Parental Challenges brought by Online Learning Modalities

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the educational system and has consequently shared the spotlight on parents who have become home facilitators in the teaching-learning process. Hence, this descriptive research paper analyzed the degree of parental challenges in Kindergarten and Primary Grades in online learning modalities at a private higher educational institution in Bacolod City during the School Year 2020-2021. Needed data came from 91 parents using Microsoft forms. Subsequent findings revealed time management obtaining the highest mean score, interpreted as a high degree of parental challenges, specifically balancing household roles, responsibilities, and teaching. In contrast, the learning environment got the lowest mean score, interpreted as a moderate degree, particularly on keeping the place free from noise and distractions during an online class. Time management likewise got the highest mean score when grouped by age: younger, higher family income, and unemployed employment status. The learning environment also reached the lowest mean based on the same variable groupings. Moreover, findings revealed no significant difference in the degrees of challenges parents encounter in online learning modalities when grouped according to the abovementioned variables. This paper concludes that regardless of age, family income, and employment status, parents struggle to assist their children in using online learning modalities. Further, it is recommended that parents be guided with some intervention in providing emotional support to their children during times of online schooling system aimed at improving the bond between children and their parents during this time of the pandemic.

Keywords: Education, parental challenges, online learning modalities, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental

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Introduction

Nature of the Problem

The Covid-19 epidemic has forced everyone to stay at home, but it has not brought the world to a halt. People must continue to work, pupils must study, and instructors must teach. Some schools have chosen virtual learning to keep children safe, which is a whole new paradigm for everyone involved - instructors, kids, and, most importantly, parents.

Nowadays, people are staying in their homes close to the lockdown policy implemented by the government. However, learning should not halt. Different countries worldwide have introduced various answers during the pandemic to continue the education process using distance learning; thus, online learning platforms such as google, TV broadcasts, guidelines resources, video lectures, and online channels were introduced (Tria, 2020).

In the Philippines, The Department of Education (DepEd) formulated and implemented policies, plans, and programs to continue the education of Filipino students during times of pandemic (DepEd, 2020). They spearhead the pure online, blended learning, and modular teaching approach depending on the capacity and capability of basic education students. The program proves successful since it makes the students continue their studies during a crisis.

However, there are challenges, especially for parents in distance learning education. They have been assigned a difficult online job that requires them to work from home while also assuming responsibility for ensuring that their children's learning process runs smoothly during Covid-19. They served as partners of teachers in education and played a vital role as home facilitators (FlipScience, 2020).

Furthermore, parents are concerned about the difficulties that distant learning has presented to them and their children. Online education necessitates the availability of computers and the internet at all times. Any technological faults with the prerequisites may cause the youngster to lose out on learning. Parents also said that they have had to handle homework more than ever before, including explaining worksheets and other activities. On-screen, kids, may be hesitant to ask questions, or internet slowness may prevent them from doing so, resulting in all inquiries being sent to parents, some of whom have jobs to accomplish from home. (Bhamani, Makhdoom, Bharuchi, Ali, Kaleem & Ahmed, 2020).

These are just a few of the challenges parents nowadays face; in this study, age, family income, and employment status are taken into consideration as part of the challenges brought by this learning modality, therefore needing to be investigated and explored. Hence, this study was formed on the issues and concerns encountered by the parents in Kindergarten and primary grades at a private higher educational institution in Bacolod City, who was hands-on in assisting their children in the online learning modalities and to formulate a recommendation for this learning modality to be sustained.

Current State of Knowledge

Manoharan et al. (2021) stress that online education changes the face of traditional classrooms, and education becomes more accessible than before. Students can attend classes from anywhere. This becomes a rich learning experience with much more flexibility. Thus, it becomes a new normal for learners. The support of parents is significant, and they have to take a role of a facilitator or coach. And it's not simple amidst all their work and household-related affairs. Online learning indeed presents us all with a wide range of challenges. The wholehearted cooperation of parents is necessary in this regard, and even a technology-literate faces difficulty regarding matters regarding online education.

Educating children in the learning process in the Post-modern era is not only the teacher's task but at this time, parents are required to guide and monitor children's learning at home. It is not appropriate if the responsibility is only delegated to the teacher in teaching and learning. The changing times provide convenience and challenges in Christian education; education is about the responsibility of formal educational institutions and informally, including parental support (Simanjuntak, 2018).

According to Situmorang, (2018), parents must play an active role in guiding their children to study at home. Parents at home must know the lessons they must follow every day, and the child's homework assignments must be completed. Children's learning media must also be provided, and parents

must give time to guide their children to study at home every day. Teachers and parents have an equally important role in education. Parents must be open to changes to anticipate the challenges of accelerating in the world of education, mostly done online, so that children can continuously develop themselves in a relevant way, both formally and informally.

Bitterli (2020) studied School #FromHome: The Challenges of Online Learning for parents and Kids. The following were found as the top five difficulties faced by parents of Kids in K -12 with virtual learning: a.) keeping their children focused on schoolwork instead of other online activities (50.31%), b.) establishing a daily routine (49.26%), c.) balancing household responsibilities and teaching, (41.83%), d.) establishing a wake-up and bedtime schedule, (33.40%), e.) balancing working from home and teaching (33.31%).

The study also mentioned that the most significant issue faced by parents with virtual learning was that parents were unsupported by technology. According to research conducted by EdTech company Promethean, just 5% of instructors believe they are receiving full training and support for EdTech in their schools. It's not surprising that you, as a parent, feel unsupported.

Students have a variety of diversions at their disposal in their home environment. You can set them in front of the computer, but kids are kids, and it's not a leap to think they'll move to another game at some time. According to a 2016 study, students check their gadgets for "non-class purposes" 11.43 times per day on average, even in an atmosphere where a teacher could stroll around and supervise what was going on and keep them interested. The case of that proximity is lost with virtual learning. This scenario will now be the responsibility of parents to keep their children how to be focused on classes online.

Although parents do their best to keep their children involved in meaningful activities, there are some problems that they are aware of. Many youngsters regard this time as a vacation from school, and as a result, they desire nothing to do with a typical school-like routine. They would rather sleep, wake up when they want, and spend the remainder of their day playing video games and watching cartoons/movies. This might jeopardize their social, educational, and physical development. Their way of life is growing sedentary, with little outdoor access, and they are not used to physical activity within their house, most likely due to a lack of room. It is especially difficult if the parents work from home or have strict schedules to adhere to. Keeping their children in control all the time has become difficult now that home assistance is scarce, and parents end up letting their children do things their way (Bhamani, Makhdoom, Bharuchi, Ali, Kaleem & Ahmed, 2020).

Furthermore, by creating an academic environment at home, parents must do all possible to offer a quiet area for their children and assist them in mentally demarcating that space as a study space. This might entail investments in technology, which some families may find burdensome. A high-speed internet connection is necessary at a minimum for families with many children and a single screen at home. 2020 (georgiatestprep.com)

When parents and children participate in learning activities together, their connection grows, and they spend more time together. In such cases, parents can become a source of comfort by relieving their children's discomfort and fear by engaging in dialogues with them. It has been suggested that parents be educated on how to offer emotional support to their children during times of uncertainty (Wang, Zhang, Zhao, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020). Online schooling systems with parental support guidelines could help improve children's and their parents' bonds.

Implementing a national education system in response to the coronavirus epidemic and school closures can be enhanced with a curriculum that includes parental assistance and COVID-19-related knowledge. This would assist to strengthen education systems in general and ensure learning accomplishment at home. Such programs can also help kids build a sense of responsibility for their own growth and development through independent learning. The government has just begun to broadcast official tele-education on its national television network. However, the influence of tele-education on curriculum delivery quality has yet to be studied. Until recently, and even now, most parents facilitate learning at home, and research on the subject is scarce, particularly in the context of COVID-19 (Bhamani, Makhdoom, Bharuchi, Ali, Kaleem & Ahmed, 2020).

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the degree of parental challenges of kindergarten and primary grades pupils in online learning modalities (OLM) at a private higher educational institution in Bacolod City during the School Year 2020-2021. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: 1) What is the degree of parental challenges in OLM based on time management, instructional competence, learning environment, and technical resources? 3) Is there a significant difference in the parental degree of challenges in OLM when grouped according to the abovementioned variables?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the degree of parental challenges in OLM when grouped according to the abovementioned variables.

Methodology

This section illustrates the supporting structure of this paper in adherence to the stringent requirements of research as a scientific process. It includes the research design, subject-respondents, the instrument used to collect the data, and the procedures used for validity and reliability testing, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

This paper used the descriptive research design consistent with its objective of determining the degree of parental challenges in OLM in a private higher educational institution in Bacolod City during the School Year 2020-2021. The descriptive research design was adopted since it attempts to determine, describe, or identify characteristics of the degree of parental challenges in OLM.

Subject-Respondents

The study's respondents were ninety-one (91) parents from Kindergarten to Grades 1, 2, and 3 in the mentioned research environment during the same school calendar. Purposive sampling was utilized.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made survey questionnaire was used in gathering the data to determine its stated objectives. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, wherein part I deals with the profile of respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, employment, and family income. Part II of the questionnaire is a 40-item statement, 10 for each area, namely: time management, instructional competence, learning environment, and technical resources, adapted from the works of literature gathered, which measures the degree of challenges encountered by parents on online learning modalities using Likert scale rating with 5 as always, 4 as often, 3 as sometimes, 2 as rarely and 1 as almost never.

Procedures

The data gathered were tallied and tabulated using the appropriate statistical tools. The raw data were transformed into numerical code guided by a coding manual, allowing for computer processing, statistical derivations, and tabular presentation. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process the encoded data.

Validity of the Data-gathering Instrument

The self-made instrument was subjected to validity testing by enlisting the services of three (3) experts from their fields of endeavor using the validation criteria of Goods and Scates. The said validity test obtained a score of 4.83, making the instrument valid.

Reliability of the Instrument

After the validity test was done, the instrument was subjected to a reliability test. Thirty (30) individuals not forming part of the official study respondents underwent pilot testing to determine whether the instrument was reliable or not, utilizing Cronbach's Alpha. The said test obtained a score of .976, interpreted as excellent, indicating that the instrument was reliable.

Data Collection

After establishing the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researchers obtained clearance from the SBE Principal and the Vice President for Academic Affairs to gather the needed data. In front of the subject respondents, the researchers explained the purpose of the study and, with the help of teacher-advisers, gave the link and guided them in filling out the questionnaire. Filled questionnaires containing the needed data were retrieved thru Microsoft Forms.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

The first objective used the descriptive-analytical scheme and mean as a statistical tool to determine parental challenges in online learning modalities in terms of time management, instructional competence, learning environment, and technical resources and the second objective used the comparative-analytical scheme and Mann-Whiteny U test as a statistical tool to determine whether or not a significant difference exists in the degree of parental challenges in online learning modalities when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were given throughout the study with regard to access, confidentiality, and consent. Due to the sensitive nature of this research, none of the personal details will be asked while carrying out the primary research, and the respondents were encouraged to leave the personal details field blank if they wish to. No data sought that could exhibit participants' direct identity like names, telephone numbers, addresses, areas, or national identification numbers.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Degree of Parental Challenges in Online Learning Modalities based on Time Management

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a parent, I encountered problems in…		
1. balancing household role responsibilities and teaching.	3.67	High Degree
2. setting time to finish my child's e-book before the deadline.	3.59	High Degree
3. setting clear rules between leisure and study time.	3.49	High Degree
4. telling my child that they have household chores to accomplish aside from their school assignments.	3.21	Moderate Degree
5. giving reminders to set their priorities in doing their assignments during their asynchronous session.	3.59	High Degree
6. making a consistent schedule for my child's study and physical activities.	3.55	High Degree

7. spending time with my child working on his/her modules.	3.52	High Degree
8. taking time to talk to my child regarding assignments and task performance.	3.54	High Degree
9. establishing a daily routine in accomplishing their worksheet	3.46	Moderate Degree
10. dividing my time between my work and assisting my child.	3.66	High Degree
Overall Mean	**3.53**	**High Degree**

Table 1 summarizes the analysis of the degree of parental challenges in OLM with an overall mean of 3.53, interpreted to mean "high degree." The highest mean score goes to item no. 1 (3.67) on the task of balancing household duties and teaching their kids, while the lowest goes to item no. 4 on the need to tell their kids about their household chores on top of their school assignments.

The result suggests that time management is problematic for parents, especially in balancing household role responsibilities and, at the same time, teaching their children about their assignments and activities. It is especially challenging if the parents are working from home or offices and have their schedules to follow in; some of them have their work to complete from home, resulting in them becoming preoccupied. Parents have to multi-tasking from household chores and attend to their jobs. The findings are consistent with Bitterli's (2020) study on School #FromHome: The Challenges of Online Learning for Parents and Kids, which found that balancing household responsibilities and teaching was one of the top three difficulties faced by parents of children in grades K-12 with virtual learning (41.83%).

Table 2
Degree of Parental Challenges in Online Learning Modalities based on Instructional Competence

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a Parent, I encountered problems in…		
1. giving clear instructions to my child in answering his/her worksheet	3.40	Moderate Degree
2. telling my child that playing with gadgets is not allowed during study time.	3.71	High Degree
3. reviewing the lesson discussed by the teacher during an online class.	3.34	Moderate Degree
4. giving reminders that he/she should give focus on his/her online class.	3.70	High Degree
5. checking the answers of their e-book due to lack of knowledge of the lesson.	3.26	Moderate Degree
6. keeping my child focused on school work instead of other online games.	3.70	High Degree
7. keeping my child engaged in meaningful activities.	3.45	Moderate Degree
8. helping my child develop good study habits.	3.53	High Degree
9. giving examples if ever my child asked me to do.	3.31	Moderate Degree
10. providing additional valuable information to my child aside from what he/she is learning from his e-book.	3.38	Moderate Degree
Over-all Mean	**3.48**	**Moderate Degree**

Table 2 summarizes the analysis of the degree of parental challenges in OLM based on instructional competence, obtaining an overall mean of 3.48, duly interpreted as a "moderate degree."

Getting the highest mean of 3.71 was item 2 on telling kids to set aside gadgets during study time, a problematic issue owing to students' propensity to manipulate their gadgets. Getting the lowest mean of 3.31 was item 9 on needing to give examples if asked by kids.

These figures illustrate how parents are torn between engaging their kids in meaningful lesson activities and letting them do what they want, like playing video games and watching cartoons/movies, even during study time. Bhamani et al. (2020) corroborate this finding by describing kids how lifestyle is becoming sedentary with limited outdoor access. Because of the lack of room in their home, they are not used to engaging in physical activities.

Table 3
Degree of Parental Challenges in Online Learning Modalities in terms of Learning Environment

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a parent, I encountered problems in…		
1. providing my child enough space for an online class.	3.20	Moderate Degree
2. keeping the place conducive for learning.	3.10	Moderate Degree
3. keeping the place free from noise during an online class.	3.23	Moderate Degree
4. setting up the space only for an online class.	3.15	Moderate Degree
5. keeping the place free from distraction.	3.23	Moderate Degree
6. maintaining the space in order and well-arranged chairs and tables.	3.11	Moderate Degree
7. providing some materials to be used during synchronous and asynchronous classes.	3.07	Moderate Degree
8. providing school supplies like ball pens, pencils, paper, and crayons, place them on a table ready to use.	3.07	Moderate Degree
9. keeping toys and other gadgets in the study area.	3.10	Moderate Degree
10. maintaining a place for synchronous and asynchronous classes.	3.09	Moderate Degree
Over-all Mean	**3.13**	**Moderate Degree**

Table 3 illustrates the moderate degree of parental challenges in OLM in terms of learning environment, with an overall mean of 3.13. Items 3 and 5 obtained an identical mean score of 3.23, duly interpreted as a moderate degree, as they strived to keep the place free from noise during online class and keeping it free from distraction. On the downside, items 7 and 8 got an identical mean of 3.07 as parents try to maintain a steady supply of their children's logistical needs.

This confirms the statement quoted made by Mateo (2020) in the enrolment survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) showed a significant number of parents citing issues on challenges that may affect the learning process of their children is on the distractions such as social media and noise from the community at 2.3 million. (philstar.com/headlines/2020/08/02)

Table 4
Degree of Parental Challenges in OLM based on Technical Resources

Items	Mean	Interpretation
As a parent, I encountered problems…		
1. in maintaining a high-speed internet connection during an online class.	3.43	Moderate Degree
2. in maintaining enough load for an online class.	3.14	Moderate Degree
3. in providing enough gadgets to cater to my child/children's needs during online and synchronous sessions.	3.14	Moderate Degree
4. when there is a power interruption during an online class.	3.63	High Degree
5. in using and manipulating gadgets.	3.15	Moderate Degree
6. in assisting my child using teams and elms.	3.18	Moderate Degree
7. in familiarizing the icons and commands in the computer.	2.89	Moderate Degree
8. in helping my child to search for some assignments using different websites.	3.05	Moderate Degree
9. in investing multiple gadgets for more than one child.	2.89	Moderate Degree
10. in maintaining a good internet connection when my child is taking an examination.	3.58	High Degree
Over-all Mean	**3.21**	**Moderate Degree**

Table 4 shows the high degree of parental challenges in OLM based on technical resources obtaining an overall mean of 3.21, duly interpreted to mean moderate degree. The highest mean of 3.63 (high degree) goes to item 4, dealing with power interruption during online classes. Items 7 and 9 got the lowest identical mean of 2.89 (moderate degree) on matters dealing with familiarizing with computer icons and commands as well as in investing multiple gadgets for more than one child. This finding brings the spotlight on matters beyond their control, like power interruptions during online classes, poor internet connection, and rotational power outages. Other interruptions resulted from preventive maintenance of diesel generators and power lines.

Bisharyan (2021) also declares that power outage affects everyone's daily lives; it is more damaging to an underprivileged student's education. Unprecedented conditions, such as power outages during online education, make it almost impossible for disadvantaged students to gain equal access.

Table 5
Difference in the Degree of Parental Challenges in OLM based on Time Management and Selected Variable Groupings

Variables	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U test	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	46	48.01	942.50	0.462		Not Significant
	Older	45	43.94			0.05	
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	62	44.24	790.00	0.353		Not Significant
	Higher	29	49.76				

Employment Status	Employed	51	45.69	1004.00	0.898		Not Significant
	Unemployed	40	46.40				

At this juncture, Table 5 summarizes the analysis of the significant difference in the degree of parental challenges in OLM based on time management and selected variable groupings. The Mann-Whitney U tests found all *p*-values on three selected variable groupings way higher than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses stating the absence of any significant difference in parental challenges in OLM were henceforth accepted.

Table 6
Difference in the Degree of Parental Challenges in OLM based on Instructional Competence and Selected Variable Groupings

Variables	**Category**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U test**	**p-value**	*Sig. level*	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	46	48.18	934.50	0.425		Not Significant
	Older	45	43.77				
Family Income	Lower	62	44.68	817.00	0.484	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	29	48.83				
Employment Status	Employed	51	45.81	1010.50	0.939		Not Significant
	Unemployed	40	46.24				

Table 6 summarizes the analysis of the significant difference in the degree of parental challenges in OLM based on instructional competence and selected variable groupings. The Mann-Whitney U tests found all *p*-values on three selected variable groupings (age=0.425; family income=0.484; and employment status=0.939) way higher than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses on the absence of any significant difference in parental challenges in OLM based on instructional competence were henceforth accepted.

Table 7
Difference in the Degree of Parental Challenges in OLM based on Learning Environment and Selected Variable Groupings

Variables	**Category**	**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Mann Whitney U test**	**p-value**	*Sig. level*	**Interpretation**
Age	Younger	46	47.11	984.00	0.685		Not Significant
	Older	45	44.87				
Family Income	Lower	62	44.52	807.00	0.433	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	29	49.17				
Employment Status	Employed	51	46.80	979.00	0.743		Not Significant
	Unemployed	40	44.98				

Table 7 summarizes the analysis of the significant difference in the degree of parental challenges in OLM based on the learning environment and selected variable groupings. The Mann-Whitney U tests found all *p*-values on three selected variable groupings (age=0.685; family income=0.433; and employment status=0.743) way higher than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses on the absence of any significant difference in parental challenges in OLM based on the same constructs were henceforth accepted.

Table 8

Differences in the Degree of Parental Challenges in OLM based on Technical and Selected Variable Groupings

Variables	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U test	p-value	*Sig. level*	Interpretation
Age	Younger	46	45.66	1019.50	0.902		Not Significant
	Older	45	46.34				
Family Income	Lower	62	42.63	690.00	0.075	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	29	53.21				
Employment Status	Employed	51	47.55	941.00	0.527		Not Significant
	Unemployed	40	44.03				

Table 8 summarizes the analysis of the difference in parental challenges in OLM based on technical aspects and three selected variable groupings. The said analysis showed no significant difference in age, family income, and employment status, evidenced by the computed p-value of 0.902, 0.075, and 0.527, respectively, which were all found to be greater than the significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis was henceforth accepted. Simply put, this means that age, family income, and employment status do not influence the degree of parental challenges in OLM based on technical resources. Parental challenges in OLM from either younger or older groups, those with lower or higher income, and those who are either employed or unemployed do not significantly differ based on technical resources.

Conclusion

Among the identified challenges parents encountered in online learning modality (OLM), time management appears to have earned the trophy as the most problematic parental task during the Covid crisis. Instructional competence, learning environment, and technical resources recorded some moderate degree of challenges in OLM as parents did their best to help schools deliver the curriculum for their children right in their respective homes. Subsequent inferential analysis showed no such significant difference in parental challenges in OLM based on selected variable groupings and those four abovementioned areas. These findings call for parents to assert their authority by establishing a sensible ground rule that maintains a balance between work and play for their children at home.

Acknowledgment

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