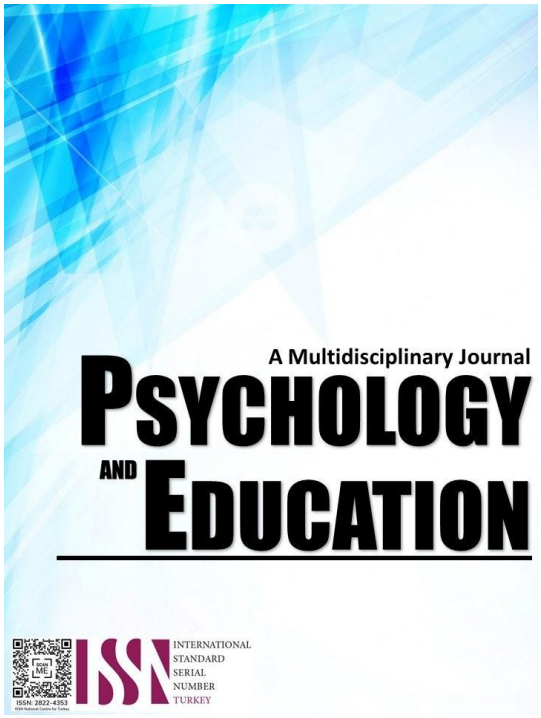
JOURNEY OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN ONLINE LEARNING MATHEMATICS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY



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Research Article

Journey of Students and Parents in Online Learning Mathematics During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Transcendental Phenomenology

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Abstract

Countries all over the world dramatically shifted from face-to-face to online learning due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. To continue the learning of the students the Department of Education in the Philippines has presented an online learning modality. Therefore, it is important to determine the experiences of the students and parents in the online learning modality. Thus, the study is focused on the experiences of the students and parents in online learning Mathematics using a transcendental phenomenology. It utilized purposive sampling in determining the respondents, there were three students including both parents a total of nine respondents. To gather the experiences of the respondents as prescribed in phenomenology the researcher utilized face-to-face interviews. The findings revealed that students and parents were struggling in online learning Mathematics as indicated by underlying experiences such as poor internet connection, difficulty in understanding the lesson, and procrastination. In addition, parents had a lack of content knowledge and pedagogy and struggled in online learning due to limited knowledge of the new technology. Thus, this study serves as a basis for providing a comprehensive education policy while considering the perspective of the students and parents during the pandemic.

Keywords: *students, parents, online learning mathematics, phenomenology, Philippines*

Introduction

The Philippines is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic which affects every individual. Among the sectors affected by the pandemic is education, which has shifted radically from faculty lecturing in a classroom environment, which has been the backbone of conventional academic education, to distance learning, in which students continue their education from the comfort of their own homes (Fulgencio et al., 2020). It is truly this pandemic that brought changes to the educational system throughout the country which brings challenges and opportunities to the implementation of online learning (Inciso, 2021; Lubis & Dasopang, 2021). In response to the crises created by COVID-19 in the field of basic education, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) to safeguard the health and safety of teachers and students (Briones, 2020). One of the learning modalities under the BE-LCP is online learning which refers to the utilization of the internet whether it is synchronous or asynchronous sessions.

During the implementation of online learning in Mathematics, 59 percent of respondents stated it was less effective during the Covid-19 pandemic due to the following factors: (a) limited internet access; (b) difficulty understanding the material; and (c) the lecture system, in which the lecturer only provides material and does not comment on the answers (Ilmadi et al, 2020). Many students have been dealing with concerns such as internet access, an overload of lesson activities, financial issues, a lack of resources required for online programs, and mental health issues (Fulgencio et al., 2020). Further, negative emotions like anxiety, worry, sadness, and fear can disrupt online learning (Kamal et al., 2020). Online learning due to COVID-19 Pandemic also causes difficulties for students to do group discussions (Payadnya et al., 2021; Adnan & Anwar, 2020) as well as the decrease in student motivation.

Students, on the one hand, complained about a lack of engagement with the lecturer, a long response time, and a lack of typical classroom socializing (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). Interaction with the teacher is a very important aspect in teaching Mathematics which develops higher-order thinking skills for the students. However, the higher-order thinking skills of the students in online learning Mathematics were at low-level categories which means they showed less ability to understand the problems, identify main ideas, and poor analytical skills (Payadnya et al., 2021). Their most significant barriers were at the student level including student lack of knowledge and skill in e-learning use, and their lack of access to devices and internet connection (Almanthari et al., 2020).

On the other hand, parents' involvement in online learning of their children is important, especially during this time of the pandemic. Parents play an important role in teaching and guiding their children in online learning. However, parents have encountered challenges which include insufficient media resources,

time constraints, and technological proficiency (Situmorang, 2020). In addition, parents were also concerned that because online schooling lacked a learning environment and social relationships that would capture the attention of young children, poor learning outcomes might arise (Dong et al, 2020). According to the findings, 82% of parents do not grasp their children's teachings, and 16% of parents became irritable while studying, while 47% become anxious (Siahaan et al., 2021).

Most recent studies had been focused on the lived experiences using phenomenology studies of the medical workers (Wang et al., 2020). Though, in the educational field, there were limited studies conducted on the experiences of the students in online learning Mathematics. One of which is the study of Irawan et al. (2020), students become bored with online learning within the first two weeks of learning from home, and mood swings occur because of too many tasks, which students feel ineffective. In addition, the study of Abdullahi et al. (2020) discovered that students faced challenges in online learning of Mathematics during the stay-at-home order, including but not limited to: a lack of electricity supply that resulted in a flat battery during online learning, insufficient data to access their online class, lack of understanding during online learning, difficulty in solving mathematics questions during online class, teachers unaware to the students' needs during online learning, and teachers unaware to their needs during online Mathematics class.

In this light, Laksana (2021) recommended conducting further studies on the experiences of the students on the implementation of online learning. It is also interesting to hear about fathers' thoughts on their engagement in their children's online learning (Cahapay, 2021). Further, recommended by Garbe et al. (2020) to capture the experiences of the fathers since 95 percent of his data were focused on mothers' experiences. Hence, "future studies would take into account the use of other methods, including face-to-face interview techniques, to reveal the struggles of parents" (Garbe et al., 2020). Those related works indicated looking for the experiences of the students including their both parents as they experienced online learning Mathematics during this time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This exploration of learning experiences among students and parents in online learning in Mathematics amid the COVID-19 catastrophe is important to gather deeper insights into the current situation. This study will contribute new knowledge for the researchers who are interested in looking for lived experiences especially to the participants both parents in the journey of the online learning of their children. It will also serve as additional inputs to the administrators in the education for policy decisions and develop program interventions that will respond to the result of this study.

Research Questions

The researcher investigated the journey of the students and parents on online learning in Mathematics during this COVID-19 pandemic to determine their experiences and coping mechanisms. Specifically sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do the students and parents describe their experiences in online learning? and 2. How do students and parents cope with online distance learning?

Literature Review

Online Learning Experiences of the Students

During the pandemic, most schools around the world used online learning. Online learning refers to any type of learning that is happening with the use of the internet. Corresponding to Retnoningsih (2017), pointed out that online learning is a process of learning over using the new trends of technology. Saifuddin (2017), also defines online learning as "remote learning" in which students are physically separated from their learning resources but can contact and interact with one another via the internet. On the other hand, it can help to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus while pupils in primary school are studying online (Cui et al., 2021).

After two weeks of learning from home, students get bored with online learning, and mood swings develop because of too many activities, making them feel inefficient (Irawan et al., 2020). Teachers felt that they were incapable of evaluating students' knowledge and learning during online sessions due to limited time. Students also pointed out that they have a short attention span, and that online learning is resource-intensive (Mukhtar et al., 2020). Furthermore, a lack of engagement has made it difficult for students to do group projects, as reported by 42.9 percent of students (Adnan et al., 2020). As a result, Fatonia et al. (2020) discovered students cannot take classes when the internet is not accessible and that their concentration is condensed, in addition, students can maximize their

time at home, they can answer anywhere as long there is the internet. However, students have challenges in online learning of mathematics during remote learning. According to Abdullahi et al. (2020), they experience a lack of power source that resulted in a flat battery during online learning, lacking data to access their online class, lack of learning online because of limited understanding, slightly find it hard to solve Mathematics problems, and teachers unaware of the student's needs during online learning.

Parent's Experiences in Online Learning

One of the most significant components in promoting their children's learning achievement is their parents' engagement (Cui et al., 2021; Silinskas & Kikas, 2019). The finding showed a substantial link between student engagement in online mathematics and parental participation; in fact, it is the best way of getting students to be cognitively, socially, and emotionally engaged (Purnomo et al., 2021). Furthermore, Fatmawati et al., (2021) revealed that parental assistance in mathematics learning was not well implemented throughout the pandemic, with parents encountering numerous obstacles in teaching their kids. Parents should inform their children about the most up-to-date Internet learning technology and ensure that they are not being overused (Abdullahi et al., 2020). Parents may also build motivation and interest in their children's learning during the Covid-19 pandemic; however, they already have enough problems with their children's tediousness when they are at home all day, which leads them to be fussy (Sari et al., 2020). Parents, according to Tus (2021), must provide direction and supervision to their children, particularly during the pandemic's online learning modes. Parents were also regularly concerned and stated a variety of complaints and worries. Encouraging parents' and kids' participation in these classes and barring professors from assigning parental tasks might increase the success of these courses as well as their mental health (Cui et al., 2021).

This abrupt move to online distance learning, as well as the issues it poses, is cause for fear since, without sufficient parental involvement, these changes may increase the probability of parents experiencing parenting pressure and stress, which might negatively influence children (Griffith, 2020). As a result, further directions on how parents conceive mathematics learning, including coping with online mathematics learning and parents' psychological readiness to handle their children's learning, are proposed (Purnomo et al., 2021). Finally, parents should be encouraged to foster good screen behaviors, such as avoiding interfering with physical or social activities while on the internet (Lau et al., 2021). They should also discuss with their children how to set media usage and content-watching limitations to give appropriate mentorship (Zaman et al., 2016).

In this light, it would be interesting to hear about fathers' thoughts on their engagement in their children's online learning (Cahapay, 2021). It is also recommended by Garbe et al. (2020) to capture the experiences of the fathers since 95 percent of his data were focused on mothers' experiences. Hence, different approaches, such as face-to-face interviews, would be used to disclose the difficulties that parents confront (Garbe et al., 2020).It is vital to research the experiences of the students on the implementation of online learning, especially with a minimal internet connection (Laksana, 2021). Thus, the researcher will investigate the journey of the students and parents on online learning in Mathematics during this COVID-19 pandemic to determine their experiences and coping mechanisms they experienced. This study will be the basis for program intervention in schools.

Methodology

The researcher used descriptive qualitative research using phenomenology design in this study. This design is a qualitative method in which the researcher discovers the core of human experiences concerning phenomena as expressed by study participants (Creswell, 2014). The transcendental phenomenology approach developed by Husserl (1858- 1938) was used in this study. This philosophical approach to qualitative research technique is needed to grasp human experience (Moustakas, 1994). In phenomenology, Moser and Korstjens (2018) proposed a progressive guideline for choosing participants, advising that researchers focus on less than 10 cases. Thus, the researcher selected the participants using purposive sampling in which students including both parents had experienced online learning in Mathematics. Nine respondents took part in this study: three students (2 female and 1 male), three mothers, and fathers. They were selected regardless of age, religion, employment, language, socioeconomic status, and educational level.

To gather the experiences of the respondents as prescribed in phenomenology the researcher utilized face-to-face interviews. This method "continued to be the best form of data collection when one wants to minimize nonresponse and maximize the quality of the data collected" (Lavrakas, 2008). Every selected

participant received a permission form outlining the study's goal, data-gathering processes, and potential advantages and disadvantages. Then, the researcher interviewed the students separately from their parents to gather accurate responses regarding their experiences and the coping mechanisms they encountered in online learning Mathematics. The researcher used mobile phones to record the responses of the respondents. To obtain deeper levels of dialogue, the researcher asked probing questions, then listened, thought, and asked more probing ones. The researcher followed Punch's (1998) recommendations and began as a member of a group before transitioning to a more objective observer.

To protect the respondent's rights, the following safeguards were used: 1) the research objectives were articulated verbally and in writing so that they were clearly understood by the respondent (including a description of how data will be used), 2) written permission to proceed with the study as articulated was received from the respondents, 3) the respondents were informed of all data collection devices and activities, and 4) verbatim transcriptions and written interpretive reports were provided.

Results

Poor Internet Connection

Having a good internet connection at home is very important, especially for students who are having online classes at this time of the pandemic. Student 3 described her experiences as "The most challenging I encountered in my online learning in Math is when my teacher gives an example to solve a certain problem, I cannot understand because my internet connection at that time is very poor until my audio is not audible and the screen is blurred. When my internet connection was back, my teacher had a very long process, and a lot of formulas were used." She also added that she was " Not Motivated" to continue listening to her teacher because she missed a lot of processes during online classes. This means that poor internet connection affects learning and lowers the motivation of the students to solve Mathematics problems.

Difficulties in understanding Online Lessons

One of the participants expressed "I can't easily understand the topic because we have limited meetings online unlike face-to-face is every day." This is an indication that without constant follow-up and setting up classes online, the students do not understand the lesson well, especially in Mathematics need to further demonstrate the process of solving problems. Student 1 added, "I find sometimes quite challenging to answer a problem-solving in Mathematics because some of the tutorials do not show all the steps." Despite the availability of resources in online learning, she also encountered solving Math problems because some of the video content on YouTube did not demonstrate step-by-step processes.

Procrastinating

"Procrastination is an emotion regulation problem, not a time management problem," said Dr. Tim Pychyl. Student 1 expressed that she "encountered in online learning in Mathematics is procrastination/Procrastinating or being lazy". She tends not to perform that task because of so many modules and activities in the Learning Management System. She added that she "needs more time to understand the lesson well before answering them". That is why she always submitted her performance task late. Student 2 also expressed the same sentiment "There are times that I submitted my requirements late because I'm too lazy to do the task immediately". Further, described by student 3 that "There are a lot of times that I got lazy to answer the activities in the LMS especially when I feel that I did not learn something". The participants are not motivated to answer the activities online because they feel that they are not learning. Boardman et al., (2021) say that after switching to emergency online learning, students felt less motivated to work and procrastinated more.

The process yielded four themes, as revealed in the results. These themes describe the experiences of parents to the online learning Mathematics of their son/daughter as (1) Struggling on Online Learning; (2) Lack of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy; (3) Depression; and (4) Lack of Time Management. These findings are further described and discussed as follows.

Struggling with Online Learning

The current situation brought by the Pandemic changed the way the student learns. This brings adjustment to the students as well as to the parents. The parents noticed that their children are having trouble online learning Mathematics. In connection, they expressed it as "online learning is really difficult even though there is YouTube and good internet connection" as mentioned by parent 4. This is a manifestation that parents experienced struggling in online learning even though they have all the resources

such as computers and stable internet connection. On the other hand, parent 5 expressed "It is really difficult for me to provide the needs of my daughter in her online learning because my earnings as a tricycle driver are just good for our basic needs." It is expected situation in the COVID-19 pandemic that tricycle drivers have affected their income. Another parent 6 mentioned that " During her online exam, she struggles with the internet connection because the exam was the synchronous session". Indeed, poor internet connection affected the performance of the students.

Lack of Parent Content Knowledge or Pedagogy

Guidance and assistance in the learning process of the students during this COVID-19 pandemic are essential. However, parent 3 noted that "There some instances that he needs help in solving Mathematics problems, honestly I told him that I cannot help him because I don't how ". This is also expressed by parent 5 "When it comes to helping her in answering the activities in Mathematics, I cannot help her because I was not able to finish my studies". This means that parents cannot help their son/daughter in solving Mathematics problems because of their incapacity to teach their children. Even though they were a college graduate just like parent 4, she expressed that "I'm quite guilty as a parent because I don't have much time spending with him in his online learning because of the nature of my work". Thus, students were not able to receive much attention in their online learning because their parents were busy working to provide their basic needs and some didn't know how to teach Mathematics.

Depression

Parents observed that their child experienced being irritated in online learning as parent 2 articulated that her daughter is "already pressed in such a way she is too much irritated". This is a manifestation that the students had experienced depression in online learning. Also, added parent 4 realizations that " his son had a lot of activities in the module, which was a big burden to him". Online instruction's increased screen time and absence of face-to-face interaction have been attributed to perceived attention issues (Wirth, 2020).

Lack of Time Management

Parents noted that their students are experiencing a lack of time management during online learning. Parent 4 noticed that his son "doesn't have time management, he is always cramming". The parent had prepared a schedule for his son to follow, but he still did not follow it because he was hooked by "reading Japanese cartoon stories" as mentioned by parent 3.

The themes on coping mechanisms in online learning in Mathematics were described as (1) Emerging Utilization of the Internet, and (2) Peer Collaboration and Family. These themes are discussed as follows.

Emerging Utilization of Internet

The use of the Internet in online classes has been utilized by the students. When the lesson presented in an online class is hard to understand, student 1 is "watching video tutorials on YouTube which helps me a lot to learn Mathematics". Indeed, videos from YouTube are a big help for students for them to cope despite the challenges they encounter. Student 2 expressed that "Through YouTube, which explains every process helps me a lot to solve the problem". This means that the use of the internet during this time of pandemic helps the learner to learn on their own despite the absence of the teacher.

Peer Tutoring and Family Involvement

Learning with peers plays an important aspect to students. Most of the students are learning when their peers are explaining the process of solving Mathematics problems. For instance, student 3 expressed " My classmates are also a great help for me because they explain it when I don't know how to solve a certain problem." She also asked for help coming from her cousin who explained the Math problems step-by-step manner. This is a manifestation that no matter how difficult learning Mathematics online, there is a way to cope with it.

On the other hand, the themes on the coping mechanism of parents in online learning in Mathematics were expressed as Responding to being responsible parenthood, and Financial and Emotional Connection.

Responding to being responsible parenthood

One of the fulfilling achievements of the parents is to find ways to help their son/daughter no matter what challenges they may encounter along the way. Parent 3 stated that "To minimize his struggles, we go to some places to relax, such as beaches, and farm activities". This is one way to minimize the stress they experience in online learning. However, parent 6 had a different way of helping her daughter in online learning by "looking for help from my neighbor to allow my

daughter to connect with their internet connection". This means that they are not capable of providing an internet connection for online learning, but she looks for some ways and means to continue the online learning of her daughter despite the financial constraints they experienced. This is how the parents show their love to their children.

Financial and emotional connection

Parents have been affected by their livelihoods caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many families in the Philippines suffered financially because of the lockdown and restrictions set by the government. Students are affected by this situation, however, parents still looking for resources to provide for their basic needs. Parent 5 elaborated "I'm focused on looking for finances because I am the only one who is working in the family. Despite the challenges, he is determined to survive the online learning of her daughter. On the other hand, parent 4 said that "I realized that I need to talk to my son always because he is already a teenager". She emphasized having an emotional connection with his son, especially in this time of pandemic where mental health is a big concern.

Textural and Structural Descriptions. The themes are synthesized into a textural description of "what" and then examined with different perspectives of the structural description of "how". The following is the discussion of the textural description and structural description of the journey experiences of the students and their parents in online learning Mathematics during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Textural Description

The respondents always mentioned the words "difficult" and "struggling" with related terms like "challenging" and "stressed" respectively in their interviews. Student participants described online learning Mathematics as "I can't easily understand the topic because we have a limited meeting online" which required more meetings online to further grasp the learning of the students. A stable internet connection also helps the learner to focus on students listening in an online class, however, some participants described it as "I cannot understand the lesson because my internet connection is very poor, and my audio is not audible, and the screen is blurred". Parents also described online learning Mathematics as "my son is struggling in online learning Mathematics". Helping their son/daughter in Mathematics is a problem As one parent always says " I told him that I cannot help him because I don't know", the same sentiment to others " I cannot help her because I was not able to finish my studies.".

Structural Description

The student's and parents' journey in learning Mathematics online was revealed as difficult and struggling as common experiences of the participants. Because learning Mathematics required a series of demonstrating the process of solving problems. The students had a hard time understanding the lesson due to limited meetings online and poor internet connection resulting in being unmotivated in solving the Math problems. In addition, student participants had different contributing factors affecting their online learning, they were exposed to social media apps and read Japanese manga stories, respectively. It was also interesting to note that their parents were also struggling to guide their son/daughter in online learning. They have similarities in lack of knowledge on the content of the subject in which they rely on YouTube and other internet resources.

The Essence of Lived Experiences

The journey of students and parents in online learning Mathematics during the COVID-19 pandemic is an experience that involves struggling with so much adjustment in their way of learning and adapting to the new changes in their lives. This challenges the parents on how they guide, provide media resources, and connect to their son/daughter physically and emotionally in their online learning. Within this existing situation of experiences, students and parents encounter various technological changes in pedagogy, emotional attachment, and rational difficulties. However, despite the mentioned challenges, they were determined to provide a coping mechanism brought by the Covid-19 crisis.

Discussion

This transcendental phenomenology study aimed to explore how students and parents experienced the new trends of education as they involved themselves in learning Mathematics online learning during the COVID-19 crisis. This paper revealed four emerging themes for the students and parents underlying the essence of the lived experience and two emerging themes for students and parents on their coping mechanisms.

It was revealed in Table 1, the experiences of students

in learning Mathematics online. The first is " poor internet connection." There are times when they are having online classes students experience blurred screens and audio is not audible resulting in unable to follow the steps in solving problems in Mathematics. Illmadi et al. (2020), described that students were slightly learned in online learning because of limited internet connection. It is also further supported by Almanthari et al.(2020) and Fulgencio et al. (2020) that limited internet access significantly affected the online learning of the students. Secondly " difficulties in understanding online lessons" were experienced by the respondents. They did not grasp the learning because of limited interaction with the teacher even though there were modules provided. These findings had a connection with the study of Adnan et al. (2020) as they reported that students complained about a lack of interaction with the lecturer which resulted in difficulty in understanding the lesson and solving Mathematics questions in online learning (Abdullahi et al., 2020, & Illmadi et al., 2020). Third is, that "procrastinating" affected their academic performance. They felt that they were not motivated to answer the activities in the Learning Management System (LMS) because they felt that they were not learning. Bordman et al. (2021) revealed that students are less motivated and procrastinate more when switching to online learning. Moreover, students with high levels of academic procrastination had poor levels of self-regulated online learning, according to Rahimi et al., (2021), resulting in a high perceived ineffectiveness of online learning. Fourth is, that "lack of time management" brings overlapping of learning tasks to be submitted. This brought more stress to them since the tasks were accumulated because of their time management difficulty. It was noted by Fidalgo et al., (2020), that students had difficulty with time management related to online learning.

On the other hand, parents have been "struggling with online learning" of their children since the Covid-19 pandemic started. Their children had been taught how to manipulate the current trend of online learning such as Learning Management System, Google Meet, Zoom, Google Drive, and many more. However, parents who have a big responsibility in teaching their children at home have limited knowledge of technology resources. It is noticeable that parents need to upgrade with the current trends in online learning delivery to successfully guide, teach, and direct their children. Secondly, parents "lack content knowledge and pedagogy" as they struggled so much to help their children learn something despite the current situation. It was revealed that parents were not able to deliver the content knowledge in Mathematics 9 because they had difficulty understanding the lesson. They always remind their children to research YouTube and proceed to google.com. This is a manifestation that their students are doing self-learning without the supervision of their parents. Thirdly, parents encountered that their children are experiencing "depression" which is a common problem at this time of the pandemic. Hasanah et al., (2020) pointed out that students had mild depression during the Covid-19 pandemic which affected the learning outcomes. Parents also expressed that their children are irritated once they are reminded about their deficiency in answering the learning module in the LMS.

Despite the myriad problems encountered by the students in online learning they also use coping mechanisms such as "emerging utilization of the internet" which help them for a searching solution to the problems faced in the learning module. Most of the time they utilize youtube.com for tutorials when they find it hard to understand the topic especially when it requires a lot of formulas and solutions to the mathematics problem. In addition, they also seek "peer tutoring and family involvement" when they don't understand the explanation of their teacher online because of limited internet connection.

Further, parents were also trying their best to "respond to being responsible parenthood" by providing the needs of their children in online learning. Parents were trying to educate themselves with the current trends and technologies used in their online learning so that they can assess their children with their difficulties. In addition, " financial and emotional connection" was one of the important aspects that parents realized specifically in the emotional aspect. Parents observed that children were irritated when they kept reminded to answer their modules online. So, they started to talk to their children about their problems realizing that their children experiencing a symptom of depression. To minimize it they went to some safe places to unwind, relax, and energy.

Conclusion

This study arrives at the following conclusions; Students had encountered numerous problems in online learning in Mathematics during this time of COVID-19 pandemic. They had difficulties in understanding the lesson due to poor internet connection during synchronous lessons which resulted in procrastination and unable to control time management. On the other hand, parents were also struggling with online learning due to a lack of content

knowledge and pedagogy in the delivery of the learning module in Mathematics. Despite the challenges encountered by students and parents. They have also had coping mechanisms to survive online learning. Students had utilized the internet and used it to communicate with their peers asking for help and guidance from their relatives. Parents also started to learn the new technologies in online learning and realized to have an emotional connection to their children.

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