

Homes as Classrooms: Lived Experiences of Mothers as Facilitators of English Modular-Based Distance Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of mothers who served as English learning facilitators in modular-based distance learning during calamity-induced class suspensions in Negros Occidental, Philippines. Employing a qualitative phenomenological design, eight mothers of Grade 5 learners were purposively selected and interviewed using semi-structured guides in Hiligaynon to ensure comprehension and authenticity. Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns and themes. Findings revealed three major themes: work-life balance, role of learning facilitator and its effect on parent-child relationship, and support systems received. Mothers demonstrated resilience in balancing household responsibilities with their role as facilitators, prioritizing their children's welfare despite limited resources, fatigue, and academic challenges. Their facilitation fostered emotional bonding, patience, and persistence, transforming study sessions into opportunities for connection and encouragement. Teacher communication, printed modules, and family collaboration emerged as crucial supports, bridging gaps in knowledge and sustaining instruction amidst poor connectivity and socio-economic constraints. Conclusions underscored that parents, particularly mothers, played indispensable roles in sustaining modular learning, while schools and teachers provided vital instructional and emotional reinforcement. Recommendations included strengthening instructional support, enhancing parent training, promoting shared responsibility within families, and reinforcing teacher support systems. Overall, the study highlighted the human dimension of modular learning, where resilience, collaboration, and empathy ensured continuity of education during crises.

Keywords: English, modular-based distance learning, maternal facilitation, lived experiences, emergency education

INTRODUCTION

The Philippine educational system had long been vulnerable to disruptions brought about by health-related crises and natural calamities such as typhoons, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. During these times, schools struggled to ensure continuity of education when face-to-face classes were suspended. Teachers were challenged to find new ways to reach their students, while families were compelled to adapt their homes into makeshift classrooms. In adherence to the 1987 Constitution and grounded in Republic Act 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, the Department of Education had implemented DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020, which introduced the Interim Policy Guidelines for Assessment and Grading in Light of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP). This policy had been crafted to guide schools during periods of suspended face-to-face classes, ensuring fairness, flexibility, and continuity in student assessment. It also emphasized collaboration among schools, teachers, and parents, recognizing that continuity of education required collective effort and empathy (Llego, 2020; DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020).

The above descriptions of the situation were the impact of Typhoon Tino and Kanlaon Volcano, leading to a sudden shift to modular-based distance learning, transforming homes into classrooms, with mothers often stepping into the role of facilitators of their children's education. This transition was also particularly evident in English language learning, where printed self-learning modules became the primary instructional tool. Mothers, despite attaining only elementary education or reaching high school, were tasked with guiding, explaining, and motivating their children through lessons while balancing household responsibilities and

limited resources. Their lived experiences reflected both the challenges of navigating academic content and the resilience of families in sustaining learning continuity amidst crises. As Campaño (2026) emphasized, parental involvement, especially maternal facilitation, was crucial in bridging gaps in modular-based distance learning, highlighting the need to humanize policies and strengthen support systems to ensure equity and quality in education. Mothers had been left with no choice but to step into the role of facilitators.

These circumstances underscored how mothers became central figures in sustaining modular learning at home, yet their role was not without unique challenges. In particular, the use of English as the medium of instruction intensified the difficulties mothers faced, since some families did not typically use English in daily household communication. In the public elementary school in Southern Negros where the researcher conducted the study, English presented a specific challenge during home-based modular learning. Most of these mothers were homemakers with limited formal educational backgrounds, which influenced their subjective experiences and perceived confidence in comprehending and teaching English lessons.

This study addressed this gap by exploring the lived experiences of mothers acting as English learning facilitators for Grade 5 learners during calamity-induced class suspensions in La Castellana, Negros Occidental. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions: How did mothers balance their household responsibilities with their role as English learning facilitators during modular-based learning? How did their role as English learning facilitators affect their relationship with their children? What forms of support did parents receive to effectively fulfill their role as English learning facilitators in modular-based distance learning?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically phenomenological inquiry, to explore and describe the lived experiences of parents who had served as English learning facilitators in modular-based distance learning during calamity-induced class suspensions. In a qualitative study, phenomenological inquiry was an approach that focused on understanding and describing the "lived experience" of a specific phenomenon from the perspective of those who experienced it. It explored the "essence" of experiences of how people perceived, felt, and made sense of their world rather than testing hypotheses or analyzing quantitative data (Bliss, 2016).

Subject and Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were eight (8) selected mothers of Grade 5 learners enrolled in a public elementary school in La Castellana, Negros Occidental, during the school year 2025–2026. Eligibility for inclusion required that participants had direct experience with modular-based distance learning and were recognized by school personnel and class advisers as the primary English learning facilitators for their children at home.

Population and Sample Size

The study utilized purposive sampling, a qualitative method employed to select participants with direct and relevant experience with the phenomenon under study. Out of the target group, a sample size of eight (8) mothers who actively assisted their children with English modules was selected to serve as the study's respondents.

Data Gathering Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-developed, semi-structured interview guide composed of open-ended central questions and follow-up probes aligned with the research objectives. The guide was translated into Hiligaynon (the local language) to allow participants to express their feelings, struggles, and strategies freely and accurately.

Data Analyses

The study employed thematic analysis to examine the lived experiences of mothers as English learning facilitators during modular-based distance learning. Following Braun and Clarke's six-step approach, the researcher carefully listened to participants' voices and transformed their narratives into meaningful themes that captured both shared and unique experiences.

The analytical process unfolded as follows:

Step 1. Familiarization with the data. The researcher immersed in the data by reading and re-reading the transcribed one-on-one interview. This stage allowed the researcher to grasp the texture of the mothers' experiences and notice salient aspects such as struggles, joys, and adjustments.

Step 2. Generate initial codes. Significant phrases and concepts were methodically identified and emphasized. Coding enabled the researcher to capture significant features of the data relevant to the research questions.

Step 3. Searching for themes. Codes were grouped into themes, where similar codes were clustered together to form broader themes. For mothers, themes included challenges in balancing their "dual" roles, the emotional impact of facilitating learning, the growth in parenting skills, and the community and family support.

Step 4. Reviewing themes. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they truly reflect the mothers' voices. Through refinement, the researcher effectively captured both shared patterns and distinctive aspects of individual experiences.

Step 5. Defining and naming themes. The researcher defined and named each theme to represent the essence of the mothers' lived experiences. This step provided coherence and clarity in presenting the findings.

Step 6. Producing the report. The final step involved weaving the themes into a narrative that explained parents' experiences. Rather than merely listing findings, the analysis illustrated how mothers felt, adapted, and grew while facilitating modular learning, making the research both informative and deeply human.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains shared stories and experiences gathered from mothers who showed how they guided their children in modular English learning. The themes that emerged from their voices revealed both the challenges they faced and the ways they coped. The thematic analysis yielded three primary themes corresponding to the study's research objectives: Work-Life Balance between Household Responsibility and Role as English Learning Facilitator, Role of Learning Facilitator and Effect on Parent-Child Relationship, and Support System Received by Mothers as Facilitators of Learning.

Theme 1: Work-Life Balance between Household Responsibility and Role as English Learning Facilitator

The theme explored how parent-facilitators, specifically mothers, navigated the constant negotiation of time, physical energy, and instructional demands to balance household chores with guiding their children through English modular activities. Their narratives showed how daily routines, from early morning chores to structured teaching schedules, were carefully sequenced to sustain both family life and educational support. This balance was not merely logistical but embodied with resilience, discipline, and adaptive strategies that transform homes into classrooms. Across the participants' interviews, five sub-themes emerged: Multitasking and Structured Routines, Task Sequencing, Boundary Awareness, Adaptive Strategies, and Emotional Commitment.

Multitasking and Structured Routines

Mothers' resilience and discipline ensured that children's learning thrived alongside the demands of family life. This theme showed how mothers often found themselves cooking, cleaning, or caring for younger children while guiding their school-aged children through English modules. This constant overlap of duties illustrated the physical and cognitive strain of modular-based learning facilitation within the home.

Sequencing

Highlighted how mothers deliberately practiced dividing household chores and educational tasks into distinct, non-overlapping time blocks throughout the day to maintain stability within the household.

Boundary Awareness

Mothers consciously preserved learner autonomy by guiding, explaining, and reviewing outputs rather than providing direct answers, which aligns with findings by Le & Nguyen (2021) regarding effective parental involvement.

Adaptive Strategies

Some mothers adjusted routines around livelihood activities before teaching, which showed flexibility in sustaining both economic and educational roles.

Emotional Commitment

The mothers went beyond completing chores or managing schedules to their willingness to give time, energy, and patience, even when faced with fatigue or competing demands. This highlighted how mothers provided encouragement and structure, ensuring children felt supported despite the strain of balancing multiple responsibilities.

Theme 2: Role of Learning Facilitator and Effect on Parent-Child Relationship

Mothers who acted as facilitators moved beyond being mere instructors to becoming partners in discovery. Instead of dictating answers, they encouraged curiosity, structured routines, and modeled resilience. Participants' responses revealed that learning was continuous, extending beyond the boundaries of school into everyday family life. It highlighted how mothers, as primary English learning facilitators during modular-based distance learning, shaped both academic progress and relational dynamics within the household. The narratives revealed that learning facilitation at home was not a mechanical duty, but a deeply human expression of care and adaptability. This interpretative synthesis highlighted that while modular distance learning brought the curriculum into the living room, its most profound impact was how it reshaped and strengthened family relationships. From these findings, four subthemes were identified to explain further this dynamic: Emotional Connection and Support, Routine Reinforcement, Sacrificial Assistance, and Cultivating Mutual Respect and Child Autonomy Over Time.

Emotional Connection and Support

Instead of allowing modular instruction to cause persistent disruption, mothers turned study sessions into opportunities for parent-child bonding, gentle explanation, and shared humor. When the participants stepped in to guide their children's learning, they did not merely share knowledge; they also offered comfort and encouragement, helping their children feel supported and understood. This theme highlighted how mothers actively guided their children's home learning, providing opportunities for intentional interaction, laughter, and emotional bonding.

Routine Reinforcement

To navigate the dual burden of managing household chores and providing academic guidance, mothers established structured daily routines within the home. This subtheme captured how mothers, acting as English learning facilitators, utilized scheduled time blocks and structured habit formation to maintain discipline and emotional stability in the parent-child relationship during modular-based distance learning. The participants established predictable daily schedules for module execution, rest, and follow-up study.

Sacrificial Assistance

This subtheme highlighted how mothers demonstrated deep commitment by sacrificing personal sleep, postponing domestic responsibilities, such as doing laundry late at night, and reallocating limited household

funds for mobile data. These ongoing compromises highlighted the participants' dedication to their children's academic needs despite personal strain. Their transition into home-based English learning facilitators demanded significant personal compromise, illustrating a willingness to set aside rest, adjust financial priorities, and endure physical exhaustion to ensure continuous learning support.

Cultivating Mutual Respect and Child Autonomy Over Time

This subtheme captured the positive shift in relationship dynamics as children became more self-reliant and developed improved reading and English skills. Mothers reported feeling pride as children took initiative, reducing parent-child friction and establishing a foundation of mutual trust. As children adjusted to home-based learning routines and improved their comprehension, decoding, and language abilities, their reliance on direct parental supervision gradually decreased.

Theme 3. Support System Received by Mothers as Facilitators of Learning

Sustaining home-based English instruction required mothers to rely on an active support system at home and at school. School and teacher support in modular distance learning were decisive factors in sustaining student performance, as teachers' commitment, resource provision, and feedback mechanisms directly influenced learners' outcomes in the Philippines. Teachers acted not merely as distributors of learning packages, but as essential anchors of continuity and guidance. Their dedication to preparing, reproducing, and retrieving self-learning materials ensured that modular-based distance learning remained functional despite resource constraints.

However, effective home-based facilitation extended beyond the physical distribution of instructional materials. Theme 3 presented how mothers navigated these instructional and operational hurdles by relying on a combination of teacher guidance, household collaboration, and personal determination. Five subthemes emerged to explain this support dynamic: Shared Responsibility, Teacher-Communication Support, Technological and Digital Resource Mobilization, Provision of Printed Learning Materials, and Persistence in Teaching.

Shared Responsibility and Support

This theme highlighted how the participants prevented instructional burnout and sustained continuity of learning, turning home-based facilitation into a collective family effort rather than an isolated maternal duty. It captured the collaborative intra-familial dynamics in which husbands, older, educated siblings, and extended family members actively shared household chores, assisted in teaching complex subjects, or provided essential technological resources. The empirical evidence demonstrated that mothers successfully sustained English learning facilitation by transforming home learning into a distributed family responsibility. When mothers encountered pedagogical limitations in English grammar or vocabulary, educated older siblings stepped in as secondary tutors. Husbands complemented this structure by absorbing domestic tasks or taking over evening instruction, while extended relatives provided technological and inter-household scaffolding.

Teacher Communication Support

This subtheme captured the institutional support that teachers provided to bridge the pedagogical gap for mothers. Mothers relied heavily on advisers who were accessible via Messenger group chats or private messages to clarify instructions, send video lessons, and provide step-by-step solutions for complex tasks. Rather than working in isolation, the participants viewed teachers as essential guides who provided instructional scaffolding, clarified complex module tasks, and offered emotional reassurance. This highlighted the responsive communication channels established between teachers and parents, enabling mothers to facilitate English learning effectively despite their own educational limitations.

Technological and Digital Resource Mobilization

When mothers encountered advanced English vocabulary, complex sentence structures, or unfamiliar instructions in self-learning modules, their own educational background presented a limitation. To bridge these

pedagogical gaps, mothers actively leveraged external digital tools, mobile applications, search engines, and local network infrastructures. This subtheme captured how mothers, as English learning facilitators, utilized online resources, such as Google, supplementary instructional links, and community Piso Wi-Fi networks, to clarify learning content and maintain instruction despite resource constraints and connectivity failures.

Provision of Printed Learning Materials

While digital group chats and online messaging provided essential communication channels, physical self-learning modules (SLMs) still serve as the foundation for participants in modular-based distance learning. The subtheme Provision of Printed Learning Materials highlighted how hardcopy instructional modules provided a reliable, physical pathway for continuity of learning. It also captured the formal pickup and distribution routines established by schools to deliver these materials to mothers safely. This theme was especially true during localized environmental emergencies, such as volcanic activity from Mt. Kanlaon and severe flooding from Typhoon Tino, when power disruptions and unstable mobile signals rendered online platforms unreliable.

Persistence in Teaching

Despite experiencing severe physical exhaustion, overlapping household duties, and content-related challenges in English, mothers demonstrated remarkable grit and determination to ensure their children did not fall behind in their studies. This theme depicted the unwavering dedication, resilience, and problem-solving strategies mothers demonstrated to sustain home-based distance learning amid personal fatigue, connectivity constraints, and domestic strain.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn mothers demonstrated remarkable resilience in assuming dual roles as both caregivers and learning facilitators. Despite the challenges of modular-based English learning, they prioritized their children's welfare and educational attainment. Mothers assumed dual roles as facilitators and household managers, yet they fully supported their children's education. Moreover, schools, teachers, and families worked hand in hand for the continuity and progress of the child's education. Instructional guidance, motivational reinforcement, and emotional support from teachers and schools were vital in helping parents fulfill their role effectively. These institutional supports bridged knowledge gaps and sustained the learning process.

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