

Empowering the Parents as Home-Partners in the Implementation of Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan During Covid-19 Pandemic in the Philippines

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Abstract – *Despite the threats of the COVID-19 pandemic, basic education in the Philippines remains upfront in the quest for quality education. But the traditional face-to-face mode of teaching has been suspended in compliance with the minimum health standards and quarantine protocols implemented by the local government units. Hence, the parents are burdened with the responsibility to take the place of the teachers instead of their respective homes. Using the responses of 156 parents who served as the respondents of the study, this study, therefore, aimed to identify the dimensions that will empower parents as they embrace the upscale of their duties as parent-teachers during the new normal. The rotated component matrix of the exploratory factor analysis revealed four constructs that represent the dimensions of empowerment of parents in the implementation of the basic education learning continuity plan. These include technological preparedness, constant collaboration, effective time management, and support for capacity building on pedagogical strategies. The quality delivery of the teaching-learning activities outside the school can still be possible at home with the presence of highly empowered parents taking the role of the teachers.*

Keywords: *empowerment, parents, basic education learning continuity plan, COVID-19 pandemic, new normal*

INTRODUCTION

In this time of the pandemic, the education sector is one of those greatly affected. More than 376.9 million learners were not able to adapt with the new learning process secondary to school closures in many countries worldwide [1]. Given the control and mitigating measures implemented by governments, there is no doubt that students anywhere in the world are prohibited from attending the traditional classes

inside the classroom. Considering the health risks brought about by the novel corona virus, academic institutions have been restricted to conduct face to face classes including laboratory setups and other learning procedures which requires physical contact. [2]. This is in congruence with Uscher-Pines' statement that during an evolving influenza pandemic, community mitigations such as social distancing can curb the transmission of the virus in schools and its vicinity [3]. Fong et al. [4] added that non-pharmaceutical methods of intervention such that of social distancing and extended school closures can reduce the impact of an outbreak like that of COVID-19. Schools therefore are placed in a situation where innovation is the contingent option for them to continue the educational enterprise despite the government restrictions.

In the Philippines, the government mandated the basic education department to strategize and to impose strict restriction of face-to-face classes yet ensuring the implementation of the basic education learning continuity plan. This initiative ensures that the students from the K-to-12 system can still avail of free education using modular or blended approaches. In this modality, students remain in their respective homes, provided with the learning materials such as modules, and are guided by their parents or guardians. No students are allowed to go to school but are instead represented by their parents or guardians to collect and submit the teaching-learning materials. This makes them safe and free from any possibility of being infected by the COVID-119 considering that they learn from home.

Parents therefore are placed in a position where they have to act as both parents and teachers. Caught off-guarded by the situation, they have no choice but to keep their children away from getting infected and embrace the reality having to execute what teachers usually do in schools. The role of parents as teachers themselves is brought by this form of adaptation in the

educational system. However, this adds up to the daily loads of parents which already juggle a number of roles in their daily living. This setup leaves them with few resources or none at all. or parents who need to manage their personal lives, jobs, and raise children, being left alone without other support is a stressful experience [5].

But according to Bubb and Jones [6], learning-at-home through modular or blended learning modalities was well received by students and parents. It was noted that there were more innovative learning, better progress, more valuable input, and greater independence of students have been created during the pandemic. It can be gleaned from this finding that face-to-face delivery of instructions can be replaced by the modular and blended learning approaches with the same quality of the outcome.

Nevertheless, the capability of parents to replace the teachers at home cannot be conclusive. In most rural or poverty-stricken areas, parents cannot attend to the academic needs of their children without the right support mechanisms. They cannot fully materialize the dual-function expected from them as parent-teachers. In the study of Cahapay [7], it was found that this approach to education would have significant consequences for some parents whose skills need to be further developed in home education by modular or hybrid modalities. Empowering these parents is therefore imperative towards the successful implementation of basic education learning continuity plans amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study was to explore the constructs to empower the parents as home-partners in the implementation of basic education learning continuity plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discovering these constructs will enable the administrators of the education department and other concerned government agencies to consider the capacitation of parents in their roles being parent-teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed quantitative non-experimental research using exploratory design. The tool was used to identify the underlying constructs to empower the parents as home-partners in the implementation of basic education learning continuity plan during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Keiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy

was used to test the magnitude of partial correlation among identified constructs while Bartlett's test of sphericity determined whether the correlation is identity matrix or not. The data was gathered from 156 sampled respondents who answered the 30-item survey questionnaire using a 5-point Likert-like scaling of agreement. Since the face-to-face survey was impossible due to the restrictions of health protocols amid the pandemic, online data collection was used via a google form. This is a free and conventional online platform that allows the researcher to collect data from the respondents by sending a link of the google form that contains the survey instrument template to the social media accounts and emails of students [8]. The accomplished questionnaires were retrieved through the google sheet and processed through SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factor Analysis

This section presents the results of KMO and Bartlett's Test and Principal Component Analysis. The derivation of the number of factor structure and the rotated matrix of the model is also presented using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

KMO and Bartlett's Test. As presented in Table 1, the results of the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy revealed that the KMO value is .682 which is above the recommended value of .5. This indicates that the sample is meritorious and adequate for factor analysis. Almalak et al. [9] recommend that the values greater than .5 are acceptable. Meanwhile, the results of Bartlett's test revealed that the p-value is significant ($p < .05$) indicating that the data have patterned relationship and factorability is assumed. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should be significant for factor analysis to be suitable [10]. It can be generalized that the items in the instruments are suitable and adequate for the extraction of factors.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.682
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1547.923
	Df	435
	Sig.	.000

Derivation of the Number of Factor Structure and Total Variance Explained. The derivation of factor structure was determined through the eigenvalues of the components. As a rule of thumb, components are selected whose Eigenvalue is at least 1.

Table 2. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.883	16.277	16.277	4.883	16.277	16.277	3.092	10.306	10.306
2	3.104	10.348	26.625	3.104	10.348	26.625	2.571	8.569	18.875
3	2.345	7.817	34.443	2.345	7.817	34.443	2.509	8.364	27.239
4	1.941	6.470	40.913	1.941	6.470	40.913	2.019	6.729	33.968
5	1.770	5.900	46.813	1.770	5.900	46.813	1.884	6.281	40.249
6	1.472	4.907	51.719	1.472	4.907	51.719	1.862	6.207	46.456
7	1.349	4.496	56.216	1.349	4.496	56.216	1.776	5.920	52.376
8	1.261	4.203	60.418	1.261	4.203	60.418	1.682	5.606	57.982
9	1.148	3.827	64.246	1.148	3.827	64.246	1.559	5.197	63.179
10	1.106	3.688	67.934	1.106	3.688	67.934	1.426	4.755	67.934

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 2 presents the number of constructs extracted, initial Eigenvalues associated with the specified constructs, the percentage of the total variance, and the cumulative percentage of each construct. After utilizing the criterion for Eigenvalue, the 30 items of the scale seem to measure ten underlying factors because the first ten components have an Eigenvalue of at least 1.

Rotated Component Matrix. After identifying the number of factor structure, the 30-item construct was then subjected for rotation using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Based on the standard rule of factor analysis, items with a loading value of less than .60 should be excluded [10]. The results revealed that nine items have a loading coefficient below .60 and have face validity issues and low communalities while another five items were lone items and were unable to produce constructs. These items were removed from the model. Hair et al. [11] posited that items having no sense and not reflective with the factor can be removed in the model. Moreover, Field [10] stated that the suppression of communalities less than .60 and ordering variables by loading size would make it easier to understand since the matrix does not need to be scanned to recognize substantive loadings.

Rotated Component Matrix with Grouped Items

Based on the criterion, a total of 15 items were categorized into four constructs. These constructs will empower the parents in the implementation of basic education learning continuity plan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Construct 1: Technological Preparedness of Parents. The exploratory factor analysis revealed the four items that fall under the first construct showing the following items: *modules and course materials sent to parents are hard to understand* which obtained a loading coefficient of .788; *the government should*

provide financial assistance to parents to purchase necessary information technology materials like a laptop, internet connection which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.831; *the speed of internet should be improved* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.815; *parents cannot allow their children to organize group studies with friends or classmates* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.642, and *parents should spend time with their children to maintain the pacing of the lessons* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.603. The thematic analysis revealed a common concept that technological preparedness is one of the key ideas to empower the parents in implementing a basic education learning continuity plan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Upon the novel coronavirus' sudden strike, thus halting face-to-face learning, educational institutions have embarked on technological platforms to deliver online learning programs to students. This technology allows teachers to access each student's style of learning thus offering a forum for learners to work at their own pace. The implementation of modern technology is a vital part of modern education in ensuring the quality of educational work. According to Veličković and Stošić [12], through its implementation and incorporation into the educational work of educators, technology in education should be realized. As supported by Almekhlafi and Almeqdadi [13], researchers conducted worldwide indicate that using technology has a positive impact on teaching and learning.

The challenge for educators now is to create meaningful learning experiences on the readiness of the Philippines in the implementation of flexible learning modality, neither dismissing or keeping up with parents' and students' latest technological know-how. As such, the government should find ways in improving internet speed as well as support in the purchase of the basic needs of parent-teachers on IT.

As espoused by Slaughter [14], the government is the provider of goods and services that individuals cannot provide for themselves. Improvement of IT infrastructure and support on IT materials related to the implementation of the educational plan are some of the vital initiatives that the government should give high importance to ensure continuity of education with the help of parent-teachers.

Construct 2: Constant Collaboration between Parents and Teachers. The exploratory factor analysis revealed the second construct with the following items: *parents are responsible for collecting any materials from schools* obtained with a loading coefficient of 0.802; *parents should contact the teachers for any questions and concerns* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.653; *parents need to have constant communication with the teachers and school administrators* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.796; *parents need to learn how to teach their children at home* with a loading coefficient of 0.769, and *parents need to work hand in hand with the teacher* with a leading coefficient of 0.655. The thematic analysis of these items suggested that constant collaboration between parents and teachers is required for the successful implementation of a basic education learning continuity plan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For a reflection of practices and the information sharing, collaboration is needed. It has been used as the primary technique for generating imagination and innovation to create productive education programs. It has been used as the primary technique for generating imagination and innovation to create productive education programs. [15]. As presented by several studies, it was found out that constant collaboration between parents and teachers has shown to have a positive effect on the learning of students. For the success of students, particularly in the context of the pandemic, good two-way communication between families and schools is important. Teachers and parents need to work together to determine what aspects of the growth of students need attention and to realize educational objectives and goals [16].

Parent engagement is typically a primary predictor of the effective experience of virtual education. Studies show that a direct positive link exists between the engagement of parents and the success of students. On the flip side, parents gain confidence upon realizing the value of their involvement. Such can also be achieved

when they provide a caring and edifying environment at home [17].

Construct 3: Effective Time Management among Parents. The exploratory factor analysis revealed the third construct composed of the following items: *parents should check the outputs of the children at home* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.753; *parents should also update themselves of the lessons of the children* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.706, and *parents should spend time with their children to maintain pacing of the lessons* with a leading coefficient of 0.629. The thematic analysis of these items generated that effective time management is a significant factor for the continuity of basic education learning.

Along with many adjustments that parents need to make economically to survive during this pandemic, they are also hurdling the adjustments concerning their children's new learning set-up for the coming school year. One of the vital factors for the success of online education and blended learning which needs a learning management system for assistance and structure is time-management [18]. Parents play a key role in this in a way mentioned by ACS international Schools that parents who constantly check on their children will help them develop learning routines that makes them more organized and productive [19].

Most importantly, parents provide support and encouragement to their children. They nudge their children to complete tasks on time and to develop a good attitude and healthy habits to create a flexible routine.

Despite the multi-functions that the parents are currently playing being working individuals, they are challenged to balance time for work, teaching, household obligations, and other routines. Effective time management must empower the parents to execute the expectations set from them as learning facilitators of their children at home [18].

Construct 4: Capacity Building on Pedagogical Strategies for Parents. The exploratory factor analysis revealed the fourth construct with the following items: *parents should be given special training on how to teach at home* with a loading coefficient of 0.777; and *parents can introduce other techniques other than modules in teaching their children like film viewing, drama, etc.* which obtained a loading coefficient of 0.743. Thematic analysis of these items came up with a common notion that

capacity building on pedagogical strategies is an important support to be given to the parents as home-partners to ensure the successful implementation of a basic education continuity plan in this time of the pandemic.

Parents are adopting new roles to support their child's learning as the regular on-campus school moved to modular or blended learning. Parents are stepping in as facilitators and learning coaches. With that, support for capacity building on pedagogical strategies must in place to ensure that parents have an appropriate skill in the delivery of its new functions as the second teacher. This capacity-building activity would allow parents to develop a pedagogical understanding of being a teacher. According to Polyakova [20], pedagogical knowledge of parents on educational strategies allows them to properly educate and develop their children. With this, parents will be able to develop an ability to regulate and control their behavior in creative maintenance of psycho-pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of technologies, a humanistic style of interaction with the child.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The COVID-19 crisis and the unparalleled education disruption is far from over and put face-to-face learning to a halt. The modular and blended learning approaches, being the only option for the continued delivery of education for public basic education in the Philippines, provides transfers the roles of the teachers to the parents of their students. This strategy makes sure that learning loss is prevented, and a basic education continuity plan is implemented. With that, parents step in to support and encourage their children while learning at home. This study, therefore, was able to develop constructs that will help in empowering the parents as they embrace the learning continuity plan during the COVID-19 pandemic namely; technological preparedness of parents, parents' constant collaboration with the teachers, effective time management of parents, and capacity building on pedagogical strategies for parents.

It is hereby recommended that the education department must develop mechanisms to encourage constant collaboration between the school and the parents, initiate basic pedagogy training and effective time management for parents in online or other media platforms while partnering with other concerned government agencies for possible support and assistance in the acquisition of technological devices that can be used for efficient execution of the parents'

role as teachers at home. Further, an exploratory study may be conducted to confirm the themes and established the reliability of the study.

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