Lived Experiences of Mothers in Home-Learning

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of mothers in who were engaged in home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing a phenomenological research design. Through purposive sampling, ten mothers were selected for in-depth interviews, following the acquisition of necessary permits and informed consent. Thematic analysis of the data revealed key themes such as professional commitment, the importance of education, mothers' experiences as educators, and barriers to technology adoption, time management, mothers' responsibility, parental involvement, facilitating factors, and cognitive factors. The findings reveal that mothers juggling multiple roles experienced stress and burnout, prioritizing their children's education despite challenges in attention, literacy, technology, and time management. The study concludes that these mothers require professional support to navigate these hurdles effectively. Recommendations include flexible work arrangements, training for mothers, and improved access to technology, time management strategies, shared responsibilities among family members, and the provision of tutoring services. This research offers valuable insights that can inform support strategies, policy-making, and community interventions, ultimately aiming to alleviate the challenges faced by mothers and enhance the educational experiences of their children.

Keywords: home-learning, lived experiences, mothers' commitment, mothers' experiences

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Introduction

Home learning provides flexibility and personalized content, enhancing engagement and understanding. It offers a stress-free environment compared to traditional classrooms, with increased parental involvement supporting children's progress (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Nevertheless, challenges like unequal access to technology deepen socioeconomic gaps, while social isolation can impact social skills and well-being. Balancing work and home responsibilities can be a struggle for parents, who may lack effective teaching skills (Garbe et al., 2020). Effective strategies involve structured routines, educational technology use, and communication among teachers, students, and parents. Academic success in home learning varies based on motivation, parental guidance, and available resources (Hinton et al., 2024). The shift to home learning has increased stress, highlighting the need for mental health support (Halliburton et al., 2021). Schools and communities play a vital role in providing resources to address the psychological impacts of home learning, aiding families in navigating these challenges (Hungo et al., 2024; Nemiro et al., 2022).

Researchers discuss the advantages and drawbacks of home learning (Scott, 2024). It offers flexibility and personalized experiences, enhancing student engagement and understanding. Parental involvement supports comprehension of educational needs, creating a less stressful environment (Whalley et al., 2021). Challenges include the digital divide and social isolation, impacting social skills and well-being. Balancing work and home responsibilities can hinder parental support for learning (Mathrani et al., 2022). Strategies like structured routines, technology use, and consistent communication are crucial. Academic outcomes vary based on motivation, parental guidance, and resources (Aslan et al., 2020; Hungo & Casinillo, 2024). The shift to home learning has increased stress, highlighting the need for coping mechanisms and mental health support. Schools and communities play a vital role in providing resources to help families manage the psychological impacts of home learning (Mitchell et al., 2022).

Mothers often face difficulties ensuring their children have access to necessary technology and reliable internet connectivity, with these issues being more pronounced among lower-income families (Addi-Raccah, & Seeberger Tamir, 2023). Balancing work responsibilities with supporting their children's education at home leads to significant stress and fatigue (Groves et al., 2020). Additionally, not all mothers have the educational background or skills to assist effectively, increasing their anxiety about their children's academic progress (Addi-Raccah & Seeberger Tamir, 2023). Social isolation deprives children of important interactions, impacting their social development and emotional well-being (Larsen et al., 2022). The sudden shift to home learning has heightened stress and anxiety for both mothers and children, exacerbated by the lack of routine and uncertainty (Bhamani et al., 2020). To cope, mothers establish consistent daily routines to provide a sense of normalcy (Kingod & Grabowski, 2020), leverage educational technology to enhance engagement seek support from networks and maintain communication with teachers and address psychological impacts through mental health support (Rahmatullah et al., 2022). By investigating these challenges and coping strategies, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of mothers' experiences during home learning in the COVID-19 pandemic, informing policies and practices to better support families in similar situations in the future.

Hence, this study investigates the lived experiences of mothers in home learning during

COVID-19, providing valuable insights into their challenges. It underscores how mothers balance work, home duties, and educational support, emphasizing the need for equitable technology access and resources. It reveals psychological impacts and informs policies to assist families, guiding educators and policymakers in developing targeted interventions for resilient and inclusive educational systems during crises.

Framework of the Study

This study is rooted in Feminist theory, a robust social and intellectual movement dedicated to addressing gender inequality, advocating for women's rights, and advancing gender equality (Hessini, 2020). Feminist theory critically analysis how gender influences power dynamics within society, shedding light on the systemic oppression and discrimination faced by women and marginalized genders (Few‑Demo & Allen, 2020). It aims to deconstruct the social and economic frameworks that sustain gender-based inequalities, encompassing a wide array of ideologies such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, ecofeminism, and intersectional feminism (Few‑Demo & Allen, 2020). The overarching goal of feminist theory is to cultivate a more just and inclusive society by challenging stereotypes, promoting gender inclusivity, and empowering individuals of all genders (Few‑Demo & Allen, 2020; Zerbe Enns et al., 2021).

In the context of this study, the alignment with Feminist theory is evident as it delves into the lived experiences of mothers in home-learning environments. By exploring the family backgrounds and encountered life challenges, the study likely uncovers how societal norms and power structures influence women's roles, responsibilities, and opportunities within the realms of education and family dynamics. This feminist lens allows for a nuanced examination of gender dynamics and inequalities present in these settings, offering insights into the complexities of gender roles, expectations, and experiences within the context of home-based learning (Dadheech & Sharma, 2023).

Methodology

Design

This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of mothers navigating home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Phenomenological research delves into individuals' subjective experiences within specific contexts, aiming to understand their essence and meaning (Ravn, 2023). By investigating these experiences as articulated by participants themselves, this study aims to uncover deep insights into the challenges faced by mothers in this unique educational setting (Shin et al., 2019). Researchers adopt an open stance, setting aside preconceptions to grasp participants' subjective realities without imposing external interpretations. Using methods like in-depth interviews, participant observations, and analysis of materials, researchers seek detailed descriptions of participants' encounters. Through phenomenological reduction, common themes and patterns will be identified, providing a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced realities surrounding mothers' experiences with home learning during the COVID-19 era.

Participants and Locale of the Study

Ten (10) mothers residing in Barangay Cat-iwing, Hinundayan, Southern Leyte, aged between 25 to 50 years old, and having elementary children aged 6 to 12, were selected to participate in the study using purposive sampling. The participants included individuals holding diverse roles within the community: one councilor, one teacher, one midwife, one barangay health worker, one day care worker, and five housewives. Notably, one participant was identified as an illiterate mother. These participants were purposefully chosen due to their relevance to the study's focus and their elementary school-aged children, facilitating insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The selection criteria prioritized individuals with firsthand experience, potential insights, and a readiness to contribute to the study. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable participants are essential for the in-depth exploration of any topic. Utilizing purposive sampling ensures that individuals with the necessary knowledge and experiences are included, enabling a comprehensive investigation of the phenomenon at hand.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to commencing the study, authorization will be obtained from the Barangay Captain, followed by coordination with the Barangay Health Workers to acquire necessary documentation for selecting qualified research participants. The chosen participants will receive an informed consent form, allowing them ample time for thoughtful consideration before agreeing to partake in the study. Detailed information regarding the study's purpose, level of involvement, associated risks and benefits, as well as participant rights, advantages, and confidentiality, will be provided post-consent. Researchers will respectfully request permission from participants to record their responses using a mobile phone during interviews, ensuring mutual attentiveness throughout the process. Interviews, lasting 5-15 minutes, may be conducted once, particularly if participants are readily available and responsive to inquiries. Face-to-face interviews will be arranged at the participants' convenience, adhering to health protocols such as the use of face masks, shields, and maintaining social distancing for safety and compliance.

Data Analysis

This study utilized thematic analysis, a qualitative research method, was crucial for exploring the experiences of mothers involved in home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aimed to uncover the challenges these mothers faced in navigating education during this crisis, providing valuable insights into their distinct encounters. Researchers immersed themselves in collected data, potentially comprising narratives, interviews, and observations from participants, to identify recurring patterns and themes reflecting the mothers' struggles in home learning. By analyzing and interpreting these themes, researchers gained a comprehensive understanding of the nuances within the mothers' experiences. This methodological approach allowed for a detailed exploration of the multifaceted aspects of mothers' experiences during the pandemic, shedding light on their challenges, successes, and hardships while supporting their children's education at home. Ultimately, thematic analysis offered a structured and rigorous means to comprehend the lived experiences of mothers in home learning amidst the COVID-19 crisis, contributing to a deeper understanding of their circumstances and providing rich qualitative data for analysis and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

The lived experiences of mothers in home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, several ethical considerations were carefully addressed. Informed consent was prioritized, ensuring participants fully understood the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits before agreeing to participate. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, researchers emphasized the well-being and autonomy of the mothers involved, mindful of the potential emotional impact of sharing personal experiences. Confidentiality and data protection were rigorously upheld to safeguard participants' identities and personal information, ensuring they were not disclosed without explicit permission. Researchers also considered power dynamics, ensuring participants felt empowered to share their experiences freely and without coercion. Respect for cultural and individual differences was essential to accurately represent diverse perspectives and backgrounds, preventing misinterpretation of participants' narratives. Transparency, integrity, and respect for participants' rights were maintained throughout the study, fostering a trusting and respectful relationship between researchers and the mothers who shared their experiences.

Results and Discussions

Theme 1: Professional Commitment

1.1. Duty-Bound and Accountable

Mothers are more involved in their children's education than ever before, and they say they have never felt more invested in it. The time has come to ensure that with increased parental responsibility comes an increased right to participate and have a say. The issues are exacerbated by the fact that they are responsible and accountable for additional duties. The participant 8 emphasizes that, besides being a parent, they are required to fulfill other responsibilities. Participants 6 and 3 shared the following:

> - *"Sometimes it can be difficult because, as a Day Care Worker, I am also responsible for creating modules for other children that I teach."*

> - *"Sometimes it can be challenging because children used to go straight to school, but now as a barangay council, I have a lot of work."*

> - *"Now I have responsibilities as a barangay health worker, so I really struggle in this situation."*

Participant 2, on the other hand, described how she had been trying to play an active role in her child's academic life, maintaining a healthy learning schedule for the children while also juggling her other responsibilities. Her dedication to her role as a mother was admirable, as she stated:

> *"This does not affect my responsibilities in the short term because I know that my children are aware of my other responsibilities and I have seen his development even though I have not taught him. If I have a day without work or a day off like today, I will spend all my time managing and taking care of my child, and I will answer any questions he has about his modules."*

The significant themes concerning parenting, education, and gender roles in today's society emphasize the increasing involvement of mothers in their children's education, calling for a corresponding increase in their rights to participate in educational decisions (Reyes, 2020). This involvement can positively impact children's academic outcomes but also raises concerns about balancing work and family responsibilities (Daniel & Madugu, 2023). Furthermore, it shed light on persistent gender dynamics in parenting, with women often shouldering the majority of child-rearing duties (Ballif, 2023). This can perpetuate inequalities both at home and in the workplace. The call for collaborative approaches between parents and schools underscores the importance of fostering partnerships to enhance educational outcomes. Finally, it underscores the complexity of modern parenthood, highlighting the need for supportive policies that promote gender equality and work-life balance while prioritizing the best interests of children.

Theme 2: Importance of Education

2.1. Dedicated Mother Supports Child's Education

Parenting has always been tough. It's not easy to feel like you have so many roles to fulfill that you can't possibly excel at any of them. However, despite the circumstances, participant 1 stated that she still has to prioritize the necessary tasks to help her child with his studies. She continues to monitor her child's progress and development. She commented:

> *"I have given extra importance to his studies, especially during this pandemic. We are given all that we can to help him with his academic and daily needs, even though it is challenging due to the modular learning."*

The challenges and resilience of mothers in managing parenting responsibilities, particularly in the context of their children's education, especially during challenging times are evident (Alsharaydeh et al., 2019). The multifaceted roles mothers play, balancing childcare, education, and potentially employment, which can lead to stress and role overload (Bravo-Moreno, 2021). Despite these difficulties, mothers prioritize their children's education, showcasing resilience during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The positive impact of parental involvement on academic outcomes but also addresses gendered expectations that can perpetuate inequalities. Recognizing maternal resilience and promoting supportive policies, equitable educational support, and shared parental responsibilities are key takeaways from the insights provided, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to address the complexities of modern parenting and support mothers in navigating their roles effectively.

2.2. Focusing Intensively on their Children's Studies

With the onset of the pandemic, all participants were concerned, especially for their younger children. In the absence of a teacher, they mentioned that focusing intensively on their children's academics was one of their methods to ensure they were learning. The participant 5 shared:

> *"We focus on our children's learning well because it becomes more challenging with modules and no teacher to teach."*

The current situation has led to a rise in parental involvement in children's education, with parents playing a more direct role in facilitating learning at home due to the pandemic (Ribeiro et al., 2021). This shift has implications for the parent-child relationship, parental stress levels, and children's academic performance (Ogalisco, 2024). Additionally, the transition to remote learning has exposed and worsened existing educational inequalities, particularly regarding the digital divide, as families lacking access to necessary technology or internet connectivity have encountered obstacles in supporting their children's education (Devkota, 2021). The importance of robust teacher-parent collaboration has been emphasized during this time, highlighting the necessity for effective communication and partnership between educators and parents as families become more involved in their children's learning. Moreover, the strain of managing children's education while working remotely has negatively impacted parents' mental health and well-being, potentially affecting family dynamics and increasing the risk of parental burnout.

2.3. Children Neglecting Attention to Studies

School looks different during the Covid-19 Pandemic, whether it's modular learning, online learning, or distance learning. Mothers appear to excel with this learning approach, while children seem uninterested in their studies. Students' interest may have decreased, and their focus may have shifted significantly since the closure of schools. Consequently, participants voiced their discontent about the value of education. As participant 7 replied:

> *"The problem and difficulty started since the school closure, that's why children are no longer focused on their studies."*

The current educational landscape during the Covid-19 pandemic are significant. Firstly, there has been a notable increase in parental involvement in children's education, with parents assuming more direct roles in facilitating learning at home (Huck & Zhang, 2021). This shift has implications for the relationship between parents and children, parental stress levels, and the academic outcomes of students (Antony-Newman, 2019). Secondly, the transition to remote learning has exacerbated existing inequalities, particularly in terms of the digital divide (Vassilakopoulou & Hustad, 2023). Families lacking access to necessary technology or internet connectivity have encountered significant obstacles in supporting their children's education

(Hanna et al., 2019). Additionally, the importance of strong collaboration between teachers and parents has been highlighted, emphasizing the need for effective communication and partnership as parents become more actively involved in their children's learning. Lastly, the stress of managing children's education at home, often while balancing remote work, has had a negative impact on parents' mental health and overall well-being. This, in turn, can affect family dynamics and increase the risk of parental burnout.

Theme 3: Mother's Experience as Educator

3.1. Teaching-Acting, Answering Child's Questions

Being a mother and a teacher at the same time is challenging to handle, especially when there are other obligations to fulfill. Acting as a teacher, especially in responding to her child's questions about the module, is one of the participant's responses. Since she was acknowledged by her child as a teacher, she felt more involved than she ever anticipated because she knew what they were working on. In addition to teaching, addressing her child's inquiries is a significant help for the child to learn effectively. The participant 10 stated:

:

> *"I manage my child in teaching his module as a mother, like answering questions as a teacher."*

The dual role can blur the boundaries between parenting and education, leading to increased involvement but also challenges in balancing these responsibilities (Ghosh & Chaudhuri, 2023). Acting as teachers allows mothers to have a more direct and insightful role in their child's education, understanding their learning needs better (Santoso et al., 2019). Moreover, they can offer immediate support and guidance, boosting the child's learning experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). However, this additional responsibility can escalate the workload and stress for mothers, potentially leading to burnout (Mazumdar et al., 2023). Recognizing the mother's teaching role can enhance the parent-child relationship and motivate further engagement in the child's education. Furthermore, this situation presents an opportunity for shared learning experiences, fostering a stronger bond and a supportive home learning environment. To effectively educate their children, mothers in teaching roles may require additional support, resources, and access to educational materials, training, and support networks. Lastly, the involvement of mothers as teachers can provide insights into the challenges of teaching, potentially fostering greater appreciation for the teaching profession.

3.2. Becomes Instant Teacher

There is emerging evidence that pandemic pressures are linked to a variety of changes in people's lives. Changes due to COVID-19 have been associated with increased parental stress. One example is what the participant highlighted. She mentioned that it seems they are now surprised that they have become instant teachers and she doesn't have the ability to teach children. However, during this pandemic, it's their responsibility to facilitate learning for their children. The participant 9 stated:

"It seems like we were surprised that we became instant teachers, so most of the time, it's really not our talent to teach children, so sometimes it really falls on the parents."

The sudden shift to homeschooling or remote learning has significantly increased parental stress, as they struggle to balance work and their children's education (Rousoulioti et al., 2022). Many parents find themselves in informal teaching roles, often feeling unprepared or unfamiliar with the curriculum (Green et al., 2020). This situation heightens their responsibility for their children's learning progress, adding pressure as they strive to support their educational development (Jezierski & Wall, 2019). Parents new to this role need additional support, resources, and guidance on effective teaching methods (Reimers et al., 2020). The pandemic has forced quick adaptation and resilience-building among parents, highlighting the complexity of education and fostering greater appreciation for teachers. This disruption has impacted work-life balance, increasing stress and potential conflicts. However, it also offers opportunities for enhanced family engagement in education, promoting learning together and strengthening relationships. Prioritizing parents' needs is essential for family well-being and positive educational outcomes.

Theme 4: Barriers to Technology Adoption

In today's era, technology has gained significant importance. Almost everyone we know owns a cell phone these days. Some use it for playing online games, while others utilize it to complete their schoolwork. Technology has become one of the essential aspects of life due to the rise of digital entertainment. However, technology poses a health-related barrier. Since children may have nothing else to do but engage with gadgets, they may suffer from health issues. They are susceptible to sleep disturbances. The overstimulation caused by electronic devices hinders good sleep, which, in turn, can impact focus, behavior, appetite, and overall health. The participant 3 stated:

"The difficulty may lead children to illness because they have nothing else to face now but gadgets."

The widespread ownership of cell phones and devices underscores technology's pervasive presence in society, transforming how people, including children, engage with entertainment, information, and educational resources (McNicholl et al., 2021). Technology serves various purposes, showcasing its potential to both enhance and detract from well-being (Schneider et al., 2022). Notably, health risks like sleep disturbances in children due to electronic device overstimulation impact focus, behavior, appetite, and overall health (Viner et al., 2022). Addressing these concerns highlights the importance of digital literacy and regulation among children and caregivers to manage screen time effectively. The impact of technology on sleep and health can have broader developmental repercussions, emphasizing the need for adequate sleep for cognitive, emotional, and physical well-being. Parents and educators must balance technology's benefits with potential risks, promoting healthy tech use. This includes interventions like promoting healthy screen time habits, reducing blue light exposure, and offering educational programs on digital wellness.

Theme 5: Time Management

5.1. Setting of Schedule

This is a stressful and unpredictable time for everyone, including parents, especially mothers, as they adapt to this new situation. During this period, they establish a schedule to follow. Creating a daily and weekly routine provides a structure for home learning. Responses within this subtheme clearly indicate the experiences in this situation. Participants 1 and 2 shared:

"They were given a schedule. Maybe they have a schedule for each subject, which I divided into seven. And if there are eight subjects in the module given, there are days with two or one each because if you don't divide it, they will get bored."

"What I will do is I will make a schedule of what day I will do the laundry, what day I will focus on the module."

Parents, especially mothers, are experiencing increased stress and uncertainty related to health, economic stability, and family well-being (Geuze & Goossensen, 2019). Adapting to new situations, such as working from home while overseeing children's education, requires flexibility and resilience (Sood et al., 2022). Establishing consistent routines is crucial for offering stability and managing stress, benefiting both parents and children (Grooms & Childs, 2021). Increased parental involvement in children's education can strengthen parent-child relationships but also adds to parents' responsibilities and stress (Jones, 2022). The focus on mothers highlights gender dynamics in parenting, with women often shouldering more childcare and educational duties, especially during crises. Supportive networks, mental health resources, and policies to balance work and family responsibilities are essential. Parents' resilience in creating routines and adapting underscores the importance of coping strategies in reducing stress and promoting well-being. Stable routines offer security, while parental stress can impact family dynamics and children's emotional well-being.

5.2. Balancing Chores and Helping Children's Learning

Many mothers find this to be an especially challenging time. It's incredibly tough due to the numerous responsibilities to juggle. However, one member suggested time management as a solution. They have their routines to follow, constantly supervise the child, and help with their modules after finishing household tasks. Participant 8 remarked:

"Regarding Time," maybe, after finishing the household chores, face the children again for their modules."

Mothers face heightened challenges balancing responsibilities like childcare, homeschooling, household chores, and potentially professional work (Stassen et al., 2023).

Effective time management is crucial, enabling mothers to establish routines, prioritize children's educational needs, and manage tasks efficiently (Huopalainen & Satama, 2019). This ensures learning continuity during pandemic disruptions and reflects adaptation skills vital for productivity and stress reduction. Maternal resilience in navigating these complexities highlights essential modern parenting skills and work-life balance. Support from family, employers, and society is crucial, acknowledging the significant burden on mothers and valuing their unpaid labor. Active maternal involvement in education positively impacts children's learning and emotional well-being, offering stability in uncertain times. Teaching time management skills also benefits children, preparing them for future academic and professional success.

5.3. Struggle Balancing Work and Motherhood

Mothers are finding themselves in a bind as they manage their households simultaneously. While mothers may have more time for their children now, the challenge of balancing multiple roles is overwhelming, and many struggle to manage their time effectively. Participant 4, due to a demanding profession, finds it challenging to focus on all aspects of her child's overall development.

"I struggle to manage my time because instead of going directly to my workplace, I can't do it anymore as I have to first drop him off at his tutor's place."

Balancing childcare with various roles such as parent, partner, employee, and homemaker can be overwhelming, leading to stress and difficulty in adequately focusing on each responsibility (Daniel & Madugu, 2023). For mothers with demanding professions, balancing work and family life is a significant challenge, potentially impacting their ability to focus on their child's development and resulting in feelings of guilt or inadequacy (Huopalainen & Satama, 2019). Effective time management skills are essential for mothers to navigate these challenges, emphasizing the need for strategies to alleviate stress and manage multiple roles efficiently (Klee et al., 2024). This underscores the necessity for supportive systems and resources, such as flexible work arrangements, parental support policies, and community assistance, to share household and childcare responsibilities. The impact of balancing these roles on children's development is significant, suggesting that maternal focus on a child's holistic growth may be compromised. Addressing these maternal challenges is crucial for creating supportive home and workplace environments, promoting work-life balance through policies like parental leave, flexible hours, and accommodating work cultures.

Theme 6: Mothers' Responsibility

6.1. Modules Affecting Home Duties

The most common obstacle mentioned by participants was the neglect of home chores due to the modules. The closure of schools and shift to remote learning posed a challenge in

balancing responsibilities for many respondents. The most frequently mentioned challenge was juggling household tasks and children's needs. Two participants 2 and 8 stated:

>   *"The situation has become very challenging as it has interfered with my other responsibilities as a mother. Because I need to teach my child, the remaining household tasks are neglected."*

>   *"Time management is really crucial, sometimes tasks are left undone. Before, when children used to go to school, the mother was always busy, but now sometimes the tasks are left behind, delaying things because the child needs to be taught."*

Participants noted that their primary obstacle is neglecting household chores to prioritize their children's remote learning, struggling to maintain routines amid these demands (Daniel & Madugu, 2023). With schools closed, balancing responsibilities has become difficult, disrupting the traditional division of time between childcare, household tasks, and work (Docka‑Filipek & Stone, 2021). Juggling household duties with children's needs is a significant challenge, leading to increased stress and fatigue (Daniel & Madugu, 2023). This shift towards home-based education suggests a temporary but impactful change in household management and labor distribution. Flexibility in handling household tasks is crucial, requiring task reallocation, seeking external support, and establishing new routines. The risk of parental burnout is high due to constant task juggling without adequate support or breaks, highlighting the importance of parental well-being for a functional household. Recognizing and supporting parents' roles in managing remote learning and household affairs is vital for family welfare and educational success.

6.2. Mother Aiding Child's Education Responsibility

The final category of comments under this theme revolves around fulfilling her duty as a mother and assisting her child with his education. It was evident that not only the children but also the mothers found this learning method unusual. They are concerned about their children's academic progress, leading them to engage in various activities and employ diverse approaches to ensure that their children continue learning despite the challenges. In response to this, participant 6 mentioned:

>   *"This does not bother me as a parent and with other responsibilities because this is also a big responsibility of a parent to help them finish their studies, so I always make sure to give my child time for his studies."*

Mothers view assisting their children with education as an essential maternal duty, reflecting their strong sense of responsibility for their children's academic and holistic growth. The shift to remote or hybrid learning is challenging for both mothers and children, requiring significant adaptation (Greenhow et al., 2021). Mothers' deep concern for their children's

academic progress drives their active involvement, employing strategies like direct teaching, supporting online learning, providing resources, and monitoring progress (Goodall, 2021). They demonstrate creativity and resourcefulness, using technology, creating educational activities, and seeking additional resources (Petty, 2024). This involvement not only enhances the parent-child relationship but also fosters closer bonds and mutual understanding. Recognizing the challenges faced by both children and mothers in the current educational landscape highlights the need for empathetic and supportive approaches. The commitment of mothers underscores the need for enhanced support and resources, including access to educational materials, technology, and guidance on effective teaching strategies to aid parents in their efforts.

Theme 7: Parental Involvement

7.1. Absence of Involvement

The global corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has thrown away family life into disarray. Closures of schools, working from home and physical separation- it's a lot to deal with for anyone particularly for parents. One of the COVID's drawbacks is that the parents are illiterate. They don't have the ability to teach their children because they can't even read. They are the parents who place complete trust on teachers for their children's future. It's quite terrible to realize that their children have no support from their illiterate parents because only teachers can help them learn and there is no longer any face-to-face engagement this time. As a result, they rely on their neighbor to guide their children. Similarly, one of the participants belongs to an illiterate group but she does her best to manage her child's education as a parent by asking if she is learning well. The participant 4 stated:

> *"Even though I cannot help my child with his school tasks because I cannot read or write, I will continue to manage my child's education as a parent by asking if his learning is going well."*

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted family life through school closures, remote work, and physical distancing, placing immense stress on parents juggling multiple roles and responsibilities (Rousoulioti et al., 2022). Illiterate parents face unique challenges in supporting their children's education, relying heavily on teachers due to their inability to read or write (Edwards & Smith, 2024). The lack of face-to-face interaction with educators is particularly detrimental, prompting parents to seek support from neighbors or community members for educational guidance. Despite their illiteracy, these parents are actively involved in their children's education, expressing concerns about their learning progress and a strong desire to participate in their academic development. This highlights the necessity for educational support systems tailored to families with illiterate parents, including accessible resources, alternative learning approaches, and community-based initiatives. The struggles faced by illiterate parents underscore broader issues of educational equity, as existing disparities are exacerbated during the pandemic, hindering disadvantaged students' access to quality education.

Theme 8: Mothers' Facilitating Factors

8.1. Needs for Professional Assistance

Mothers' knowledge and expertise in facilitating learning of their child is not as broad as the teacher in school. They still need someone to assist with care of their child's learning. As a supportive mother of her schooling child, she needed to encourage an expert who will answer the questions and difficulties faced by the child in their modules. Being a facilitator is not easy tasks of a mother but she needs to be available and be flexible just to meet the needs of the learner. Another factor that hampered in facilitating was highlighted by participants 8, 9, and 1:

> *"Because of this, I prefer traditional over Home-learning because in Home-learning, children cannot be guided on what they are studying as parents are not like teachers who are very focused on what the child should do, and the input and output of children can really be seen differently from parents because the expertise is not with the parents."*

> *"Different from face-to-face because as a parent, sometimes you cannot avoid getting tired because it's different from face-to-face where you can easily teach assignments, but now from morning till afternoon, you really need to be present. Even if we are patient parents, there will come a time when you get tired. I can say that being a teacher is quite challenging because there are many things to face. It's already difficult to focus on one thing, what more if there are many."*

> *"Another thing, even if I hire a tutor for my child, I still prefer face-to-face teaching where the teacher is more expert in all aspects of teaching."*

Mothers recognize the expertise gap between themselves and teachers in facilitating learning, highlighting the importance of professional teaching knowledge and seeking expert support (Kang et al., 2020). They often need assistance from teachers, tutors, or educational experts to help children overcome academic challenges and provide answers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Acting as facilitators, mothers create conducive learning environments, offer encouragement, and meet educational needs despite balancing other responsibilities and limited expertise. Their role includes motivating children to engage with learning materials, ask questions, and overcome obstacles, emphasizing the importance of encouragement for learning success. Mothers must be flexible, available, and open to various learning styles, adjusting schedules and providing support beyond traditional school hours. The partnership between mothers and educational experts is crucial for bridging home and school learning, ensuring consistent and high-quality educational support for children.

Theme 9: Mothers' Cognitive Factors

9.1. Limited Knowledge of their Children's Modules

Parents who have limited knowledge about a certain topic may find it so hard and challenging in teaching and facilitating their children. Several studies were illustrated and describing parents concerning about their capabilities to their children's modules. Though some of them have done the basic education and there are educational programs that developed during their time, yet parents still have inadequate knowledge about the topic. Participant 4 stated:

"Managing my child, especially teaching his module, is difficult for me as a mother because there are still subjects that I do not know or understand."

Parents with limited knowledge in specific subjects may struggle to effectively teach and support their children, leading to frustration and difficulties with schoolwork (Hartsfield & Kimmel, 2021). Despite completing basic education, many parents feel unequipped to handle contemporary educational demands, indicating a skills gap (Robertson & Tisdall, 2020). Even with some educational background, parents often lack knowledge about their children's learning topics, impacting their ability to provide effective support. Mothers interpreting their children's learning difficulties as a sign of low ability can decrease parental involvement, hindering the child's learning progress and confidence (Goodall, 2021). The parental cognitive level is vital for children's learning acquisition, with limited parental knowledge correlating with reduced learning outcomes. This underscores the importance of educational programs and resources to help parents understand modern educational topics and teaching methods, empowering them to offer better support. Knowledgeable and confident parents are more likely to engage in their children's education, leading to improved learning outcomes. A comprehensive approach involving parental education, support, and shifts in perception is essential to address these complexities effectively.

9.2. Lack of Knowledge due to Illiteracy

The parents seemed to have many personal barriers that they felt affected the standard and quality of their children's learning experience. It was clear that parents' own lack of knowledge on how to handle modular learning and the absence of trained personnel who could assist them were key concerns. Participant 6 shared:

"As a result of my lack of reading and writing skills, I cannot help my child. It hurts that I cannot assist him in his studies/school as a mother, especially when there is a lesson he does not understand. But, since I do not understand, I have no choice but to support and take care of him."

Parents face barriers impacting their children's learning quality, including a lack of knowledge on managing modular learning, absence of trained guidance personnel, and challenges in teaching their children (Sutcliffe et al., 2024). Unfamiliarity with modular learning hinders parents' ability to support their children's education and use learning materials effectively at home. The need for trained personnel highlights the necessity of educational support systems providing guidance on modular learning and educational technologies (Pappas

et al., 2019). Many parents feel unequipped to teach their children, emphasizing the importance of parental education and support. Parents with lower education levels may feel unqualified to help with specific subjects or technology, indicating a need for resources catering to diverse educational backgrounds. These barriers directly affect children's learning quality, potentially causing difficulties in subject comprehension and technology use. Robust educational support systems are essential, offering training on modular learning, technology support, and resources for parents with varying education levels. Empowering parents through education and support can enhance their ability to assist their children effectively, boosting confidence and competence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research findings highlight that mothers juggle multiple roles, including professional duties, household chores, and supporting their children's education, leading to stress and burnout. Hence, it is concluded that despite these challenges, they prioritize their children's education, although children's lack of attention to studies can hinder academic success. Acting as educators, mothers face demanding roles, especially when they lack knowledge or literacy, impacting the quality of education. Limited access to technology and digital literacy also impedes home-learning. Time management challenges arise from balancing work, household chores, and educational support, leading to incomplete tasks and increased stress. Mothers expressed a need for professional assistance to support their children's education, and the absence of such support can lead to ineffective teaching.

Furthermore, recommendations include flexible work policies, support and training programs, improved technology access and digital literacy, time management strategies, shared responsibilities, and professional tutoring services. The study's limitations include issues of generalizability, small sample size, self-reporting bias, and contextual factors. The significance lies in highlighting mothers' critical role in education, informing policy and practice, enhancing educational support, and promoting family engagement for better academic outcomes and balanced responsibilities.

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