HOME LEARNING IN TIMES OF COVID:
PARENTS' EXPERIENCES, DIFFICULTIES AND COPING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE. The purpose of this research study was to explore the parents' experiences of home learning in times of COVID-19 their difficulties and their coping strategies.

RESEARCH PROBLEM. How does parents overcome the difficulties experienced on home learning in times of covid 19?

METHODOLOGY. A descriptive qualitative study was planned to explore the challenges of parents about home learning and management during COVID-19 to get an insight into real-life experiences regarding their difficulties and their coping strategies.

CONCLUSIONS. Based from the findings of the study, the researcher concluded the following:
1. Home learning foster difficulties in this pandemic time such as retrieval and distribution process of the learning packages, simultaneous roles at home, education and work and health related restrictions.
2. For the strategies encountered in modular distance learning includes the proper time management, constant communication with the adviser regarding the distribution and retrieval of the learning packages and lessons which are very hard to understand and the attitude towards the new normal learning.

SIGNIFICANCE. This action research was conducted to help teachers and school administrators to adjust their plans regarding home learning in collaboration with parents.

Keywords: COVID-19, home learning, modular distance learning, parents' difficulties

INTRODUCTION:

An overwhelming majority of the world's enrolled students have experienced the temporary closing of school during the COVID-19 pandemic in an attempt to encourage social distancing and therefore decelerate the transmission of the virus (Viner et al., 2020). Countrywide lockdowns have strongly impacted the lives of people of all occupations and all ages. The flare-up has also affected the education system across the world and has altered the lives of 1,576,021,818 learners in 188 countries (UNESCO, 2020). The lockdowns have put an unprecedented challenge on the governments to ensure that there should be continuity of learning (Chang & Yano, 2020).Nearly 200 countries shut down schools with over 90% of

these learners ranging from early years through higher education facing some sort of disruption to their education (UNESCO, 2020). School closures have unprecedentedly altered the daily lives of the student learners, their families, and their educators.

Parental involvement is an important factor for student achievement in traditional school settings. Parent support has demonstrated significant contributions to the success of learners (Borup et al., 2014; Feng & Cavanaugh, 2011; Lee & Figueroa, 2012; Makrooni, 2019; Woofter, 2019). However, parents must take on new and unfamiliar roles and responsibilities as their children participate in education while experiencing increasing instructional responsibility for their child's learning. As a result, parents often struggle with understanding the role they should play in their children's learning (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2009).

As the opening of classes run in the extraordinarily school year, the DepEd adopted the BE-LCP which permits multiple learning delivery modalities including modular distance learning (MDL), online distance learning (ODL), TV/Radio-Based Instruction (TV/R), and Blended Learning – a combination of different distance learning modalities. The MDL involves the use of self-learning modules (SLMs) either in print or digital format/electronic copy and various learning resources like learner's materials, textbooks, activity sheets, worksheets, study guides and other study materials. The ODL allows live synchronous instruction which requires stable internet connection but is more interactive than the other types of distance learning. The TV/R utilizes SLMs converted to video lessons for Television-Based Instruction as well as radio script for Radio-based instruction. To help learners, parents, and teachers successfully adopt these learning delivery modalities, SLMs are made available in print and offline/online digital formats.

As much as these initiatives are found to be appropriate to address the need of the time, it has also given a tough routine to parents who are working from home and simultaneously taking the responsibility that their children's learning process continues seamlessly during the times of COVID-19. Hence, the purpose of this research study was to explore the experiences of home learning in times of COVID-19 from parents' experiences, their difficulties and coping strategies.

Based from the data gathered, parents prefer to use modular distance learning in Arawan Elementary School. Since face-to-face classes are not yet allowed, the DepEd will implement Blended/Distance learning wherein the combination of the various distance learning modalities such as printed modules, offline digital modules, online, and TV and Radio-based instruction will be used by students and teachers when classes formally start (Malipot, 2020). The researcher wanted to determine parents' experiences and difficulties and their strategies to overcome these difficulty. Hence, this study was conducted.

Research Problem

This research study was undertaken to determine the experiences and difficulties encountered by parents on home learning in times of COVID

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:
1. What are the experiences and difficulties encountered by parents on home learning in times of COVID?

2. What are the strategies used by parents in overcoming the difficulties experienced on home learning?
3. What plan of action may be derived based from the result of the study?

Research Approach

Self-devised questionnaires was used to collect data. Collecting answers were done through private messages, video calls and face to face interaction during the retrieval and distribution of learning packages in learning kiosks or in school. The data collection happened in different time so as to minimize face to face interaction among the informants and the researcher. The questions were validated by a master teacher and the school principal. The responses were carefully recorder, transcribed and coded in themes. Data collection was held on December 2021 to March 2022. The results were utilized for the adjustment of the Learning Continuity Plan regarding the modular distance learning.

METHODOLOGY

This part contains the methodology that the researcher used to complete this research work. It exposes the research design, respondents of the study, research instrument, data-gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data

Descriptive qualitative study was used to explore the experiences and difficulties of parents about home learning and management during COVID-19 to get an insight into real-life experiences.

There were 15 key informants in the study. The study was conducted in Arawan Elementary School, school year 2021-2022.

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Responses of the key informants were translated and coded using thematic coding, which involves identifying passages of text linked by the common theme (Gibbs, 2007). This coding process allows for the categorization of codes, ultimately enabling thematic analysis of ideas. The researchers utilized the descriptive open coding to analyzed parental responses regarding their experiences, difficulties and coping strategies experienced during the COVID school closure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Difficulties Experienced on Home Learning

Themes	Informants' Transcribed Answers
Retrieval and Distribution process / times	*"Hindi ako, sigurado sa schedule ng pagkuha at pagdadala ng module sa aming barangay"* *Ang schedule (oras at araw) ng pagkuha at pagdadala ng mga module ay hindi pare-pareho bawat linggo.* *"Nahihirapan ako sa halos linggo linggo na pagkuha ng module. Mas maganda sana kung mga pandalawahang linggo ang nakahanda"*
Roles at home and work	*"Nahihirapan ako sa oras dahil sa dami ng gawain sa bahay at sa trabaho"* *"Pareho kami ng aking asawa na nagtatrabaho kaya madalas hindi na nababantayan at naasikaso ang pag-aaral ng mga bata"* *"Sa dami ng mga anak na nag-aaral, hindi lahat ay napagtutuunan ng pansin. Sabay pa ang mga gawain sa bahay kaya madalas, may mga bahagi ng module na hindi nasasagutan "*
Parents' Educational Cpacity	*"Maraming mga aralin ang hindi ko maunawaan. Madalas ay hindi naming natatapos ang aralin kaya naipapasa ito ng walang sagot"* *"Marami sa mga aralin ay hindi ko alam sapagakat kahit ako ay elementarya lamang ang natapos"*
Health related problems	*"May mga panahon na hindi naming nakukuha ng tama sa schedule ang modules dahil sa health protocol. Kapag may sipon o ubo, hindi makapunta sa school"* *" Minsan, sa dami ng gawain, nastress ang mga bata. Lalo na kapag malapit na ang pasahan tapos di pa namin matulungan dahil sa sabay-sabay na gawain sa loob ng bahay"*

Table 1 presents the difficulties experienced by the informants regarding home learning. It shows that during the retrieval and distribution process, parents' encounter difficulty due to schedule because it differs from time to time. There is no definite date and time making it hard for them to adjust their schedule. In different sitio, there were learning kiosk, but the schedule was not definite.

The second and third theme is about the roles at home and workplace and their educational capacity. It shows that simultaneous roles of parents at home seems to be a difficulty also. Their scheduled time for work is always the same with the retrieval and

distribution of learning package scheduled. Another notable answer from the informants is their education ability which is most of the times hard for them to explain thus the inability to finish their output on time is impossible. , parents are the one to get the module of their kids which became a challenge for them. It adds up to their everyday tasks as they also work and doing the household chores in their daily living (Bendijo, 2020).

Health related restriction is also included for the difficulties encountered by parents. With simple cough and cold parents won't come to school or in a learning kiosk because of the strict implementation of IATF health protocol. There are informants that they tend to ask their son/ daughter to get the modules even there is health protocol because of sickness. Though they are not allowed to go out because of the situation, they don't have a choice. The researcher take note that the school administrator must consider the result thus, helping the community to cope up with these difficulties. The lockdowns have put an unprecedented challenge on the school administrators to ensure that there should be continuity of learning (Chang & Yano, 2020)

The results above were strengthened by several theories regarding parent involvement in their child's education. Parental involvement is an important factor for student achievement in traditional school settings. Parent support has demonstrated significant contributions to the success of learners (Borup et al., 2014; Feng & Cavanaugh, 2011; Lee & Figueroa, 2012; Makrooni, 2019; Woofter, 2019). However, parents must take on new and unfamiliar roles and responsibilities as their children participate in education while experiencing increasing instructional responsibility for their child's learning. As a result, parents often struggle with understanding the role they should play in their children's learning (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2009).

Table 2.Coping Strategies Employed on Home Learning

Themes	Informants' Transcribed Answer
Proper time management	*"...maraming gawain ang dapat tapusin sa tahanan. Upang magawa ko ang aking tungkulin sa pag-aaral ng aking mga anak, kailangan kong gumising nang maaga at tapusin ang gagawin."* *"Magpapaalam muna sa aking amo tungkol sa schedule ng pagkuha ng learning materials bago pumunta sa aking trabaho"* *"Magkakaroon ng tamang pagpaplano ng aking schedule upang matulungan sa pag aaral ang aking mga anak"* *"..Maaring humingi ng tulong sa aking asawa, mga matatandang anak na magtulungan sa gawaing bahay para mabigyang pansin ang pagsasagot sa kanilang module."*
Constant communication with my daughter/ son adviser	*"Mag pm o kaya ay magtext sa guro ng aking anak kung kailan ang distribution at retrieval ng module"*

	"Maging updated sa group chat tungkol sa distribution at retrieval ng mga module" *"Para sa mga lesson na hindi ko alam, maaring naman sigurong magtanong sa guro sa pamamagitan ng text, pm o video call para sa paliwanag"*
Attitude towards the new normal learning	*"Kailangan kong tulungan ang aking anak sa kanyang pag-aaral. Babaguhin ko ang aking pananaw tungkol sa distance learning, na ito ay mahirap para sa akin at ang guro lamang ang may tungkulin na magturo"* *" Mahirap pagsabayin ang trabaho at pagtuturo sa aking mga anak. Pero kung magtutulong tulong ang lahat ng miyembro ng pamilya, masosolusyunan din ito"* *"Magkaroon ng positibong pananaw na makakaya kong pagsabayin ang gawain sa bahay, pagtatrabaho at pagtulong sa aking mga anak"*

Table 2 shows the strategies of the parents/guardians on modular distance learning. For the topmost answer, proper time management is important. Parents tasks at home is endless, but with proper time management, everything can be done. Parents strategize in managing their simultaneous tasks thereby attending to their livelihood, household chores and education of their students (Bendijo, 2020).

The second theme is about the constant communication with the adviser through different platforms such as group chat and text messages on the process of modular distance learning. Due to the different modalities existing in social platforms and varied places, the community became anxious on the studies of their students (Quinones, 2020; Malipot, 2020). Communication affects the teaching-learning process (Zlatovic, 2020). Thus, parents/guardians made use of social platform to communicate and be informed of the process of modular distance learning. Social platform made communication easier for them (Anderson, 2018).

For the last theme, parents attitude towards new normal learning is important. Parents/guardians stated that they must sacrifice for their children's sake. Although, more difficulties can be experience in the coming days because of the learning situation, they must stay positive. Seeking also the cooperation and help of other members of the family will be of great help. This is supported by the Saviuc (2020), that positive attitude improves the likelihood that people will achieve their goal, speeds-up progress and makes them resilient to overcome the challenges and remain persistent in pursuit of their goal, which is the education of their students.

CONCLUSION

Based from the findings of the study, the researcher concluded the following:

1. Home learning foster difficulties in this pandemic time such as retrieval and distribution process of the learning packages, simultaneous roles at home, education and work and health related restrictions.
2. For the strategies encountered in modular distance learning includes the proper time management, constant communication with the adviser regarding the distribution and retrieval of the learning packages and lessons which are very hard to understand and the attitude towards the new normal learning.

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