

A Phenomenological Study on Parental Involvement in the Completion of Students' Learning Task in Science under Modular Distance Learning

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Abstract: An education continuum plan was unveiled by the Department of Education (2020) as soon as schools resumed their operations and acknowledged the key contribution that parents can make to the academic achievement of their children. Hence, this paper sought to explore parental participation in the completion of science academic tasks using the Husserlian Transcendental phenomenology approach. The result revealed six (6) emerging themes of the parents' lived experience; (1) parents' educational background and ability limit their involvement in Science learning tasks; (2) social media sites and online games hamper science learning tasks productivity; (3) navigating multifaceted challenges in the new-normal education; (4) technology and the internet as a game-changer in the completion of Science learning tasks; (5) moral and emotional support as a way to encourage; and (6) discipline and ensuring a healthy working environment at home. Based on the findings, the school must provide parents with intervention strategies that meet their demands, including household instructional strategies and behavior management approaches for circumstances when children are learning at home.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Parental Involvement, Modular Distance Learning

1. Introduction

Most nations reportedly momentarily suspended school services due to the upsurge of COVID-19 around March 2020 (Tria, 2020). Around 1.2 billion learners worldwide have been impacted by school shutdowns, along with over 28 million in the Philippines (UNESCO, 2020). The school in the Philippines reopens and students have been accessing education via distance learning since around October 2020. To encourage remote learning, the Department of Education (DepEd) offered several learning delivery methods, including paper-based self-learning modules, different online platforms, broadcast radio, and television programs, and messaging (Cho et. al, 2021). As mentioned by the Philippine Daily Inquirer (2020), DepEd reported that more than 42% of parents from private and public schools prefer modular learning- either printed or digital- over blended and online learning for their children. This printed or digital self-learning module (SLM) helps students to become guided in their learning, where the teacher supervises the student through different available communication platforms (Yes, 2021).

As schools reopened, a continuum plan for learning was announced by the Department of Education (2020). One plan component is taking into account the different contexts of the communities such as the use of different remote learning modalities. It also emphasizes the importance of parents in executing the plans for various learning delivery modalities (Pimentel-Tibon, 2020). The new normal education highlighted an increased challenge for teachers, who were already dealing with various issues and hurdles before the pandemic. The shift in modalities involves a shift in responsibilities to assist students in achieving their learning outcomes. Also, it creates another challenge in monitoring the student's learning.

As challenges arise with the new modalities, problems also arise in the student's academic performances in their different subjects. Learners are having difficulty in comprehending science concepts in the pandemic time, even though it excites them and is pertinent to their everyday lives, as noted by Sparks, according to new statistics given at the annual American Educational Research Association conference (2021). In which the teachers have had experience presenting challenging topics, meeting problems in delivery, altering instructional practice, and drawing kinds of assistance to better in providing remote learning in science, according to Cahapay and Labrador's research (2021). The Modular Approach, as an alternative educational tool for science learning in particular to grade 10,

significantly increases academic achievement, as per the findings of the study by Valencia (2020). Thus, the completion of the student's science learning tasks is directly proportional to the level of involvement of the parent. (Panol et al., 2020).

Now, the learning process of the students is not the sole duty of the teachers but it needs the involvement of parents to monitor the learning at home. In the present environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic, parental engagement in the learning and teaching processes has become crucial. According to Teach for the Philippines (2020), the success of learning at home is dependent on teachers and parents working together. Thus, the parents and other students' learning partners, including relatives and neighbors, play an important role in ensuring educational continuity. In the study by Garbe (2020), parents indicated that balancing obligations, student motivation, accessibility, and learning results are the challenges that they have faced. It was also mentioned by Kong (2020), that the COVID-19 outbreak and its effects on students' learning, and parental involvement at home were critically valuable. By helping their children adapt to the new modalities, parents may help ensure that their children are being taught what they need to understand.

In connection with the circumstance above, this study aimed to find out the parents' actual participation in completing the science learning task through modular distance learning. The researcher hopes to unveil the stories that have meaning and value to parental involvement as the education system shifts to a new normal.

2. Methodology

In this study, a Transcendental Phenomenology developed by Husserl (1964) was utilized as a research strategy to properly characterize the lived experiences of parents throughout the distance learning of their children. Phenomenology is a method of qualitative study that is interested in examining people's lived experiences, according to Neubauer et al. (2019). Morley (2017), elaborated that the main concern of phenomenology is the lived experiences and how these lived experiences were described by the experience. Trace (2016) further revealed that researchers derived the theory of ideal and actual things from phenomenology where they place their expertise. Thus, transcendental phenology is a philosophical approach to qualitative research technique that seeks to explain life experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This analysis of lived experiences through transcendental phenomenology was able to explain why parents participate in their children's remote learning during the COVID-19 problem.

The participants were selected based on the available contact information provided by the school. A total of seven (7) participants with shared experiences yet varied in characteristics and individual differences volunteered to participate in the study, this is based on the progressive guidelines for selecting participants in phenomenology by Moser and Korstjens (2018). Each one of them was subjected to an in-depth unstructured interview by the researchers.

To conduct the survey for this study, the researchers created an open-ended questionnaire with the informed consent of each participant throughout the selection process. To allow respondents to freely express their opinions, the survey included a variety of questions that matched the research topics and some socio-demographic data. The survey questionnaire then followed a validation process through pilot testing and the validation of experts. Then, selected participants underwent an unstructured face-to-face or online interview that might be necessary to validate and prompt the responses made in the survey questionnaire to get stories behind the participants' experiences.

To guarantee the study's validity and reliability, a triangulation approach was employed. Triangulation involves using many techniques or data sources to create a thorough understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999). In this study, the researcher triangulated an open-ended questionnaire, a one-on-one interview, and a focus group discussion. In order to characterize a connected component of the same phenomenon, this approach of method triangulation looks at the consistency of results provided by diverse data-gathering techniques (Patton, 1999 & Denzine 1978).

In this study, two stages of the interview are conducted. The first stage involves introducing the study, obtaining consent, and giving the open-ended survey questionnaire. In the second step, the researcher scheduled an unstructured one-on-one interview with chosen participants to investigate topics of interest in their earlier responses. Based on their first responses, the participants affirmed, clarified, or elaborated. The other information was gathered in the same manner. The researchers transcribed all of the data collected throughout the two stages into a continuous master transcript for ease of organizing.

After the one-on-one interview, a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted between the researchers and some of the participants. This helped discuss, clarify, and confirm the correctness of the analyzed data. All interviews and FGD were conducted through the chosen modality by the respondents.

The researchers examined the parents' lived experiences using the phenomenological data interpretation technique. The researcher inferred the meaning of the motifs detected through manual coding suggested by Moustakas (1994) cited by Greening (2019) following the four (4) major steps of the data analysis framework and used in the transcendental phenomenology research of Cahapay (2021). The following four steps were used in exploring the lived experience of the parent in helping the child to complete the task in science during the pandemic time:

Step 1: Significant Statements (Bracketing) - extracted specific statements that give details about respondents' experiences from transcripts. These statements were selected from the transcripts and provided a better understanding of the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994).

Step 2: Meaning Units or Themes (Intuiting) - it involved the elimination of statements that are redundant and irrelevant to the paper's purpose. Then, evaluate the remaining relevant statements carefully by sorting them into themes or units (Moustakas, 1994) and will be partnered with related studies that have the same concepts.

Step 3: Textural and Structural Descriptions (Analyzing)- the phenomena were described both texturally and structurally. The themes were merged into a description of the texture, or "what," which was then examined from several viewpoints or creative modifications to understand the principles of the structure, or "how" (Moustakas, 1994).

Step 4: Essence of the Lived Experience (Describing)- this is the final phase of the process, providing distinctions and crucial descriptions of the captured meaningful experience from the extracted data.

4. Results and Discussion

The researchers meticulously recognized the codes as they emerged from each interview. Data were documented and categorized. Several themes were discovered throughout the interviews after analyzing the interview transcripts. A collection of words and phrases from the interviews served as the basis for the coding. After then, categories were used to classify words and sentences. The following is a list of the themes and codes that came out of the interviews.

Theme 1: Parents' educational background and ability limit their involvement in science learning tasks

The Covid-19 disease outbreak that transitioned to Philippine education in modular remote learning has enabled parents to get involved and participate in the learning process. However, most parents struggle when it comes to assisting their children in answering their modules because their knowledge is limited due to a low level of education. Thus, other parents resort to asking someone to teach their children to accomplish the learning task. These experiences were manifested in the following statements below;

Parent 1: Oo, kay bisag ako galisod gihapon sa iyang mga pangutana mao nga ipahulam nalang nako ang akong cellphone sa iyaha para didto siya mag search. (Yes, because even I find it hard to answer her questions. So, what I do is I let her use my phone for her to look it out on the internet.)

Parent 2: Kini dako kaayug kakulian tungud kay sama namo nga ubos lamang ang among nahuman dili namo mamahimo nga matabangan o mapasabut sila gumikan usab sa elementary lang ang akong nahuman." (It's a huge challenge for me in giving help and my knowledge and understanding hinder my ability to help my daughter because I only finished elementary.)

Parent 3: Kay usahay dili ko ka... bisan ako, hahahaha, bisan ako di kasabot usahay. Hahaha. Kay high school raman ko taman sir uy. (Sometimes, even I couldn't understand his activity. Hahaha. Since I was just a high school graduate.)

Parent 7: Murag manawag nalang gyud sir, kaning makatudlo sa iyaha bitaw. Ma tsu-turan nako sya, patsuran nako sya, kay naa koy, naa man syay ig-agaw nga college na. (That's why I call for someone to teach him. Someone will tutor and want him to be tutored... since he has a cousin at the college level.)

As expressed by parents 2 and 3 who only attained an elementary and secondary level of education, their level of educational attainment hampers their capacity to help with their children's academic needs in finishing the science learning task. Their statement is consistent with Kainuwa, Binti, and Yusuf (2013) who revealed that parents' facilitation and involvement in their children's education is dependent on the level of education that they had. Sui-chu and Wiliams (1996) & Williams (1980) also affirmed that the parents' educational background of secondary school students determines the amount of their involvement. Furthermore, among secondary school pupils, Sandefur, et al. (1999) noted a substantial correlation between the children's academic success to parents' educational attainment. On the other hand, parents' professional competency and educational attainment do not always result in a high level of student performance. These present the idea that parental involvement in this time of pandemic is crucial to students' learning achievement. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that parents, who are among the most crucial yet notably undervalued components in their children's education, should actively engage in education.

Theme 2: Social media sites and online games hamper science learning tasks productivity

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic was followed by a series of lockdowns that left most of us locked up in our houses. This resulted in increasing our engagements on social media sites to keep connected with our loved ones, to stay informed, or just ease our boredom. According to a global poll conducted in March 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, 70% of internet users worldwide are using smartphones more often (Watson, 2020). In fact, Social Media Sites like Facebook, TikTok, and online games like Mobile legends are very prevalent among high school students. However, many parents have expressed strong disagreements and frustrations with regard to the use of Social media sites and online games because it consumed students' time in answering their modules, thus resulting in delayed submission.

Parent 1: ...pero naay panahon nga gakawili siya sa paggamit sa Facebook ug Tiktok... (...however, there were instances when she spends too much time on social media...)

Parent 2: Dili na kini makatarong og mag focus saiyang pagkat-on kay tungud sa mga social media nga anaa na-install sa iyang cellphone. (He can't focus anymore in learning the module because of the social media installed on his phone.)

Parent 3: Nakaapekto gyud kaayo, kanang mag...ting oras sa ting module nila nya unya dili nimu mabantayan nagdula na. (It has a big effect. Like at the time of doing the module, you can't notice that they already played.)

Parent 4: Nakapekto gyud sir, kay ushay mag sige man ug ML (Mobile Legends), tapos mapabayaan na niya iyang module. (It really affects sir, because she would go on and on with the ML (Mobile Legends), then he would leave the module.)

Parent 7: Oo, nakaapekto gyud sir! Ah mga online, online ba, kaning online games. Di' gyud maayo sir. (Yes, it really affects sir! ahhhh... like online, online, these online games. It's not really good sir.)

All of the parents expressed their thoughts that social media and online games distracted their children in doing their learning tasks. Parent 7's frustration with Mobile Legends was reinforced by the findings of Al Mawalia, (2020) that students who play Mobile Legends tend to be passive and highly dependent on them. Aviso, et al., (2020) also noted that online games like Mobile Legend can affect students' mental health and academic performance.

Theme 3: Navigating multifaceted challenges in the new normal education

Dramatic change to our entire educational landscape is caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. In which resulted to the transition from conventional instruction to modular distance learning is one of them. These changes entail new challenges not just among students and teachers but also with the parents, as they are given more direct responsibility when it comes to the education of their children at home. While some parents have easily adapted to the new type of learning, it is undeniable that most parents here in the Philippines still struggle to balance their parental responsibilities as a provider and home learning facilitators. These multiple realities of parents' challenges are reflected in the following statements;

Parent 1: Ayha rako gatabang sir og galisod na gyud siya, labi na ug mangutana sya sa mga terms sa science nga iya gikalibogan. (I only help her when I notice she's having a hard time especially when she asks me about certain terms in science.)

Parent 2: Ilabi na karon sa ka crisis sa panahon mamroblema gayud kami alang sa pagprovide sa panginahanglanon sa akong kabataan. (In this time of crisis, we have problems in providing for the needs of my children).

Parent 3: Then, naa poy usaahay nga kanang dili pud nako s'ya matabangan, kay kanang usahay mag lakaw ko. (There are times I can't help because I have errands)

Parent 4: Oo, kalisod sa financial... pero bisan paman sa mga kalisod sa financial amo japon ginatabangan among anak... (Yes, despite our financial difficulty... we made sure to provide our children the support they need...)

Parent 7: Busy man gud kaayo sir, usahay makauli nga gabii na. Musuporta man ko about ana (sa ilang edukasyon), pero lang, lahi raman gud ning pag abot nimu sir kapoy na. (I am very busy. Sometimes I get home by night. I really support (their education), but it's different when you get home tired.)

It's very heartwarming to note from the above statements that although parents of low-income status are having a hard time trying to meet both ends, they make it a point to still find time in assisting or checking their children's progress. This practice was affirmed by Agaton and Cueto (2021) that say positive achievement results in homeschooling are possible if there is the involvement of parents at a higher level even with the absence of school or teacher. Moreover, most parents have reported that the burden of financial difficulty during the COVID-19 pandemic hinders them from attending to their children's needs most of the time. Students in Zimbabwe who were enrolled in remote learning programs reportedly had financial difficulties, according to Matswetu et al. (2013). Adle (2020) further revealed that the unprecedented economic shutdown in the Philippines has severely affected financially poor families.

Theme 4: Technology and the internet as a game-changer in the completion of science learning tasks

Students nowadays rely significantly on the internet and technology. Most of the parents expressed the importance and disadvantages of the internet and technology to the education of their children. The use of technology provides assistance to their child by letting them use the internet. There is some hesitation when they expressed their opinions on the internet and technology but they were eventually amenable to the use of the internet and technology. Also, with limited knowledge of science and education itself due to their lack of knowledge of the topic their children have in their lessons. They utilized the internet and its benefits to bridge the gap between their limited knowledge. Thus, the parents appreciate and depend on gadgets and the internet but are also frustrated because of the failing internet signal. Furthermore, some parents' response was somewhat vague but the essence of their answer shows their dependence on the internet. Their experience on this matter reflects on the following statements;

Parent 1: Among balay naay wifi vendo, mao nga ug maglisod siya ug answer ug module gina search lang niya sa internet. (Our house has a wifi vendo installed which is why when she's having a difficulty in answering her module she searched on the internet.)

Parent 4: Nag research mi kung dili namo makaya ug tubag ang mga pangutana. (We search it on the internet for questions that are so difficult to answer.)

Parent 5: Usahay mag research raman sya kung naa syay di makuan (masabtan). (Sometimes, he researches the answers if he has difficulties.)

Parent 6: Dako pud ning tabang iyang selpon sir kay maka search search, ahm siya sa pag-answer. (Also, his cellphone is a big help sir because he can do searching, ahm... when he answers)

With the advent of the use of technological advancement, respective participant households have also adopted it since it is more beneficial for their children in answering the task that they had in school. Carsten et al. (2021), asserted that technology enhances learning and makes students more comfortable, but that it may also be a tool that is misused, compromising students' fine motor development and problem-solving abilities. Also, Roomi (2021) stated that student relies on the internet due to its information and accessibility. Students may now more easily understand their studies because of the internet's accessibility. Students gain from the accessibility of information when conducting data research. Furthermore, the findings of Francis (2017) reveal that students become motivated by the use of technology uniquely in the classroom, whether for accommodation or instructional.

Theme 5: Moral and emotional support as a way to encourage

It has been more than two (2) years since the implementation of modular distance learning, yet many students are still having a hard time coping and adjusting to the new learning modality. Parents are seen as the key player in maintaining vigor and enthusiasm among their children, especially during this challenging time. Most of the parents concurred that they often encourage their children through words of affirmation that despite the pandemic their family remains intact.

Parent 2: Magtuon kanunay dili mag sige ug dula sa selpon tungud kay Kini para lamang sailang kaayuhan. (I encourage them to always study and not spend so much time playing games on their cellphone.)

Parent 3: Kanang giyahan lang s'ya ug naa s'ya kanang di' masabtan pwede sya mangutana sa akoga ug makaya nako ug pwede pud sa iyang teacher. (I enlighten him that if there are lessons that he can't understand, he can ask me if I can answer or might ask his teacher.)

Parent 4: Paghatag ug giya ug pagsuporta. I encourage sila aron ganado sa pagtuon. (By giving them support and encouraging them so that they will be inspired to study)

Parent 5: Gina engcourage nako sya. Nga sa among ka pobrehon or dili man gyud ingon nga... pasalamat ta gyapon ta sa ginoo bisan sa pandemya nga na agian nga okay rami. (I encourage him. Even though we are poor or something like that... I was thankful to God that despite the pandemic we are okay.)

Parent 7: Ako gyung ginagiyahan sya nga humanon iyang module, gina-follow up nako ug human naba or wala. Ginapasagdan nako siya sa iyang kwarto magbuhat ug module ug galili gyud nako usahay ug nagbuhat ba. (I guide him to finish his module, and I do follow-ups if it is done or not. I let her in her room to do the module and I sneak sometimes if she really does it.)

Parents never forget their role to give moral and emotional support to their children when doing the learning task. The participants finds that encouragement boost their childrens to do the task and its also a way for parents to check thier children... Relative to this, Golberstein et al. (2020) revealed that a pandemic has a major impact on people's mental health, particularly in children (Patrick et al., 2020 and Xie et al., 2020). Rotas and Cahapay (2021) reported that students' difficulties brought on by remote learning significantly affect mental health.

Theme 6: Discipline and ensuring a healthy working environment at home.

Parents have their way of supporting their children as well as giving them a form of discipline when doing their modules and activities as well as their personal activities outside of school work. On the other hand, another parent has a stricter policy when it comes to answering modules and dealing with the activities. There are parents that have a more lenient way of parenting compared to other parents. They give their children ample time to answer their modules as well as to do other things. This was significantly shared in the following statements;

Parent 1: Dili pwede mag Tiktok ug Faceook basta wala pa nahuman ang module. (No TikTok and Facebook as long as the modules are not yet finished.)

Parent 2: Balaud nga sa oras sa iyang module, walay friend nga mo anhi dre. (Rules on time in his module, no friends will be here.)

Parent 3: Kuan... Kanang, gina assign sad nako na sila. Kanang ting oras na sa ilang modyul nila , dapat dili na sila mag motrabaho sa kuan kay dapat e-set asside sa..." (I assign them, If the time is for a module, they don't need to work, they should set aside until they have finished their module.)

Parent 5: Ay ayha raman sya mag answer ug wala na siyay buhaton." (He only answers the activity if he doesn't have any work to do.)

Parent 6: Kaning, ipatrabaho sa nako ang mga trabahoon, tapos kaning selpon limitahan kay maka distract man sa ila.. (Let her do the work, then the use of cell phones will be limited because it can also distract them.

Parent 7: "...di naman sya makagunit sa iyang gadget ug tab sa oras nga mag answer sa iyang module." (...he can't hold the gadget and tab when answering her module.)

During COVID-19, parents felt compelled to become more active than they had before. As a result, the current study implies that parental involvement in the child's education had evolved, emerging an additional degree of parental engagement. A study by Mbaluka (2017) discovered that parental involvement and student self-discipline are important determinants of academic success. Some parents allow their children to be independent in their

studies while others are involved in their children's education. According to Halpenny et al. (2010), the main stresses on parents were fears about their children's mental and physical health, anxiety about their academic performance, and anxieties about financial matters. This may be reflected in the parent's concern for their kids' academic success as well as their physical and emotional well-being.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The research's conclusions support six (6) emerging themes of the parents' lived experiences as they assisted with their children's tasks in Science while remote learning was being implemented. Parenting's involvement in the education of their children and its significance is emphasized by the following themes. as; (1) parents' educational background and ability limit their involvement in science learning tasks; (2) social media sites and online games hamper science learning tasks productivity; (3) navigating multifaceted challenges in the new-normal education; (4) technology and the internet as a game-changer in the completion of science learning tasks; (5) moral and emotional support as a way to encourage; and (6) discipline and ensuring a healthy working environment at home.

Thus, this study has drawn that parent still prioritizes the education of their children even in an ambiguous time like the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, parents have also devoted some time to helping their children in completing their science learning tasks in various ways, maybe financial, moral, or emotional.

The study's conclusions lead to the following recommendations:

1. The school must provide parents with intervention programs that meet their needs, particularly regarding at-home teaching strategies and behavior management approaches.
2. The teacher is encouraged to gamify and involve social media interaction in their lesson activities.
3. The administration must provide some practical plan for future crisis preparation in education.
4. The school and teacher must give additional learning resources by maximizing the advantage of the technology such as video lessons, video links, and online interaction to further explain the lessons and scaffold the learning of the students.
5. The parents must strengthen their relationship with their children by checking on their physical, emotional, and mental health.
6. The parent must continue reinforcing positive discipline to their children when giving rewards and punishments.

Lastly, for the future researcher, it is recommended to involve a more number of male participants in the study to elicit answers from the perspective of the fathers. Also, to have a study on the different locations with different background statuses to discover emerging themes and provide additional information on how other parents cope with the challenges they have faced in helping the education of their children

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