

***Stakeholder Engagement and Involvement Towards Child and Growth Development  
During Pandemic: A Framework on Correspondence Education***

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**Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted children and adolescents' lives, leading to psychological problems and PTSD symptoms. In the Philippines, research on child and growth development during the pandemic is limited, emphasizing the need for better preparedness and quality education. The study investigated stakeholders' involvement in child growth and development during the pandemic, providing a framework for correspondence education. The study used mixed method from division of Manila schools using four point likert scale. A study using Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model found that stakeholders are involved in accessing online modules but less engaged in planning and development. They are highly involved with teachers but less engaged with Barangay assistance. Stakeholders are also involved in teacher assessment and feedback but less engaged with school heads. Modular distance learning is used, but parents face difficulties in integrating their child due to work and chores. Stakeholders' involvement is low, and school heads should involve stakeholders in planning and utilizing local government assistance for financially challenged families. Teachers should adapt best practices, communicate progress updates, and minimize activities, while parents should improve the learning environment and reduce distractions.

Keywords: Modular Distance Learning, Child Development, Child Education, School Stakeholders

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## **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted children and adolescents' daily lives, causing immediate and long-term impacts on their growth and development due to health, economic, and sociopolitical disasters. In China, some school-aged children, adolescents, and young adults have higher levels of psychological problems and PTSD symptoms (Liang et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2022). In Italy, a nationally representative sample of Italian adolescents found that youngsters are concerned about the pandemic's detrimental scholastic repercussions (Buzzi et al., 2020). Educational concerns and depressive symptoms may be stronger during the pandemic for people in higher grade levels in both China and Italy (Buzzi et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2022).

The Philippines has made progress in ensuring the rights of Filipino children through legislation, service improvements, and more accessible participation. However, research on child and growth development during the pandemic remains a gap, with mental health disorders impacting 10% to 15% of children and 16.8% of adolescents attempting suicide (Berger et al., 2019). Early detection of these disorders is crucial for proper treatment and prevention of poor health and social repercussions (Dix et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to exacerbate these figures, posing a threat to the delivery of healthcare services in the Philippines, including those related to children's growth and development. The study investigated stakeholders' involvement in child growth and development during the pandemic, providing a framework for correspondence education. It is crucial to examine how stakeholder engagement and involvement in child and growth development played out during the first year of the pandemic, particularly in the formulation and implementation of correspondence education. This will enable the government, educational institutions, and Filipino families to better prepare for future crises and ensure children continue to receive high-quality education.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model. Due to prolonged COVID19 duty hours-related mental stress and other mental health difficulties, these parents may be harsh with their children (Ramaswamy & Seshadri, 2020). The microsystem is a child's immediate environment, including relationships and organizations like family, peer group, and school setting. It is crucial to note that the microsystem remains intact during a crisis, providing research on its impact on development. Early data can help develop a plan to move forward and act quickly (Sim & How, 2020). This Theory provides a substantial explanation of a child's growth and development during a pandemic, as well as how children are influenced by it.

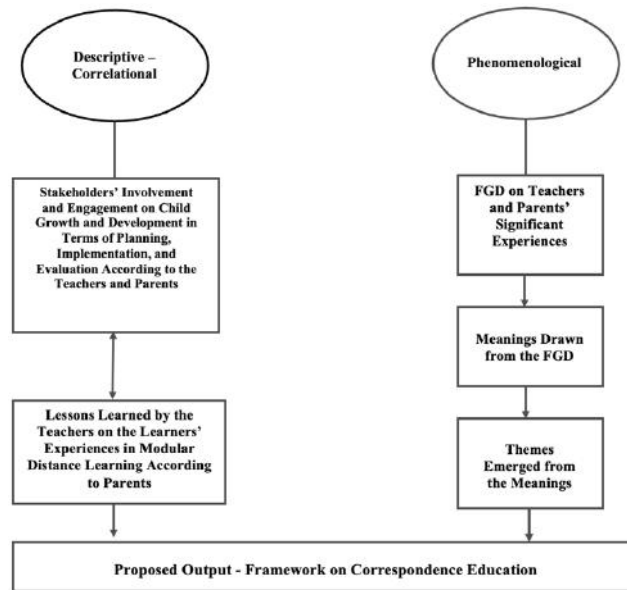


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This study utilized Descriptive-Correlational and Phenomenological designs to assess stakeholders' involvement in child growth and development during the pandemic. The Descriptive-Correlational part assessed stakeholders' involvement in planning, implementation, and evaluation, while the Phenomenological investigation involved teachers and parents providing insights on their experiences with the Modular Distance Learning Approach. The results were analyzed through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) responses, resulting in themes for Correspondence Education framework.

This study examined the stakeholders' involvement and engagement in child growth and development during pandemic. The results of the study were used to provide a framework for correspondence education. Following the conceptual framework presented the following hypothesis was measured:

*Ho<sub>1</sub>* There are no significant differences in the extent of the stakeholders' practices in correspondence education when grouped according to their responses.

*Ho<sub>2</sub>* There are no significant differences in the extent of the stakeholders' encounters with the issues or challenges in correspondence education when grouped according to their responses.

This study was conducted in using 4 point likert scale researcher-made instrument to gather data in four public elementary schools in the Department of Education - Division of Manila, Philippines. The study involved 110 teachers and 225 parents in quantitative and five (5) teachers and five (5) parents for qualitative sections, focusing on stakeholders' involvement and engagement in child growth and development during the pandemic. The respondents were teachers and parents from four public schools in division of manila. The schools used correspondence education during the Academic Year 2020-2021. The study utilized Slovin's formula and simple random technique to compute samples, with all respondents being elementary teachers from selected locales with firsthand experience in engaging school stakeholders.

## Conclusions

The study reveals that teachers and parents have been involved in various aspects of correspondence education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers have engaged themselves in planning, while parents have also been involved in implementation. Teachers have been involved in evaluation, reflecting their involvement in child and growth development. The teachers' encounters planning issues are related to converting activities and content into modules, online/distance learning, and lack of free resources and tools from education technology companies. In terms of implementation, both teachers and parents agreed that implementation is less involved due to unfavorable home learning environments and lack of experience with instructional technologies.

A one-factor analysis of variance with repeated measures showed significant differences between the variables, rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis. The best practices of teachers and parents include health protocols, conducted online meetings, open communication with teachers, organization in module distribution and retrieval, provision of guidance, effective time management, and conditioning the child. However, parents face difficulties in managing their time, dealing with child attitude and behavior, keeping up with the study schedule, absence of more-knowledgeable others (MKO), being overwhelmed with module activities, and environmental distractions.

The effects of modular learning and teaching on child learners include the inability of parents to provide learning, learners struggling with parents, diminished performance and distorted study habits, poor learner engagement, learning from amusing topics, collision of parent work and academic involvement, and poor learning engagement due to the modality employed. The 'Redondo's Correspondence Framework' is proposed as a framework for executing the modular distance technique, known as Correspondence Education, which was widely adopted by most schools in the Philippines during the pandemic.

The study found no significant differences in the responses of teachers and parents to issues or challenges in correspondence education. However, there was a significant difference in their responses to planning in correspondence education. Teachers were more convinced about preparing content for modules and online/distance learning, while parents believed they lack free resources and tools from education technology companies. The study indicates that there are no significant differences in the extent of stakeholders' encounters with issues or challenges in correspondence education when grouped according to their responses, but there were indications that parents viewed differently in terms of parameters in correspondence education.

The learner is also overwhelmed with module activities, as they are overwhelmed by the activities that need to be completed for a week. Environmental or home distractions like noise, games, siblings, and peers can also pose a challenge.

Overall, parents face various challenges in managing their time between home and work, dealing with their child's attitude and behavior, keeping up with their study schedule, and dealing with environmental or home distractions. By addressing these challenges, parents can help their children succeed in modular classes and improve their overall learning experience.

The findings are congruent with Vonderwell's (2019) study on learner participation revealed that remote learner engagement and patterns are influenced by technology and interface

characteristics, content area experience, student responsibilities, instructional tasks, and information overload. Effective online learning requires interdependence, and instructors can detect student needs and scaffold learning by closely monitoring student involvement and patterns. During the COVID-19 pandemic, universities face challenges in providing and using online and e-learning systems, such as Blackboard. Understanding the adoption drivers and primary problems of contemporary e-learning systems is crucial for successful use. However, there is a gap in knowledge about the critical challenges and factors that shape e-learning usage. This study provides important recommendations for policymakers, designers, developers, and researchers to better understand the key factors of successfully using an e-learning system during the pandemic (Almaiah, 2020).

### Framework on Correspondence Education for Enriched

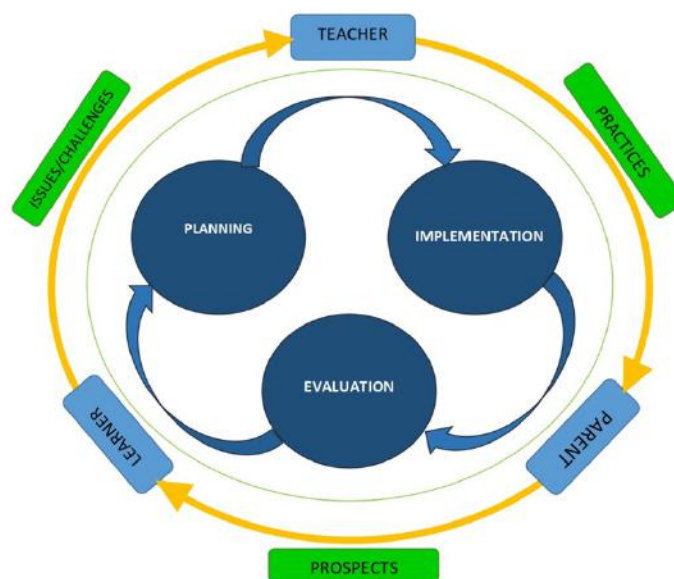


Figure 2. Redondo's Correspondence Education Framework

The framework developed based on the result of the study indicated that modular distance technique, also known as Correspondence Education, is a widely adopted strategy in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic. To effectively implement this technique, schools should involve all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and learners, in the planning and development process. This involves teachers, module writers, parents, and publishers on digital platforms.

Stakeholders are involved in accessing online modules during the pandemic, but they are less engaged in planning and developing these modules. They are highly involved with teachers who can provide answers to their queries, but are less engaged with assistance from the Barangay, such as internet connection or financial assistance. Stakeholders are also highly involved with the assessment and feedback activities of teachers, but they are low in communicating with school heads on feedback regarding modular learning.

Teachers and parents have significant practices in employing modular distance learning on their children. They observe local/national health protocols for distributing, receiving, and retrieving modules, and implement 'kamustahan' to check on progress and how parents cope with providing guidance. However, parents face difficulties in getting their child on board

modular learning due to work and chores. In some cases, learners are left to independently answer their modules due to the absence of an MKO. Learned learners are observed to be overwhelmed due to the number of learning activities in the module, and distractions at home often beset them. This results in poor modular engagement due to demotivation due to abrupt changes in the learning platform.

Quantitative findings indicate that stakeholders are involved and engaged in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of modular distance learning during the pandemic. Parents face difficulties in facilitating learning engagement, such as internet disruptions and environmental distractions like noise, peers, and games. Evaluation and feedbacking are highly involved and engaged by stakeholders, but low in terms of planning and development and implementation.

Effective communication systems should be in place to provide updates and feedback mechanisms for learners' progress, including their challenges. Parents should inform teachers about home issues such as resources, discipline, and guidance provided to students. Curriculum planners and module writers should minimize the number of activities in modules to avoid overwhelm. Teachers should also undertake active home visits to provide relevant ways to interest students in learning through modules. Parents should also search for ways to improve the learning environment and decrease distractions while modular study is in progress.

### **Recommendation**

School heads should involve stakeholders like parents, barangay officers, and the community in the planning and development of modular learning modules to provide individualized attention and support for students' growth and development during the pandemic. They should also tap into the local government for internet connectivity packages for families who cannot afford it. School heads should establish linkages with non-government units and the local government for assistance to financially-challenged families.

School heads should identify the best experiences of stakeholders and cascade it to teachers for adjustments or emulating best practices. School officials should ensure that teachers and parents are on the same page when implementing modular distance learning for child students. Teachers should be able to describe how modules should be used to increase student participation.

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The study is limited to the teachers and parents from four public elementary schools in division of manila. The study does not include public schools in other cities in the national capital region (NCR) and private academic institutions. The study only takes the data and

information for the research during the duration of the school year 2020-2021 and does not cover other academic school year.

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