

# Why do Parents Answer their Children's Modules?

## A Closer Look on Parental Practices and Challenges in Modular Distance Learning

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### Abstract

As the schools abruptly shifted from face-to-face learning to distance learning due to the pandemic, novel education-related problems emerged which include parents answering their children's modules. This study described the ways and practices of parents in guiding their children in answering self-learning modules at home and it also identified the challenges faced by the parents in modular distance learning by taking a closer look into the parents' reasons on why they answer their children's modules. In doing so, 638 parents were asked to answer a qualitative survey comprising of one closed-ended and two open-ended questions. The responses of the parents were thematically analyzed which paved the way in the identification of practices they employed as well as the plights they faced in the implementation of modular distance learning. This study identified the pedagogical stances, albeit unconsciously, taken by the parents in facilitating learning at home. Moreover, this study revealed that the malpractice of parents answering their children's modules is an offshoot of the challenges faced by the parents, to wit: a) poor reading and writing skills of their children; b) time constraints due to work and household chores; c) too many children to attend to; d) too difficult lessons and subjects; and e) too many learning activities in the modules. If these challenges are left unaddressed, modular learning will fail and no learning whatsoever will take place. Hence, parents, being the facilitators of learning, should be capacitated and empowered to effectively facilitate learning at home.

**Keywords:** distance education, modular distance learning, modules, new normal in education, parental involvement

## Introduction

The unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19 has brought about serious challenges to the education system, which include, but not limited to, delivery, resources, funding, and public health. This pandemic provoked the education sector to think of ways to continue providing quality education without jeopardizing the health and safety of the learners, teachers, and school personnel. As we face the new normal in education, schools are preparing a wide array of learning delivery options rather than the traditional face-to-face classroom set-up to ensure the continuity of the delivery of quality, relevant, and accessible education. Thus, distance learning will be a major component of learning delivery in the new normal in education.

Based on the survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), among all the distance learning modalities, modular distance learning is the most preferred learning delivery modality by parents. Modular distance learning (MDL) “involves individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning Modules in print or digital format, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner, and other learning resources like learner’s materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials,” (Department of Education, 2020: p. 31). In facilitating MDL, any member of the family or other community stakeholders will serve as para-teachers while the teachers will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the learners.

This abrupt shift in learning delivery modality from the traditional set-up to modular distance learning modality has introduced novel concerns among teachers. One of these concerns is the problem on parents answering the self-learning modules (SLMs) on behalf of their children. Estela Cariño, director of the Department of Education’s office in the Cagayan Valley Region, reported in a virtual press briefing that there are parents who answer the SLMs for their children. This scenario urged Education Undersecretary Tonisito Umali to call on parents to not take over their child’s school activities. He said in Filipino, “They are not the ones who should answer the test or the assignment or the children’s schoolwork. That is clear.”

Comically, several memes and pictures circulated on social media sites, especially on Facebook, showing parents answering their children’s modules in order to get high grades. For instance, one parent jokingly commented, “*Ngayon na nga lang magiging first honor mga anak namin eh, kokontra ka pa* [This will be the only time that our children will have the chance to be the first honor in their class, stop meddling],” in response to a post asking parents not to answer their child’s modules. In another post, one Facebook user listed the names of parents as top ten honor rolls, instead of their children’s names, since

apparently, it was the parents who were answering the modules. Albeit jokingly stated, it may be deemed true especially that “the honor and award system of the public school system [in the Philippines] reproduces a certain hypervigilant parenting that will ensure access to quality yet affordable education for their children,” (Arzadon, 2017: p. 99).

In her paper entitled *Killing for the Grade*, Arzadon (2017) attempted to describe and analyze the parental involvement in the context of schooling and how it “is mediated by the deployment of forms of capital that are exclusively available to teachers, analyzing it in the broader context of societal structures and forces that may be unique to the Philippine context,” (p. 101). She elaborated the intensity of competition in schools and told “bizarre stories about what parents and students would do to get ahead,” (Arzadon, 2017, p: 111). This precedent could add up to the notion that some parents will do everything, including answering their children’s modules, just to get high remarks.

While getting high remarks is the most popular reason as to why parents answer the self-learning modules (SLMs) on behalf of their children, I believe that there are other reasons behind this malpractice, especially that the DepEd Order No. 31 s. 2020 or also known as *Interim Guidelines for Assessment and Grading in Light of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan* stipulates that the bases of the learners’ grades only include written works and performance tasks. Teachers shall administer written works and performance tasks “to assess the content and performance standards that describe the knowledge, abilities, and skills that learners are expected to demonstrate,” (Department of Education, 2020: p. 6). Importantly, activities in the modules should not be included in the written works because these activities are formative in nature which are free from the restrictions of grading (Christodolou, as cited in, Department of Education, 2020).

Cognizant of the misalignment of logic between parents answering their children’s module to get high remarks and the DepEd’s guidelines for assessment and grading, it is interesting to delve into the submerged part of the icebergs and explore the other reasons as to why parents take over their children’s learning activities. Since modular distance learning, although already existent in the Philippines for quite a time, is relatively new to many Filipinos since they are forced to shift learning modality due to the pandemic, it is hard to assume the real reasons behind the parents answering their children’s modules without empirical data. Most of the listed reasons were all based on assumptions since little to no studies were conducted to explore the covert reasons as to why parents answer their children’s modules, at least to the best of my knowledge.

Hence, to address this gap, this paper seeks to describe the practices of parents in guiding their children in answering self-learning modules and to

identify the challenges they face in modular distance learning by knowing the reasons why they answer their children's modules on their behalf. Specifically, this paper aims to employ a qualitative research design to answer the following questions:

1. How do parents guide their children in answering the modules at home?
2. What are the challenges faced by the parents in modular distance learning?

In finding answers to these questions, this paper hopes to discover the reasons why parents tend to answer their children's modules. Finding these reasons will pave the way for the identification of the challenges faced by the parents in the implementation of modular distance learning. When these problems become more apparent, proper interventions will be given such as capacity building among parents. Moreover, adjustment to the School Learning Continuity Plan may be made to address the challenges faced by the parents. Lastly, this paper hopes to open research pathways on the implementation of modular distance learning in consideration of parental involvement specifically in answering self-learning modules.

## Methods

This study was conducted in a public elementary school in the Philippines, specifically located in Quezon City, with a population of more than 4,000 pupils from Kindergarten to Grade Six. Specifically, this study involved 638 parents whose children were enrolled in the modular distance learning modality in the said elementary school. To construct the corpus of this paper, a qualitative survey was used to get responses from the parents. Due to the pandemic, the data gathering procedure was conducted online.

In the conduct of the survey, the participants were asked to answer an online questionnaire through Google Form. The online questionnaire has two parts, to wit: Part 1—respondents' demographic and Part 2—main survey questions. The Part 2 of the questionnaire is comprised of one closed question and two open-ended questions. The closed yes or no question identifies whether or not the parents had resorted to answering their children's modules. If they answered no, they were asked to not answer the rest of the questionnaire. Otherwise, they were encouraged to answer the rest of the questionnaire, specifically the two open-ended questions which asked for the reasons as to why they resorted to answering their children's self-learning modules and the ways on how they guide their children in answering the self-learning modules. The participants were given as much time as they needed in answering the questions and they were given the liberty to give as many answers as they wanted.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data obtained in this study. Specifically, in analyzing the data, six major steps were undertaken as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), to wit: 1) familiarizing yourself with your data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing the report.

## Findings

### Ways on How Parents Guide Their Children in Answering Modules

To reiterate, the main role of the parents in modular distance learning is to facilitate the learning at home; hence, the first part of this study sought to know the ways and practices of the parents on how they guide their children in answering their self-learning modules. Five pervasive themes were generated to describe their facilitation of learning at home, to wit: 1) Guiding by Explaining; 2) Guiding by Giving Examples; 3) Guiding by Correcting their Children's Incorrect Answers; 4) Guiding by 'Googling' the Answer; and 5) Guiding by Giving Directly the Correct Answers.

**Guiding by Explaining.** Self-learning modules, albeit underwent an evaluation process to ensure their quality and appropriateness to the students' level, still contained topics that were hardly understood by the students due to difficult words and ideas. To address this, parents try to explain to the best of their understanding the difficult topics to their children using easy-to-understand words. As one parent of a Grade 5 pupil said, "*Hindi ko direktang sinasabi ang sagot. Ipinapaliwanag ko 'yung mga pangungusap na malalim at 'di nya maintindihan* [I do not directly give the answer. I explain the difficult sentences that they do not understand]." In doing this, parents hope that their children get the gist of the lessons which, in turn, will help them in answering the questions that follow.

**Guiding by Giving Examples.** Parents also guide their children by giving other examples that are not provided in the modules. Cognizant of their children's experiences, they give examples that are familiar to their children like the TV shows that they watch, the places where they go, the food that they eat, the people that they meet, and activities that they do, among others. Since the examples are more relatable to the children, they tended to understand better the topics being studied or the questions being asked. Hence, the children arrived at the correct answer with the help of the parents' scaffolding, particularly the examples given.

**Guiding by Correcting their Children's Incorrect Answers.** Working parents, since they were not beside their children whenever the latter answer their modules, tend to just let their children answer their modules on their own. However, at the end of the day, once they got home from work, they will check their kids' work to see the completeness and correctness of the

answers. Whenever they spot errors, they will ask their children to change the answers. As one parent of a Grade 2 pupil answered, “*Itinatama namin ang sa palagay ko ay mali pero siya ‘yung nag susulat sa sagutang papel* [We correct the answers that I think are wrong but it is my child who will still write on the answer sheets].” In this situation, the parents will directly give the correct answers to the questions in replacement to the wrong ones. Moreover, due to time constraints, there were also instances when they no longer explain to the children why it was not the correct answer.

**Guiding by ‘Googling’ the Answer.** In instances when the topic was also unfamiliar to the parents, they tended to consult Google to seek for the answers. As one parent of a Grade 6 pupil answered, “*Minsan, may mga parte ng lesson na hindi ko kayang ituro dahil ‘di ko din alam. Kaya ang ginagawa ko ise-search ko na lang sa Google tapos ipapakita sa kaniya ‘yung result* [Sometimes, there are lessons that I cannot teach because I know nothing about it. So, what I do is, I will look for the answer on Google and I will show them the results].” In this situation, the children will just copy the answer from Google. Importantly, these answers may or may not be discussed to them depending on the parents’ understanding of the lessons and availability of time since they have some other things to cater to.

**Guiding by Directly Giving the Correct Answers.** One of the most pervasive themes on how parents guide their children in answering their modules is parents directly giving the correct answer. In answering, the parents will read the questions and give the answers to their children. The children, on the other hand, will be the ones to write the answer on the answer sheet. As one parent narrated, “*Hindi po ako ang nagsusulat mismo ng sagot pero po tinuturo ko po ang tamang mga salita o mga letra na isusulat niya sa kaniyang sagutang papel* [I am not the one who will write the answer on the answer sheet. But I will teach them the right words or letters that they will write on the answer sheet].”

In some cases, parents were the ones who also wrote the answers on the answer sheets. This situation implies that the children have no longer participation in answering their modules; hence, no learning whatsoever took place. Apparently, the answer sheets will be given remarks accounted to the students’ performance despite the fact that it was not them who actually answered their modules and activity sheets.

### **Challenges Faced by Parents in Modular Distance Learning**

Parents answering their children’s self-learning modules is truly problematic because it snatches the learning opportunities from the kids. However, this paper discovered that this problem is actually a manifestation of several challenges faced by parents in modular distance learning. To reiterate, this learning delivery modality is new to the parents and they had no choice but

to adapt in the new normal in education. However, in the process of adaptation, parents were facing novel challenges that were different from the ones they have faced in the pre-pandemic school setup. This paper generated five pervasive themes that describe the plights of the parents in modular distance learning, to wit: 1) Poor reading and writing skills of their children; 2) Too many children to attend to; 3) Time constraints due to work and household chores; 4) Too difficult lessons and subjects; and 5) Too many activities on the modules.

**Self-directed learning? Our Kids Can't Even Comprehend: Poor Reading and Writing Skills of Children.** The majority of the parents raised a concern regarding their children's poor reading and writing abilities. One parent of a Grade 2 pupil said that, "*Tinutulungan kong sumagot sa module ang aking anak; ako po ang taga-basa, siya po ang taga-sulat at pumipili ng sagot sapagkat hindi pa siya marunong magbasa* [I help my child in answering the modules by reading to them the contents. However, they will be the ones to choose and write the answer. This is because they do not know how to read]." Moreover, reading comprehension seemed to be a problem as well. Albeit the children can read the lessons, they cannot understand what they were reading. There were times also when the parents tended to answer the modules themselves because their children are struggling readers.

One key problem, according to the responses of the parents, was the use of the English language in the modules. The parents noted that their children have difficulty in reading and comprehending the texts written in English. Importantly, many subject areas used English as the medium of instruction in writing the modules. The parents had to translate the lessons to Filipino first before their children can understand and answer. In doing this, some parents admitted that they tended to give the right answer already due to lack of alternate terms. Unfortunately, some parents who are not also good in English just let their children answer on their own without giving assistance or they just refused to answer the difficult parts of the modules leaving some questions unanswered.

**The More is Not the Merrier in Modular Distance Learning: Parents Have Too Many Children to Attend to.** One key finding of this study is the plight of parents who have more than one child enrolled in modular distance learning or online distance learning. In general, the parents had problems in helping the unique needs of each of their children who are enrolled in different grade levels. For instance, one parent said, "*Yung anak ko tatlo-Grade 9, Grade 5, at Grade 2. 'Yung bunso ko, walang alam sa module na pinapagawa sa kaniya, so 'yun, si kuya niya ang gumagawa ngayon* [I have three children-Grade 9, Grade 5, and Grade 2. My youngest knows nothing about what is in the module so it is their eldest brother who answers their

modules].” In this case, the parent asked the help of their eldest child to help their younger siblings.

Another parent stressed that the reason why they answered their child’s module is that besides their two enrolled children, they also have a newborn baby. The parent said, “*nahhirapan po ako magturo lalo’t na sabay-sabay po ang gawain at pag-aalaga at pagtuturo* [It is hard for me to teach them because I have to juggle doing household chores, taking care of the kids, and teaching them their lessons].” In this particular scenario, having a newborn child is also a big factor as it consumes a lot of time knowing that babies need extra care. Thus, study time with their other school-aged children is limited and deficient.

**Work Over Modules–We are Busy being Parents to be Teachers: Time Constraints Due to Work and Household Chores.** Now that the parents’ role drastically shifted to facilitators of learning in the new normal in education, majority of them seemed to have difficulties in terms of time management most especially when they have a full-time job. For example, one parent narrated, “*May work po ako pang-gabi at ang out ko po ay 12 noon. Minsan pag-out ko, need muna matulog kaya naasikaso ko ang anak ko gabi na which is patulog naman siya kaya nagrereklamo na if magsasagot kami ng modyul* [I have a night-shift work which ends at 12nn. After my shift, I have to sleep first. That’s why I can only guide my child with their modules at night. However, at that time, it is their bedtime already so they will complain to me if we will continue answering the modules].”

Another parent admitted that she was giving the right answers to her child because she had a lot of things to attend to at home. She narrated, “*Kapag nasa bahay ka, marami kang ginagawa na minsan sunod-sunod. May trabaho pa ako [kaya] gabi na nakakauwi. Ang tendency talaga sasabihin mo sa kaniya ang sagot at minsan hindi mo na naipapaliwanag ang mga subject sa kaniya* [At home, we have a lot of chores to do. Moreover, I have a job so when I got home, it’s nighttime already. The tendency is to just give the answers even without explaining the subject to my child].”

These situations imply that parents, who have full-time jobs, found it difficult to guide their children in answering their modules due to time constraints. Their work schedule, especially those who have nightshift jobs, does not jive with the schedule set by the school. Those who have work in the morning, on the other hand, have problems in guiding their children at night because their children were already sleepy by that time.

**We Do Not Know What These Modules Are Talking About: Too Difficult Lessons and Subjects.** Parents, needless to say, have a variety of skills and knowledge depending on their personal background and level of education and training. Hence, it is with great possibility that they may encounter problems in guiding their children in subject matters and specific



lessons that are not familiar to them. True enough, majority of the parents raised concern on the lessons' levels of difficulty. According to one parent, "*Maski kaming mga magulang ay nahihirapang unawain ang bawat leksyon sapagkat maski kami ay hindi namin maintindihan ang mga tanong at leksyon na ibinibigay nyo. Hindi rin naman lahat ng magulang ay nakapag-aral* [Even us parents have difficulty in understanding every lesson and question you are giving. Not all parents attended school]."

Based on the responses of the parents, four subjects appeared to be the most difficult for them and their children, namely: English, Science, Math, and Music. Apparently, they were spending longer time answering the modules in these four subjects due to their high level of difficulty. Topics covered in these subjects, especially in Math, were already forgotten by the parents; hence, it was harder for them to guide their children in these subject areas. Moreover, besides the fact that the concepts being studied in these subjects are difficult in nature, the medium of instruction used is English which makes it a lot harder for them to understand and comprehend.

**There's Too Much on Our Plates: Too Many Modules, Too Many Activities.** Every week, parents received a total of eight modules covering all the eight subject areas, namely: Mathematics, Science, English, Filipino, *Araling Panlipunan* (Social Studies), *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (Values Education), Technology and Livelihood Education, and Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health. Each module is jampacked with activities that the students need to answer ranging from review, drills, application, evaluation, and enrichment activities.

In relation to that, the majority of the parents raised concerns regarding the overwhelming activities on each module that their children need to answer. One parent said, "*Nahihirapan po kasi ang aking anak na magsagot ng module sa sobrang daming activities at sabay-sabay ipapasa at minsan ay hindi niya na din maintindihan sa sobrang dami* [It is difficult for my child to answer the modules because there are too many activities which are needed to be submitted altogether. Sometimes, they cannot understand because there are a lot to study]." Indeed, it is really overwhelming to answer all the activities in the modules especially that the students are expected to answer eight of them in a week. Importantly, some activities need experimentation, drawings, paragraph constructions, and other output-based activities.

## Discussion

The findings of this study identified the ways and practices of the parents in guiding their children in answering the latter's learning modules. Looking at these practices, the way on how the parents play their roles in the new normal in education is described. In this new normal in education, since

face-to-face learning is restricted, parents assumed the roles of teachers. Pre-pandemic, teachers take a pedagogical stance in carrying out the lessons. Pedagogical stance is “the particular kind of stance taken by a teacher while interacting with a pupil in his/her role as a teacher,” (D’Errico, Poggi, & Leone, 2012: p. 926). Three pedagogical stances can be taken by the teachers, to wit: 1) sage on the stage; 2) guide on the side; and 3) meddler in the middle. Albeit unconsciously, parents also play these roles at home in guiding their children in answering their self-learning modules. The parents who guide their children by explaining and giving examples without directly giving the answers to their children may be playing the role of a guide on the side. As a guide on the side, the parents allow their children to take active participation in the learning process; hence, their role is just “to facilitate students’ interaction with the material and with each other in their knowledge-producing endeavor,” (King, 1993: p. 30).

On the other hand, the parents who guide their children by just giving the correct answer right away may be playing the role of a sage on the stage. In this case, the parent is the one “who has the knowledge and transmits that knowledge to the students, who simply memorize the information and later reproduce it on an exam—often without even thinking about it,” (King, 1993: p. 30). Since the children are just passive learners, it may be implied that learning is not as effective as when they are actively involved “in thinking and discussing ideas while making meaning for themselves,” (King, 1993: p. 30).

Lastly, the parents who guide their children by ‘Googling’ the answers because they also know nothing about the lessons may be taking the stance of a meddler in the middle. In this situation, the parent becomes a co-learner and “puts into practice strategies that require both themselves and their students to stay in the zone of “sense-making and joint problem-solving,” (Erica, 2009: p.10). Since the parents lack understanding of the lessons, they try to look for answers together with their children; hence, “they do not [just] take over the work of thinking and doing [but also] they provide support and direction through structure-rich activity in which they themselves are highly involved,” (Erica, 2009: p.10). However, they will only be taking this stance if they do not just let their children copy the answer but they also engage themselves in the learning process. Meaning, they should be making meaning out of the information they found online altogether.

This study also discovered the challenges faced by the parents in modular distance learning by knowing the reasons as to why they have resorted to answering their children’s self-learning modules. It turns out that this malpractice is a manifestation of several challenges connected to the abrupt shift of learning delivery modality from face-to-face learning to distance learning. It is important to note that this shift is unexpected and unprecedented

leaving parents with no choice but to just adapt. Hence, parents are unprepared and not equipped with the skills related to the facilitation of learning.

One of the problems encountered by the parents is the inability of their children to independently answer the self-learning modules due to their poor reading and writing skills. In retrospect, the Philippines ranked the lowest in reading comprehension among the 79 participating countries in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) with an average reading score of 340 (OECD, 2019). Since the learning delivery modality is modular distance learning, reading is a prerequisite skill because all the lessons are in written format. Hence; the poor reading and writing skills of the children may have adverse impacts on the learning process since they have difficulty in comprehending the lessons.

The use of the English language as the medium of instruction was also a contributory factor as to why the students had a problem in understanding the texts since they have poor reading comprehension. According to Simui, Thompson, Mundende, Mwewa, Kakana, Chishiba, and Namangala (2017), “an equally critical aspect that determines the level of user-friendliness is the use of clear and concise language,” (p. 94). Moreover, instructional materials like modules may be deemed user-unfriendly when unfamiliar language is used (Simui et al., 2017). Hence, the children’s difficulty in answering the modules which, in turn, forced the parents to answer them on their behalf, may also be attributed to the use of the English language in writing the modules, especially that the mother tongue of the students is Filipino. It is noteworthy that Mother Tongue-Based-Multilingual Education is implemented in all public schools in the Philippines, specifically in Kindergarten to Grade 3 levels as a part of the K-12 Basic Education Program.

It was also identified in this study that four subjects, specifically, Math, English, Science, and Filipino, are too difficult for the children. The reason behind this may also be the use of the English language as a medium of instruction. Since they cannot understand the lessons due to the unfamiliarity of the language, the students tend to not understand the concepts. In retrospect, the Philippines’ ranking in the PISA 2018 for Mathematics and Science is at the second-lowest with scores of 353 and 357, respectively (OECD, 2019). Importantly, these subjects were also assessed using the English language as the medium of instruction. Thus, it is with great possibility that the use of the English language could really be a reason as to why students get low scores in both school- and international-level testing.

Having more than one child to attend to is also quite challenging for the parents. Every grade level has its own standards and competencies to address; hence, the parents need a breadth range of knowledge on the subject areas in order for them to guide their children in answering the modules. Importantly, the Philippines’ K-12 curriculum is spiral in nature; hence, it is based upon “an

iterative revisiting of topics, subjects or themes throughout the course,” (Masters and Gibbs, 2007: p. 2). While some topics are recurring, the concepts become more and more complex which require a deeper level of thinking.

In comparison, parents teaching more than one child enrolled in different grade levels may have a resemblance to the Department of Education’s Multigrade program as one of the features of elementary education in the Philippines. “A multigrade class is defined as a class of 2 or more grades under one teacher in a complete or incomplete elementary school,” (DECS Order No. 96, 1997). Similarly, parents having more than one child act as multigrade teachers who need to cover lessons for each child depending on their respective curricula.

Since their children are enrolled in different levels and there is no seamless opportunity to merge competencies since materials and resources like the self-learning modules and textbooks are designed as monograde, parents need to teach individually their children. This situation may be explained by the Quasi-monograde model of multigrade education where the parents, who serve as the facilitators of learning in the case of modular distance learning, are “responsible for transmitting two curricula into two grades but at the same time,” (Gelener, 2009: p. 8) at home. While establishing multigrade classes has many advantages in the pre-pandemic state of education (see Gelener, 2009), doing it now by parents who receive no formal training or education on multigrade education may really be a lot more challenging.

Parental involvement in the new normal of education is really a key factor in the effective implementation of modular distance learning. With that in mind, parents need to allot more time and effort to their children’s education compared to the previous school years. However, this seems to be a problem for working parents who need to juggle work, household chores, and their children’s education. Parents spending lesser time with their family, especially in guiding them in their studies, has adverse impacts on the child’s development. Ermisch and Francesconi (2001) found that “when children are in school there is less conflict between parents’ time in paid employment and time with their children. The children are not available at home for a large part of the day,” (p. 2). However, since distance learning is implemented, children spend their entire day at home while parents go to work. With that being said, parents have little to no time in guiding their children with their studies at home. In turn, children’s learning is jeopardized and they have reduced “chances of obtaining A-level qualifications,” (Ermisch and Francesconi, 2001: p. 1).

Due to time constraints, parents exhaust all possible means just to comply with the requirement. Every week, the children are expected to submit all the modules with complete answers despite the fact that their parents have very limited time in guiding them. In order to submit just for the sake of

complying, parents exhaust all possible means which include answering the modules on behalf of their children. This saddening situation may be considered as a manifestation of social inequities in education. Parents prioritize their work over their children's modules because it is more important for them to provide food on the table than to submit the perfectly answered modules.

Low-income families need to work harder in order to provide for the needs of the family. Due to the pandemic, many parents lost their jobs; thus, they had to find other sources of income. Caturianas and Užpelkienė (2017) pointed out that parental income mediates the economic effects of an individual's educational achievement. Meaning, "Individuals from high income parents are more likely to stay in a higher income bracket and not to fall to middle-bracket despite lower educational achievements," (Caturianas and Užpelkienė, 2017: p. 5). On the contrary, children of low-income parents are at a disadvantage since parental involvement is inadequate because their parents need to exert extra effort and time to earn extra money.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The rationale of this study is to discover the reasons behind why parents answer their children's modules with an intent to identify the ways on how parents guide their children in answering self-learning modules and to identify the challenges faced by the parents in modular distance learning. Apparently, the malpractice of parents answering their children's modules is an offshoot and indicator of the struggles faced by the parents in modular distance learning. Parents are not experts in terms of pedagogies; hence, they have plights in facilitating learning at home and in finding their pedagogical stances as facilitators of learning.

Parents use their agency just to comply with the requirements even if there is no learning whatsoever taking place. Due to the unaddressed challenges faced by the parents who serve as facilitators of learning at home, their children's learning is compromised. This situation, in turn, may have adverse impacts on students' academic achievement as they move to the higher grade levels without learning the prerequisite skills and knowledge needed for a higher level of competencies especially that the K-12 curriculum is spiral.

Modular distance learning will not work in the Philippines unless the challenges faced by the parents will be addressed. Sadly, everyone's effort and time—parents giving answers directly to the children, children writing answers on the modules, and teachers checking and grading the answer sheets—will just be wasted if this malpractice of parents answering their children's modules continues. Modular distance learning will be a success if the children make

meaning out of the contents of the modules by themselves as their parents provide appropriate scaffolds and their teachers assess their work accordingly.

Parent empowerment is a key to the effective implementation of modular distance learning. Thus, it is important to organize capacity-building activities and programs for the parents to equip them with skills and knowledge necessary in modular distance learning which include, but not limited to, facilitation of learning, behavior management, and time management. Moreover, to lessen the requirements, it is also recommended to integrate lessons and assessment measures. Curriculum mapping may be done to find related competencies among the different subject areas. Lastly, the school and home partnership should be strengthened in order to come up with innovative ways to optimize students' learning at home.

### **Study Limitations**

While this study has provided substantial information on how parents guide their children in answering the self-learning modules as well as the challenges faced by parents in modular distance learning, the findings of this study should be seen in the light of some limitations. First, this study was conducted in an elementary public school in Quezon City; hence, generalizations were not applicable to a larger population which includes public high schools, private schools, exclusive schools, and parochial schools. Moreover, this study only involved parents whose children were enrolled in modular distance learning. Online distance learning and radio- and television-based distance learning and other learning modalities were not included in this study.

### **Future Directions**

The findings of this study have opened various directions for future studies related to the ways and practices of parents in guiding their children in answering modules as well as the challenges faced by the parents in modular distance learning. While this study provided surface information on the plights of working parents, it is interesting to delve intensively into their experiences, especially those who are single parents, stay-in working parents, and Overseas Filipino Workers and its relation to the learning of their children in the new normal in education. Moreover, it is also provocative to assess the modules used in the public schools in terms of quality, length, design and layout, and other criteria that determine the module's user-friendliness. Lastly, researchers may also corroborate the findings of this study to the perspectives and experiences of the teachers. Doing this may yield substantial information on how the home and school may work hand-in-hand in providing quality education to the children in modular distance learning.\*\*\*

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