular or online learning effectively. The psychological burden of this responsibility can be overwhelming, as parents seek to provide the best possible support for their children under difficult circumstances.

According to Liu et al. (2010) and Bhamani et al. (2020), parents must adapt to these extraordinary times, taking on instructional responsibilities that were previously managed by teachers. This situation calls for schools to enhance communication systems between parents, teachers, and administrators, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned in supporting students. Such collaboration is essential to sustain family engagement and ensure that students receive the academic and emotional support necessary for success in these challenging times.

In summary, existing literature emphasizes the significant and positive impact of parental involvement on student outcomes, particularly during the pandemic. However, there remains a gap in research concerning the lived experiences of Filipino parents navigating distance learning in public schools. This study seeks to fill that gap, offering insights into the challenges and strategies parents employ in supporting their children's education through printed modular learning, and contributing to the broader understanding of family engagement in education during times of crisis.

4. Result and Discussion

The lived- experiences of the respondents were categorized into three themes. The first theme centers around the challenges faced by both parents and children during the home-learning process, shedding light on difficulties such as maintaining focus and adapting to a new learning environment. The second theme focuses on the support provided by the school, including resources, guidance, and assistance to help ease the transition to home-based education. Lastly, the third theme explores the strategies that parents implemented to facilitate effective learning at home, highlighting methods used to keep children engaged and ensure consistent progress in their studies.

Theme 1: Challenges faced by both parents and children during home-learning process

This theme encompasses three sub-themes regarding the difficulties faced by parents and children during home learning. The primary challenges identified by respondents include:

Subtheme 1. Change in Children's Daily Routine: Many parents reported significant alterations in their children's daily schedules, leading to a lack of structure. Prior to the pandemic, children followed a disciplined routine, engaging in academic and social activities. However, during home learning, they often woke up late and prioritized recreational activities over educational tasks, which parents found concerning. Respondents expressed that their children were more productive in traditional classroom settings, emphasizing the importance of social interactions and structured learning environments (Respondent #1, #5, #6).

Subtheme 2. Difficulty in Facilitating Home Learning. Parents also faced challenges in effectively teaching their children. The absence of a teacher's physical presence made it difficult to maintain discipline and focus, resulting in frustrations over children's lack of attention. Many parents noted that they struggled to explain certain lessons, often needing to consult others for assistance. This challenge was exacerbated by the overwhelming amount of activities in the learning modules, leading parents to request extensions on submission deadlines (Respondent #1, #6, #11).

Subtheme 3. Children's Difficulty Concentrating. Despite parents' efforts to engage their children in home learning, many reported that their children were not serious about their studies, often preferring to engage in

leisure activities. Parents described a struggle to keep their children focused, especially when they had multiple obligations, highlighting the challenges of balancing household responsibilities with educational oversight (Respondent #4, #5, #11, #17).

Theme 2: Support Extended by the School

This theme outlines the various forms of support provided by the school during home learning, which include 3 subthemes.

Subtheme 1. COVID-19 Awareness and Health Kits. Parents appreciated the information provided by the school regarding COVID-19 safety protocols and the distribution of health kits for prevention. The school ensured that safety measures were followed during module distribution and retrieval, fostering a sense of security among parents (Respondent #5, #8).

Subtheme 2. Home Visits by Teachers. The implementation of home visits allowed teachers to connect with students and their families, positively impacting children's engagement and reminding them of the importance of their studies. Parents expressed gratitude for these visits, noting that they helped reinforce their children's understanding of lessons (Flannery, 2014; Respondent #2, #6).

Subtheme 3. Regular Schedule for Module Distribution. The school established a consistent schedule for distributing and collecting modules, which helped create a routine for both parents and children. This structured approach allowed parents to manage their time effectively and support their children's learning (Respondent #3, #4, #10).

Theme 3: Strategies Used by Parents at Home to Support Learning. This theme highlights two key strategies employed by parents to facilitate learning at home:

Subtheme 1. Maintaining a Strict Schedule. To manage their children's education amid various responsibilities, parents created homemade timetables, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a structured routine similar to regular school days. This approach aimed to keep children focused and accountable for their learning tasks (Respondent #3, #9, #10).

Subtheme 2. Giving Rewards to Motivate Children. To encourage their children to complete learning activities, parents implemented reward systems, such as allowing screen time or special treats upon task completion. This strategy helped create a sense of motivation for children, although some parents noted that their children often needed incentives to stay on track (Respondent #4, #11, #16).

Overall, these themes reveal the multifaceted challenges and adaptations parents faced during home learning, highlighting the critical role of school support and the innovative strategies parents developed to foster their children's education during the pandemic.

5. Findings

The themes surrounding home learning experiences reveal significant challenges faced by parents and children during the pandemic. Theme 1 highlights the difficulties of maintaining a structured routine, with parents noting a shift in their children's daily schedules that led to a preference for recreational activities over educational tasks. This change resulted in concerns about productivity, as many parents felt their children thrived better in traditional classroom settings, where social interactions and structured learning were more prominent. Additionally, parents struggled with facilitating home learning due to the absence of a teacher's physical presence, which complicated discipline and focus, and they often found it challenging to explain lessons, sometimes needing external assistance. The overwhelming volume of learning activities further complicated the situation, prompting parents to request extensions on deadlines. Furthermore, many parents reported that their children displayed a lack of seriousness towards their studies, preferring leisure activities and presenting difficulties in maintaining concentration.

The challenges surrounding home learning experiences during the pandemic underscore the importance of structured routines, effective facilitation of learning, and intrinsic motivation for academic success (García, J. L., Grek, S., & Smeyers, P. (2020); Harms, P. D., Credé, M., & Tynan, M. (2021).; Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000);Tomasik, M. J., Helbig, A., & Freund, P. A. (2021). As parents navigated the complexities of remote education, they faced significant obstacles that impacted both their children's learning and their own well-being. These experiences highlight the need for ongoing support and resources for families to effectively manage home learning, especially during unprecedented situations such as a global pandemic. Studies have shown that providing continuous support and resources for families is crucial during disruptions to traditional education. This support can include access to educational materials, training for parents on how to facilitate learning, and emotional support to cope with the challenges of home learning (Mason et al., 2021).Moreover, Research indicates that active family engagement in their children's education significantly enhances academic outcomes. Schools that offer resources and guidance for parents help create a more supportive learning environment at home (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

Theme 2 emphasizes the support extended by schools, including COVID-19 awareness initiatives and health kit distributions that reassured parents during module distribution and retrieval. Home visits by teachers significantly enhanced student engagement and reinforced the importance of academic commitment, with parents expressing gratitude for these visits (Flannery, 2014) The establishment of a consistent schedule for module distribution allowed parents to create a routine that facilitated their children's learning, improving their time management.

According to U.S. Department of Education, (2020), schools played a crucial role in disseminating information about health and safety protocols, ensuring that parents and students understood the importance of measures such as mask-wearing, hand hygiene, and social distancing. This communication not only provided practical guidance but also offered reassurance to parents during the challenging times of module distribution and retrieval (CDC, 2020). Parents reported feeling more confident and secure when they were informed about the steps schools were taking to protect their children's health, which mitigated some of the anxiety associated with the pandemic. Moreover, in the study conducted by Hale, K., & Ranganathan, D. (2021); findings illustrate how schools have taken proactive steps to inform and protect their communities during the pandemic by implementing and communicating health and safety protocols.

In addition to health initiatives, the distribution of health kits was another essential support mechanism. These kits often included masks, hand sanitizers, and educational materials related to COVID-19 prevention, empowering families to take proactive steps in safeguarding their health (Mason et al., 2021). By equipping parents and students with the necessary tools to navigate the pandemic safely, schools fostered a sense of community and solidarity.

Theme 3 delves into the innovative strategies that parents adopted to enhance their children's educational experiences during home learning. A key approach was the creation of homemade timetables, which allowed parents to establish structured routines similar to those of a traditional school day. These timetables served as visual reminders for children, helping them understand the importance of maintaining a consistent schedule for their learning activities. Research suggests that structured routines can significantly contribute to children's academic success by promoting self-discipline and time management skills (Duncan et al., 2007).

Moreover, to foster motivation and engagement, many parents implemented reward systems that offered incentives for completing educational tasks. These rewards often included privileges such as screen time, favorite snacks, or special activities, effectively encouraging children to stay focused on their studies. Such reinforcement strategies align with behavioral theories of motivation, which posit that positive reinforcement can enhance learning outcomes and promote desired behaviors (Skinner, 1953). However, some parents observed that their children frequently required these incentives to remain engaged in their work, indicating a potential challenge in cultivating intrinsic motivation.

In addition to timetables and reward systems, parents also utilized various interactive tools and resources to make

learning more enjoyable. Activities like educational games, hands-on projects, and collaborative learning experiences were integrated into their home learning environments. This aligns with findings by O'Connor and McCartney (2007), which highlight the importance of active engagement in learning for maintaining children's interest and promoting deeper understanding.

Ultimately, these strategies exemplify the adaptive measures parents took to navigate the challenges of home learning, demonstrating their commitment to supporting their children's education in unprecedented circumstances. The effectiveness of such strategies underscores the vital role of parental involvement in fostering academic achievement and the need for ongoing support for families as they continue to manage home learning environments.

Overall, these themes illustrate the complex landscape of home learning during the pandemic, revealing the crucial role of school support and the innovative strategies parents employed to nurture their children's education

6. Conclusion

The study explored the experiences of parents whose children are engaged in home learning, revealing a range of challenges that must be addressed to prevent negative impacts on their children's educational outcomes. The findings highlighted the significant support provided by schools during this transition, as well as the proactive strategies that parents developed to enhance home learning. This collaboration underscores the importance of both parental involvement and school assistance in improving educational experiences during remote learning periods.

Additionally, the study's findings have informed a proposed action plan to support families participating in Printed Modular Distance Learning. Copies of the research will be shared with relevant officials, including school administrators and teachers, to offer insights into parents' perspectives on this learning approach, which can help in formulating effective solutions for the challenges students face. The researcher intends to present these results at various forums, including SLAC, INSET, and academic conferences. A major goal of the initiative is to empower parents to embrace the role of educators at home. To aid in this transition, specific guidelines have been recommended for parents to effectively support their children's learning. It is suggested that parents schedule learning activities, especially analytical subjects like math, for the morning when children are most alert. Additionally, they should pay attention to their child's emotional well-being, as moods can greatly affect learning productivity, and maintain open communication about feelings. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to allow children to tackle problems independently before stepping in, recognizing and praising their efforts. Engaging children in creative activities—such as discussions, writing, drawing, dancing, and listening to music—can also promote their creativity, empathy, and language development.

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