

Parents' Experiences in Implementing Home Reading Activities

Carmelita Tayab
Graduate School
St. Louis College of Bulanao
Tabuk City, Kalinga, Philippines

Carmelita Ayang-ang
Graduate School
St. Louis College of Bulanao
Tabuk City, Kalinga, Philippines

Abstract— This qualitative study delved into the experiences of parents in executing home reading activities, aiming to inform the development of a structured home reading program. Employing a phenomenological interpretative research design, the study engaged thirteen parents of children enrolled at Anonang Elementary School through purposive sampling. Data analysis revealed two prominent themes: (1) Parents' Support on Children's Reading and (2) Issues and Challenges in helping their Children toward Reading. The findings underscored the critical role of parental involvement, particularly amidst the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in enhancing students' reading proficiency. Despite employing various strategies tailored to the pandemic circumstances, parents encountered challenges, including limited knowledge on reading, pupil-motivation issues, and time constraints. These insights contribute to the development of effective home reading interventions that address both supportive and challenging aspects of parental involvement in children's reading development.

Keywords— *Reading, Home Reading Activities, Parents*

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of pupils' reading literacy is one of the most crucial educational objectives. Reading is included among the core subjects of the basic education curriculum in the Philippine educational system (Pasia, 2019). Due to pupils' subpar reading abilities both nationally and internationally, the quality of Philippine education has been heavily questioned during the past ten years (Abrigo, 2021). A Filipino pupil need to acquire functional reading and higher-order thinking skills. It goes without saying that any Filipino child with adequate reading abilities would have a higher chance of succeeding in school than a youngster with bad reading abilities. Those with weak reading abilities are frequently diagnosed with reading disabilities when properly examined (Reilly et al., 2019). The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, also known as Republic Act No. 9155 (RA No. 9155), requires the Department of Education (DepEd) to develop national educational policies to enhance the delivery of its services and attain basic education goals (Ocampo & Buenviaje, 2022). Accordingly, DepEd enacted Republic Act No. 10533 (RA No. 10533), popularly known as the K-12 Program or the "Enhanced Basic Education Act," which intends to provide

Filipino students with the knowledge and abilities necessary to meet the demands of the 21st century (Abulencia, 2015). DepEd has launched a number of programs to improve and expand Filipino children's early-grade reading skills. These include "Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP)," "project D.E.A.R (Drop Everything and Read)," "Reading Assistance Program," "Summer Reading Camp," the observance of "National Reading Month" every November, and other school-based reading activities (Abeberese et al., 2014).

Over 796 million people worldwide are illiterate, and just 20% of English-speaking children who speak the language at home are confident readers by the time they are 11 years old (Piro, 2019). This can be a sign that children did not acquire the reading readiness abilities needed to read at the right age and stage. In the meantime, the most recent study from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2019) revealed that roughly 91.6% of Filipinos can read and write. The equivalent number of Filipinos is almost 73 million. This also indicates that among Southeast Asian nations like Singapore, Brunei, and Indonesia, the Philippines has the greatest rate of literacy (Albert, 2021). Nevertheless, the Department of Education (2020) reports that there are still more than 1 million pre-literates and more than 6 million persons who are considered to be functionally illiterate in the Philippines despite the country's high literacy rate (Mirasol & Topacio, 2021). Additionally, the problem of pupils having difficulty reading is not a recent one. According to several surveys, reading challenges among Filipino students seem to remain. The Program for International Assessment (PISA) gave Filipino pupils a reading comprehension score of 340 points in a 2018 global survey of 600,000 students, which was lower than the global average of 487 points. As a result, out of 79 countries included in the survey, the Philippines placed in last (Schleicher, 2019).

Moreover, a regional research revealed that although a sizable portion of students were still performing at levels expected in the early years of primary education, elementary students in the Philippines were lagging behind their peers in certain Southeast Asian nations in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The percentage of Grade 5 Filipino students who attained minimum competency in reading, writing, and arithmetic was much lower than that of Vietnam and Malaysia, according to data from the Southeast Asia Primary Learning

Metrics (SEA-PLM) in 2019 (Haw et al., 2021). Filipino fifth-graders performed similarly to or occasionally even lower than their counterparts in Cambodia, but slightly better than those in Laos and Myanmar. In the Philippines, the majority of grade 5 students had reading proficiency levels comparable to those in the first years of primary school, with 27% of students remaining at the lowest level (on a scale from 2 to 6), where they can only match single words to an image of a familiar object or concept. Only 29% of grade 5 students nationwide can read a variety of commonplace texts, like straightforward tales and personal viewpoints, and start to connect with their contents.

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of teachers in the formation of students' reading habits and interests when it comes to reading-related difficulties (Saaf, 2021; Ngadi et al., 2021; Altuin et al., 2022). When educators show genuine enthusiasm and believe that all children can learn to read and achieve anything with hard work and abilities, they positively impact their pupils' achievement (Ama & Widyana, 2021). They provide a structured and dynamic learning environment, base their classroom activities on reliable reading theory, employ a variety of instructional methods designed to match each student's unique learning needs, and routinely evaluate their students' reading proficiency. The development and maintenance of a positive attitude toward learning and literacy in children is mostly the responsibility of their teachers. Motivated readers read more, employ more sophisticated cognitive techniques, and improve more as readers (Yusuf et al., 2019).

However, due to modular distance learning, which only requires minimal teacher-learner connection, teaching reading is one of the issues that contemporary teachers are confronting in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Zawadka et al., 2021; Asri et al., 2021). In addition to teachers, the Covid-19 epidemic has forced parents to assume a significant role in their children's education nowadays (Oducado, 2020). The researcher chose this particular study in order to determine the impact of modular distance learning on the teaching-learning process of readers, particularly on the ways in which parents support their children's reading development. While many school-age children in high-income nations have access to online education during this pandemic, those in low- and middle-income nations, including the Philippines, have restricted access to television, radio, computers, internet, and data for them to participate in remote learning. Parents may need to take up the responsibilities of full-time instructors in nations where school systems have been unable to adjust to distant learning so that their children's literacy skills can be continuously improved at home throughout school closures. Parents now have to balance helping their children learn to read while still providing for their families financially, which has put a tremendous strain on them.

II. METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative research design employing phenomenological interpretative research. This research approach helped explore in detail the meanings those

particular experiences, events, and states hold for informants. It involved a detailed examination of the informants' interaction with their world. It also helped interpret personal experiences and their personal perception or account toward this event, which in this case was their experiences in implementing home reading activities in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The informants of the study were thirteen (13) parents of children enrolled at Anonang Elementary School. They were chosen to become the informants with the use of purposive sampling technique through an inclusion criteria composed of the following: (1) must have a child enrolled in Anonang Elementary School for the SY 2021-2022, (2) must be involved in the reading activities of his/her child/children, (3) must be willing to participate in the study. Moreover, consent letter was given to the participants prior to the interview session. The purpose of the research was explained, and all of their queries were promptly addressed. Lastly, each informant was given corresponding codes, which were referred to as codes P01 to P13.

The study utilized a one-on-one interview to explore the experiences of parents in implementing home reading activities. The researcher employed a semi-structured interview as its data collection technique – a commonly used technique in qualitative research (Kallio, Pietila, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016). The interview was conducted using an interview guide comprised of predetermined questions followed by sub-questions. Through this, informants were able to express and elaborate themselves more during the interview. The semi-structured interview format encourages two-way communication. Both the interviewer and the candidate can ask questions, which allows for a comprehensive discussion of pertinent topics (Paine, 2015). Furthermore, the interviews were manually transcribed using the denaturalized approach to transcription (Oliver et al., 2005; Davidson, 2009 and Bucholtz, 2000). Hence, speech fillers, pauses, and extra linguistic and paralinguistic elements were purposefully omitted. Utilizing the funneling approach (Smith & Osborn, 2008), questions of the interview schedule were devised to be flexible, neutral, and non-leading. Appropriate prompts were employed with initial questions to encourage the participants to elaborate on the details. Every subsequent interview was re-defined by taking novel inputs from the previous one to ensure refinement of the original schedule (Suhail, Iqbal & Smith, 2020). During the interview, additional queries were given by the researchers as a clarifying method to ensure that the data gathered by the researchers were consistent with what the informants conveyed during the interview.

This study utilized Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) by Smith and Osborn (2008) for the research probe to explore the experiences of parents in implementing home reading activities. After manually transcribing the online interview, below are the steps followed during analysis:

1. The data that were gathered from the informants were read and re-read thoroughly to obtain a general idea of the participant's account and sense of the whole. Also, the themes and novel details stated by the participants were noted simultaneously. Those significant details were highlighted and assigned with initial codes in the form of written comments located in the margin.
2. Second, the data gathered were re-visited, and discrimination of meaning units within a psychological perspective was given to the themes to enable a higher level of abstraction and to ensure that the initial codes were consistent with the original accounts of the informants.
3. Third, a summarization of the initial codes was created to be able to get the fundamental essence of the participant's experiences on prolonged social deprivation and the coping strategies that they have employed.
4. Lastly, groups of codes that were interrelated among the data were identified and grouped together. The list of the leading codes that were grouped was produced by the first and second researcher separately to ensure face validity. The major and subordinate themes were then created and refined by the third and fourth researcher before the finalization of data analysis and synthesizing of transformed meaning to form a consistent statement of the structure of the participant's experience before all the authors agreed and finalized the themes. The goal was to ensure that the analysis presented on each account was justified by the data and matched the participants' accounts.

The researcher ensured that ethical considerations were employed in this study. Informed consent was sought from the eligible informants. Researcher guaranteed that the concerns and queries of informants before, during, and after the interview were immediately addressed. The informants were also assured that their interviews and any data that yielded from it were kept confidential. The researchers preserved the anonymity of the respondents by all means. In addition, respondents were given pseudonyms, and any information that could possibly reveal their identity was removed from the transcripts. Moreover, the interview transcript was only accessible to the researcher, adviser, and promoter. At the conclusion of the study, all transcripts were destroyed (Nieswiadomy, 2018).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore the experiences of parents in implementing home reading activities as a basis for the development of a home reading program. Based on the gathered data, two major themes were deduced, which are as follows: (1) Parents' Support on Children's Reading and (2) Issues and Challenges in helping their Children towards Reading. The different themes and responses served as basis for the researchers in the development of a home-reading program.

Theme 1. Parents' Support on Children's Reading

Based on the results of the data gathering, it was revealed that parents are utilizing some strategies and interventions to help their children towards reading proficiency and enhancement. These include the following: (1) provision of additional and supplemental reading materials besides the SLMs, (2) family reading session, (3) purchase of electronic reading resources and gadgets, and (4) reward system for reading.

a. Provision of Additional and Supplemental Reading Materials besides the SLMs

Generally, most of the parent-informants stressed that in order for them to help their children in terms of reading; they provided additional reading materials and books besides the required self-learning modules that their teachers were given to them. Additionally, these books are the common reading materials available in the market, which focused on alphabets, basic words with pictures, short stories, and even some with folk literatures. Some of the verbalizations of the informants are as follows:

P02: *Bumili ako ng mga reading materials maliban sa mga binigay ng teacher niya na modules. Iyong mga binili ko iyong mga murang libro na mabibili sa market para habang wala siyang ginagawa, nagbabasa. (I bought reading materials besides those given by her teacher, which is the module. Those that I bought are cheap books that can be bought in the market so that she can still read during her free time.)*

P05: *Gimmatang nak ti libro nga pagbasaan na tapos ajay ginatang ko ket adyay ado kulay ket picture na tapno lalo suna maingganyo nga agbasa. (I bought books for her to read but I made sure that those books are colorful and with pictures for her to be more motivated in reading.)*

It can be shown from the responses that the most basic activity and remediation that parents can give is through the provision of additional reading materials. Apparently, since most of the participants belong to the lower level in terms of their socio-economic status, they tend to rely on doing basic remediation, which is the purchase of reading materials. The findings affirm the results of previous studies

stressing the importance of books in improving reading proficiency, especially among children (Abeberese et al., 2014; Cook, 2019; Albert, 2021).

b. Family Reading Session

Another important reading activity used by parents for their children is the family reading session. As an effect of the pandemic, children cannot go outside of their homes, resulting in home isolation. Some parents said that they conduct nightly activities to enhance their children's reading proficiency. Some parents conduct a family reading session in which all of them are reading to enhance the reading abilities of the child. In addition, some parents also ask for the help of their older children in doing reading intervention programs. Some of the verbalizations of the informants are as follows:

P11: *Every rabii ket ada kami sala tapos ada agbasbasa kami jay buybuyanin mi isu nga pati atoy anak ko ket makibasa metten.* (Every night, we are all at the sala reading those what we are watching. As a result, my child also read).

P05: *Ayabak ni manang na nga tumulong nga agisuro ti agbasa ken anak ko.* (I asked my other child to help her sibling to read).

Family involvement plays a very critical role in a child's development. As a result, family members should model good values and behaviors as children will imitate them. In terms of reading, literature revealed that family involvement and participation positively impacted children's abilities to read (Brude et al., 2021; Mabeya, 2020). Adams and Todd (2020) contend that family reading time is an investment in children's language exposure over the long term. Children can clarify vocabulary they do not understand by asking questions during family reading sessions, which improves reading comprehension. Daniela et al. (2021) also emphasized the importance of family and parents in a child's academic, social, and emotional development. This can enrich and improve a child's educational experiences and results, such as reading fluency and comprehension.

c. Purchase of Electronic Reading Resources and Gadgets

Some parents also claimed that they even purchased and provided electronic reading material and even gadgets, such as cellular phones, laptops, and tablets to their children as part of distance learning and for reading enhancement and development. Some stressed the need for gadgets to fully support their child's learning and development. Some of the verbalizations of the informants are as follows:

P03: *Bumili akong gadget ng anak ko kasi alam ko mas mapapadli sa kanya ang mag-aral pag kumpleto gamit nya.* (I bought a gadget for my child because I believe it will be easier for her to learn if she has learning gadgets.)

P01: *Nagloan ako para bilhan ko siya ng laptop tapos naglagay nadin ako ng applications doon para sa reading at ibang academic activities niya.* (I applied for loan for me to buy a laptop for my child. I also downloaded applications in relation to reading and other academic activities.)

It is important to note that learning nowadays depends on the kind of learning style a child has. In today's society, it is evident that most children are considered visual learners; hence, activities should be geared towards this kind of learning style (Baschenis et al., 2021). Parents also invested in the education of their children through purchase of different electronic gadgets, such as cellular phones and laptop computers. According to Lau and Lee (2021), technology is important in reading enhancement. Technology can read aloud text to students, and educational programs can help pupils understand vocabulary concepts, all of which have been shown to improve comprehension. Technology has been found to be an effective tool for increasing children's reading comprehension. Additionally, readers are far more inclined to start up where they left off whenever and wherever they may be if they do not have to carry around actual books. With the ability to download books to your laptop, smartphone, or other smart device, reading a few pages on the commute is now more convenient than ever (Abrigo, 2021).

d. Reward System for Reading

One of the most conventional types of parenting is the use of a reward system. Categorically, parents used this kind of activity to further help their children to read. Some of them utilize reward system through the use of monetary aspects, while others give incentives such as more time for recreation and playing games. Some of the verbalizations of the informants are as follows:

P09: *Pag nagbabasa sia, binibigyan ko siya ng reward gaya ng mas mahaba ang time niya maglaro at manood.* (I give rewards when my child reads, such as more time to play and to watch.)

P06: *May rule ako sa bahay na pag gumaligaling siya magbasa, binibigyan ko siya ng pera at sa tingin ko effective naman iyon.* (I have a rule in which whenever he reads, I give her money, and I think it is effective.)

Parents may employ a reward system as a method of punishment and behavior modification to encourage their children to swap undesirable actions for positive ones. Instead of punishing a child for misbehavior, parents should encourage good behavior instead (Jala, 2020). Children need to be rewarded for their efforts and certain actions in order to sustain those behaviors. Children who are consistently rewarded for good behavior are encouraged to repeat it until it becomes ingrained. This is crucial, especially for young children. Furthermore, according to Figuracion and Ormilla

(2021), rewards are crucial for a variety of reasons because they can motivate children to behave well. The likelihood that a behavior will recur depends on how parents react immediately after it occurs. Children who receive rewards are more likely to engage in the activities they enjoy, such as reading and literacy.

Theme 2. Issues and Challenges in helping their Children towards Reading

Results of the interview revealed three major difficulties and challenges faced by the parents with regard to reading: (1) limited knowledge on reading, (2) pupil-motivation related issue, and (3) lack of time.

a. Pupil-Motivation Related Issue

One problem that parents encountered in helping their children to read is the motivation of pupils to read. Since they were at home, there were instances that pupils did not want to read due to some external factors, such as influence of social media, games, and television. In this case, some parents claimed that they did not have ways and mechanisms to address this concern. Some of the responses of the participants were:

P05: *Mahirap imotivate and bata at lagi niyang sinasabi na wala siyang motivation na magbasa* (The child is not easily motivated to read, and he always says that he doesn't understand what is in the reading material).

P10: *Nahihirapan akong imotivate ang aking anak na magbasa. Madalas imbes na magbasae, nanonood lagi sila ng TV or nagfacebook kaya lagi akong nagagalit sa kanila.* (I find it difficult to motivate my child to read. Instead of reading, he often watches TV or surf Facebook that is why I always get angry with him.)

b. Limited Knowledge on Reading

One of the major issues and problems that parent-participants faced in reading was their limited knowledge in reading. Some of the parents stressed that they found it difficult to help their children in their learning because they themselves did not have enough knowledge with regard to certain subjects, especially along English. Some of them did not experience formal schooling. Some of the responses of the participants were:

P04: *Nahihirapan ako sa reading ng aking anak kasi hindi ko maintindihan ang kanilang lesson lalo na English. Hindi naman ako nakapag-aral kaya nahihiya ako sa anak ko na hindi ko matulongan sa pagbabasa.*
(Reading is hard because I do not understand the lessons my child, especially in English. I did not go to formal schooling and I am quite embarrassed

because I cannot help him in his reading assignments.)

P07: *Mahirap ang reading kasi ako mismo nahihirapan sa mga subject ng anak ko lalo na iyong English. Wala naman akong alam sa mga ganyan.*
(Reading is difficult, especially that I struggle in English. I do not know things about that.)

c. Lack of Time

Another problem of parents was the lack of time that they could give to their children. It was observed that most of the parents in the current study were daily laborers such as farmers and vendors. Hence, they were always not at home during the day and were already tired in the evening. Hence, there was a limited interaction with their children especially in helping them in reading. Some of the responses of the participants were:

P36: *Wala akong time sa anak ko kasi araw-araw ako lumalabas para magsaka. Kailangan kong magtrabaho para may pangkain kami. Kaya minsan, wala na akong time para sa kaniya.*
(I do not have time for my child because I always go out everyday to do farming. I need to work for us to have food. That is why sometimes, I do not have time for her.)

P26: *Wala akong panahon para sa anak ko. Nagwowork kasi ako kaya minsan tuwing gabi ko nalang siya natutulungan pagbabasa niya.*
(I do not have time for my child. I work everyday that is why I only helped her in reading at night.)

INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Project PARENT

(Parents' Active Reading Enhancement in Now normal Towards pupils reading proficiency)

Parents play a very critical role in the education of their children, especially in this kind of learning set-up in which children learn at home through the implementation of the distance learning. This project is aimed to empower parents to further enhance their engagement and participation in their children's reading proficiency. It specifically tries to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To provide parents opportunities to learn and to value their role as facilitators of knowledge in this new normal education;
2. To help parents cope with the demands and challenges in teaching reading to their children; and
3. To strengthen maximum partnership between schools and parents to achieve the full potential of children in reading.

Objectives	Activities	Time	Outcome
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		Frame	
To orient parents with their roles and responsibilities on the reading and literacy	Orientation Program	July 2022	Parents will be familiarized with their roles and responsibilities.
To provide supplemental training for parents on teaching and guiding their children on reading	Seminar-Workshop on Distance Learning for Parents through Offline and Face-to-Face Set-up)	July 2022	Parents will be able to fully support their children on reading.
To provide parents avenue to raise concerns about their issues and challenges on reading enhancement and proficiency	Implementation of PARENTS-HELPLINE	Whole School Year	Parents will be able to raise their concerns and issues on reading and literacy.
To promote 21 st century home-based activities responsive to the needs of children	Health and Wellness Sessions with teachers	August 2022	Parents will gain enough knowledge on different responsive activities at home.
To guide parents on effective parenting in the midst of the pandemic	PARENTING sessions	Agust 2922	Parents will be able to gain knowledge on parenting.
To update parents with new and emerging technologies in reading	Training and workshop	July 2022	Parents will be able to enhance their technological skills.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of parents at home is crucial given the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences on students' learning. The importance of parents monitoring their children's education was highlighted and established. This study concludes that parents utilized different strategies and techniques to help their children improve their reading proficiencies. These activities are responsive to the nature and current set-up brought about by the pandemic. However, parents still experienced issues and challenges that hinder them from helping their children in reading, which are limited knowledge on reading, pupil-motivation related issue, and lack of time.

The school may continue implementing orientation and capability-building activities for parents to further enhance their involvement in the education of their children in the midst of the pandemic, especially in reading and literacy. Reading teachers may also develop and implement new methods of teaching reading to pupils with activities that will involve parents and family. Future researchers may also dwell into conducting a qualitative study looking into the lived experiences of parents in other forms of learning during the pandemic.

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