



Challenges in Modular Learning Modality Experienced by Parents of Children with Special Needs in Molocaboc Island

Garcia, Mary Anne

University of St. La Salle, Philippines

Email: maryannecapilayan@gmail.com

Received: June 30, 2026

Revised: July 22, 2026

Accepted: August 28, 2026

ABSTRACT

Within the period of the year 2020, institutions around the globe shut down their entrances to diminish the spread of the viral occurrence in the course of the pandemic. This physical closure prompted a quick transition to modular distance learning, which handed parents and guardians more responsibilities for their children's education. This study aimed to investigate the challenges in modular learning modality experienced by 10 parents of children with special needs in Molocaboc Island. Adhering with the qualitative method of research and phenomenological approach, a researcher-made semi-structured method of an in-depth interview composed of three parts was utilized in the conduct of this study. The obstacles that parents of special learners encountered while completing the modular distance learning of their learners were analyzed using thematic coding. The data revealed four (4) themes focusing on the challenges of parents in home learning support system, balancing parents' duties and responsibilities, parents' background, and accessibility with emerged sub-themes each. The results indicated parents struggles and challenges amidst modular learning modality. Parents described having difficulties with home learning support system, balancing responsibilities, parents' background, and accessibility. The result of the study also showed opportunities seen by the respondents in two (2) themes directing on the opportunities of modular distance learning and building success from strengths. The results suggested some important implications and recommendations for the department, local government unit, educators, and parents. The implication of this study is the need for adequate preparation for the challenges that will be encountered on the island where they may be assigned and to equip them with proper measures to deal with unexpected situations. The results of the study were the basis for feedbacking for the crafting of action plan for intervention.

Keywords: challenges, parents, children with special needs, modular learning modality

How to Cite:

Garcia, M. A (2026). Challenges in Modular Learning Modality Experienced by Parents of Children with Special Needs in Molocaboc Island. *Global Journal of STEM Education & Management Research*, 2(3), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22135910>



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INTRODUCTION

Parents are vital partners in educating learners. Many people do not fully understand the challenges of being a mother or father until they experience parenthood themselves. Raising a child with special needs can be even more demanding, requiring extra patience, care, and dedication. However, the hopes and dreams of these families are no different from those of families with typically developing children. They want their children to reach their fullest potential, be accepted and included in their communities, build meaningful relationships, learn new things, and enjoy life alongside their peers. Above all, they hope their children can grow, thrive, and experience happiness just like any other child (Smith, 2020).

Modular Learning Modality indicates to the modality of learning delivery, where learners use self-learning modules (SLM's) provided by the teachers. It can also be known as home study or, correspondence education or a type of learning in which teachers and students have little or no face-to-face interaction (Abude, 2021). As a result, this research enables us to understand more about the challenges of parents, primarily those who registered their children during the pandemic. The researcher is interested in learning about the challenges that parents with special needs children face, as well as possible solutions to the problems they face.

Many parents of children with special needs experienced challenges, especially those who are residing in remote areas, like those who are in the island. Further, the researcher was a former teacher in the island for six years, who knows the struggle of the parents because of constant conversation with them. However, no matter how difficult the situation is, the love for their children fueled them to face the challenges every day. This is the reason that led the researcher to study the challenges of the parents of children with special needs. Thus, this study was conducted and as a result, this became the basis for feedbacking and crafting of action plan to address the needs of the parents.

Parents of children with special needs often require separate investigation from parents of regular learners because their experiences, responsibilities, and challenges are significantly different. Studying them independently allows researchers to identify their specific needs and develop targeted interventions, support services, and educational policies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study primarily sought to draw a definite picture of the challenges in modular learning modality experienced by parents of children with special needs in the island of Molocaboc in the Division of Sagay City. Specifically, this investigation sought to answer these questions: first, the challenges in modular learning modality experienced by parents; second, the coping mechanism used by parents; and third, the opportunities in modular learning modality perceived by parents of children with special needs in Molocaboc island.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Children with Special Needs

According to Mauro (2020), Special needs is an umbrella term for a large array of diagnoses, from those that can be resolved immediately to those that will become a challenge for a lifetime and those that are quite mild to those that are profound. Children with special needs might have medical conditions, developmental delays, congenital conditions, and/or psychiatric conditions. These special needs need accommodations so children can achieve their potential. Special needs are usually defined by what a child *cannot* do, foods banned, goals unmet, experiences denied, or activities avoided. These barriers can strike families hard and may get special needs seem like a catastrophic designation. Likewise, children with special educational needs are children first and have much in common with other children of the same age. There are many aspects to a child's development that make up the whole child, including – personality, the ability to communicate (verbal and non-verbal), resilience and strength, the ability to appreciate and enjoy life and the desire to learn. Each child has individual strengths, personality and experiences so particular disabilities will impact differently on individual children. A child's special educational need should not define the whole child.

The description “children with special needs” is for children who may have challenges or disability than the regular child and could probably last a lifetime. These children need further support, and extra services. They have different goals, and will need additional guidance and help meeting social, academic, medical, and sometimes emotional milestones. Persons with special needs may need lifetime supervision and support while facing or dealing with daily issues such as employment, housing, finances, and social involvement. For children with special needs, early intervention is an important step towards helping the child fulfill



his or her full academic, emotional, and social potential. Early intervention refers to a process during which the developmental abilities of the child are evaluated (M&L Special Needs Planning, 2020).

Children have the right to access an educational system. Education is a fundamental right of children. It has no importance whether the child is healthy or has a health problem. When the medical problem of the child impairs him to learn in a normal school, it is necessary to find alternative forms of study. The fundamental children's right for education is offered to children with special needs by special schools (Ardelean, 2020).

Parental Roles in Special Education

According to Parental Today, LCC (2019), Parents of children with special needs have a vital role to play in the education of their children. This fact is guaranteed in federal legislation that specifies the right of parents to participate in the educational decision-making process. As their child progresses through educational systems, knowing and following through on the parents' rights and responsibilities ensures that they are a contributing partner with professionals who will influence their child's future. Furthermore, parents and guardians have the most complete understanding of a child's physical, social, developmental, and family history. They are the only grown person in the instructive process who have been and will be profoundly involved throughout the child's school years. That continuousness is very respected. Parents may not be educationalists themselves. But they take their years of experience in other careers and pieces of life to the progression, along with their understanding with their own child. There is no one as motivated in and interested to see a child prosper and thrive than their own parents (Logsdon, 2021).

It takes extensive knowledge and access to information, services, and resources, to raise special needs children. As they assume the majority of the duty for the care of the child in families with impaired children, some parents give up other responsibilities they have, which results in a loss in their social lives as well as in their contribution to social activities (Taderera and Hall, 2017).

Moreover, some parents will always weep for their child's dropped potential, and some conditions become more worrying with time. Other families may find that their kid's challenges make victories sweeter and that weaknesses are regularly accompanied by remarkable strengths. However, no parent wishes his or her child to be disabled, sick or harmed in any means. It is not an experience anyone anticipates to have; rather, it is a ride that is unplanned. Majority of families are able to learn the strength within themselves and among their groups of support to adapt to and manage the challenges and stress that may go along with their child's special needs or disability (Brown, et al., 2020).

Distance Learning Challenges

The great number of activities in each module is one of the main problems that emerged in the implementation of Modular Distance Learning. The Department of Education (DepEd) must consider this problem, take out the unnecessary topics and remove unnecessary activities, so that mastery will be achieved as much as possible. As what other parents said, the lesser the better. One of the apprehensions of the learners is that they do not have ample time to answer all activities in the modules within a week. Therefore, if DepEd cannot extend the duration of accomplishing the modules, they must lessen the activities (Dangle, et al., 2020). Given that parents will play a significant part in the new standard classroom layout, this is extremely fresh to everyone, especially parents. The learning environment will be moved into the homes of the students, and parents will serve in certain capacities as teachers. Many questions have been raised as a result of these developments, including what type of instruction will be provided at home, how parents will oversee their children's education, particularly for special needs children, and what class schedule will be adhered to by parents who work full-time (Arias, 2020).

Parents are not a trained special education teacher to provide their children the supports they needed. And the lack of skills and knowledge resulted to anxieties and challenges (David, 2020). Likewise, parents' viewpoints have revealed a number of obstacles to online and home learning, including logistical, financial, technical, and personal obstacles. Personal obstacles included parents' lack of technical knowledge to help their kids access online learning and the resources/tools used in this setting. Technical difficulties were primarily caused by inadequate internet access or a lack of tools to follow lessons correctly. The idea that online learning did not suit students' unique requirements or learning rhythms was tied to logistical challenges, and parents also felt that it was not a good replacement for face-to-face learning. Financial obstacles are closely tied to logistical ones (inability to buy better technology tools and internet connection), module tutors, and logistical obstacles (Ribeiro, 2021).

Modular Learning Modality During COVID-19

Due of the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were canceled, preventing teachers and students from directly interacting. Philippine schools have switched from traditional face to face instruction to a distance learning technique in order to overcome these extraordinary challenges. This is a method of teaching where the lesson is delivered outside of the conventional face-to-face



forum and communication occurs between teachers and students who are physically separated from one another, even during the lesson (Magsambol, 2020).

Modular learning modality is the most widespread type of Distance Learning. In the Philippines, this learning modality is currently used by all public schools because according to a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents with children who are enrolled this academic year (Bernardo, 2020). However, in the research conducted by Olivo (2021), parents asserted that time allocation in the accomplishment of learning activities was lacking since the activities and tasks were so many. In addition, some parents said that some topics in the modules are so hard to understand for them and they cannot help and guide their children in answering the learning tasks. The study then suggested a review of the learning activities and perform seminars for parents to aid them in supporting their children during their “classes “at home.

The present study is supported by the findings of Agaton et al. (2021), who explored the lived experiences of Filipino parents during distance learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study revealed that parents faced numerous difficulties, including balancing household responsibilities, work obligations, and their children's educational needs, while also dealing with limited resources and insufficient knowledge to facilitate learning at home. These challenges are likely to be more pronounced among parents of children with special needs, who require additional instructional support and individualized guidance. In a similar vein, Sonnenschein et al. (2022) found that parents of children receiving special education services reported increased responsibilities during distance learning because their children required substantial adult assistance to participate in educational activities. Parents also expressed concerns about reduced access to special education services and the difficulty of providing adequate support while managing other family and work commitments. Together, these studies highlight the critical role parents play in facilitating learning at home and underscore the unique challenges experienced by families of children with special needs. These findings provide a strong basis for investigating the specific experiences of parents in Molocaboc Island, where geographical isolation and limited access to educational resources may further intensify the challenges associated with modular learning.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, utilizing the phenomenological research method. Phenomenological approach is appropriate for this study as the design focused on the experiences of the parents of children with special needs. Phenomenological research approach is a form of qualitative inquiry that emphasizes *experiential*. Phenomenology supports us to comprehend the meaning of humans' lived experience. It discovers what people experienced and concentrates on their experience of a phenomena (Neubauer, et al., 2019).

Participants

The participants of the study were the ten (10) parents of children with special needs, who are in modular learning modality in the island of Molocaboc, Sagay City, Negros Occidental. Purposive sampling can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (Campbell, 2020).

Research Instrument

To gather qualitative data, this study used the semi-structured method of an in-depth interview, using an interview guide. Semi-structured interview is usually employed in qualitative research, and it involves a number of open-ended questions based on the topic areas that the study wants to cover. Questions were open-ended to provide opportunities for both the interviewer and the interviewee to discuss a topic further or in more detail (Hancock, et al., 2009; cited by Barilea, 2021).

Hence, an interview guide to be used in this study was composed of open-ended questions. Research instrument of this type allowed the researcher to gain rich, thick detail through questioning and probing techniques, and participate in the natural “give and take” of conversations (Canos, 2017; cited by Barilea, 2021).

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, the study employed several strategies:

1. **Trustworthiness:** The study established trustworthiness through credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.



2. **Credibility:** The researcher ensured credibility by conducting in-depth interviews, using open-ended questions, and probing for more information.
3. **Dependability:** The researcher ensured dependability by conducting repeated interviews with participants and using a semi-structured interview guide.
4. **Confirmability:** The researcher ensured confirmability by presenting the notes and transcripts to the participants for validation and confirmation.
5. **Data Saturation:** The study used data saturation as a benchmark for reliability, where participants' responses were deemed reliable once no new information emerged from additional interviews.

To ensure the validity of these open-ended questions, the researcher submitted it to three validators, who are experts in their fields and have the knowledge about this study. Using the Good and Scates validation form, the validators were allowed to make necessary corrections, suggestions, and recommendations to improve the instrument. The validity index was computed to be 3.78, interpreted as good; therefore, the instrument is valid.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher went to the areas where the researcher's interacted with the parents in their natural settings. The researcher explained the purpose of the study in the language that they would understand best.

After the necessary consent was obtained, the second visit was made in which the researcher established contact with the participants and agreed on the date of the interview. Furthermore, the researcher asked for the participants' permission to have the interview session be recorded.

Once the interview was finished, the data was analyzed and interpreted by the researcher to suffice the problem with answers and to come up with a valid conclusion.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data undergone phenomenological analysis, following the six steps in data analysis and interpretation by John W. Creswell (2014).

Organize and transcribe. The researcher repeatedly listened to the audio recording of each interview to become familiar with the words of the participants.

Read or look at all the data. This step provided a general sense of the information and an opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning. The researcher took down notes in margins of transcripts and start recording general thoughts about the data.

Start coding all of the data. Coding is the process of organizing the data by Bracketing chunks and writing a word representing a category in the margins (Rossman and Rallis, 2012 cited by Creswell, 2014). The researcher combined similar clusters of themes that formed a major idea and labeled them as words or phrases to represent the combined ideas to form a second-order theme.

Use the coding process to generate a description of the settings or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. Description involves a detailed interpretation of information about places, people, or events in a setting. Researcher's made codes for this description.

Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative. The researcher used a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis. This included the discussion that mentions a chronology of events, the detailed discussion of several themes or a discussion with interconnecting themes (Creswell, 2014).

A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation in qualitative research of the findings or results. Asking, "What were the lessons learned?" arrests the spirit of this idea (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 cited by Creswell, 2014). These lessons might be the researcher's personal interpretation, phrased in the understanding that the enquirer brings to the research from a personal experience, culture, and history.

In order to check the accuracy and credibility of the research findings, the researcher used member checking and an external auditor. Member examining was used to verify the correctness of the qualitative findings all through taking the specific descriptions finishing report or themes back to respondents and deciding whether these respondents feel that they are accurate (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, the expertise of the external auditor was requested to review the entire research findings. The procedure of having an independent investigator look over many aspects of the research findings (e.g., accuracy of transcription, the relationship between the research questions and the data, the level of data analysis from the raw data through interpretation) enhances the overall validity of a qualitative study.



Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured the ethical conduct of the study. The researcher approached the parents at their convenience. The researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the study and the benefit they might gain. They received assurances that their responses would be kept private and that their privacy would not be violated. They were made aware of their freedom to withdraw from the study whenever and for any reason. The participants were asked for their consent before the interviews could be recorded. The interviews were captured on audio. Additionally, notes were made to elaborate on and represent the emotions seen.

Meanwhile, to address the anonymity of the respondents, this study did not use participants' real names; instead, they were individually identified all throughout this paper using a code.

The data was kept confidential and remained protected from disclosure outside of the research setting or to unauthorized people. This data was disposed of after the retention period to meet some ethical requirements. The tangible source of research data, which is the transcribed interview, was incinerated while the recording, which is a digital file, was deleted without any chance of retrieval.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic Findings

The study at hand generally aimed to draw a definite picture of the challenges in modular learning modality experienced by parents of children with special needs in Molocaboc Island in the Schools Division of Sagay City. The sudden shift in education from classroom to home schooling posed various challenges to parents. The following are the main textual themes found in the interview transcripts.

Theme 1: Home Learning Support System

The common challenges experienced by the parents of children with special needs in terms of Home Learning Support System is shown in figure 2.

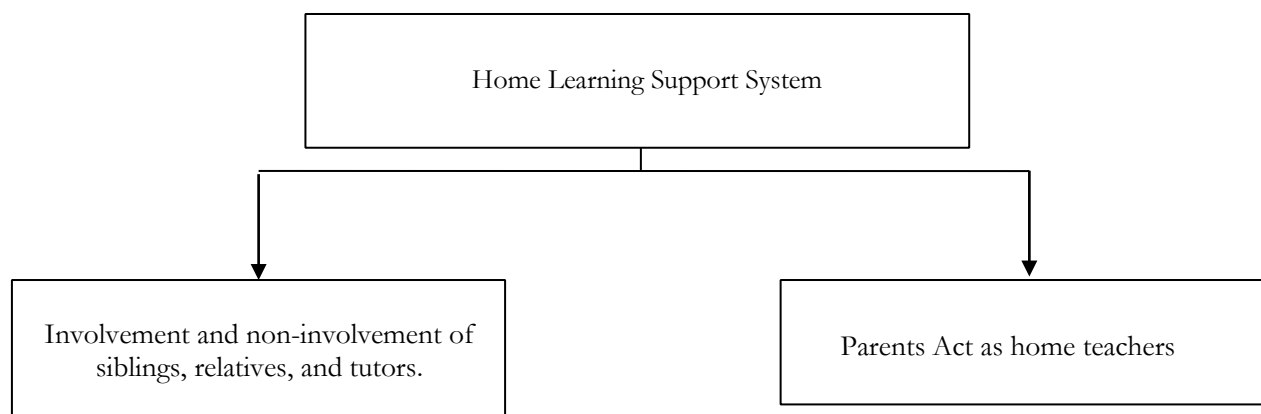


Figure 2: Home Learning Support System

The COVID-19 pandemic has closed educational establishments and theatrically shifts education to distance learning. However, students rooted in marginalized families and from rural areas like island schools have limited access to the technology necessary for online learning. Modular learning addresses this learning inequality by providing more inclusive access to education (Agaton and Cueto, 2021).

The home learning environment is the combination of everything you and your family do and the spaces your child has access to that affect your child's development and learning (Parentzone, 2022). Home Learning Support System refers to the persons behind the education at home of the learners. It includes the learners' parents, siblings, relatives, and tutors. Under this theme are the involvement and non-involvement of the siblings, relatives, and tutors, and parents act as home teachers.



Involvement and non-involvement of siblings, relatives, and tutors

During a time of distance learning, family engagement is critical for ensuring that the needs of students, particularly those with disabilities are being met. Families should have the opportunity to be involved in their child's or siblings' education in a way that is meaningful to them (Vanderbilt University, 2022). At this time of modular learning modality, having siblings, relatives, or tutors that can help the learners on his/her modules are great reinforcement for the parents.

"Kabudlay mag kuha modyul sa pikas isla kay kami may mga ubra man. Ginapakuha ko nalang sa Grade 6 ko nga bata, lakaton usa ka oras padding sa eskwelahan" P3

This shows that there's the involvement of siblings and relatives. Some are helping in getting and returning the modules to school. Others are taking care of their special siblings when their parents are at work, and few shows support by answering the parents' queries. The family members, friends, and relatives of the learners play a essential role in instruction today. Siblings are at the top of the list helping the learners in answering the modules followed by friends and classmates (Dangle, et al., 2020). The influence of siblings is by no means limited to help with everyday life and homework, even modules. It's not just parents who find themselves thrust into the demanding role of at-home educators, but the siblings, and other family members too (Moguerou and Santelli, 2022).

However, there are parents says that there are circumstances that can hinder to have such support. Like the child has no siblings and relatives. The parents can likewise hire a home tutor for their child, but poor families can't afford to hire tutors on their behalf (Itorralba, 2022).

"Iya manghod di paman katabang kay Grade 2 pa malang." P1

"Ok lang sa mga datu kay naa silay ibayad ug tutor, pero kami pigado na wala pajny alam." P8

None from the participants could provide tutors for their special children because of the poverty, much more because of pandemic.

Parent Act as Home Teachers

In the 'new normal', parents have to play a more significant role in the learning and development of their child than they have done traditionally. More so, because most education is now taking place in the home environment instead of the school campus, without the physical presence of teachers.

These changes have created a number of questions, including how parents will manage their children's education at home, especially for special needs children, and what kind of instruction will be provided at home (Arias, 2020). In a sudden, they became the teacher of their special children at home. That is why they experienced struggles and challenges of being a parent and a teacher at the same time.

"Sa modyul ya, budlay kay may ubra kami. Mag-abot sa balay kapoy na kay manghimos pa kag madigamo. Grabi gid ky nadugangan amon ubra nga kami pa matudlo sa ila." P4

"Hindi na kami ka trabaho kag maski ubra sa sulod balay hindi na namun mahimo kay magkuha pa modyul kag magtudlo pa sa amon kabataan." P3

According to Rohita and Krisnawati (2020), teacher is a profession that is obtained by someone after passing the minimum educational requirements and mastering the competencies to become a teacher.

This means that not everyone can become a teacher if they do not go through the process. However, the Covid19 pandemic forces everyone, especially those who have children, to be able to carry out their role as teachers at home. The implementation of being a teacher at home can't just accompany or guide, but also must have the ability to explain the meaning and benefits behind the tasks given by teachers at school. Parents can't fulfill all their obligations at once.

Theme 2: Balancing Parents' Duties and Responsibilities

The common challenges experienced by the parents of children with special needs in terms of Balancing Parents' Duties and Responsibilities is shown in figure 3.

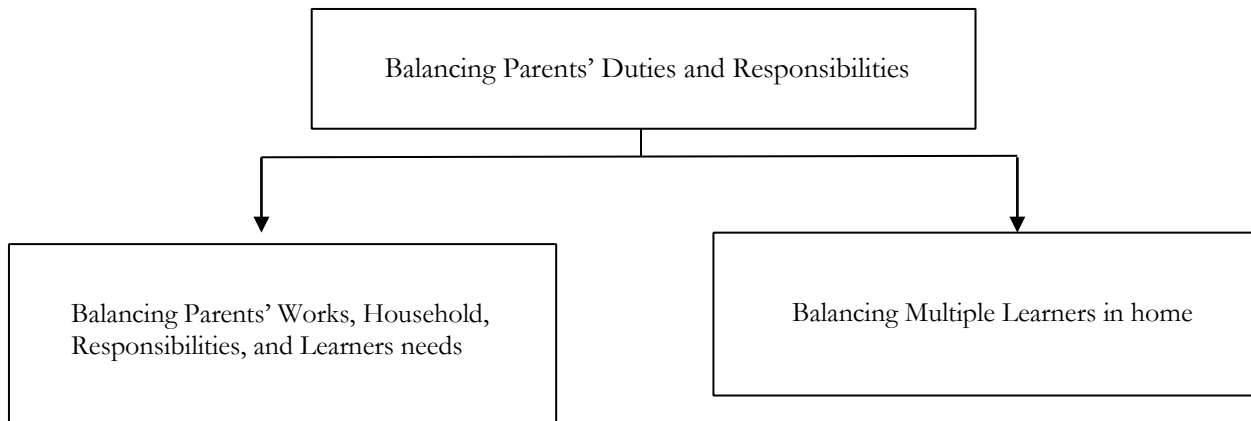


Figure 3: Balancing Parents' Duties and Responsibilities

Many participants found it difficult to combine their parental responsibilities as a result of school closures and distance learning. Respondents frequently voiced their worry about the conflicting demands on their meager energy and time caused by their many obligations. Researchers identified two different challenges: helping several children in the home with their learning and juggling parent work, domestic duties, and learners' needs.

Balancing Parents Works, Household Responsibilities, and Learners Needs

The most frequently mentioned challenge was juggling the demands of learners, parents, and home tasks. During the COVID school cancellations, the majority of respondents had difficulty managing their households, their jobs, and helping their children with their education (Garbe, et al., 2020). The following are some of the statements of the parents:

"Te ang ining modyul Ma'am nagdugang pagid sa amon nga libog kag kakapoy, kay daw haluson nalang gani ko kapanghimus sa balay tungod ani. Kag ginkuha pagid sini ang oras sang amun inugpahuway." P6

Parents throughout the world are naturally concerned about how their routines and the routines of their children are being interrupted since they must manage the household, work from home, and keep their child(ren) on track with their modular homework (Kintanar, 2021). Further, the new learning set up gives additional labor for the parents who are also busy working in order to provide the needs of the family (Agaton and Cueto, 2021).

It is clear that these worries could reduce the parents' level of preparation. Parents weren't prepared for this adjustment because the pandemic breakout came on so suddenly and without warning. They would therefore encounter difficulties juggling their obligations at home, at work, and as teachers. In order to achieve the deadlines, set by the school, parents occasionally forgo their job and other obligations. This unpredictable and difficult circumstance might make people feel more anxious and stressed, which would make it harder to plan ahead and manage their time. The majority of families do not have someone to take over the full-time responsibility of maintaining remote education in a culture where families typically have two parents working outside the home (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). It is hardly surprising that having additional duties caused parents to suffer.

Balancing Multiple Learners in Home

Another situation that created a challenge in juggling obligations was helping and directing the learning of several youngsters at home. This includes the difficulty in addressing the requirements of special learners at home due to the presence of various learning levels under one roof. This adds to the responsibilities of the parent on how to manage or balance their time and efforts.

"Kis a gani di na ko katudlo sa uban ko nga bata." P5
"Nangin challenge jud ni sa akua Ma'am kay kinahanglan ko gid nga tungaon ang akon oras sa ubra ug sa pagtudlo. Kag kabudlay kay tulo ni sila ang mag modules." P9

Having multiple student who are in modular learning modality is a challenge to the parents, most especially those who are working and has responsibilities.

The larger the family, the greater the dilution of parental guidance, and the more limited are the educational chances of each child. Given that children from large families may have lower chances of receiving assistance from the parents (Feng, 2020).

Theme 3: Parents Background

The common challenges experienced by the parents of children with special needs in terms of Parents' Background is shown in figure 4.

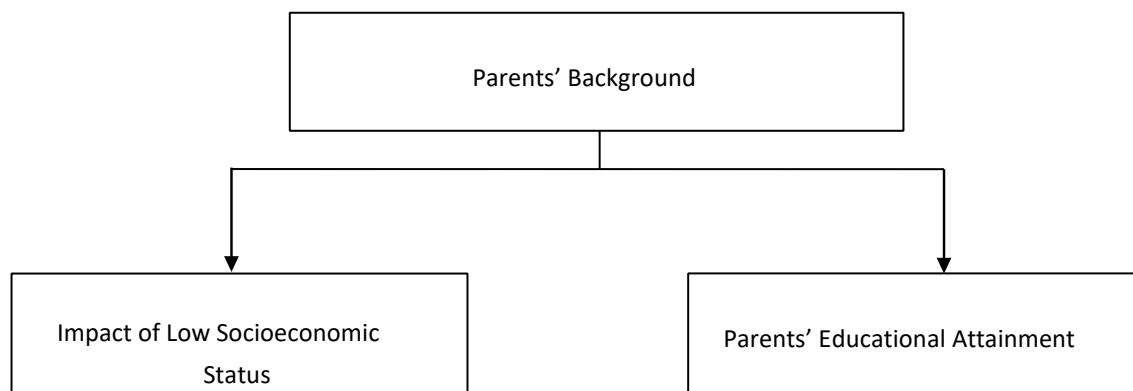


Figure 4: Parents' Background

Many from the participants emphasize how they struggle in modular learning modality in terms of their background. Under this theme, sub-theme emerged: Impact of low socio-economic status and parents' educational attainment.

Impact of Socio-economic Status

Families from different socio-economic groups create a different learning environment that affects a child's achievement motivation. According to a number of studies, a student's academic success is significantly influenced by the socioeconomic circumstances of their family. Additionally, according to academics, one of the reasons why parents are unable to meet their children's educational demands is because of their parents' low socioeconomic level (Pant, 2020). Below are the statements from the parents:

"Nakaapekto gid sa amon trabaho, daw gadugang sa amon kapigaduhon." P1
"Bahala pigado kami basta mapaeskvela ko ang tatlo ko ka bata." P4 *"Amo na gapamangkot ko ilabi na sa kondisyon sang akon bata kay syempre wala man ni sya napa doctor gid kay kapobre man sa amon."* P5

They were unable to devote the necessary time, focus, and effort to their kids' education. Similarly, children growing up in poverty may experience more developmental delays and learning disabilities than children from higher-income homes, and parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may also provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school (Thomson, 2018).

Another difficulty faced by parents of special needs children is financial difficulties. According to Resch et al. (2010), families of children with disabilities generally incur higher costs than other families, regardless of the kind of the disability. The fact that children with disabilities are disproportionately more likely to reside in low income homes presents a financial difficulty. Disadvantaged communities may lack proper healthcare services, have limited access to crucial information about family wellbeing, and have low educational levels, which could all be contributing factors. Time and financial costs, physical and emotional demands, and logistical complexities associated with raising a disabled child can have far-reaching effects as we describe below. The impacts will likely depend on the type of condition and severity, as well as the physical, emotional, and financial wherewithal of the family and the resources that are available (Reichman, et al., 2021).

Parents' Educational Attainment



Education plays a vital role in enhancing the level of thinking and standard of living. Educated parents transfer the value of education to their children which intern affect the aspiration level and achievement of the child (Malabarbas, 2022).

Parents are complaining because they can't understand well what's in the modules. They cannot give proper instructions to their children because of their low level of comprehension and educational attainment.

"Kag usabay dili ko kasabot sang modyul kay Grade 6 lang man ko asta." P1 "Dasun di na kami maglibog sa ila modyul nga usabay di mi kabibaw kay wala man mi katapos elementary." P2

"Pero karun tanan nan ga subject amun itudlo sa amon bata. Kis a hindi ko kabibaw kay wala man ko katapos gani elementary." P4

Parents who do not know how to read and write, making it more difficult to teach their children the lessons in their subject areas (Anzaldo, 2021). Well-educated parents are more involved in their children's education as compared to less educated parents because less educated parents can't assist their children well in terms of modules because even them, themselves have not enough knowledge to teach their children in terms of academics. According to Kapinga (2014), referenced by Pants (2020), parents who attained a particular degree of education might support the school's appraisal of their children. Parental education serves as the family's social capital. Parents with education who assist their kids with their homework or other assignments improve the learning environment at home. Parental education serves as the family's human capital. Children from well-educated families have more chances to learn from their parents at home.

Theme 4: Accessibility

The challenges experienced by the parents of children with special needs in terms of Accessibility is shown in figure 5.

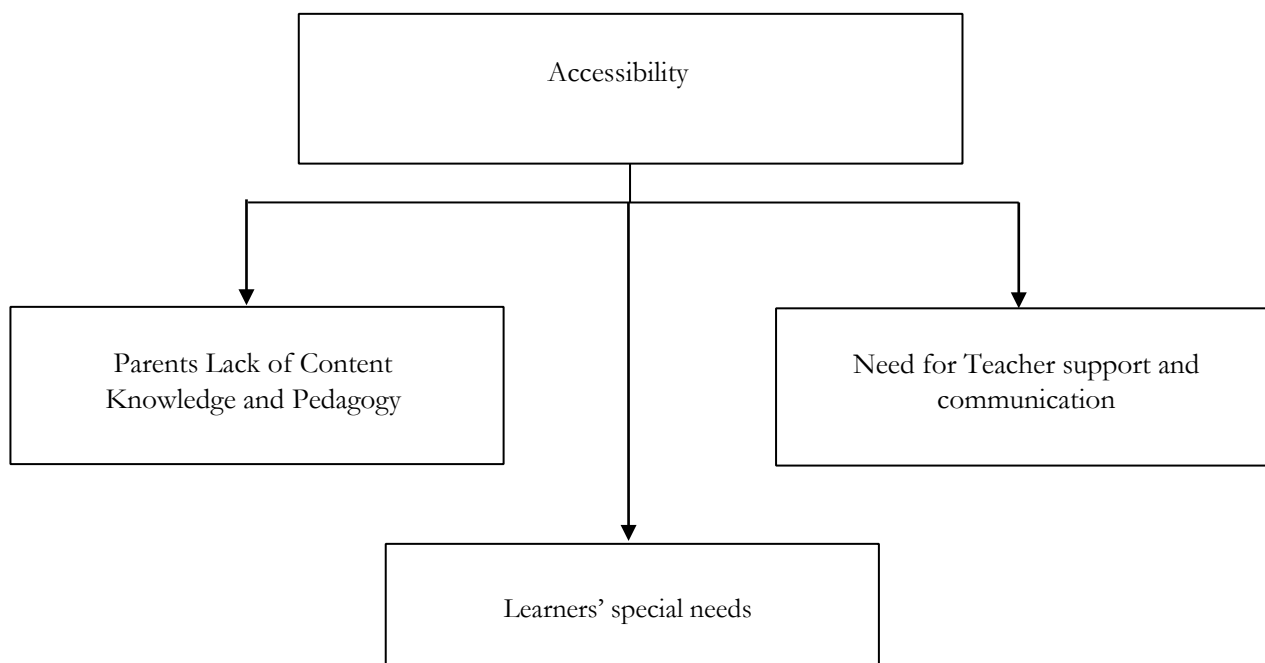


Figure 5: Accessibility

The fourth identified theme is accessibility. Many respondents mentioned obstacles that prevent students from fully utilizing the options for online learning. These issues fit under the umbrella of accessibility. Accessibility was impacted by three subthemes: student special needs, parent content or pedagogy ignorance, and demand for teacher communication.

Parents Lack of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Most of the participants cited lack of parent pedagogy or content expertise as a difficulty. The researcher determined that their main difficulties were related to pedagogy or content understanding and talked about their lack of preparation for careers as educators. The following responses from participants were categorized as indicating a lack of parent pedagogical or topic knowledge:

"Hindi ko gid maayu matagaan kag matudluan akon bata kay wala man kami natudluan panu." P9

"Tsa pa di ko siya matabangan ug tarong kay maski ako di kamao." P2 "Maski tuod Ma'am nga para man ni sa amon kabataan pero kay may ara man kami responsibilidad nga amon kag kulang man kami sa alam." P4



Teachers are experts in their fields of subject, pedagogy, and communication in a typical educational context. However, it appears that during the emergency shift to remote learning, the actual delivery of concepts, help for grasping concepts in greater depth, and explanation of procedures are generally lacking (Hawkins, 2020).

Furthermore, the future of the children will undoubtedly be impacted by parental issues with regard to topic knowledge or pedagogy, as well as a lack of preparation to become an educator. Additionally, when parents lack knowledge, they worry about their kids' achievement in school and at home (Kintanar, 2021). Likewise, since special education is a unique type of instruction, it needs a unique set of skills and perspectives in order to ensure that kids advance. Due to compromises and the fact that some parents and caregivers lack special education teacher training, many parents are faced with children who are regressing (ViewSonic, 2020). Parents are not a trained special education teacher to provide their children the supports they needed. And the lack of skills and knowledge resulted to anxieties and challenges (David, 2020).

Learners' Special Needs

The most common challenges cited by participants was their children's special needs. Participants described the struggle to meet the special needs of their children during COVID school closure. Parents shared the following:

"Ang pagtutlo sa iya kay usabay maayun sya tudluan, kis a nagamaoy kay hindi gusto mag answer sang modyul." P1
"Budlay kay akon bata bulag pero okay lang man kay ang importante Ma'am maka eskwela siya." P2

The most predominant issue impacting accessibility was the learner's special needs. Many students' special learning needs were left unmet by teachers due to the lack of capacity of schools, internet access, and diverse students' special needs and also left unmet by parents because of a lack of time, responsibility, content knowledge or pedagogy, communication, and/or resources (Garbe, et. al., 2020).

One of the more difficult applications of modular learning is for special education distance learning. Pupils who opt to learn outside of the classroom run a higher risk of regressing because these students have individualized and particular demands that go beyond the requirements of the core curriculum. What duties parents and caregivers have when it comes to creating accommodations and following instructions is one area of worry that could have an impact on regression. Particularly, these pupils are more likely to fall behind in their academics without careful planning if they are having individualized education plans (IEPs) (View Sonic, 2020). A young person with special needs is one who has been determined to need special attention and certain essentials that other children do not, according to Kagan (2020), as cited by Degamo, et al., (2021). Therefore, it is important to pay close attention to these kids' requirements, especially as parents or other adult guardians are crucial to the success of the modular distant learning program.

Moreover, it takes deep knowledge and access to resources, info, and services to raise special needs children. As they assume the majority of the duty for the care of the child in families with impaired children, some parents give up other roles they have, which results in a loss in their personal interaction as well as in their contribution to community activities (Taderera and Hall, 2017).

Need for Teacher Support and Communication

For some, the necessity for teacher communication presented yet another obstacle. Participants who expressed this need described a range of underlying circumstances that led to the need for communications.

"Mas sayun sa una nga face-to-face kay may maestra nga gatutlo sa ila kag mag alam gid sila. Kay sa amon kis a di maminaw, masuko pa kung tudluan. Sa maestra kay mahadlok man sila." P4
"San una syempre kay may katuwang ako sa pag tan aw sang kondisyon o pamatasan sang akon bata Ma'am tungod may ara maestra sa daku nga para gid sa mga special child." P5

Due to the abrupt transition to modular distance learning, many teachers' time was probably spent developing content, printing modules, creating Learning Activity Sheets, weekly home learning, overwhelming paper works, and giving feedback on submitted learning tasks, showing the beginning of the learning task and feedback for task completion. The time and expertise required to complete the task or render in-the-moment assistance through home visitations and communication to assist students in grappling with concepts and meet their special needs, was likely new to many teachers (Garbe, et al., 2020) and appeared as a struggle noted by the participants. Lastly, Families with children with special educational needs require more assistance from teachers or school (Haller and Novita, 2021).

To further achieve the purpose of both the parents, teachers, and institution in educating and including the children in home education, effective communication and coordination with the educators are required at this time. They work along with their



teachers, who maintain open lines of communication with them so they can receive assistance when they are having trouble with the child (Degamo and Sano, 2021). Similarly, strong relationships between parents and education professionals' benefit all, especially children with disabilities.

Theme 5: Opportunities of Modular Learning Modality

The opportunities experienced by the parents of children with special needs in terms of Opportunities of Modular Learning Modality is shown in figure 6.

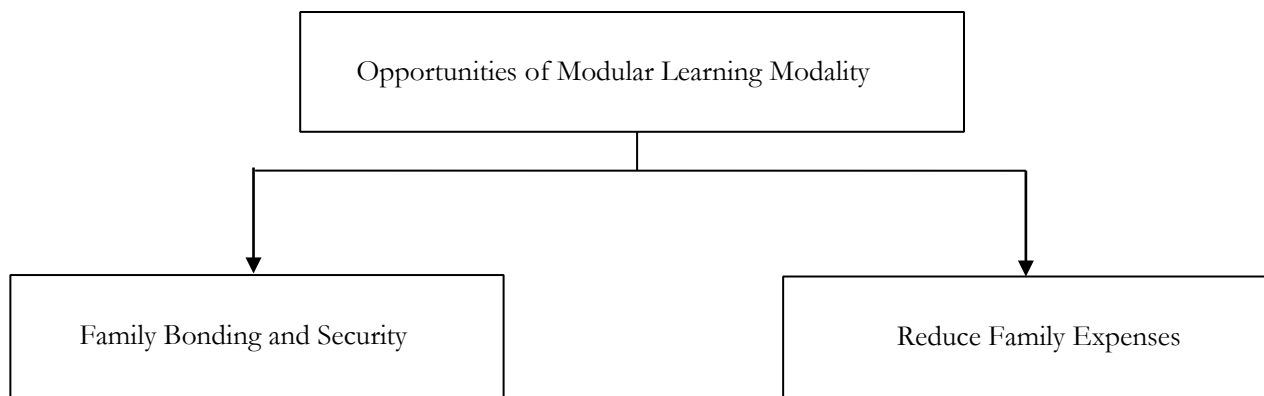


Figure 6: Opportunities of Modular Learning Modality

Parents of children with special needs also experienced opportunities on modular learning modality despite of the challenges they have experienced. Under this theme submerged the two sub-themes: Family Bonding and Security and Reduce Family Expenses. Parenting children with special needs is not all sorrow. We have tremendous joy, and our children teach us to appreciate milestones that other people take for granted (Parenting Today, 2019).

Family Bonding and Security

The lockdowns and sudden shift to home schooling generates stress to the parents but somehow, parents are happy that their family have time together and become close to each other. At the same time, seeing their children secured inside their house is a relief. The participants expressed this kind of opportunities they experienced despite of the challenges:

"May yara kami bonding sang bata ko Ma'am, amu gid na nakita ko nga oportunidad kay sang face-to-face hindi nagid kami maayn maka updanay lawig kag mabantayan gid namun sya." P5

"Ug makuyog ko pa sila permi kag makita naku nga safe sila." P10

The participants acknowledged the value of the new learning set-up as it ensures the safety of their children as well as building a stronger relationship among the family members (Agaton and Cueto, 2021).

According to Wang, et al. (2020), it is likely said to be a healthy bond when parents and their kids spend more time together so that they can both spend more time collaborating on a child's educational activities. Additionally, it claims that the more parents are forthcoming and spend time with their kids, the more likely it is that their kids will recognize that they are there for them when they need comfort and hope, lessening their suffering and anxiety.

Reduce Family Expenses

Due to its alignment with recent trends and learner proclivities, distance learning has developed into one of the simplest methods of education, as demonstrated by AISmadi (2020). In addition, modular distance learning reduces expenses of the parents at school.

Participants of this study shared their experiences:

"Kag wala na kami pabalonan ug gaan pamasabe. Nakabuhin sa amon galastohan." P1

"Ang modyul may maayn man nga nabimu kay nabuhinan ang amon galastohan sa pag eskwela nila, sa balon kag plete sa pambot pakadt sa eskwelahan kag hindi na maglakat sa malawig ang kabataan kung hunas." P3



Modular Distance learning minimizes the spending priority of the family in terms of child's daily allowance, fares, and other expenses. Face-to-face gives additional financial burden for the family from the daily allowances, fares, and other school expenses. (Agaton and Cueto, 2021). This is beneficial not only for financial reasons but also for time management.

Theme 6: Building Success from Strengths

The strengths of the parents of children with special needs in terms of Building success from Strengths is shown in figure 7.

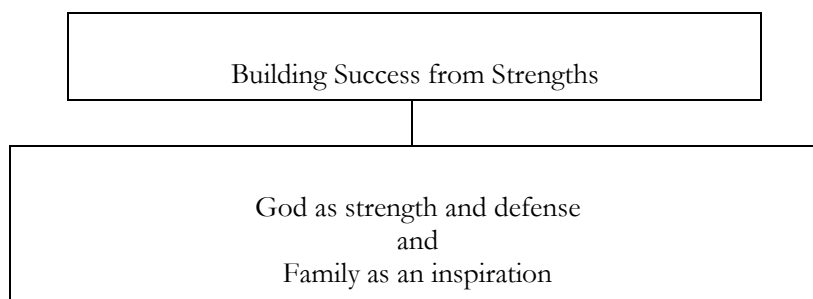


Figure 7: Building Success from Strengths

Parenting is constantly challenging, but the challenges get to new altitudes when you are parenting a child with special needs. Whenever we talk about children with special needs and their parents, the first thought that comes to mind with most people is either of challenges, sadness, or pity. However, no one talks or observes about their happiness, strength, strong coping, mechanism, etc. (Special Kids Company, 2019).

Under the theme Building Success from Strengths, sub-theme emerged: God as strength and defense, and Family as an inspiration.

God as Strength and Defense, and Family as an Inspiration

Participants shared on how they face the challenges they experienced and to whom they drew strength to fight and continue every day.

“Sa Ginoo kay wala nagid uban nga makatabang sa atoa kundi siya lamang kag sa akon man pamilya.” P1

“Sa pagpangamuyo gid sa Ginoo kag ang akon pamilya.” P2

“Sa Ginoo kag sa akon pamilya Ma’am. Sila gid na gabatag kusog sa amon sang akon bana nga mag kugihan pagid kag mag padayon.” P3

When adversity comes, we are forced to face problems and pressures that are too big for us to resolve. We cannot continue to pursue our goals, tasks, and relationships in the same manner. We have to stop and evaluate our situation, ask God for wisdom, obey His Word, and trust Him to bring the help we need (Institute in Basic Life Principle, 2021). God indeed a rescue in all problems and challenges of human beings. Parents drew their strength in God Whom greater than their problems.

The family, on the other hand, serves as an inspiration to the parents to keep going and pursuing despite the obstacles they encountered along the way. According to the Hanley Foundation (2022), family helps us get through the most disastrous times and the best times. Family is important because it can provide support, security, and unconditional love; they will always look for and bring out the best in you, even if you cannot see it for yourself. Family gives inspiration to those struggling family members because they will, for the most part, be the only ones who can really understand you and bring you back to that place of peace. Your family might not be able to shield you from everything, but they will be able to assist you through the hard times and give you the tools you need to diffuse or avoid the situation.

Above all, the Theory of Challenges and Response by Arnold Toynbee was incorporated in this study. The theory underlying it is that a barrier to civilization shouldn't really be "too hard" or "too soft." Too much of a task might halt a person's progress or cause them to go extinct, while too little of a difficulty leaves people complacent and without the desire to better their situation (Nielsen, 2008).

CONCLUSION



This study shows that parents of children with special needs in Molocaboc Island have become indispensable partners in their children's education, especially during the implementation of modular distance learning. Despite the many challenges they encountered, parents demonstrated dedication, perseverance, and a strong commitment to supporting their children's learning. Their experiences reveal that the success of distance education for learners with disabilities depends not only on the learners themselves but also on the capacity of families and the support they receive from schools and the broader educational system.

The findings contribute to the field of special education by highlighting the realities faced by families of children with special needs in geographically isolated communities. They underscore the importance of recognizing parents as active collaborators in the learning process and ensuring that they are provided with the resources, guidance, and encouragement necessary to support their children effectively. The study also adds to the growing understanding of how educational inequalities can be intensified during emergencies and alternative learning situations.

Furthermore, the study offers valuable insights for distance learning and special education policies. It emphasizes the need for more inclusive, family-centered, and responsive educational programs that address the unique circumstances of learners with disabilities. Strengthening parent support systems, improving access to appropriate learning materials, and fostering stronger school-home partnerships can help create more equitable learning opportunities for all children. Ultimately, this study serves as a reminder that achieving inclusive education requires collective effort and sustained support, ensuring that children with special needs can continue to learn, grow, and succeed regardless of their location or circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Develop and implement support programs, such as parent orientation, training, and workshops, to equip parents of children with Special needs with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively facilitate modular learning at home.
2. Maintain regular communication with parents through home visits, phone calls, text messaging, or online platforms to provide guidance, monitor learners' progress, and address challenges encountered during modular learning.
3. Design and distribute modified, learner-friendly, and needs-based modules that are appropriate for children with special needs, making learning activities more accessible and manageable for both learners and parents.
4. Collaborate with schools to provide educational assistance, learning materials, and psychosocial support to families of children with special needs, particularly those residing in geographically isolated areas.
5. Encourage future researchers to explore other aspects of learning among children with special needs, including the effectiveness of various learning modalities, parental involvement, and support mechanisms, to contribute to the development of more inclusive and responsive educational programs.

By implementing these recommendations, we may help improve parental involvement, enhance learning outcomes, and promote a more inclusive and effective educational environment.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this paper. They affirm that no financial, personal, or professional relationships with other individuals or organizations have compromised the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research work. As a final point, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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