Parental Involvement in the Remote Learning of Young Children with Academic Difficulties During the Pandemic

Ma. Erika Luis Kanapi-Villanueva - Play Plus Therapy Center
Lizamarie Campoamor-Olegario, PhD - University of the Philippines College of Education

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic caused physical schools to close, leading to a sudden shift to remote learning. This transition posed a significant challenge, as the course designs and strategies were initially designed for face-to-face settings. Despite efforts to provide quality education to all students during the pandemic, children with academic difficulties faced limited support. As a result, the responsibility for teaching fell on the parents and other family members, as students were bound to stay at home. Thus, the purpose of this case study is to describe the roles, experiences, and challenges of the nine parents of children with academic difficulties while engaging in their child's remote learning during the sudden shift. Semi-structured interviews, online class observations, and focus group discussions were conducted via videoconferencing. The data gathered during the lockdown were thematically analyzed. The findings of this study revealed five primary types of parental involvement within this setting: (1) providing for their child's needs, (2) organizing space and time, (3) motivating and monitoring the child's behavior, (4) instructing technology and lesson-related problems and (5) adapting the lessons. Despite the challenges, parents have gone above and beyond to provide their children with the necessary resources and support for remote learning. This study also suggests relevant implications and recommendations for educators and policymakers.

Keywords: *parental involvement, remote learning, children with academic difficulty, pandemic*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people of different socio-economic statuses around the globe. No one has been spared from the negative impact on all aspects - economic, social, or educational. Efforts to minimize the spread of this highly contagious COVID-19 virus have forced people to stay at home and practice minimum health pro-

tocols mandated by the World Health Organization (2021). The consequences of this have caused schools, colleges, and universities across the globe to shut down their campuses so that students could follow social distancing measures (Toquero, 2020).

Billions of students from different countries were forced to transfer their education from face-to-face to remote learning. Teachers and students alike had to adapt quickly without any prior preparation, as the course designs and strategies were originally intended for face-to-face instruction. In the local setting, the Department of Education (DepEd) developed the Basic Education Learning Plan (BE-LCP) framework that provides multiple learning delivery modalities guiding teachers, school leaders, learners, and families during this crisis. These modalities are modular distance learning, online distance learning, and homeschooling. They differ based on accessibility, the readiness of the stakeholders, and the COVID situation in their area. For example, students from rural areas with limited access to technology opted for modular learning (Agaton & Cueto, 2021). On the other hand, some parents opted for homeschooling for their children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Cahapay, 2020), while others opted for online learning.

Despite considerable efforts by the government, the World Bank reported last year that poverty in the Philippines worsened to as high as 90 percent (Baclig, 2022). De Vera (2021) reported that "one in every four Grade 5 Filipino students did not have the reading and mathematics skills for Grade 2. Four in every five 15-year-old students did not understand basic mathematical concepts, such as fractions and decimals that are expected to be known by fifth graders" (De Vera, 2021). These indicated that many Filipino students were already struggling and experiencing academic difficulties even before the pandemic. The education sector in the Philippines grappled with access, equity, and quality issues (Alinsunurin, 2021). With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, these students worsened as they struggled with the abrupt change and studying remotely.

Teachers identify children with academic difficulties who need academic support; these children do not qualify to receive special education services (Carman, 2015). They present difficulties in learning reading, mathematics, and writing skills. These reasons include growing up in economically disadvantaged settings, low proficiency in the language, emotional difficulties, and even inadequate instructions (Donovan & Cross, cited in Fletcher and Vaughn, 2009). On the other hand, Brophy (1996), as cited by Karsenty (2009), described children with academic difficulties concerning their learning behaviors, such as low self-esteem and frustration threshold and constant need for supervision. Given the features of children with academic difficulties, after- school tutoring or tutor-based instruction is commonly perceived as an efficient way to support them to sustain and advance at all grade levels (Slavin, 2002). However, after-school tutorials and other supplementary support were also put on hold due to the pandemic.

Since students had to stay at home, the responsibility for teaching and learning was placed on the parents. Parents of children with academic difficulties, who are independent and usually work in partnership with teachers, struggle significantly with the disappearance of face-

to-face networks and collaboration in supporting their children (Whitley, 2020). Decades of research have stated that the involvement of parents in their child's education is vital because it contributes to achieving the child's developmental tasks from all aspects of development. In line with this, the involvement of parents in educating children cannot only improve children's morals, attitudes, and achievements, and they also improve their behavior and social adjustment (Centre for Child Well-being, 2010). However, Horesh and Brown (2020) showed that prolonged lockdowns and lack of support would likely aggravate existing vulnerabilities and contribute to new stress- related disorders in parents. When not recognized, these will result in negative behaviors towards their family, especially to their children, such as verbal and physical abuse. In effect, a child's well-being and academic performance are compromised.

Numerous studies discussed the experiences of teachers and students during the sudden shift to remote learning, but there needs to be more studies on parents' perspectives (Agaton & Cueto, 2020). Moreover, there is no research on the remote learning experience by parents of children with academic difficulties during unprecedented times like the COVID-19 pandemic. As clear stakeholders of their children's academic achievement, parents' skills, struggles, and needs in a remote learning environment must be thoroughly investigated (Garbe et al., 2020).

School leaders and policymakers see how parents, teachers, and children, especially those with academic difficulties, cope with the sudden shift to remote learning. Such a learning model may remain in emergencies in education even after the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings can serve as a guide for teachers in considering the diversity of the learners, the type of family dynamics, and implementing new modalities. The findings can also inform school programs focused on parental involvement.

Specifically, this qualitative research sought to answer the following questions:

1) How were the parents involved in the remote learning instruction of children with academic difficulties? 2) How did the children with academic difficulties respond to the new teaching and learning process? 3) What challenges did parents experience with remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic? 4) What benefits did parents experience with remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Established frameworks that examine parental involvement in face-to-face settings exist, but frameworks in the online setting must be developed (Borup et al., 2014). Moreover, most of the current research surrounding those attending online schools full-time is limited (Barbour & Reeves, 2009). Some researchers used face-to- face frameworks to investigate online learning environments in this manner (Hasler- Waters, 2012). With this, the theory that served as the framework of this study is the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) identified variables influencing parental involvement. Their model has five levels of tiers that include parents' decision to be in-

volved, influences, several types of parental support or mechanisms, and outcomes for child learning. The fourth and fifth levels pertain to the attributes associated with student learning and student achievement, considered the outcome variable of parental involvement. This study focuses on Levels 1 to 3.

The first tier of the model suggests the three primary factors that influence parents to become involved in their children's education. These are 1) Personal motives, which are parental role construction and parents' self-efficacy; 2) Life context variables, which include parents' perception of their skills and knowledge, perceptions of the time and energy available, and family culture; and 3) Perceptions of invitations to be involved or how parents believe that the school, teachers, and their child want their involvement.

The second tier of the model describes the parent's mechanisms of involvement, which include methods of academic encouragement, modeling of appropriate school-related skills, reinforcement of learning and attributes related to learning, and instruction.

The third tier of the model focuses on the child's perception of parental involvement using the four mechanisms: encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. First, they explained that when parents encourage and provide positive feedback it could positively affect student engagement. Second, they identified that parents could model or show appropriate engagement in instructional activities with a positive attitude toward learning (Steven & Borup, 2015). Third, they highlighted that parents should acknowledge and reinforce the learning actions of the student. Finally, parents must provide and be involved in instructional activities that range from fundamental to critical analysis.

Figure 1

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of Parental Involvement

Level 5

Student Achievement

Level 4

Students Attribute Conducive to Achievement			
Academic Self-Efficacy	Intrinsic Motivation to Learn	Self-Regulatory Strategy Use	Social Self-Efficacy Teachers

Level 3

Mediated by Child Perception of Parent Mechanisms			
Encouragement	Modeling	Reinforcement	Instruction

Level 2

Parent Mechanism of Involvement			
Encouragement	Modeling	Reinforcement	Instruction

Parent Involvement Forms			
Values	Home Involvement	School Communications	School Involvement

Level 1

Personal Motivation		Invitation			Life Context	
Parental Role Construction	Parental Efficacy	General School Invitations	Specific School Invitations	Specific Child Invitations	Knowledge and Skills	Time and Energy

Note. Adapted from Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. & Sandler, H. M. (2005, revised).Final performance report for OERI Grant # R305T010673: The social context of parental involvement: A Path to enhanced achievement. Paper presented to Project Mentor, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/7595OERIIESfinalreport032205.pdf?sequence=1

Methods

The researcher is a Filipino female mother who is an educator specializing in Educational Psychology. She has taught and tutored children with academic difficulties and has assisted her children in their studies during the pandemic. The researcher is most likely to empathize with the participants of the study and give value to parental involvement. At the same time, the participants are most likely to relate well with the researcher who is also a mother, who is of the same age.

A descriptive case study design is employed in this study to describe and investigate the parents' experiences, struggles, and involvement with their children's forced tran-

sition from face-to-face learning to emergency remote learning in a short time and insufficient preparation. In the preliminary phase, request letters for referral to potential parent participants were sent via email to known therapy centers and tutorial centers in Metro Manila. However, only two centers responded and agreed to distribute the letter. The researcher was eventually able to recruit participants by using snowball sampling. The initial participants the researcher interviewed helped recruit other participants who met the criteria.

An email was sent to the fifteen participants who showed interest. The email included an explanation of the research project and an invitation to complete the Participant Screening form. Their written response was evaluated based on the criteria to determine if the parent qualified for this study. The criteria were the following: (1) the parents had a child enrolled in the Grade 1 to 3 bracket; (2) their child attended physical school before the pandemic; (3) their child needed external support and not special education support as recommended by the school teachers or administration; (4) their child attended tutorials for their difficulties in other subjects, and (5) their child enrolled in a school for remote learning at that time. Ten people responded and answered the questionnaire, but only nine were eligible for the study. A formal letter of invitation and consent form were sent to the eligible participants. Table 1 presents the demographics and a brief profile of the parent participants in this study.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Parents

Participant Code	Parent Code	Family Role	Number of children	Occupation
1	P1	Mother	3	Employee
2	P2	Mother	3	Businesswoman
3	P3	Mother	3	Full-time mother
4	P4	Mother	2	Full-time mother
5	P5	Mother	4	Part time employee
6	P6	Father	2	Sales employee
7	P7	Mother	3	Lawyer-business
8	P8	Mother	1	Employee
9	P9	Mother	5	Businesswoman

The parents who participated in this study were mainly mothers. Eight of the nine were mothers, and only one was a father. Seven worked during the remote learning shift, while two mothers were unemployed. All parents involved in this study recognized that their child had academic difficulties and received additional academic support outside of school. Since the pandemic started, all parent participants have been staying at home

to assist their children with remote learning. Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the children with academic difficulties involved in this research.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of Children

Participant Code	Child Code	Gender	Age	Grade Level
1	CAD1	Male	7	Grade 2
2	CAD2	Male	7	Grade 2
3	CAD3	Female	6	Grade 1
4	CAD4	Male	6	Grade 1
5	CAD5	Male	7	Grade 2
6	CAD6	Male	8	Grade 3
7	CAD7	Male	6	Grade 1
8	CAD8	Male	6	Grade 1
9	CAD9	Male	7	Grade 2

Children with academic difficulties in this study were primarily males. During the data collection, the children participants were between six and eight. All of them were enrolled in a school and attended synchronous and asynchronous classes. Eight of the nine children were enrolled in a private school and one in a public school in Metro Manila.

The researcher-designed instruments underwent face validation by experts in educational psychology and were pilot-tested. Improvements were made before the actual data gathering. Due to the social distancing restrictions, personal interviews were impossible; thus, video conferencing via the Zoom application was conducted. The interviews were done at the participants' preferred time and recorded with their permission. Some preferred to be interviewed after school hours, and some on weekends. The nine parent-participants were interviewed to gain insights into their involvement, challenges, and benefits experienced during remote learning. Each interview with the parent participant, which lasted for an average of 40 minutes, began by establishing rapport with the respondents, and probing questions were also asked for clarification and elaboration, and they were requested to give as many concrete examples as possible.

After the interview, permission to observe their child's online class was requested from the parents to further understand the parents' roles in the remote learning setup. The school's permission was likewise requested, and the school authorities were asked

to sign a Data Privacy Agreement form. The non-participant observation occurred for one hour, three times a week for two weeks. A total of 18 observations were done. During the observation, the camera was turned off during all the observations, and the microphone was muted throughout the session to allow the people involved to act naturally. Continuous manual recording was done to describe the activities occurring in the classes, the responses of the students and parents to tasks, and the thoughts and feelings that surfaced. Several observation focal points are the parent's tasks, the child's tasks, the roles of the parents throughout the session, how they resolve the challenges, and classroom engagement.

The parents were given letters and consent forms before the focus group discussion with the nine children with academic difficulties. The focus group was intended to provide a forum where the participants could share their experiences and ideas about the topic in a comfortable environment (Kruger & Casey, 2000). The FGD guide consisted of 12 questions for the children in this study. Ground rules were also presented. Examples of these were: (1) to turn on their camera, (2) to use a plain background; and (3) to mute their microphone when it was not their turn to talk. The discussion lasted for 40 minutes and was recorded with their consent.

The interviews and focus group discussions were done and recorded via Zoom application with the permission of the participants. The verbal information was translated to written form by transcribing it verbatim. The hard copies of the transcriptions were returned to the parent participants for clarification and verification. This allowed the participants to determine that the data was accurate and consistent.

In the triangulation, the information gathered through the interviews and focus group discussions was cross-checked through the observations. Member check was also conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Each parent-child was analyzed as a single case. In this way, it was possible to see the similarities and differences. All the data were treated as equally important. The data analysis was guided by the six-phase guide to doing thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006), which was 1) familiarizing with your data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing the report. This guide was not a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next. Instead, it was a recursive process with back-and-forth movement as needed throughout the phases.

Results

Parents' Involvement in the Remote Learning Instruction of their Children with Academic Difficulties

Findings from the interviews, focus group discussions, and observations revealed eighteen initial codes. These initial codes went through numerous comparisons and re-

organizations before the themes of this study were finalized.

Table 3 shows the different types of parental involvement in supporting their children during the sudden shift to remote learning. These different types were: (1) providing for their child's needs; (2) organizing space and time; (3) motivating and monitoring the child's behavior; (4) instructing technology and lesson-related skills; and (5) adapting the lesson.

Table 3

Parents' Involvement in the Remote Learning Instruction

Themes	Codes
Providing for their child's needs	Shelter and food
	Provide for their needs
Organizing space and time	Organize space
	Make a schedule
	Label school supplies
	Establish routine
Motivating and monitoring a child's behavior	Monitoring school work
	Monitoring grades
	Monitoring behavior
	Encourage engagement
	Verbal reminders and practices
	Incentives
Instructing technology and lesson-related	Instructing instructions
	Use Zoom and online applications
	Turn on and off computers and laptops
Adapting the lessons	Adapting the instructions
	Alternate resources
	Looking for more examples

Due to the unexpected shift to remote learning, parents have found themselves under immense pressure to take charge of their children's education. With the responsibility of providing for their children's academic needs, parents have been forced to make decisions based on their perceptions of what is most important. One of the most crucial aspects of this has been ensuring that their children have an environment conducive to learning. This has required parents to provide the necessary learning materials and basic amenities to support remote learning. The financial burden of purchasing equipment such as computers, printers, and headphones, and upgrading their Internet has made it challenging for some parents. For many parents with multiple children, providing these resources for each child has been even more challenging.

To make their home conducive to learning, parents have had to reorganize their space in response to the demands of the new learning mode. They have had to create designated areas in their homes for learning and organize their children's learning materials and schedules for efficient online classes. In one case, a parent went to great lengths by rearranging the living room to create a study area with tables and shelves for her children's materials and worksheets. Another parent provided a visual schedule for her children that aligned with her work schedule, allowing them to take turns using the computer.

Another significant role that parents played during remote learning was monitoring and motivating their child's behavior during class. Most of the parents in this study shared that their physical presence kept their children on task, and when they were not present, their children tended to get distracted and miss important information. One parent shared that she caught her child scribbling and drawing while the teacher was talking. Another parent shared that her son missed a few activities because he did not understand the instructions. Since the teacher can only see them on the screen and there are multiple learners, the teacher did not notice that their children were not attending the discussion. From then on, parents had to stay close to their children during classes. In fact, during the focus group discussion, the children validated the idea that the presence of their parents motivated them and helped them redirect their attention. Parents also shared that, they would offer incentives like watching a movie together or taking a short trip outside the city with fewer COVID cases to keep their children motivated.

When there were content-related issues and technical problems, parents in this study observed that their children sought their help instead of their teachers in a remote learning environment. It was inevitable since these parents were just an arm's reach or a few meters away. They can seek help immediately instead of their teachers, who can only see on the screens. Since it was an online setting, some children in this study could not understand the lessons immediately. This allowed the parents to devote more time to teaching their children. However, some parents shared that they doubted their capabilities in teaching and felt they needed to be more confident about their approach. They worry that their approach might confuse their children instead of helping them. Some parents in this study admittedly would answer some workbooks for their children instead of explaining the process to them.

One of the practices that the parents frequently engaged in was their willingness to adapt to the needs of their children. The term "adapts" was used to describe the behavior of adjustment because it symbolized the dynamic nature of their roles and their interactions with their children (Hasler Waters et al.,2014). For example, one parent would press mute when she thought her son did not understand the instruction from the teacher and modified it based on what she thought fit his level of understanding. Another parent shared that she adapted the learning environment so that the teacher could notice him out of the many students online by changing his background.

The parents in this study adapted the lessons of their children when they encountered difficulty. If they thought their children needed help understanding the lesson, they adapted it based on their child's level of understanding and looking for resources. If they thought the environment did not work for their child, they adapted the setting to become more favorable. It is good to note that it was the parents' nature to adjust as they were merely responding to make their children's online learning feasible. This was especially true for children with academic difficulties who took time to understand the lesson and needed modification compared to their classmates.

Overall, parents faced numerous challenges during remote learning, but they rose to the occasion and did their best to ensure their children's academic success. The efforts to create a conducive learning environment, motivate and monitor their children, instruct technology and lesson-related, and adapt to their needs were admirable.

Response of the Children with Academic Difficulties to the New Teaching and Learning Process

Table 4 shows the responses of the children with academic difficulties to the new teaching and learning process. Two positive responses from children with academic difficulties emerged: 1) Being independent in online activities and 2) Getting good grades. Otherwise, children with academic difficulties became 3) less attentive and motivated to work.

Table 4

Response of the Children with Academic Difficulties to the New Teaching and Learning Process

Themes	Codes
Being independent in online activities	Turn on and off the computer by themselves
	Know where to click
	Know how to operate
	Upload work on their on
	Log in and out by themselves
Getting good grades	High scores
	High grades
	Reads faster
	Answers on time
	Good feedback from teachers
Being less attentive and motivated to work	Not participating and listening
	Easily get distracted
	Less Motivated
	Fidgety on his seat
	Not listening
	Doing something else
	Needs redirection

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic brought about a sudden and unprecedented shift to online learning. In response, parents were forced to take on a more active role in their children's education as they struggled to adapt to this new learning environment. Many parents find themselves in the position of having to teach their children how to use computers and online applications and help them navigate the challenges of online learning. As the semester progressed, however, many parents were pleasantly surprised to find that their children were quick learners, able to maneuver the computer independently and make the most of online applications. Some parents even expressed awe at their children's ability to use technology and online tools.

Poor academic performance was a significant hurdle for the student participants in this study. Before the pandemic, these students had to attend educational tutorials or remedial classes to cope with the pace of school. However, parents were forced to take a more active role in their children's education when the pandemic happened. For most of the parents in this study, this meant observing their children's progress firsthand and adapting lessons to suit their individual needs. They provided a positive and supportive learning environment, encouraging their children to stay on task and providing additional resources where necessary. As a result, many students got good grades and received positive feedback from their teachers according to the parents.

Despite receiving good grades, several parents still felt the need to check on their children's participation and attentiveness. Two parents even caught their sons playing video games and watching YouTube while the class was in session. Another parent observed his son doodling on his paper rather than answering the questions in the workbook as instructed by the teacher. Therefore, parents needed occasional monitoring and supervision to ensure that their children were fully engaged and participating in their online classes. Through this, they can provide the necessary support to help their children achieve the best learning outcomes and excel academically.

Parents' Challenges with Remote Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Based on the results of the parent interviews, Table 5 shows three themes that emerged as their challenges in remote learning: managing responsibilities, experiencing technical challenges, and doubting their children's learning outcomes.

Table 5

Parents' Challenges with Remote Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Themes	Codes
Managing Responsibilities	Managing workload
	Work at home
	Facilitating online classes and working simultaneously
	Accompanying children in online classes
	Provide the right amount of support
	Multiple learners
	Addressing the needs of multiple learners
Experiencing technical challenges	Do not know Zoom
	Do not know the Microsoft team
	Turn on and off the computer
	Weakness in Internet
	Poor connection
	Drop video call
	Hard to connect
Doubting their children's learning outcome	Unsure if children are learning
	Lack of practice and examples
	Need other resources
	Poor motivation
	No socialization

Parents who relied on their "village" to raise their children were suddenly forced to shoulder all these responsibilities at once, leading to countless challenges and issues of parental involvement. The parents had to balance full-time work, managing the household, and teaching responsibilities, which proved to be a daunting task, especially for those with multiple children or children with disabilities.

All working parents in this study shared their sentiments on how difficult it is to manage their workload and their children's. One parent shared that she felt sorry for her child and felt that she neglected him during the first year of the pandemic because she was also busy adjusting to the work-from-home setup. Eventually, she decided to quit her job and looked for a job that fit the schedule of her child. Two other parents had also shared that they had to quit their jobs to manage their responsibilities. They both agree that their children's well-being and schooling is their priority.

Poor internet service was also a common issue for parents, which led to several subscribing to multiple internet service providers, incurring additional costs for the family. Additionally, the sudden shift highlighted the digital divide, with several participants expressing difficulty with the transition since they were neither digitally literate nor used to using computers. For example, during one of the class observations, they had technical problems while the teacher was discussing. The parent did not know what to

do and sought help from her husband. With this, they already missed the discussion, and her child did not know how to answer the activity.

Some parents expressed their gratitude to their child's school administration which offers online webinars on how to use the Zoom application and Google Classroom. One parent shared that his son's school gave them an email and several technicians in case they encountered technical problems. However, half of the parent participants expressed that they did not receive any support from their child's school.

Moreover, the parents had to assist and guide their children with the transition to remote learning, which made them dependent on their parents when problems arose since there was a lack of immediate access to teachers. This was a particular concern for parents who doubted their competencies in teaching their children despite being educated. They were apprehensive about teaching their children since the teaching method was different from how they were taught.

In addition, the shift to an online format made it challenging for children to socialize and develop their socialization skills, which is just as important as supporting their cognitive and physical development. With lockdowns and social restrictions, children had limited interaction with their peers, which hampered their social development. In fact, during the focus group discussion, children expressed how they miss playing tag with their peers.

The online learning setup required prolonged attention and sitting, which was difficult for younger children, especially those with academic difficulties who preferred to work in teams or pairs. Overall, the sudden shift to remote learning has brought to light several challenges for families, and supporting parents and children during this time is crucial.

Parents' Experienced Benefits from Engaging in Their Children's Remote Learning

Engaging in their children's remote learning also had positive outcomes for the parents. Table 6 shows that the parents mainly experienced stronger family bonds and became aware of their children's strengths and weaknesses. Meanwhile, the children learned to share responsibilities.

Table 6

Parents' Experienced Benefits from Engaging in Their Children's Remote Learning

Themes	Codes
Experiencing stronger family bonds	Good family bonding
	More time together
	Do things together
	Planning games and movies
Sharing responsibilities	Take turns
	Older sibling watches younger sibling
	Scheduling responsibilities
	Good communication
Being aware of their children's strengths and weaknesses	See them struggle
	Aware of their strengths
	Addressing their weaknesses
	More confident now
	Needs other resources
	Less distracted

In addition to the challenges parents faced during the COVID-19 outbreak, they also identified several positive aspects of the situation. Parents recognized it as an opportunity to spend more time with their families. With the educational sector shifting to an online and home-based setup, many parents found themselves working from home and could spend more time with their children than before. Parents reported that this increased time together allowed them to bond with their children and engage in activities that they had not done before. These activities included watching movies, trying new recipes, and gardening. Parents mentioned that they did these activities on the weekend so their children could look forward to something and feel a sense of normalcy.

Buheji et al. (2020) suggested turning everyday moments into quality time can help cope with isolation. In line with this, parents also tried incorporating physical activities into their family time. They played outdoor games, walked, and did other physical activities together. These activities allowed them to bond with their children and stay healthy and active during a time when outdoor activities were limited.

During the focus group discussion, the children also shared that they have been playing with their siblings more often than before the pandemic. They discovered that they have many things in common and enjoy playing computer games together. This suggests that the pandemic has brought families closer together and helped siblings bond in new ways, highlighting the importance of family time and shared activities during times of crisis.

The social limitations also involved each family member and shared the responsibilities to ease the parent's burdens. For example, older siblings assist their younger siblings with schoolwork, while others help with the laundry and watering the plants. The situation has also strengthened the relationship between husband and wife as they share responsibilities towards their children's schoolwork. For example, the mother would teach Reading while the father would teach Math.

Most parents in this study admitted that they solely depended on teachers and tutors regarding their child's academic skills before the pandemic. However, with the sudden closure of the school, parents found themselves filling in the shoes of the teacher and the tutor. The sudden demand for attention to their child's online education brought many insights for the parents and increased their awareness of their children's capabilities. Another benefit that emerged in this study is that parents are aware of their children's strengths and weaknesses.

Discussion

This case study focuses on the experiences and challenges of nine parents of children with academic difficulties while engaging in their child's remote learning during the COVID-19 crisis. The study aims to provide insights into these parents' roles and responsibilities in supporting their children's remote learning and highlight their unique struggles and concerns during this challenging time. The study identified five different parental involvement behaviors that were observed: (1) providing for their child's needs; (2) organizing space and time; (3) motivating and monitoring the child's behavior; (4) instructing technology and lesson-related skills; and (5) adapting the lesson.

Epstein (1987) stated parents must provide for their child's physiological and academic needs. In this study, parents shared that the immediate action they took when the government announced the physical closure of schools was to ensure that all their children's needs were met. This responsibility entails providing the resources they need, such as purchasing computers and upgrading the Internet. Despite the additional financial burden, parents have risen to ensure their children have the right resources. They believe providing such an environment can help their children adapt easily to remote learning and excel academically. Similarly, Epstein (1987) and Staker (2011) have both emphasized that it is the parents' responsibility to provide access to basic learning materials so that their children can excel in an academic setting.

After providing the additional resources, parents in this study took on the responsibility of creating conducive learning environments for their children at home in response to the demands of the new mode of learning. Parents organized their homes and schedules to provide a learning space for each of their children. It has, however, been challenging for most of the parents, especially those with multiple children. They had to constantly rearrange their schedule and space to accommodate each of their children to avoid getting distracted during online classes. This corroborates Stevens and Borup

(2015) who found that they tried to create multiple learning spaces and flexible schedules to meet the learning needs of their children. Parents had to adjust their working schedules and organize their learning resources ahead of time (Hasler- Waters, 2012). However, despite the constant reorganizing of schedules, working parents expressed their difficulty managing. Working parents were inefficient with their work as they also had to assist their children in their online classes while meeting their deadlines (Ludji & Marpaung, 2021). Thus, some parents in this study eventually had to quit their work so they could attend to their young children.

Young children naturally have limited attention spans and require engaging activities and movement breaks to help them stay focused. More so for children with academic difficulties in this study who are particularly vulnerable to distractions and may struggle with self-regulation. As a result, parents need to provide support and redirection to help keep their children on track (Karsenty, 2009). When students fail to pay attention during online classes, they risk missing important information necessary for completing assignments and quizzes. Therefore, monitoring student behavior is crucial in an online learning environment with endless distractions (McFarlane, 2011).

Due to the sudden shift to remote learning, parents are now responsible for motivating and monitoring their children. This involves encouraging engagement, praising performance, offering incentives, and keeping track of behavior and progress (Borup et al, 2014). According to the findings of this study, young children appreciate their parents' efforts in monitoring and keeping them motivated to participate in class. Therefore, it is crucial to provide positive reinforcement and praise (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). However, Curtis's (2013) research contradicts this, as parents in his study experienced conflicts with their children regarding monitoring. The researcher believed this was due to the age difference of the children involved. Young children are highly dependent on their parents, and as they grow older, this dependence gradually decreases.

Parents of these children, who had usually worked in partnership with teachers, struggled significantly with the disappearance offace-to-face networks and collaboration in supporting their children (Whitley, 2020). Since parents are more accessible, this study revealed that children sought help with instruction and technology-related problems instead of their teachers. When children lose connection or get disconnected during online classes, parents often step in to help them understand the instruction or lesson. Unreliable technology is often seen as a barrier to students in the online learning environment (Clark, 2001). Consequently, parents have had to devote more time to teaching their children until they fully grasp the concepts by adapting the lessons.

The parents in this study expressed that they need more guidance in supporting their children's learning. Eight out of the nine parents expressed that they lacked confidence in their teaching methods and were unsure how to proceed. In some cases, they would ask their spouse or an older child for help with subjects they were not familiar with. This kind of role-sharing is common among families in online learning settings (Frey, 2005).

However, when parents could not explain a concept, they admitted that they resorted to either answering the workbook themselves or providing their children with the answers. These findings have also been evident in Borup et al. (2014) and Hasler- Waters et al. (2014) that some parents do the work for their children.

Conclusion

This study described the different roles of parents in their children's remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. They provided a nurturing environment by organizing the learning space, schedule, and materials for a conducive learning environment. They gave instructions on how to navigate the computer and adapted when content- related problems arose. During online sessions, they monitored their child's behavior and encouraged them to perform well by giving rewards and verbal praise.

Since these roles emerged in this study, parents were apprehensive and somewhat unsure of their responsibilities in this type of setting. They expressed their difficulties managing their responsibilities with multiple learners at home and completing their workload. Moreover, parents have faced challenges with technology and their children's learning outcomes. The study found that internet connectivity problems were a significant issue, and some parents had to acquire another Internet provider to avoid getting disconnected and missing out on class. When the connection was not stable, it caused disruptions in the learning process, ultimately affecting the learner and the family members. Despite being in the digital age, this study revealed that school administrators and policymakers should consider these issues before offering online learning as a modality.

In the face of uncertainties and challenges, the parents recognized the positive effects of the situation. Since the lockdown forced the family members to stay at home, they had more time to do things together, such as watching TV and learning new hobbies. This also allowed schoolchildren to share responsibilities in doing housework and assisting their siblings with schoolwork. For example, an older sibling helped his younger brother with academic difficulties finishing school tasks. One of the most important findings in this study was that parents played an active role in the remote learning of their children with academic difficulties. With the awareness that there are financial limitations and overwhelming responsibilities, parents prioritized their children's needs. They provided their children beyond what they could afford and looked for ways to help them cope with the demands of the school. Thus, children with academic difficulties in the study showed academic progress and showed signs of independence in dealing with the online learning setup.

This study revealed that the online learning modality is not suitable for all learners. It is most effective for visual and auditory learners, but not for tactile learners. Additionally, the study found that online learning can be challenging for young children and those with special needs who require movement breaks and additional modifications.

Cavanaugh et al.'s (2009) research also suggests that online education is more suitable for adults than children. Many of the children in the study cited a lack of motivation and encouragement as barriers to their success in remote learning. Therefore, the findings could form the basis for more inclusive education policies and programs in remote learning environments.

School administrators and teachers could screen parents and their families for appropriate modalities that fit their lifestyles, such as providing differentiated instructions and limiting the number of students. The results could likewise help educators understand how to help parents in times of crisis like COVID-19.

Although many parents showed resilience in the face of the challenges associated with the sudden shift to remote learning, for many others, the prolonged lockdown and lack of support would likely exaggerate existing vulnerabilities and contribute to the onset of new stress-related disorders (Horesh & Brown, 2020). During class observations, the researcher noted that some parents used verbal hostilities when their children were not taking the online classes seriously. If not appropriately dressed, this situation may also cause harm to the child's mental health and development. Decades of research confirmed the association between parents' mental health and their children's cognitive and socio-emotional development (Lau et al., 2018). Therefore, this study calls for urgent attention from the government to allocate a budget and offer programs for the family's well-being.

Lastly, this study contributes to the body of parent involvement literature by describing the experiences and challenges encountered by Filipino parents of children with academic difficulties during the sudden shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

Agaton, C. & Cueto, L. (2021). Learning at home: Parents' lived experiences on distance learning during COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE).

Alinsunurin, J. (2021). Unpacking underperformance: learning mindsets and the challenge of academic achievement among Filipino students. AIM RSN PCC Discussion Paper 2021-004,

Baclig, C. E. (2022, April 8). When 10-year-olds can't read: The dulling of PH education | Inquirer News. INQUIRER.net. https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1580203/when-10-year-olds-cant-read-the-dulling-of-ph-education

Barbour, M. K., & Reeves, T. C. (2009). The reality of virtual schools: A review of the literature. Computers and Education, 52(2), 402-416.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V.(2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Borup, J., West, R. E., Graham, C. R., & Davies, R. S. (2014). The adolescent community engagement: A framework for research on adolescent online learning. Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 22(1), 107-129.

Buheji, M., Cunha, K.D., Beka, G., Mavric, B., Souza, Y.L., Silva, S.S., Hanafi, M.S., & Yein, T.C. (2020). The extent of COVID-19 pandemic socio-economic Impact on global Poverty. a global integrative multidisciplinary review. American Journal of Economics.

Cahapay, M. (2020).How Filipino parents home educate their children with autism during COVID-19 period. International Journal of Developmental Disabilities, 68(3), 395-398. https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2020.1780554

Carman, L. (2015). Low Achieving students' perspective regarding their experiences as recipients of instructional support delivered in general education. Retrieved from https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/48252/PDF/1/play/

Cavanaugh, C., Gillan, K.J., Kromrey, J.D., Hess, M., & Blomeyer, R.L. (2004). The effects of distance education on K-12 student outcomes: A meta-analysis.

Cavanaugh, C. (2007). Student achievement in elementary and high school. In M. G. Moore (Ed.), Handbook of distance education (2nd ed., pp.157- 168). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Curtis, H. (2013). A mixed methods study investigating parental involvement and student success in high school online education (Doctoral dissertation). Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, ID.

De Vera, B. O. (2021, July 1). 80% of PH kids don't know what they should know – World Bank | Inquirer News. https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1453814/wb-80-of-ph-kids-dont-know-what-they-should-know

Fletcher, J., & Vaughn, S. (2009). Response to intervention: preventing and remediating academic difficulties. Child Development Perspectives, 3, 30-37. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00072.x

Frey, N. (2005). Retention, social promotion, and academic redshirting: what do we know and need to know? Remedial and Special Education, 26(6), 332-346. https://doi.org/10.1177/07419325050260060401

Garbe, A., Ogurlu, U., Logan, N., & Cook, P. (2020). Parents' experiences with remote education during COVID-19 school closures. American Journal of Qualitative Research, 4(3), 45-65. https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/8471

Hasler-Waters, L. C. (2012). Exploring the experiences of learning coaches in a cyber charter school: A qualitative case study (Doctoral dissertation).University of Hawaii at Manoa. ScholarSpace. http://hdl.handle.net/10125/100883

Hasler Waters, L., Borup, J., & Menchaca, D. M. P. (2018). Parental involvement in K-12 online and blended learning. Handbook of research on K12 online and blended learning (2),403-422. https://doi.org/10.1184/R1/6686813

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. & Sandler, H. M. (2005, revised). Final performance report for OERI Grant # R305T010673: The social context of parental involvement: A Path to enhanced achievement. Paper presented to Project Mentor, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/7595/OERIIESfinalreport032205.pdf?sequence=1

Horesh D, Brown AD. Traumatic stress in the age of COVID-19: A call to close critical gaps and adapt to new realities. Psychol Trauma,12(4),331-335. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000592

Kanapi, E.L. (2023). Parental involvement in remote learning of children with academic difficulties during the pandemic. [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of the Philippines College of Education.

Karsenty, R. (2009). Nonprofessional mathematics tutoring for low-achieving students

in secondary schools: A case study. Educational Studies in Mathematics, 74(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-009-9223-z

Lau, P., Hawes, D.J., Hunt, C., Frankland, A., Roberts, G.M., & Mitchell, P.B. (2018). Prevalence of psychopathology in bipolar high-risk offspring and siblings: a meta-analysis. European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 27, 823-837.

Ludji, I., & Marpaung, T. (2021). Parents' perception on the implementation of home learning during Covid-19. Jurnal Basicedu, 5(5), 3636–3643. https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i5.1013

McFarlane, D. A. (2011). Multiple intelligences: the most effective platform for global 21st century educational and instructional methodologies. College Quarterly, 14, 1-8.

Stevens, M. and Borup, J. (2015), "Parental Engagement in Online Learning Environments: A Review of the Literature", Exploring Pedagogies for Diverse Learners Online (Advances in Research on Teaching, Vol. 25), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Leeds, pp. 99-119. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-368720150000027005

Staker, H. (2011). The rise of K-12 blended learning: Profiles of emerging models. Innosight Institute. Retrieved from http://www.innosightinstitute.org/innosight/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/The-Rise-of-K-12-Blended-Learning.pdf

Slavin, R. E. (2002). Evidence-based education policies: transforming educational practice and research. Educational Researcher, 31(7), 15-21. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X031007015

Toquero, C. M. (2020). Challenges and opportunities for higher education amid the COVID-19 pandemic: the Philippine context. Pedagogical Research, 5(4). https://doi.org/10.29333/pr/7947

World Health Organization. (02, March 2021). WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Dashboard. https://covid19.who.int

Whitley, J. (2020). Coronavirus: Distance learning poses a challenge for some families of children with disabilities. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-distance-learning-poses-challenges-for-some-families-of-children-with-disabilities-136696

Yunting, M. (2017). Student-led argumentation effects on knowledge building and scientific reasoning. University of the Philippines.

Authors' Bionotes

Ma. Erika Luis Kanapi-Villanueva, M.A. is a Filipino female mother who is an educator specializing in Educational Psychology. She has taught and tutored children with academic difficulties and has assisted her children in their studies during the pandemic. The researcher gives value to parental involvement.
ORCID No.: https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6815-9707

Lizamarie Campoamor-Olegario, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor specializing in Educational Psychology at the University of the Philippines College of Education. Her advocacies include promoting well-being and safe, equitable, quality, and relevant education.
ORCID No.: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6688-1651

How to cite this article: