

Remote Learning and Children with Intellectual Disabilities and Hearing Impairments: Parental Challenges and Coping Strategies

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Apprendimento a distanza e bambini con disabilità intellettiva e problemi di udito: sfide e strategie di coping genitoriali

The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated profound global transformations, and in the Philippines, Emergency Remote Learning (ERT) emerged as a vital response to address the educational needs of students during this crisis. While existing research has extensively examined the challenges faced by parents during ERT, limited attention was devoted to understanding the unique experiences of parents of children with intellectual disabilities (ID) and hearing impairments (HI). Using a qualitative descriptive case study within interpretative paradigm, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the challenges encountered and coping strategies employed by 15 parents in the Philippines who have children with ID and HI. Findings illuminate the multifaceted challenges faced by parents, encompassing their roles as caregivers and facilitators of their children's education. Moreover, it reveals the support mechanisms available to these parents, while also highlighting the pressing need for additional assistance to better meet the complex needs of these children. The research also identifies the most effective strategies employed by parents to navigate the challenges of remote learning. The results serve as a critical resource for parents, educators, and policymakers, providing a roadmap for enhancing the support system for families with children who have ID and HI, particularly during times of crisis.

La pandemia COVID-19 ha provocato profonde trasformazioni globali e, nelle Filippine, l'Emergency Remote Learning (ERT) ha offerto una risposta vitale per gli studenti durante la crisi. La ricerca ha ampiamente esaminato le sfide affrontate dai genitori durante l'ERT, ma con limitata attenzione all'esperienza eccezionale di chi ha figli con disabilità intellettiva e problemi di udito. Utilizzando uno studio di caso qualitativo descrittivo all'interno del paradigma interpretativo, questo contributo mira a colmare tale lacuna, esplorando le sfide e le strategie di coping di 15 genitori delle Filippine con figli con disabilità intellettiva e problemi di udito. I risultati gettano luce sulle molteplici sfide affrontate dai genitori in quanto caregiver e facilitatori dell'istruzione dei figli; inoltre, consentono di individuare le strategie di supporto accessibili a questi genitori, evidenziando al contempo l'urgente necessità di ulteriore assistenza per meglio soddisfare i complessi bisogni dei bambini. La ricerca identifica anche le modalità più efficaci utilizzate dai genitori per affrontare le sfide dell'apprendimento a distanza. Gli esiti costituiscono una risorsa fondamentale per genitori, insegnanti e policymaker, in quanto forniscono una tabella di marcia per migliorare il sistema di supporto alle famiglie con bambini affetti da disabilità intellettiva e problemi di udito, soprattutto in tempi di crisi.

Keywords: COVID-19; Emergency Remote Teaching; Children with Disabilities; Intellectual Disabilities; Hearing Impairments.

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1. Introduction

The global enforcement of restrictions on in-person classes has led to significant disruptions in the worldwide education system, affecting a staggering 1,576,021,818 learners (Mohammed, Khidhir, Nazeer, & Vijayan, 2020). In response to these closures, educational institutions were compelled to shift toward remote learning, which the Department of Education (DepEd, 2020) of the Philippines defines as a pedagogical approach where learners access materials and resources independently, often in a self-directed study at home or other venues. For instance, China launched an emergency response to COVID-19 titled “Suspending Classes without Stopping the Learning” to ensure the continuity of educational services despite school closures (Zhang, Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2020). This approach, known as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), aims to provide reliable and efficient instructional support (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). ERT is considered a temporary measure necessitated by circumstances, and therefore, the education system is expected to return to traditional learning delivery modes when the crisis subsides (Raguindin, Lising, & Custodio, 2021). While remote learning existed before the pandemic, its widespread implementation is relatively new (DepEd, 2022a). Thus, caution is warranted, as misconceptions about this approach can have lasting adverse effects (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

The paradigm shift brought about by ERT has transformed children’s education into a shared responsibility between educators and parents. This shift necessitates parents to facilitate learning (Duraku & Nagavci, 2023) and organize leisure activities (Parczewska, 2020). Consequently, parents and other family members have been bestowed with various titles, such as pseudo-teachers, coaches, significant learning facilitators, co-creators of learning, and home-school supervisors (Garbe, Ogurlu, Logan, & Cook, 2020; Raguindin *et al.*, 2021; Toquero, 2021). They have taken on multiple roles at home, serving as teachers, therapists, speech pathologists, and coaches for their children’s developmental milestones, often with limited professional support (Eshraghi *et al.*, 2020). But the added parental responsibilities could potentially strain parent-child dynamics (Sharma, 2020), leading to pronounced implications for parents, especially those with children from vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities (CWD). Online learning for CWD has posed significant challenges for all stakeholders, encompassing learners and educators (Cachon-Zagalaz, Sanchez-Zafra, Sanabrias-Moreno, Gonzales-Valero, Lara-Sanchez, & Zagalaz-Sanchez, 2020). However, these challenges have been particularly pronounced for parents (Bokayev, Torebekova, Davletbayeva, & Zhakypova, 2021; Efstratopoulou, Delligianidou, & Sofologi, 2021; Neece, McIntyre, & Fenning, 2020). The repercussions of these challenges include heightened familial socio-emotional stress (Schuck & Lambert, 2020), difficulties in guiding their children’s learning due to limited access to online devices or the complexity of managing their children’s challenging behaviors during learning (Novianti & Garzia, 2020). Additionally, some parents may have reached lower educational levels, leading to limited technology skills, inadequate training, and time constraints (Bokayev *et al.*, 2021; Rideout & Katz, 2016; Smith, Burdette, Cheatham, & Harvey, 2016). Nevertheless, Anderson (2020) offers valuable advice for parents, encouraging them to perceive this multifaceted role as a source of relief rather than an added responsibility. Several studies underscore the pivotal role parents play in fostering academic success (Garbe *et al.*, 2020; Jamaludin, Alias, & DeWitt, 2015; Lee & Figueroa, 2012; Makrooni, 2019), emphasizing the importance of their engagement in their children’s education.

2. Context of the Study

In the Philippine context, the education sector emerged as one of the hardest-hit domains during the pandemic crisis (Samortin, Corcuera, Alvarez, & Palm, 2022), significantly impacting approximately five million CWD (Cahapay, 2020). Data analysis conducted by the DepEd and the Department of Health (DOH) (2021) underscores specific learners’ challenges in remote learning, highlighting issues such as the absence of hands-on guidance, emotional support, and limited access to technology. Consequently, recommendations have been made to prioritize these learners for a return to physical classes in areas where disease transmission is controlled and it is safe to do so (DepEd, 2022b). Encouragingly, parents of CWD have demonstrated resilience during the pandemic by implementing various practices. These practices include availing online occupational therapy services, establishing structured schedules

that engage children in household chores, teaching new social behaviors in the context of COVID-19 through real-life situations, exploring homeschooling options, and providing support to other families with disabilities through online platforms (Cahapay, 2020).

Additionally, special education (SpEd) teachers have played a crucial role in facilitating learning at home by utilizing strategies like online communication, homeschooling, fostering parental engagement, ensuring psychological safety, and employing empathetic language. Furthermore, they have advocated for additional support measures to promote inclusivity during ERT, such as developing inclusive school policies and government-driven emergency interventions (Toquero, 2021). It is essential to emphasize the need for future legislation to support CWD (Greenberg & Fisher, 2020), a topic addressed in this study, which employs a qualitative descriptive case study approach. This research aims not only to elucidate the challenges faced by parents of children with intellectual disabilities (CwID) and children with hearing impairments (CwHI) in the context of remote learning but also to delineate the coping strategies employed by Filipino parents in this unique educational landscape.

3. Methods

3.1. Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, allowing researchers to gain in-depth insights into the meanings attributed to social or human issues by individuals or groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). More specifically, it utilized the descriptive case study methodology, characterized as “an empirical investigation that explores a contemporary phenomenon (referred to as the ‘case’) within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context may not be clearly defined” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.2. Participants and Instrumentation

This study collected data from fifteen parents of CwID and HI who were enrolled in the SpEd program from kindergarten to Grade 3 during the 2020-2021 school year (See Table 1 for the participants' profile).

Data collection was conducted through focus group discussions and phone interviews. Discussions and interviews were intended to delve into parents' experiences, focusing on their challenges, the support they received, coping strategies they employed, and best practices they adopted while teaching their children during remote learning. Employing a descriptive thematic analysis, the researchers identified the challenges faced by parents, the coping strategies they used, and the effective best practices they utilized in teaching CWD during the pandemic.

Table 1 – Profile of research participants

GROUP CODE	Age	Relationship to CwD	Skills related to rearing their CwD	Occupation
ID Group 1				
PIDA01	46	Aunt	Strong organization skills	Out of work
PIDA02	50	Mother	Proficient in behavioral management	Online seller
PIDA03	50	Father	Proficient in written communication	Entrepreneur
PIDA04	55	Mother	Innovative in pedagogical approaches	Homemaker
PIDA05	55	Mother	Proficient in writing skills	Seamstress
PIDA06	54	Mother	Proficient in task management	Out of work

GROUP CODE	Age	Relationship to CwD	Skills related to rearing their CwD	Occupation
HI Group 2				
PHIo1	29	Aunt	Not proficient in Sign Language	Homemaker
PHIo2	60	Grandma	Not proficient in Sign Language	Out of work
PHIo3	36	Mother	Not proficient in Sign Language	Electrician
PHIo4	36	Mother	Not proficient in Sign Language	Entrepreneur
PHIo5	63	Granddad	Basic sign language	Electrician
ID Group 3				
PIDBo1	42	Mother	Proficient with technology	Homemaker
PIDBo2	47	Mother	Efficient in organizational skills	Out of work
PIDBo3	19	Brother	Technologically competent	Student
PIDBo4	48	Mother	Proficient in task management	Homemaker

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

The research team initiated the process by submitting a formal letter of intent to the school principal. Upon obtaining approval, they collaborated with class advisers to disseminate a study announcement to parents through chat/email containing the researchers' contact details. Interested parents who wished to participate initiated contact with the researchers, who provided them with comprehensive information about the study's objectives and their role. Informed consent was then obtained from willing participants after this explanation. Participants who provided consent were gathered for face-to-face focus group discussions held in classrooms, adhering meticulously to safety protocols.

After obtaining requisite permissions and participant consent, the researchers negotiated with the participants to finalize the schedule for interviews and FGDs. Subsequently, a meeting link was disseminated to the participants by the agreed timetable. The execution of virtual interviews and FGDs adhered meticulously to established protocols delineated in the scholarly literature (Farooq & de Villiers, 2017). Before data collection, participants were made aware of the study's background and the researchers' positionality. Preparatory measures encompassed the set up of equipment, including PCs, cameras, microphones, and recorders, ensuring the acquisition of comprehensive and precise data for subsequent transcription, analysis, and confirmatory audit process. During engagements, the researchers employed structured introductory scripts, adaptive conversational styles, and methodological flexibility to facilitate a more nuanced exploration conducive to thoroughly acquiring qualitative data. Inquiries ranged from foundational to targeted prompts, thus ensuring a comprehensive data spectrum. Promptly following interviews, data were securely achieved in multiple iterations and safeguard files. The researchers executed transcriptions and analyses collaboratively. Findings were subjected to rigorous deliberation and negotiation to ascertain consensus regarding the identified thematic elements. While some researchers found it appropriate to use phone interviews and online focus group discussions (Cresswell, 2017; Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009), literature also mentioned that it could be helpful in interviews about vulnerable populations (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002; Stephens, 2007). Further, the global scale lockdown rendered face-to-face interviewing impractical, necessitating alternative data collection modalities.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data collected through phone interviews and FGDs were consolidated, coded, analyzed, and synthesized to address the research questions. The researchers initially outlined protocols for data analysis like creation and agreement on a codebook, confirmatory audit, member checking, and finalization of codes, patterns, and assertions. Data were initially explored through open coding. This has necessitated the researchers to understand the raw data thoroughly. Subsequently, axial coding elucidates interconnections within and between codes, facilitating a deeper understanding of underlying patterns. Patterns identified were meticulously documented in the codebook, including definitions of codes and verbatim

quotations to substantiate findings. The codebook underwent validation through coding iterations. Following the finalization of the codebook, each researcher independently conducted coding to enhance the dependability of the processed data. After deliberation and consensus on the coded data, participants were invited for a member check to confirm the incorporation of their insights. Upon confirmation, a confirmatory audit ensued. An external researcher was asked to verify the alignment of structural elements, patterns, and assertions from the raw data to analyze outcomes. The culmination of activities, including codebook finalization, member validation, internal audit, and external audit, minimized researchers' bias and increased the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study (Cresswell, 2017; Marshall, Rossman, & Blanco, 2022; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were rigorously maintained throughout the study to ensure the welfare and rights of all participants. The research commenced after obtaining clearance from the university's ethics committee, assuring that all ethical protocols were observed. The purpose of the study was explained in detail to all participants. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary. Informed consent forms were thoughtfully administered to participants via Google Forms, offering a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, their roles, and their right to withdraw from participation at any point. Data collected in this study was kept strictly confidential and solely utilized for research purposes.

4. Results

This qualitative case study explored the challenges Filipino parents of CwID and CwHI faced and the coping strategies they employed. The study results are categorized according to three main themes that emerged. These are challenges encountered, support needed and received and coping strategies.

4.1. Challenges Encountered

Results show that Filipino parents of CwID and CwHI faced two typical challenges when teaching their children during remote learning. Firstly, they grappled with emerging behavioral problems as their children often lacked focus and motivation when engaging with module-based learning at home. Sometimes children resort to excessive phone usage for entertainment. Furthermore, environmental distractions were cited as a challenge within this group, as some parents observed that their children quickly became distracted when other family members were present.

“It’s like... sometimes my child doesn’t seem to understand because they think we’re just at home. They can’t focus. They just agree, but when you ask about it, they don’t know.” (PIDB01)

“Sometimes, my child doesn’t want to do anything if there’s no task. But if you insist, they throw tantrums. When they know there’s a module, that’s the only thing they’ll do.” (PIDA01)

Secondly, this abrupt shift to remote learning significantly impacted parents' employment demands, household responsibilities, and their role in attending to their children's educational needs. Balancing these responsibilities was deemed challenging by parents who found themselves primarily responsible for teaching their children at home. Some have conveyed their loss of employment during the pandemic, significantly impacting their financial capacity to acquire the necessary gadgets for remote learning.

“As a business owner, I can only see my child during the night when I’m at home. Only then can I teach them.” (PHI04)

“We are greatly affected because I lost my job. I can’t pursue new employment because I need to teach my child, and I’m a single parent.” (PIDA01)

In addition to their teaching concerns, parents of CwID also faced technological challenges. Some experienced poor internet connectivity and weak cellular signals, impeding and restricting online access.

“We can’t watch YouTube continuously due to the cost of internet access.” (PIDA01)

Conversely, parents of CwHI underscored the challenges related to communication barriers. Given that their children cannot communicate verbally, sign language was the most effective means of expression. However, the issue lies in the fact that many parents had little to no knowledge of sign language, making it more challenging for them to convey information to their children. Moreover, delayed spoken and written language development posed an additional obstacle to communication between parents and children. One parent mentioned that their child has not yet learned how to write, limiting their communication to pointing at objects or topics of interest.

“My child has made significant progress in sign language. But now that learning is confined to our home, I’m struggling because I’m not highly skilled in sign language. I wonder how to teach them all the lessons when I don’t know sign language well.” (PHI03)

“Um, my child still can’t express themselves in writing. When they want something, they resort to pointing and inviting us to see what they’re indicating.” (PHI05)

Parents encountered analogous challenges in teaching, grappling with their children’s behavioral issues and the struggle to establishing a conducive study environment at home. While some parents could afford to buy the necessary educational gadgets, others found themselves beset by issues of poor internet connectivity. Notably, the parents of CwHI faced an even more significant hurdle, contending with the added complexity of inadequate training in sign language as reflected in the participants’ profile. This multifaceted array of challenges underscores parents’ remarkable resilience and adaptability in navigating the uncharted territory of remote learning for their exceptional children.

4.2. Support Received and Needed

The study found that parents of CwID and CwHI in the Philippines received similar types of support, including financial assistance in the form of government aid, known as “*ayuda*.” Additionally, parents mentioned various forms of psychological support, such as receiving phone calls, praying together, encouraging words, teacher feedback, assistance from household members, accommodations regarding deadlines, and additional support from teachers on instructions and lesson delivery.

“Support from the barangay, mayor, and government, such as groceries and rice.” (PIDB01)

“Emotional support from siblings, sharing among them. Since there’s no face-to-face interaction, texting is our main form of communication. It’s a big help when feeling sad or stressed.” (PIDB02)

“The teacher is supportive. Learners can write in their module.” (PHI01)

Both groups of parents expressed the need for technical training, educational assistance and more fluent communication between home and school. This includes training parents on effectively teaching their children and learning sign language.

“Perhaps better internet connectivity is needed since everything relies on online classes, and the teacher delivers lessons through video calls.” (PIBB03)

“Having access to books for reference would be helpful.” (PIDA02)

“I hope parents can learn sign language. That’s what we’re seeking. For example, when our children and we are communicating, we can understand each other because we know sign language.” (PHI04)

“There is a need for increased income sources and training for mothers in teaching their children, especially in developing their communication skills, such as speech therapy. Even though videos are available, face-to-face interaction remains distinct.” (PHI01)

“We only wish for parents to be guided by teachers in teaching special education. It would be a big help. Our (children’s) teachers are responsive and hardworking. They update us from time to time—even through Facebook Messenger.” (PHI04)

Parents have undeniably appreciated the financial support extended by the government. However, they express a keen need for more targeted assistance. In particular, they yearn for enhanced internet connectivity to bridge the digital divide and specialized training to effectively equip them with the skills to teach their children with ID. The heartening support from teachers and loved ones has not gone unnoticed, yet parents of CwHI express a specific desire for speech therapies and comprehensive sign language training. Government agencies and even schools can provide free sign language for hearing parents and family members to provide parallel opportunities for conversations at home. This collective call for tailored support reflects parents’ unwavering commitment to fostering their exceptional children’s holistic development.

4.3. Coping Strategies

This study has revealed that parents of CwID and CwHI employ common coping strategies: maintaining learner engagement and using reinforcements. Some specific strategies parents implement include establishing routines, using YouTube for leisure during breaks, and for educational purposes.

“I promise to reward them or offer incentives to motivate them to study.” (PHI03)

“With the help of technology, I am demonstrating my ability to my children and helping them effectively.” (PIDB01)

“When my child and I are both feeling irritable, we take a break using gadgets. Once we feel better, we return to our tasks.” (PHI01)

“Giving rewards (load/TV) every time he/she finishes to make them happier, and the tasks are being completed.” (PIDB03).

Since CwHI has unique language concerns, their parents employ communication adaptations by creating sign language they and their children can understand. They are also required to exert extra effort to acquire proficiency in sign language to bridge the communication gap with their children.

“We were provided with a sign language book, but it’s challenging to learn from it. Instead, I watch YouTube videos to study sign language, focusing on letters and numbers.” (PHI01)

Both groups recognized the effectiveness of several strategies. These include providing breaks, demonstrating patience, persevering by watching instructional videos on YouTube for guidance, assisting children in maintaining focus, and closely monitoring their progress. At the same time, they work on their learning modules.

“For me, it’s essential to have a lot of patience when teaching kids because patience is key to their learning.” (PIDB02)

In summary, this study has shed light on Filipino parents’ remarkable resilience and adaptability as they confront the unprecedented challenges brought about by the transition to remote learning for CwID and HI. Parents’ shared experiences of navigating obstacles, utilizing creative coping strategies, and advocating for essential support underscore the critical need for comprehensive and accessible resources. It is abundantly clear that pursuing compelling remote learning experiences for these exceptional children requires a collaborative commitment from educators, policymakers, and the broader community. This entails providing targeted training, technical assistance, and emotional support. The unwavering dedication demonstrated by these parents, coupled with the invaluable insights unveiled in this study, serves as a compelling call to action, ensuring that no child is left behind in the ever-evolving education landscape.

5. Discussion

The closure of educational institutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the academic landscape and imposed considerable strain on families, particularly those with CwDs. This study sheds light on the intricate array of challenges confronted by Filipino parents thrust into the unaccustomed and demanding role of educators for their children with special needs. These challenges encompass a spectrum of issues, including the emergence of behavioral complexities, technological hurdles, the juggling of multiple roles, a shortage of proficiency in effective pedagogical techniques, and economic constraints. The overarching findings resonate with prior investigations by Bozkurt & Sharma (2020) and Novianti & Garzia (2020), highlighting the adverse repercussions of parents assuming instructional responsibilities during school closures. Such shift has been shown to impact parent-child dynamics, attributable to difficulties in managing challenging behaviors and limited access to online resources. The ramifications of the widespread lockdown measures on a global scale compounded these challenges, as abrupt disruptions to daily routines and a lack of adequate support during the transition further complicated matters (Shaw & Shaw, 2023). Moreover, the challenges inherent in attending CwDs were exacerbated amidst the pandemic. Initially, the available resources for addressing the needs of these learners in an emergency context were sparse, and tailored intervention programs were scant (Latzer, Leitner, & Karnieli-Miller, 2021).

The scholarly works of Hall (2012), Tway, Connolly, & Novak (2007) and Woodehouse & McGill (2009) emphasize the profound concerns among parents regarding the education and support of children amidst the COVID-19-induced lockdowns. This concern implicitly reflects the imperative to empower parents with the necessary tools and knowledge to offer tailored support, especially to learners with special needs who depend primarily on parental guidance during school closure. The challenges highlighted by both empirical evidence and literature are language barriers, the demand for supplementary assistance and information, economic hardships, parental responsibilities, physical distancing requirements (Keleş & Özel, 2016), emergent behavioral issues and technological hurdles (Garbe *et al.*, 2020; Parczewska, 2020; Richmond *et al.*, 2020; Raguindin *et al.*, 2021; Toquero, 2021), mental health issues and low life quality (Rakap, Vural-Batik, Kaklkan, Karnas, Sari, & Bayarakda, 2022). These concerns necessitate reevaluating extant mechanisms and platforms to support children with special needs.

The profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families, particularly parents, Rakap *et al.* (2022) mentioned, highlighted the imperative of establishing a comprehensive support framework for CwDs and their families amid such crises. In response to the accounts provided by the informants, this necessitates the provision of diverse assistance, including financial aid, dissemination of COVID-19-related information, and emotional support. However, it is also evident from the narratives that a pressing need exists to acquire technical competencies to navigate distance education during a pandemic effectively, as well as access to open educational resources and livelihood training to mitigate challenges precipitated by lockdown measures.

The scholarly discourse strongly advocates for implementing robust mechanisms to cater to the unique needs of children with special needs, particularly during an extended lockdown. For instance, Navas, Verdugo, Martínez, Amor, Crespo, & Deliu (2022) and Werner, Hochman, Holler, & Shpigelman (2022) advocate for systemic reforms and governmental interventions to enhance accessibility to resources and opportunities for families and professionals working with CwDs. These opportunities encompass a spectrum of initiatives, including curriculum-oriented programs, educational materials, psychological support, economic provision and other endeavors designed to minimize the adverse effects of the global lockdown. Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that while these forms of support represent fundamental necessities, their realization poses a considerable challenge in developing countries like the Philippines, where budgetary allocations and policy initiatives directed towards CwDs remain marginalized.

One defining impact of COVID-19 is the economic hurdle it has caused, especially for citizens of developing countries. The works of Hasan & Muda (2021) asserted that there are more complex and significant burdens and impacts on parents of special needs children due to economic instability as compared to their peers from the other spectrum. As a result, the economic tightness extends into a long-term challenge and can impact each parent seriously. Thus, there is a need to institute proactive mechanisms for

parents of CwDs to prepare them for emergencies like a pandemic when economic exhaustion occurs due to lockdown measures. Local and national governments are called to rethink policy frameworks and implementation to support families of children with special needs, especially provisions for livelihood projects and other forms of financial assistance toward economic resilience amidst crises.

Other forms of support that parents in this study reported mirror the findings of Toseeb, Asbury, Code, Fox, & Deniz (2020), encompassing familial and teacher-based psychological assistance. However, critical unmet needs persist, notably in more technical concerns such as home-schooling implementation and online classroom navigation. These unaddressed necessities significantly impede parents' ability to educate and support CwDs effectively. Technical training becomes relevant in light of the evolving landscape of remote learning, requiring parents' adept navigation of digital platforms. Access to appropriate educational resources is crucial for fostering a comprehensive and inclusive educational experience. Families encountered overlapping challenges from abrupt technical and pedagogical transitions due to the sudden shift to remote learning. Abdelfattah, Rababah, Alqaryouti, Alsartawi, Khlaifat, & Awamleh (2021) corroborate these challenges, noting the inadequacy and unsuitability of available educational resources in meetings. There arises a pressing need to establish technological resources and infrastructure (Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020) alongside the provision of personalized and contextually relevant materials (Rakap, Batik, Karnas, Kalkan, Bayrakdar, & Sari, 2023) and other forms of materials, ensuring continued access to education for Cwd during widespread school emergencies. Further, support aimed at bolstering psychological resilience proves invaluable for parents of CwDs during an emergency. These forms of support foster a holistic frame to cater to the diverse needs of families navigating crises with CwDs (Gayatri & Irawaty, 2022).

The absence of face-to-face services during the pandemic, as highlighted by the informants, is a critical gap in meeting the essential needs of CWDs. This service encompasses targeted interventions and support that are challenging to replicate remotely (Rakap *et al.*, 2023). There has been a myriad of cognitive, social, and adaptive needs that must be addressed. In the paper of Abdelfattah *et al.* (2021), they reported that teachers and service providers called for actions to support parents beyond tasks related to curriculum implementation. Such support may give parents basic knowledge and skills to implement their child's IEP, thus alleviating emotional burdens and anxieties stemming from sudden transitions. Problem-based support provided to parents and families of CwD during the pandemic can be an approach to mitigate compounding challenges during a wide-scale school closure (Rakap *et al.*, 2023).

The claim is elucidated from the forms of support parents need during a pandemic, as reported by the informants. Considering these multifaceted challenges, an urgent need is to enhance parental engagement. These supports can help parents fulfill their roles as key players in the multidisciplinary team (Abdelfattah *et al.*, 2021).

6. Conclusion

The global onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has engendered a public health crisis and precipitated an unprecedented challenge in education, profoundly reshaping it in anticipated ways. With the shuttering of educational institutions as a containment measure, overseeing children's academic pursuits shifted abruptly to their parents, a responsibility many are ill-equipped with. While extensive scholarly attention has been devoted to exploring parents' challenges in supporting the remote learning of typically developing children, a scant inquiry has been directed towards understanding parents' experiences with CwDs. This study aims to bridge this gap by delving into the distinctive challenges encountered by Filipino parents within this vulnerable demographic.

The findings revealed a common thread of obstacles encompassing an increasing behavioral issue, the intricate juggling of multiple roles, and the daunting learning curve associated with assuming the role of an effective educator. These challenges underscore the complicated nature of remote learning for CwD and the substantial burden placed upon their parents. In response to these challenges, parents exhibited notable resilience and resourcefulness, deploying coping mechanisms that spanned macro-environmental, relationship-oriented, and individual levels. Strategies such as fostering learner engagement and utilizing reinforcements emerged as productive tools in the parental field, facilitating navigation of the complexities of remote learning and ensuring the educational progression of their children.

Additionally, parents underscored the importance of sustaining engagement in their children's education as a cornerstone.

The findings resonate with the broader scholarly discourse, accentuating the importance of active parental engagement in their children's educational journey (Abdelfattah *et al.*, 2021). The parents in this study highlighted this principle, committing themselves to their children's triumph amidst difficult circumstances. While parents articulate the financial and psychological support they received during this period, they also identified a critical necessity of technical training. Such training would equip parents with the requisite skills and knowledge to better cater to their children's unique learning needs amid the milieu of remote education.

The advent of global school closures amid the COVID-19 pandemic constituted a seismic shift to educational systems worldwide, impacting countries uniformly, albeit varying degrees, whose exact extent remains inadequately delineated in the existing literature. Numerous studies have documented comparable challenges faced by parents across diverse regions, including Arab regions (Abdelfattah *et al.*, 2021; Althiabi, 2021), Asian-American communities (Bothra, 2021), Indonesia (Daulay, 2021), South India (Muruganandam, Neelamegam, Menon, Alexander, & Chaturvedi, 2020), Southern Italy (Capozzo, Zoccolella, Musio, Barone, Accogli, & Logroscino, 2020), Australia (Goggin & Ellis, 2020), the Philippines (Toquero, 2021), the United States (Umucu, 2020), the Netherlands (Zaagsma, Volkers, Swart, Schippers, & Van Hove, 2020). However, a comprehensive understanding of the broader landscape necessitates nuanced consideration of contextual factors inherent to each country, such as economic robustness. For instance, a scoping review conducted by Kamalakannan *et al.* (2021) revealed that families experienced disparate impacts from closure influenced significantly by their financial preparedness and resilience.

In summation, this study elucidated the multifaceted challenges encountered by parents of CWD amidst the pandemic-induced transition to remote learning. It highlighted the reliance and adaptability of these parents, who have navigated the difficulty with unwavering resolve. Furthermore, it accentuated the imperative of acknowledging and addressing unique needs to cultivate an environment where all children can flourish in remote learning.

7. Recommendations

To support Filipino parents of CWD during remote learning, it is essential to implement comprehensive strategies that address parental unique needs. First, educational institutions and government agencies should prioritize developing and implementing comprehensive training programs tailored explicitly to parents of CwD. These programs should cover a wide range of topics, including effective teaching strategies, the utilization of assistive technologies, and techniques for managing challenging behaviors. Empowering parents with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of remote learning is crucial for their children's success.

In addition to training, schools and policymakers must ensure that educational resources are accessible to all CwDs and their parents. This entails providing devices, internet connectivity, and accessible learning materials to families who may lack access. Furthermore, fostering strong parent-teacher collaboration is paramount. Ongoing communication and cooperation between parents and educators enable a deeper understanding of each child's needs and progress, especially in remote learning settings. Utilizing digital communication platforms can facilitate regular contact and support.

Recognizing the emotional strain that remote learning can place on parents of CWD, schools and support organizations should offer psychological support services. These services can help parents manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges that may arise during this period. Additionally, schools should adopt inclusive policies and practices, such as providing reasonable accommodations and individualized education plans, to ensure that CwD receives the support they require to succeed.

Government initiatives are also crucial in addressing the needs of families with CwD. Emergency response plans should consider these families' unique circumstances, offering financial assistance, healthcare services, and support for assistive technologies. Building a sense of community among parents of CwD is equally essential. Support groups, online forums, and community organizations can provide valuable resources, information sharing, and emotional support for parents facing similar challenges.

Lastly, continued research and data collection are essential. Ongoing assessments of the evolving needs and challenges of parents of CWD during remote learning will enable policymakers and educators to make informed decisions and develop targeted interventions. By implementing these comprehensive strategies, educational institutions, policymakers, and communities can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that ensures equal access to quality education for all children, regardless of their abilities.

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