The First Teacher: A Phenomenological Study on Parents' Lived Experiences in the New Normal of Mathematics Education

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Abstract - The study looked into the lived experiences of parents in the new normal of Mathematics education. The outcomes of the study uncovered the personal challenges and struggles parents have had while participating in their child’s education, and provided useful data and trends to aid in the establishment of educational programs and policies across all levels in the education sector that address parental concerns about distance learning implementation. Qualitative phenomenological design was utilized in coming up with a fact-finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation on the lived experiences of parents who have taken the responsibility as the learner’s educator. Moreover, eight participants took part in the study via purposive sampling following the criteria that their child must be a Grade 3 bonafide student for school year 2021 – 2022 and has undergone any of the modalities implemented in distance learning mandated by the institution under the Department of Education – Cebu City Division. The study revealed four (4) significant themes namely: (1) parents’ perceptions, (2) parents’ challenges in distance learning, (3) fountain of support, and (4) realizations and aspirations and specifically included nineteen (19) subthemes. Parents play a vital role in guiding the learners to achieve the same quality of learning they receive in schools following the COVID – 19 pandemic and this reflected the diverse challenges they have encountered to attain learning. Regardless of the challenges they have met, their perspectives are centered to the educational progress and well-being of their children, even if it means sacrificing lot of their time, effort and resources.

Keywords: COVID – 19, Distance Learning, Pandemic, Parents, Mathematics Education

Introduction

The explicit instruction of mathematical concepts has been made possible with traditional classroom delivery in schools at all levels. Through pedagogical strategies, learning opportunities are established to unravel the necessary knowledge and 21st-century skills, draw connections and focus on reasoning and sense-making. It also enabled good learner support that is vital in creating a strong mathematical understanding for them to grasp and think critically about the world which leads to a positive outlook towards the subject matter. However, temporary school closures were instigated as an educational response to limit the transmission of Novel Corona virus Disease (COVID-19), one of the worst catastrophes in the recent decade. With this, a sudden transition to distance learning began where maintaining the quality of Mathematics education has been seen as a challenge and a greater responsibility for learning was placed on parents and guardians.

School closures have had a profound impact on the lives of the students as they have been forced to become virtual learners in their homes, with their parents and peers filling the role of educators in carrying out instruction according to Cohen & Kupferschmidt (2020). As per United Nations’ Children’s Fund (2021), stakeholders were caught off guard by this unprecedented situation, and some of the difficulties and challenges of an increasing parental involvement were brought to light in their attempt to engage and aid their children in the distance
learning implementation. This has prompted students to enroll in various distance learning initiatives such as modular, online/virtual synchronous, and asynchronous learning modalities, radio-based and media delivery for both private and public schools across educational levels, and carrying out Mathematics instruction has become a significant concern among educational institutions at present and participation among stakeholders are deemed necessary. Parents and guardians, being the children’s first teachers, are considered significant stakeholders of the schools. Woofter (2019) describes parental involvement as a vital element for students to thrive and progress. Liu (2010) stated that in the participation of the learners in distance learning, parents must embrace a new and unfamiliar responsibility, especially in the carrying out of Mathematics instruction for their child’s learning.

Particularly, the Department of Education (2020) has been feminist goal for continuous learning. The school curriculum in the time of pandemic has been improved and further developed by focusing on the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) to address the necessary skills and knowledge that are expected to be exhibited by the learners at the end of the school year. Furthermore, in Cebu City, public and private schools have been compliant with the flexible methods to provide effective Mathematics instruction despite the school proximity, most especially to elementary learners. Still, these modalities cannot address the gaps of Mathematics education without parental support for learners. Arriero (2006) cited that the home has been recognized as a critical factor in the child’s learning and development in Philippine school settings. Academic achievement may be attained when parents, teachers, and schools work together to support one another and form a strong relationship, according to a study by Nierva(2009).

With the learning modality in Philippine schools that is new to both the educational communities and stakeholders, many parents and guardians are having struggles on what role they should take in the teaching-learning process, adding up to their responsibilities in rearing their children and making a living for their families. The assumed obligation of parents and guardians as educators has prompted the researcher to thoroughly examine the parents' skills, daily challenges, and needs in a distance learning environment as they are one of the most important partners in their child’s academic progress, especially in Mathematics. In light of the broad and quick move to remote learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to look deeply into their lived experiences in carrying out distance learning among their children.

This study aims to yield useful data and trends to foster the development of educational programs and policies in the school, division, and national levels that will address parental needs in the implementation of distance learning. Given the recognized gaps and needs for Mathematics education in the time of the pandemic, the purpose of this study is to uncover the personal challenges and struggles parents have had while participating in their child’s distance learning, specifically in Mathematics, during COVID – 19 pandemic as the school shifts from the traditional classroom learning environment to remote learning.

Methods and Materials

The researcher used a qualitative phenomenological design as it will enable the researcher to come up with a fact-finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation on the lived experiences of parents who have taken the responsibility as the learner’s educator, following the modular modality in delivering Mathematics instruction. It is used to gain a deeper understanding on the underlying perspectives, Perceptions and challenges regarding Elementary Mathematics Education and the current distance learning implementation in the Department of Education where the researcher intermingles with the participants of the study through the conduct of interviews to collect the necessary information. The participants of the study are to be chosen via purposive sampling and are chosen following these criteria: (1) the parent’s child is a bona fide Grade 3 pupil who is currently studying in any basic education institution for SY2021–2022;
is taking up the modular/synchronous/hybrid learning modality for distance learning implementation;  
(3) have completed all academic subjects from first to second grade. The participants are to undergo an in-person/ virtual interview in their most convenient time and place wherever the participants feel comfortable provided that health and safety protocols are carried out. The participants’ data and responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The data gathering shall be stopped once the data saturation is reached where there are no additional themes and sub-themes emerging from the succeeding interviews.

**Ethical Considerations**

The ethical considerations based from the Belmont Report of 1974, which has three fundamental ethical principles in research, namely: humans as subjects, including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, are adapted to the persons under discussion or the research participants at this stage of the research methodology. Individuals should be considered as autonomous entities in the first place, and those with limited autonomy should be protected. Participants in this research may or may not respond to the questions posed, depending on their preferences; hence, there are no guidelines as to how much they should respond. Thus, they are given the freedom to respond to the questions prompted.

Furthermore, there are no students or children involved. Informed consent to the participants were provided covering the purpose of the study, the potential risk, and benefits of the study, contact persons in cases of emergency, the degree of how the data will be kept confidential, and a statement stating that the participant has partaken in the study voluntarily. In addition, no students or children are involved. Participants were given informed consent that included information about the study's purpose, potential risks, and benefits, as well as contact details for emergency situations, the degree to which data would be kept confidential, and a statement stating that the participant had voluntarily participated in the study.

**Results**

The data gathered from the respondents were examined using thematic analysis. It yielded four (4) significant themes which include: (1) parents’ feelings and perceptions, (2) challenges in distance learning, (3) Fountain of support and, (4) realizations and aspirations. Specifically, it generated nineteen (19) subthemes.

**Theme 1: Parents' Perceptions**

Theme 1 of the study is focused on the parents’ feelings and perceptions during the distance learning implementation. Specifically, it is centered on their thoughts about the school closures at the start of the COVID–19 pandemic and how it affected their relationship with their children. It is essential that their perspectives are looked into in order to understand their experiences with the sudden shift of education in the new normal at a deeper level.

**Subtheme 1.1 Mixed Emotions towards School Closure**

One participant stated that there was a mix of emotions upon the announcement of school closure for her child’s safety but pointed out that it has been a tough job for parents to continue the education of their child by teaching them the lessons in the absence of a professional, a teacher.

“Nalipay ug nasubo ko at the same time. Lipay kay at least akong mga bata kay luwas sa COVID–19 virus nga paspasakayo ang pagkatapotongpanahon kay magpundoramanpud sila sa balay. Pero naguol sad ko kay lisod para sa amo nga ipasabot ang mga leksyon nga ilang gikat-
ondiliparehasatongnaaangmgamaestrangahan-aymuexplainnilaparamasabtangyud nila” (Participant 3)

(We were both happy and sad at the same time. Happy, because at least our children were safe from the COVID-19 virus that was rapidly spreading at that time since they were just going to stay at home. However, we were also sad because it was hard for us to explain the lessons they were studying unlike when teachers explain since you really have an organized way of making them understand the lesson. - Participant 3)

It was noted from one of the participants that it was hard for parents to offer assistance to their child’s education during school closure and the responsibility was passed on to his/her sibling.

“Lisod jud Maam. Makahilak ko maghuna huna kay lisuran lage akong mga bata sa pagmodule unya di makasabot sa unsa’y buhaton ug unsay ianswer unya di bayad jud mi makatabang sa ilaha kay nakalimot napud mis mga leksyon kay dugay dugay na pud bayaa pero ako lang siya pahimangnuan nga bag-o pa man na nila nakat-unan so paningkamutan nalang jud nila bahalag lisod.” (Participant 8)

(It was hard Maam. I can’t help but get teary-eyed when I think about the fact that my children are struggling in modular learning and they cannot understand what to do or how to answer it and we cannot help her because we also forgot the lessons since it has been a long time so I just encourage her by telling her that the lesson is indeed new to her so she should make effort even if it is hard. – Participant8)

It has been a common sentiment among the participants that there is an impending worry for the quality of learning for their children along with the relief that comes from the school closures during the distance learning implementation. Thus, parents are forced to primarily take responsibility for their child’s education.

Subtheme 1.2 Relationship with Child

Both participants have observed a closer relationship with their children during the distance learning implementation.


(Every day when I come home from work, she shares to me that she was able to do some of her tasks in the module. I am hoping that she continues to openly communicate with me and maintains close ties as mother and daughter. Even though she does not have her father with her, at least we have a strong bond and that she does not feel that something is lacking with her. – Participant 1)

“Karon kay mas nagkasuod jud mi. Makasturya nami sa bisag unsa nga mga butang. Ako sad mashare niya ang mga kaagi nako sauna sa studyante pa ko parehas niya, akong mga kalisod, ug mga pahimangno para mas maninguha siya sa paghuuman sa iyang pag – eskwela.’ (Participant 3)

(Yes Maam, we became closler now. We are able to talk about things, even the most random ones. I also get to share my experiences to him back when I was still a student like him, my struggles, encouragement for them to strive harder to finish their studies. – Participant 3)

Furthermore, one participant has stated that the current learning modality has allowed her to share her experiences as a student to her child as an encouragement to pursue greater potentials.
Theme 2: Parents’ Challenges in Distance Learning

Theme 2 of the study is centered on varied hurdles undergone by the learners’ parents during the distance learning implementation as part of the new normal of education in the Philippines. This is where they share in details the challenges they have met and how they were able to overcome these as the distance learning takes place.

Subtheme 2.1 Navigating Roles and Responsibilities


(I usually leave for work at 8or9am. Her aunt is my neighbor so she just stays there during the day. At 8:30 pm, I arrive from work. I just remind myself that I have to finish all the chores at home so that I can focus on assisting her with the module. That is why it is important to manage my time well. It is very hard. There are times I would tell my child that I did not study for me to become a teacher. If I were to contemplate about how I try to manage my responsibilities, I can barely handle it. But there are really times it is hard to fulfill my duties as a mother, worker, and teacher.– Participant1)

One participant has mentioned that it is a big challenge for her as a single parent and at the same time the breadwinner of the family to balance her responsibilities at home as a mother and teacher and at work as a provider.

“Lisodjudsiya, Maam. Ilabina og naa’ymgapanahon ngaaadunako’y mga cakeorders. Ang akong responsibilidad sa pagbantay sa mga manghud kay mapasa sa kinamaguwangan ug mao pud nang panahona nga tabangan niya ang akong anak nga Grade 3 sa pagtubag sa module. Usahay, maluoy jud ko sa akong anak og mahitabo na.” (Participant3)

(It is really difficult, Maam especially when I receive cake orders. My responsibility of taking care of the two younger children has to be passed onto the eldest and thus is also the time when the eldest has to assist his younger brother in answering the module. I feel sorry for my child whenever that happens. – Participant 3)

Furthermore, another participant stated that the responsibility of taking care of the younger child and assisting themoduleispasodontotheeldestdueothemultipleresponsibilitiesheldby the parent. Time management is an important element for a parent to be able to accomplish the responsibilities as a parent and a teacher to their children.

Subtheme 2.2 Accessibility to Learning Resources

A participant of the study pointed out that having an Internet connection has been a privilege in order for the parents to easily let their child understand the lesson. However, the medium of instruction used for the learner’s module is considered a hindrance for learner’s comprehension of the lesson.

“Mag – search mi sa Internet kun dili mi makasabot sa topic. Usahay makapangutana jud ko nganong ang
mga modules sa kada subject kay naka – Mother Tongue nga lisod jud siya sabton.” (Participant 4)

(We search it in the Internet whenever we cannot understand the topic. Sometimes, I question myself as to why the modules and the subjects had to be in Mother Tongue. – Participant 4)

Another participant cited the struggle in financing for the Internet service of her child in order to look for information regarding the difficult topics in the module.

“Ug dili jud masabtan Maam, kay tan-awon jud sa cellphone. Makaahat pud mi og pa-load kayparamakasearchsila.AkolangipaliminilaangpaggamitsaInternetkayarondilisilamawad - an ug focus tungod lang sa gadget ba kay ila baya nga giingon sauna nga ang pag expose pirmi sa gadget, makaapekto jud sa focus nila. Nakaahat naman lang gani jud mi ug palit ug cellphone bisan ang kantidad kay mahal kaayo, igo na unta pangkaon sa among mga anak pero kay kinahanglan man jud sa ilang pagskwela mao napugos nalang pud ko.” (Participant 8)

(If they cannot understand, Maam, they usually look it up on the cellphone. We are forced to buy load so that they can search on the topics. I just make sure that their Internet usage so that they would not lose focus because of the gadget they said before that when we allow them to be exposed too much, it will affect their concentration to their studies. We were even forced to just buy a cellphone even if it is quite expensive, which would have been enough for the children’s meals because they really need it for their studies so I had no choice. – Participant 8)

Financial stability in the distance learning implementation in the New Normal of education has been seen as one of the hurdles that parents face as it would entail them to sacrifice a lot just to provide for their studies, that includes the accessibility to the Internet as one of the learning resources.

**Subtheme 2.3 Attaining Learner Motivation**


(We usually take more time in the answering of modules since I have to give examples just for her to understand the topic. Sometimes, it makes her feel exhausted. And we really do not move to another subject unless she can understand the topic, especially in Mathematics. Honestly, she told me that it is quite challenging for her to comprehend the topics in Math. – Participant 1)

Due to a lack of focus, it takes the parents more time for them to assist their child in their modules, affecting their comprehension on the topic discussed. Specifically, Mathematics is one of the subjects that parents and learners have a hard time in answering.

“Unya kanang mga times nga walay gana muanswer ang manghud, makasah-an nalang jud nako ug ang maguwan nalang pud muanswer ug apiki na. Agakunon pa man gud pud siya mao nang paiubangan jud nako sa iyang maguwan sa pagpaanswer.” (Participant 8)

(When there are times that she has no motivation to answer, it really comes to a point where I reprimand and it ends up with her sister answering the module. She really needs guidance that is why I let her older sibling assist her in answering the module. – Participant 8)

One participant also mentioned that due to the little motivation from the learner towards his/her studies, she
reaches a point in reprimanding her child and resorts to having the eldest sibling to finish the work as the child still needs guidance.

**Subtheme 2.4 Mastery & Academic Performance towards Mathematics**


(Although in her Math subject, she struggles a bit. Whenever she is not able to understand the topic well, she easily gets discouraged and tells me that she cannot comprehend it. Especially when it comes to fractions, added up by the fact that Mother Tongue is used as medium of instruction even in Mathematics. It is really a challenge for her because she studied in a private school when she was in nursery and in kindergarten so she was used to speaking in English. That is why I had her tutored because the lessons that she has now were different from the ones we had before. I remember, the lessons that she is taking up now were my lessons back when I was still Grade 5 or 6. So it is quite difficult for me to teach her. – Participant 2)

One participant cited that the medium of instruction used in the module, especially in Mathematics greatly affected the academic performance and comprehension of the child towards the subject. Also, the parent has a struggle in teaching her child due to the increasing difficulty of the topics covered.

“Sa Math nuon Maam, nino juy mga topics nga dugay jud mi mahuman. Samot na ug naay i- compute, magmanual jud mi ug ihap ana sa akong bata. Unya, ako jud ibalik - balik ug pasabot niyaang conceptramamatatakjudsautok, maonausahay makapangisogjudkayparamasubay jud namo ug maexplain nako ug tarong niya.” (Participant6)

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Another participant stated that due to the lack of mastery towards the fundamental operations in Mathematics, it would take longer time for her to ass is the child in answering the module and have to repeat the concept for the child to gain retention.

**Subtheme 2.5 Multiple Learners at Home**

“Ang akong tulo ka anak kay ga-eskewla ron, nino ko’y duha ka anak nga babae nga nino sa Grade 10 ug 6 unya ang kinamanghuran nga nino sa Grade 3. Silang tanan kay nag-modular approachkaysilamanpudneg- eskwelasapublicschool. Humansausaorduhakaorasasapag- assist nako sa kinamanghuran, muadto n apud ko sa iyang mga ate. Stressful pud panagsa nako ilabinaugmu-assistkosakinamanghuranunyamangayopudutabangangmgamaguwangkay maglibog sila sa topic, pero ma-manage ra man pud nako nga matabangan sila.” (Participant5)

(My three children are currently studying; the two elder sisters are currently in Grade 10 and 6 and the youngest who is in Grade 3. All of them are under the modular approach since they are studying in a public school. After an hour or two of assisting my youngest, I go to his elder sisters. It can sometimes be stressful for me especially when I have to assist my son and then his sisters also ask for help when they are confused about the topic but in the end, I manage to handle them.

– Participant 5)
A participant of the study mentioned that there is an imminent stress whenever all her children ask for her assistance in answering the module at once but is able to manage them well in the end.

“Ang Kinder kay agakunon man jud kay more on activities man sila. Pero ang kinamaguwangan kay mulihok ra man pud ug iyaha. Most of the time kay siya gani jud ang mutubangsiyangduhakamangbud. Unahaymuwingonmalangiudsiyanakongakapuyonsiyaug ganahamnasiyamuskwelabilikkaylahiramanjudangtinudluansamaestraymaexplainman jud ug tarong.” (Participant 8)

(My child who is Kindergarten still needs to be guided since most of the work they do are hands-on activities. But my eldest child can work on her own. Most of the time, she helps her two siblings. Sometimes, she tells me that she is tired and wants to go back to face-to-face classes because it really different when the teacher teaches since the topic is explained very well. – Participant 8)

Furthermore, a participant mentioned that with the multiple learners at home, the eldest child bears a greater responsibility to aid his/her siblings in answering the module, thus compromising the quality of learning for her and her brothers and sisters during the distance learning implementation.

**Subtheme 2.6 Shift in Learning Modality**

One participant mentioned that due to the factors that may affect her child, it prompted her to shift from one learning modality to another which entails an adjustment for both the parent and learner on their approach towards attaining the same quality of learning even at home.

“Adunami’yu duhaka options sapagsugodsaschoolyearchyduharammanisaamongsection nga ripli ug online classes mao nga kadugayan, naagreehan sa tanon nga i-modular approach nalang ang tibuk section. Akong giusab nga from online class to modular kay nakaamgo ko nga angpag-atubangdiyasabatasagadgetpirmikaymakadaotsamata kaymostsamga lessonsay adto man buhaton sa gadget.” (Participant 2)

(We actually had two options at the start of the school year and there were only two from our section who chose the online classes so eventually, it was agreed upon by everyone that we will just have the modular approach for the whole section. I first had the option for online classes then I changed to modular since I realized that facing the gadget would damage her eyes since most of the lessons would be done in front of the gadget. – Participant 2)

“Sa unang semana human sa sunog, nagstay mi temporarily sa skwelahan pero di ko kaagwanta nga makakita sa akong mga bata nga matulog sa skwelahan ilabi na ug naa’y ubang evacuees nga mag-lalis ug magsiningitay mao nga nakadecide ko nga papunduhon sa sila sa Negros. Atong mga panahona, ang mga modules sa mga bata kay answeran ug i-send ra sa Facebook ug iyang mga ate ang muassist niya pero lisod pud tungod kay wala – wala ang connection didto.” (Participant 5)

(Upon the first week after the fire incident, we stayed temporarily in school but I cannot bear to see my children sleeping there especially that there are other evacuees who argued and are shouting so at that time, I decided to let them stay first in Negros. At that time, the modules that my children had to answer were sent to and from Facebook and his sisters assisted him in his modules but it was difficult also due to the intermittent connection there. – Participant 5)

Additionally, a participant had to resort to an option of sending modules to and from the teacher through Facebook due to unforeseen circumstances and disasters which greatly impacted the quality of learning of the learners.
Subtheme 2.7 Study Time

“Mag-answer misa module kadaadlaw lung naa’y mga activities nga kinahanglan humanan anangasemana. Gipilipudnamongpagaansweron siyasa nga modulesiniggabiikay nausabman jud iyang body clock sukad nagsugod ang pandemic.” (Participant2)

(We answer the module every day when there are activities that needs to be accomplished during the week. We chose to have her answer her modules at night because her body clock really changed since the pandemic started. – Participant 2)

One participant mentioned that due to the shift on the learner’s body clock, they have to answer the modules at nighttime. This leads to having the parent stay awake for the night until the modules are done.

“Kasagaran, Maam, mudagan jud siya ugu 2 or 3 hours sapag-assist niya modules, maopud nga magpasabot nga mangasaba jud ko niya kada buhat namo sa task kay mag sige man pud siya ug ingon nga kapuyan na siya magbasa sa module.” (Participant5)

(Usually Maam, it takes 2 to 3 hours in assisting him in his modules, of course it also means that almost all the time, I reprimand him while doing his task because he tells me he is tired of reading his module. – Participant 5)

Another participant stated that answering of modules lasts for 2 or 3 hours as she asks her child to read the module as well to at least comprehend what the topic is all about, which can sometimes lead to her reprimanding her child.

Subtheme 2.8 Unforeseen Struggles

One participant cited that due to the fire incident that happened in their household, it took them a hard time to adjust back to the current learning modality of the children but was thankful due to the understanding of the teachers.

“Dugay jud among adjustment. Hangtud karon gani gaadjust pa jud gihapon mi samot kay wala jud mi’y nadala ato unya traumatic pud sa amoang naalitabo. Swerte pud mi Maam kay ang previous teacher niya ato nga time, masinabtanon ra jud ug naa pud siya’y gihatag isip tabang sa amoang unya ang mga module nga nasunog ug apil, wa nalang jud gipaanswer akong bata ug balik ato kay niya pa, wa naman pud ta’y mahimo ato unya nakasabot ra pud siya sa situation namo ato.” (Participant 6)

(The adjustment took a while. Until now, we are still adjusting especially that we were not able to bring anything out from the fire and it was traumatic for us. We were also lucky because the previous teacher at that time was very understanding and offered some help thousand since the module was burned at that time, she allowed my child not to answer the module again since we cannot do something about it anymore and that she understands the situation we were into. – Participant 6)

“Diri ni sila before pa sa pandemic unya pag 2020, nilarga man ug Manila ang ilang papa tungod lage sa kawad-on so didto siya nagtrabahao. Unya wa siya abhi ug tuig, niuli siya ug gingnan ko nga adto lang paskwelahon ug tiwas ang mga bata sa bukid, didto sa Tuburan mao to natransfer sila ug laing skwelahan kay wala say makamonitor.” (Participant 8)

On the other hand, a participant stated that due to the difficulty of her husband in finding a job to provide for the family, they had to transfer from one school to another which adds up to the struggle of the learning modality of the children and caused a shift in the learning environment of the child.
Subtheme 2.9 Hindrance with Teacher Communication


(There is a consistent communication with the teachers, Maam. But there are some where parents have a hard time approaching them because they a restrict. And not all parents know what their children need to answer so it is important that the teacher can easily be reached out. That is why it also lies on the teacher’s hands as to how the success of the modular learning would go.— Participant6)

One participant mentioned that the teacher’s approach towards the parents is one of the factors that greatly affects the success of current learning modality. It has been seen as a challenge whenever the teacher cannot be easily approached by the parents for queries.

“Pirmiramanjudmucommunicatesatextangt eachers.Arilanglisodsaakoakaydilikayko suweto sa cellphone samot na ug Internet ug Facebook kay naanad ra baya pud ko sa keypad unya ari man mucommunicate ang mga maestra sa parents. Usahay kay mabiya jud ko sa mga announcement.” (Participant 8)

(We can always communicate with the teachers through text. But I just find it difficult because I am not that familiar with my cell phone especially when using the Internet and Face book because I was used to the keypad phones and the teachers usually communicate with the parents through the phone. Sometimes, I am left behind with the announcements. — Participant8)

Furthermore, the unfamiliarity of using the gadget has been seen by another participant as one of the struggles she had that affected the communication with the teacher.

Subtheme 2.10 No Struggles

“Dilipudkaayosiyaoverwhelmingkayakomanjudsiguruhonngamakuhanakoangmodule ugmapassangnaanswerannakadasemanaugontime.Dilipudkoganahanngakausahon raug kuha ang module kay mas mapressure unya ang bata.” (Participant2)

(It is really not that overwhelming since I make sure that I am able to get her module and submit her answer sheets to the teacher every week and on time. I also do not like to get the modules on one go because it might cause my child to feel pressured. – Participant2)

“Wala ra ko naglisod Maam. Kay kung ingnon siya nga mag answer ug module, mulihok ra man pud dayon. Unya bahalag layo pa ang deadline, lihokon na na niya para dili maapikihan ug di na maproblema kung hapit na deadline.” (Participant 7)

(I have not encountered any struggles, Maam. If I tell him that he has to answer his module, he takes the initiative to do it. Even if the deadline is still far, he does it immediately to avoid cramming and other problems as the deadline approaches. – Participant 7)

Both participants have expressed that they have not encountered struggles in the distance learning implementation of their children as they are able to manage their responsibilities well and emphasized that prompt actions towards their child’s learning have been a great help for them.

Theme 3: Fountain of Support

Theme 3 of the study is centered on the support gained by the parents and learners with the current
implementation of distance learning which have helped them in sustaining the quality of learning of their children despite the COVID – 19 pandemic that has affected many people, most especially the education sector.

Subtheme 3.1 Learner Support from other Family Members

“Nindot man sad mutudlo iyang lola kay ako, mas nakafocus ko sa mga buhatunon sa balay. Support lang ko nila sa pagkuha sa ilang module, pagmonitor nila panagsa pag eskwela. Pero about sa pagtudlo sa akong bata, kay ako jud nang uganggan.” (Participant 7)

(His grandmother really teaches well, that is why I can focus more on the house hold chores. I just support my children by getting the module and monitoring them sometimes in their studies But when teaching the children, my mother-in-law does it. – Participant7)

A participant mentioned that she is thankful for the help and support offered by her mother-in-law who assists her child in answering the module, which lessen her responsibilities at home.

“AngmaguwingraniyamaaoangmutabangniyauganswerMaamkaydimanpudnakokaya mutabang ug answer niya kay lisod pud sa akoa.” (Participant8)

Another cited that the eldest child helped her siblings since the parent finds it difficult to assist her children in their studies.

Subtheme 3.2 School Support

“Maayoramanpudangsuportasaskwelahankaypirmimingupdateadschedulesamodule distribution. Aduna pud mi’y group chat sa section kung asa isulti ang mga announcements sa teacher. Kung naa pud mi’y pangutana, makaduol raman pud mi dayon nila didto.” (Participant 2)

(The support of the school was good because we are always updated with the schedule of the module distribution. We also have a group chat for the section where the teacher echoes her announcements. Whenever we have questions, we are also able to reach out easily to them. – Participant 2)

“Sa karon nga teacher, makasulti jud ko nga approachable kaayo siya ug dali maduolan ug masinabtanon.Iyapudi-consideranglevelsapagkakat–onsabatalabinakoronngangilang pag-skwela sa balay kay lahi ra sa katong naa sila sa skwelahan.” (Participant5)

(With the current teacher, I can safely say that she really is approachable, easy to reach out to and is very considerate. She also considers the level of learning of the student especially at this time where learning at home is different from learning in school. – Participant5)

Both participants have stated that there is a good support received from the school and the teachers which helped them to navigate through the learning modality their children have undergone.

Subtheme 3.3 Learning Intervention by Parents

“Para ma-master niya ang multiplication, maggamit jud ko ug flashcards. Dili nako siya i- encourage nga mag – ihap sa kamot. Mas prefer pud niya mag repeated addition para makakuha siya sa tubag nga siya ra.” (Participant 1)

(In order for her to gain mastery in multiplication, I used flashcards. I did not encourage her to do visual counters. She also prefers to do it through repeated addition to figure out the answer which she learned on her own. – Participant 1)
One of the supports received by the child during the distance learning implementation is the intervention initiated by the parents to ensure there is still mastery in the competencies, most especially in Mathematics.

“Ang paagi namo kay siya ug ang iyang tutor magdiscuss sa lessons sa module ug una unya iniig ka gabii, anha pa mi mag – answer sa mga activities. Naa pud sila’y mga memorization nga activity, performance tasks nga magvideo ug magreading sila online. Aduna pud sila’y window card exercises para sa Math.” (Participant 2)

(Our strategy is that she and her tutor discuss the lessons on the module ahead and at night, we answer the activities on the module. They also have memorization exercises; performance asks that involve taking videos and virtual reading exercises. They do window card exercises for Math.
– Participant 2)

Another participant mentioned that having the child tutored is a great intervention for her to comprehend the lessons despite the current situation of their education. They also do tasks helped improve the learner’s understanding towards various concepts.

**Theme 4: Realizations and Aspirations**

Theme 4 of the study is focused on the realizations gained by the parents during the distance learning implementation and their aspirations for the future of their child’s education in the new normal.

**Subtheme 4.1 School vs. Home**

“Sa skwelahan, aduna ju’y mga teachers nga professionally gitudluan sa pag – abag sa mga bata sa ilang pag-skwela while sa balay, mas dali para nila ang mag – una unya kay magasalig man sila nga ang ginikanan ra ang naa. Siyempre isip ginikanan, mahimo sad ming subjective usahay ug madesisyon mi base sa among gibati, mao nang mas considerate na nuon mi bisan ug dili na maayo.” (Participant 4)

(In school, there are teachers who are professionally taught to aid learners in their studies while at home, they are more prone to procrastinate because they are complacent that their parents are always there. Of course, as parents, we become subjective sometimes and tend to decide according to their emotions, which make sus more considerate even if it is no longer for their good.
– Participant 4)

“Kungnaangmgabataasaskwelahan,mastaasilangorassapagkat–onugmasmapasabot jud sa teacher ang lesson. Sa akong pagpangagpas, mas makasabot nuon sila sa skwelahan kay sa sabalaykaymasdalimannuosilamawalasafocusdiri.Lahirajudkungface-to-faceclasses.” (Participant 2)

(If students are in school, they have a longer time and lessons will be elaborated by the teacher. I think they can understand easier in school than at home since they are more inclined to get distracted. Although, my child has her focus on her modules when it is time to answer but it is really different when they are in face-to-face classes.
– Participant2)

Both participants share the same sentiment about the difference on the quality of learning for their children in school and at home. One has cited that they have the tendency to decide based on their feelings when it comes to their child’s learning while the other stated that a child’s focus is different in school where they are solely inclined to doing their tasks related to their studies.
Subtheme 4.2 The Future of Child’s Education

One participant shared her aspiration for schools to reopen and that teachers would conduct supplementary reviews to help learners transition with the difficulty level of the lessons.


(I just hope that teachers will do reviews so that it will not be a hard transition to an increasing difficulty in the lessons they will learn next school year. I hope they reopen schools soon. If they denote open the schools, not only will the children suffer but parents as well. All the more for those parents who were notable to study at all and do not have an idea about their child’s lessons. – Participant 1)

Moreover, another participant cited that face-to-face classes would be able to address the learning gaps brought about by the COVID – 19 pandemic that has affected the education sector for more than two years.

“Nag-ampokongautanaana’yface-to-faceclasseshangtudmabaliknajud. Ganahanko nga mubalik na sa skwelahan ang akong bata kay nagtu ko nga ang skwelahan makatabang jud sa pagpasabot sa akong bata sa mga wala niya masabtan, mao nang gipabakunahan jud nako dayon siya kay kahibaw ko kinahanglan jud niinig balik nila ug skwela puhon.” (Participant 2)

(I am hoping that there would be face-to-face classes soon until it is already fully implemented again. I want my child to go back to the school because I believe the school would be able to address the learning gaps in my child’s learning, the main reason why I had her vaccinated immediately since I know it would be needed when face-to-face classes go back in the near future.–Participant 2)

Discussion

The first finding of the study is on parents’ perceptions. With the current implementation of the distance learning, all participants were in favor of school closure policy. According to Clark et al. (2020), parents appeared to have a “survive and thrive” mentality in this current situation. The participants felt mixed emotions of relief for the safety of their children against COVID-19 and worry towards the future of their education. However, the learning modality revealed a stronger relationship between the parent and child. Many media editorials discussed the learning gaps and its consequences for children (CDC, 2020; Jinshan, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). There are several causes that contribute to this. Due to the risk of getting the virus, children have been confined to their homes. Although people were required to go into lockdowns to maintain social distancing, school closures pose a possible threat of stress among learners. Thus, parental involvement is seen as a crucial factor to attain the child’s academic progress especially in distance learning implementation where maximum guidance from the parents is necessary. Perez Sanchez, et al. (2013) and Tarraga et al. (2017) cited that parents’ engagement in their studies improves academic success and the child’s socio-emotional development in empirical research which is relevant in the current situation of the Philippines’ educational system following the COVID – 19 pandemic.

School closures imposed more responsibilities on the shoulders of parents. Another finding of the study revealed the challenges faced by parents during the distance learning implementation. Parents had to face the difficulties of being locked down as well along with the shutdown of schools, workspaces, and public spaces (Dai & Lin, 2020). While most parents have felt powerless to keep their children safe, many parents have attempted to embrace technology in order to keep their children interested. Still, it has been a big hurdle for them to address
the learning of their students considering the school proximity and the lack of knowledge in navigating the technology. Similarly, it was reported that parents had struggles in navigating their roles and responsibilities in rearing their children and supporting their studies as the teacher and the school’s fundamental partner. This tough and unexpected circumstance may raise worry and concern, as well as hamper time management and planning ability. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), most families do not have someone to support distance learning full-time. It should come as no surprise that taking on more obligations caused parents to suffer. Moreover, accessibility to learning resources was seen as another challenge since parents have limited financial resources to support for the references of their students to understand the lessons. Other challenges include attaining learner motivation, mastery and academic performance towards Mathematics, presence of multiple learners at home, shift in the learning modality of the student, study time which is allotted for parents to assist their children in answering their modules, unforeseen struggles such as calamities/disasters that have hit them, losing jobs and finding other means to provide for the family and a sudden change on the residency due to financial difficulties, hindrance on teacher communication. These inconsistencies hindered learning in typical classroom settings, but they were accentuated during the pandemic when all learning took place at home. On the other hand, two of the participants revealed that they have not experienced struggles with the current learning setup. Regardless of that, parents have been ultimately concerned about their children's academic development and accomplishment at home when learner motivation is compromised due to these various factors. While parents are worried about their children’s future, supporting their education can be challenging (Daniel, 2020).

Moreover, a finding of the study included the fountain of support for learners’ education such as the aid from family members, the school and learning interventions initiated by parents in assisting the learners in answering their modules. To address the challenges faced by parents and learners in distance learning implementation, schools and the family members of the child played a pivotal role in reversing the traditional teaching and learning methodology. They have persevered in using online facilities and other resources available as well as group messaging for as moot facilitation of distance learning implementation to attain maximum learning (Razaque, 2010; UNESCO, 2020). These efforts from all sectors considered with the child’s education help ease the learning gaps brought about by the pandemic and school closure for face-to-face classes.

In the same manner, findings of the study revealed the realizations and aspirations of parents during the distance learning implementation. Participants of the study emphasized the difference in the quality of learning of their children at home and in school as well as the motivation and attitude of their children towards learning. Rakoczy (2022) revealed that parents may need to provide more support and guidance for learners in distance learning implementation and those students who brawl with the face-to-face modality in education tend to have an even more challenging time in distance learning, entailing considerable time for learning to happen. This prompted parents to share their hope for the reopening of face-to-face classes as schools have the proper and adequate facilities that will support their children’s education and teachers are the most qualified individuals who can explain the concepts well in order for them to attain the necessary skills and competencies.

Conclusion

With the current situation of the education in the Philippines where distance learning is implemented, parents play a vital role in guiding the learners to achieve the same quality of learning they receive in schools following the COVID – 19 pandemic that has affected people all over the world. School closures ignited relief from parents for the child’s safety and at the same time, worry for their academic progress where they are considered the primary educator of the child for the next couple of years yet they have considered it a worthy and fruitful challenge all for the betterment of their child’s education like any other parent’s instinct. Despite the challenges
they have met, their perspectives are centered to the educational progress and well – being of their children, even if it entails them to sacrifice a lot of their time, effort and resources to make sure that they have learned something throughout the school year. These challenges drive them to do their best to support their children and their education with the continuous hope for schools to reopen in the new normal.

References


