

# Breaking Routines: The Lived Experiences of Solo Parents Navigating Modular Distance Learning in the Philippines

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## Abstract

Key stakeholders in education sector are enablers of sustainable development. Their collective action significantly influences human resources and the overall quality of education. Accordingly, solo parents as stakeholders in the field of education have multidimensional impact in the community, explicitly on learners' academic achievements. In this phenomenological study, the researchers aimed to explore the lived experiences of solo parents, specifically the challenges that they have experienced and the coping strategies that they capitalized when they used the Modular Distance Learning (MDL) modality to carry out their roles as *parent-educators* of their youngsters. The researchers conducted face-to-face interview using the semi-structured interview guide to achieve the objectives of the study. The results of the study are useful to education stakeholders, especially to the teachers and school officials concerned, for them to better understand the lived experiences of the solo parents, and address the challenges, thus—afford better education to learners. The findings of the study revealed that solo parents, as parent-educators, have faced many challenges when they used the MDL modality. Specifically, they have experienced *pedagogical, personal and educational, and limited parent-youngster teaching-learning interaction* challenges. To moderate the effects of these challenges, they used these coping strategies: *help seeking behavior, parent-teacher influence, and parental involvement in education*. Undoubtedly, solo parents, as parent-educators face many challenges, which can affect their teaching performance in the MDL context. However, with a dynamic teaching-learning partnership among solo parents and their youngsters an improved teaching-learning performance is assured.

**Keywords:** modular distance learning, solo parents, single parents, solo parents' lived experiences, solo parents' challenges and coping strategies, Philippines

## 1. Introduction

With the many factors, like internationalization and technological advancement that are driving rapid changes in the educational landscape, there is a need for education stakeholders, especially the teachers, parents, and school administrators in the basic education levels to keep themselves updated and responsive by improving the knowledge, attitudes and skills that they need to cope with the demands of these changes, more specifically, the demand to offer and sustain quality basic education to the learners. The stakeholders' commitment for continuous quality improvement is consistent with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). Accordingly, *quality education*—the UNSDG 4, gives people the tools to overcome poverty and promotes wider societal growth, and it is recognized as the key that enables the achievement of many other UNSDGs (The Global Goals, Quality Education, n.d.; Sabijon, 2021).

Another factor that had been affecting the quality and state of education around the world was the incidence of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been affecting the overall operations of learning institutions like the teaching-learning modality in basic education levels. As the transition to face-to-face classes started, many schools adopted a flexible learning modality like the blended delivery, a combination of both face-to-face and online distance learning modalities in areas where the internet connectivity was strong. However, in some remote areas where the internet connectivity was weak or no connectivity at all, many schools resorted to Modular Distance Learning modality to

continue their teaching-learning tasks.

In the Philippines, amidst the shift to various teaching-learning modalities caused by the pandemic, one of the most preferred modalities of teaching-learning process is the distance learning. According to Bernardo (2020), based on a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd), “learning through printed and digital modules emerged as the most preferred distance learning method of parents who enrolled their children in the coming school year” (para. 2).

Specifically, the Modular Distance Learning (henceforth, *MDL*, *MDL modality*, or *modular distance learning*), which is one of the three types of distance learning, involves individualized instruction that:

allows learners to use Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) in print or digital format, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner, and other learning resources like learner’s materials, textbooks, activity sheets, study guides, and other study materials. Learners access electronic copies of learning materials on a personal computer (PC), tablet PC, or smartphone. CDs, DVDs, USB storage, and computer-based applications can all be used to deliver e-learning materials, including offline e-books. The teacher takes the responsibility of monitoring the progress of the learners. The learners may ask assistance from the teacher via email, telephone, text message/instant messaging, etc. Where possible, the teacher shall do home visits to learners needing remediation or assistance. Any member of the family or other stakeholders in the community need to serve as para-teachers. (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020, p. 31)

Although the use MDL has its advantages over other modalities, like it can be used by learners in areas, specifically rural and remote areas, where there is weak or no internet connection, the modality, according to Alfanta and Abarquez (2023) does not provide the in-person instruction component that could affect learners’ focus in their studies. Guiamalon, et al. (2021) publish that “learners cannot totally focus on learning due to the absence of face-to-face instruction” (p. 467). Moreover, “some parents felt hampered due to lack of capacity to facilitate and explain in the modular learning session” (p. 468).

Aligned with the need for parental encouragement and support (see Guiamalon, et al., 2021) that are connected with the effectiveness of the chosen teaching-learning modality, Lawrence and Fakuade (2021) highlighted “that parental involvement and learning participation significantly contributed to the prediction of online learning commitment” (p. 11). Further, since education was at home, parents served as home initiators in education and one of their basic and essential obligations in modular distance education was to build a rapport while assisting the youngsters (Manlangit, et. al, 2020). Moreover, according to Bustillo and Aguilos (2021), during the pandemic, parents acted as learning overseers, tutors and home-schooling teachers in MDL.

The preceding numerous literature present some advantages and challenges that are associated with the use of MDL modality. The literature also highlights the vital roles that parents (like a mother and a father) play specifically when the MDL modality is used. Based on the abovementioned literature, it can be deduced that the challenges brought about by the pandemic and the use of the MDL modality are compounded when the roles as *parent-educator* or learning “overseer”, “tutor” and “home-schooling teacher” in MDL are played by *solo parents*.

How are solo parents as parent-educators to their youngsters? Are they effective as facilitators of learning through the MDL modality?

### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of solo parents and their youngsters, specifically to shed light on the challenges and coping strategies that they—solo parents, have experienced when they, as parent-educators, used the MDL modality in the teaching-learning process that took place in their respective homes aftermath the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- a. What are the challenges encountered by the solo parents, as parent-educators, in teaching their youngsters through modular distance learning ? ; and
- b. What are the coping strategies used by solo parents to address these challenges?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Single and Solo Parenting

The term *single parenting* and *solo parenting* are connected and are worldwide trend (s), but in some aspects not synonymous, especially when a person considers their definitions based on contexts. According to Henshi (1985, as

cited in Fotoh, 2021), “single parenting is a situation in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is being responsible for the upbringing of the child” (p. 31). In addition, Salami and Alawode (2000, as cited in Fotoh, 2021) contend that “single parenting result from divorce, separation of various kinds, having children from wedlock or death of one spouse which leaves the roles in the hands of a single parent....” (p.31).

As regards the impact of single parenting in the academic performance and the societal conditions in general, Ntumi et al. (2016):

The phenomenon of single parenting is a social problem in various countries in the world today. It has become a global concern which deprives many school children the opportunity to attain academic excellence in their lives and excellent labor factor for national productivity and progress. (p. 27)

Similarly, *solo parenting* has gained recognition in society in the last few years. It is no longer a new phenomenon especially in developing countries like the Philippines (Administrative Order No. 38, Series of 2003). Particularly, in the Philippine context, a *solo parent* is defined in Republic Act 8972, also known as *Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000* as:

any individual who falls under any of the following categories: (1) A woman who gives birth as a result of rape and other crimes against chastity even without a final conviction of the offender: *Provided*, That the mother keeps and raises the child, (2) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to death of spouse, (3) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood while the spouse is detained or is serving sentence of criminal conviction for at least one (1) year, (4) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to physical and/or mental incapacity of spouse as certified by a public medical practitioner, (5) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to legal separation or *de facto* separation from spouse for at least one (1) year, as long as he/she is entrusted with custody of the children, (6) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to declaration of nullity or annulment or marriage as decreed by a court or by a church as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children, (7) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to abandonment of spouse for at least one (1) year, (8) Unmarried mother/father who has preferred to keep and rear her/his child/children instead of having others care for them or give them up to a welfare institution, (9) Any other person who solely provides parental care and support to a child or children, and (10) Any family member who assumes the responsibility of head of family as a result of the death, abandonment, disappearance or prolonged absence of the parents or solo parent. (pp. 1-2)

More specifically, in the Philippines, the enactment of Republic Act 8972, otherwise known as the *Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000*, mandates various government agencies to consolidate their efforts to help address the needs of the solo parents. Particularly, a comprehensive program for solo parents is being packaged by an Inter-Agency Task Force with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as the lead on the implementation of the Solo Parents' Welfare Act.

In this study, the term *solo parents* is defined based on the aforementioned descriptions, more specifically those solo parent-participants that are described in the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study. On the other hand, *youngsters* are children or grandchildren of the solo parents who were included in this study. Moreover, the term *parent-educators* refers to solo parents who took on the role of teachers or learning facilitators for their children or grandchildren. Consequently, the salient findings of this research can help school officials and other education stakeholders better understand the challenges encountered by solo parents in relation to MDL modality, and for them to develop feasible and impactful solutions to address these challenges and concerns.

## 2.2 Modular Distance Learning

According to Gonzales (2015, as cited in Guiamalon et al., 2021), modular learning is a teaching approach where the learners have to learn all the lessons in the module. It is a good alternative way of teaching that differs from the traditional modality in which the learners are mostly passive receivers of the lessons provided by the teachers. It is students-centered, self-paced, and does not require note-taking.

*Why are teachers in favor of modular distance learning (MDL)?* Anzaldo (2021, p. 264) highlights these reasons: firstly, if to consider the engagement capacity of children modular distance is more convenient; secondly, it is much accessible for the kind of pupils in the community; then, it can cater to pupils who cannot afford gadgets and internet connectivity that will be used in online class; thirdly, this is the appropriate learning modality in the community; more time to read/study the lesson; it is more reliable and convenient to pupils who do not have gadgets; then, not every pupil is fortunate like their classmates and most of them only rely on books; hence, modular is more applicable

than online learning; next, MDL provides greater flexibility for students to work at their own pace and review work as needed; and incapability to access online learning.

### 2.3 Parental Involvement and Academic Performance

Undoubtedly, parents and guardians of students are very important stakeholders in the education sector. The level of parents' involvement in the education of their children is one factor that could affect the point of achievement of the teaching-learning objectives, goals and outcomes. According to Hill et al., (2004, as cited in Kasi et al., 2020), *parental involvement* is described as "parents' experiences with school and with their children to support their children's educational outcomes and potential success." (para. 3). Moreover, Boonk et al., 2018, LeFevre & Shaw, 2012, and Warren et al., 2018, as cited in Kasi et al, (2020) stress that parents' active participation in their children's school activities and education programs is one identified significant factor that can affect their children's achievement.

In general, *parental involvement* refers to parents' active involvement to help their children in the achievement of learning goals and in their educational journey (Karbach et al., 2013 and Wang & Sheikh-Kalil, 2014, as cited in Yu et al., 2021).

Specifically, in the study of Utami (2022), entitled *The Role of Parental Involvement in Student Academic Outcomes*, high test scores and grade point averages are:

common among students whose parents are actively involved in their education. This connection is most pronounced among younger students but remains for learners of all ages. The student's social and emotional development, as well as their sense of pride and accomplishment, can all benefit from active parental involvement. Parental participation has been shown to improve students' academic performance as well as their social and emotional development and self-worth. Parents may help their children thrive in school and attain their full potential if they take an active role in their education. Academic success, as well as other good outcomes like better social and emotional skills and stronger self-esteem, have been proven to be positively correlated with parental involvement in a student's education. Younger pupils benefited the most from parental involvement in school, but all students benefited from it. (p. 19)

In relation to parents' involvement in the education of their children and the distance learning modality, Kasi et al. (2020) reveal that parents think that their involvement in their children's educational achievement, especially when the distance learning modality is used, helps the students to timely comply with the requirements of the school. Additionally, for effective teaching and learning to take place, the school personnel expect the parents to participate actively in the education of their children "both at home and at school" (p. 86), particularly in distance learning process and modality.

With regard to modular distance learning, Bustillo and Aguilos (2021) publish that most learners were bothered by many adversities in complying with the activities in modular distance learning, for they experienced difficulties like internet connectivity, insufficient educational materials, complexity of the module contents and assessment instructions, overwhelming educational activities, non-conducive educational condition, and psychological issues. In addition, Lase et al. (2022) reveals that some parents spoiled their children, for they were the ones answering the activities on modules of their children for diverse bases and some parents who did a work-from-home arrangement and preoccupied with household chores may not be able to assist their children with the modules because they lacked time to do it; therefore, they were the ones answering the activities on their children's module.

More specifically, on solo parents' involvement in the literary instruction of their children using the modular distance learning, Llamas (2021) reported that "parents experienced and faced several problems" (p.16) and also "saw the significance and positive things in the conduct of literacy instruction" (p. 16). In addition, he recommended that programs may be launched to address the challenges and problems associated with the use of modular distance learning faced by solo parents.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Epistemological and Theoretical Perspective of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was based on social constructionism as an epistemological perspective that emphasizes the role of social processes in the formation of knowledge and understanding. In the wide scope of qualitative investigation, constructionism elaborates the principles of constructivism by highlighting the significance of creating tangible artifacts as a way to facilitate learning in which

constructivists assume about the formation of learning and concept as a societal construct (Guba & Lincoln, 2001).

To gather data on the lived experiences of solo parents, the researchers used a semi-structured interview guide and followed the steps in doing thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) to generate the emerging themes needed to achieve the main objectives of the study.

Specifically, the researchers conducted the interview through face-to-face among five participants from a province in the Philippines. The five participants were rigidly selected based on the inclusion criteria (see part 3.2) set by the researchers. With the consent from each participant, a sound recorder was used to comprehensively gather the interview data.

### *3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

In this study, the participant must be a solo parent, specifically a mother, a father, a grandmother, or a grandfather, who have been responsible for raising at least one or two youngsters or children at the time of the study. The youngsters must be enrolled in a public (national government-supervised) elementary school and with ages within 6-12 years old. Furthermore, the solo parent should be between 20-50 years old, **have** (Please delete the word "have" that is written in red font) completed an elementary level of education, and resides in a district within a province in the Philippines. Other solo parents who did not meet the aforementioned inclusion criteria were excluded in the study.

### *3.3 Ethical Considerations*

Aside from presenting the necessity and rationale of the research clearly and in person to the participants, the researchers promised them confidentiality and anonymity all throughout the research process. Thus, aliases and coding or use of codes on specific locations were applied to avoid any breach of confidentiality. Further, it was emphasized that they could always withdraw anytime as participants if they wanted to discontinue their participation in the study. More importantly, voluntary and granted informed consent was taken from the participants and the interviews were done in their preferred places for the participants to confidently express their experiences related to the phenomenon.

### *3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Strategy*

To gather the needed qualitative data, interview method was used. It started with a preliminary question; "What was your experience or describe your experience in the modular distance learning of your youngsters?" Then, appropriate follow up questions were further asked to establish in depth insights like: (1) "What is the challenge or problem that you encountered when you teach your youngsters using the modular distance learning modality?" (2) "Aside from that, what other challenges have you experienced in modular distance learning modality?" (3) "How about your coping strategies in dealing with the challenges in modular distance learning modality?", and (4) "Aside from that, what other options did you do so that the modular activities will be answered by your youngster?"

To ensure accuracy and completeness of data, the interview questions were translated in the local dialect. In addition, the interview data with solo parents were recorded using a digital recorder. The researchers continued the iterative process until the saturation point was attained.

### *3.5 Analysis of the Study*

This study specifically followed the thematic analysis steps published by Braun and Clarke (2006), and likewise described in Maguire and Delahunt (2017). The six steps published by the aforementioned proponents are:

#### *3.5.1 Familiarizing Oneself with the Data*

In this step, the researchers, to have a better grasp of the phenomenon, familiarized with the entirety of the data about the challenges and coping strategies of solo parents in modular distance learning.

#### *3.5.2 Generating Initial Codes*

After familiarizing the data, the researchers started to document on prospective data items of interest, questions, connections between data items, and other initial ideas on the challenges and coping strategies used by the solo parents in modular distance learning of their youngsters.

#### *3.5.3 Searching for Themes*

The researchers recorded all themes of possible importance in the challenges and coping mechanisms, regardless of whether they reflected to be closely connected with the research questions. In addition, essential themes gave notable connection between data items and answer vital point of research questions, but the researchers cannot finalize which

of the themes should be kept, disposed, or otherwise changed in the final analysis until they have re-read and perused the themes, or were done with the process specified in step 4.

#### 3.5.4 Reviewing Themes

The researchers analyzed the coded data assigned within each theme to establish suitability. They evaluated all pertinent codes, selected data that belonged to each theme and reflect on each of the categories. Terms or phrases that belonged to each theme were categorized. Further, the researchers decided if the individual theme was significantly appropriate to answer the objectives of the study. Then, the researchers reviewed the entire data set to reassess the themes that were uncovered and to rewrite for the needed data to make the necessary changes to reconstruct the thematic map.

#### 3.5.5 Defining and Naming Themes

The researchers identified the themes and labeled them. Then, they identified overlapping areas between themes, identified emergent subthemes, and clearly delimited the scope of what each theme entailed or included.

#### 3.5.6 Producing the Report

In this final step, the researchers wrote the final analysis, the themes and their descriptions on the challenges that were experienced and the coping strategies that were used by the solo parents to teach their youngsters in the modular distance learning (MDL) modality.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Study

To ensure valid and reliable data, the researchers used a validated semi-structured interview guide and secured consent forms from the participants and the approval from the school administrators concerned. Equally, to ensure the accuracy of the data collected and trustworthiness of the findings, the researchers used the four criteria namely: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Nowell et al., 2017).

Specifically, to gather reliable data, the researchers met regularly during the data collection and analysis to review the primary findings and emerging themes. Member checking was conducted by sending the transcribed audio recordings and interview findings back to individual participants to provide an opportunity for them to give comments on the findings.

Furthermore, for dependability, the researchers involved data about step-by-step data collection and analyses process. They also noted for any changes that occurred during the conduct and analysis of the study data. These changes were described how they occurred and how they affected the approach of the study. For confirmability, the researchers used the raw data which were the interview guide and electronic recordings of the interviews. Data reduction and analyses included the transcripts from interviews, preliminary coding, and thematic analyses.

Data reconstruction and synthesis were used to produce the narratives; the description of themes and the subthemes. Likewise, process notes indicating the research strategy, rationale, trustworthiness, expectations, and prediction, including the materials relating to intentions and dispositions were also used.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This study was conducted to recognize the lived experiences of solo parents, specifically to shed light on the challenges that they experienced related to the use of MDL and the coping strategies that they used to address these challenges. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions (1) What are the challenges or problems encountered by the solo parents, as parent educators, in teaching their youngsters through MDL modality?, and (2) What are the coping strategies that solo parents used to address these challenges?

### 4.1 Profile of the Participants

The following were the participants (see Table 1) that were purposively chosen based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the study:

*Eddie* is a solo parent, a father, 54 years old and a carpenter who frequently works in a construction company. He sometimes taught his youngsters basic Math concepts, in like addition and subtraction, when they asked him for help in their assignments, especially his youngest girl. If he did not know the answers, he would refer the questions to his neighbors or his youngsters' teachers for them to help in answering the assignments on modules.

In the case of *Neneng*, she is a 39-year old solo parent and mother. She had difficulties in helping her youngsters in answering the activities in the module. Having finished an elementary schooling only, she could not understand and did

not know how to answer the tasks included in the module, especially in English and in Mathematics subjects. So, she sought help from her younger's sister, a college student, for the assignments or activities that she could not understand and answer. Sometimes, she would research through the internet using her cellphone for her to understand the lessons. Likewise, there were instances in which both of her youngsters had the same deadline for submission of assignments, so sometimes she could not help well her youngsters to submit the accomplished modules on time because she had her own tasks to do, and deliverables to submit, that are related to her job.

As for *Lola Inday*, she is a 68-year old solo parent and grandmother. She did not teach her granddaughter on her modular activities because she did not even know how to read and write, for she had not attended school. Thus, she would simply tell her granddaughter to do it by herself or tell her to go to the store seller or “manugbantay sang tindahan” of a variety store or anybody in the store to help her granddaughter do the activities in the modules.

Another participant was *Jeana*, she is a 48-year old solo parent, and a mother. She could not teach her daughter most of the time in her modular activities since her knowledge was limited, for she had only finished her elementary education. In many cases, her daughter would not ask her to teach and help her answer the activities in her module. Her daughter thought that her mother might not give the correct answer. Thus, the adjustment that Jeana and her daughter did was doing collaborative learning to do the activities and answer the questions on the modules. Moreover, she checked the bag of her daughter if there were activities on modules, and if there were, she would tell and persuade her daughter to do the activity and answer the questions in the module. When there were instances that activities in the modules were difficult to comprehend, like in Math, English and Science, so she (the mother) would ask her cousin, who is a teacher, to help her daughter published in the learning modules.

As for *Dodong*, he is a 51-year old solo parent, a father, and a “hollow block laborer”. He had problems with his time in teaching and guiding his daughter using the modules because he was busy in his job. Consequently, he had no time to serve as a parent-teacher or facilitator, to provide guidance in modular activities for his daughter. Besides, he was also hesitant to help her, for he had a very limited knowledge. He finished the 5th grade only in elementary schooling. However, there was an instance that her daughter really asked him to help her in Math subject, like addition and subtraction of numbers, so he had no choice but to teach her with the aid of a calculator application in a cellphone. On the other hand, for subjects such as English and Sciences, he would simply tell her daughter to ask her cousins to help her to answer the activities in the modules that she received from her teachers.

**Table 1.** Profile of the Participants

Participants (Solo Parents)	Where the Interview was Conducted	Length of the Interview
1. Eddie	home	36 minutes
2. Neneng	home	40 minutes
3. Lola Inday	home	35 minutes
4. Jeana	home	40 minutes
5. Dodong	home	38 minutes

#### 4.2 Challenges Faced by Solo Parents in Modular Distance Learning

The following recurring themes (see Table 2) emerged as the challenges experienced by the solo parents when they used the MDL modality to teach their youngsters:

##### 4.2.1 Theme #1 Pedagogical Challenges

The first theme generated describes the difficulties faced by solo parents both in teaching and in assisting their youngsters to understand their lessons, during the modular distance learning sessions.

All the five solo parents expressed that they really had a hard situation with their youngsters in their modular activities since they could not fully understand the lessons when English was used as the medium of instruction to teach the English, Science, and Math subjects.

Specifically, according to Eddie “*Indi takon makabulig sa anda module kay indi ako makaintiende sa anda leksyon kay English kag elementary graduate lang takon*” (I could not help them in their module, the lessons are in English language, and I finished the elementary level only.” Furthermore, Neneng added; “*Nabudlayan gid ako sa pag intiendi sa anda nga mga leksyon sa Math, Science and English subjects kag sa pagsabat sa modules, kon kaisa, gina pasa ko nalang nga wala sabat*” (“I had difficulties in Math, Science and English subjects in answering their modules so sometimes I submitted their assignment without answers.”). In addition, Lola Inday mentioned that, “*Indi ako*

*makabulig sa akon apo kay wara ako kaagi iskwela*” (“I could not help my granddaughter since I have not attended even the elementary school.”). In addition, Jeana expressed, “*Nabudlayan man ako sa pagsabat sa anda nga mga assignments kay indi ako gawa ka intiendi ka English*”. (“I had also difficulties in answering the assignments since I could not fully understand English.”). Also, Dodong expressed that “*Indi man ako makabulig sa bata ko nga babayi kay indi man ako makaintiendi sang mga leksyon sa module kay grade 5 lang ako*” (“I could not help my daughter since I could not understand the lessons on modules because I am just a 5<sup>th</sup> grader.”).

The theme *pedagogical challenge* is related to theme *parents’ insufficient and limited knowledge* published by Llames in 2021. According to Llames, solo parents’ challenges in literacy instruction, using the modular distance learning were parents’ *insufficient and limited knowledge* to facilitate the teaching-learning process to their children. In addition, Murro et al. (2023), posited that parents strive in expounding and comprehending the lessons in the modular distance learning and as *para teachers* they were unaware in assisting learners during home schooling and lacked awareness in handling students’ needs. Likewise, Anzaldo (2021) confirmed that parents encountered challenges in educating their youngsters using the MDL modality for they had difficulties in household education with their youngsters, wherein the subject matters were more advanced and complicated and they needed the necessary expertise to instruct effectively, akin to that of trained or professional educators.

4.2.1a Subtheme #1: Not Being Trusted for Lack of Knowledge by their Youngsters. Solo parents felt that their youngsters did not trust them in teaching and in answering the modular activities. And, the youngsters were afraid that their parents may not provide the correct answers. For example, Jeana stated “*Kon kaisa wara man ako gina pasabat sa ublubrahon sa module sang bata ko kay basi indi ako kuno kamaan sang sakto nga sabat*” (“Sometimes, my daughter won’t allow me to answer the activities in the module, maybe she taught I do not know the right answers.”).

The subtheme *youngsters’ lack of trust to their parents* is supported by Hurley’s et al., (2019) findings that parents’ insights on their participation in the academic works of their teenagers was undesirable, thus it degraded parental effectiveness. In addition, according to Manlangit et al. (2020), the learners’ level of closeness and preference towards their family members who may help them in their academic tasks vary, and there were times that their parents were reluctant to ask or give assistance to them.

4.2.1b Subtheme # 2: Hesitant to Help the Youngsters. Solo parents were hesitant to teach their youngsters for they had very limited knowledge and they thought that they had no deeper understanding of their youngster’s lesson because of their academic limitations. For example, Dodong was hesitant to help his youngster and he let his youngster answer the modular activities based on his youngster’s knowledge and he would tell his youngster that he was busy in his job, but actually he was just hesitant since he, too, did not understand the lesson. In another case, Dodong said to his youngster: “*Ubraha ang mga ulubrahon mo sa module kay masako ako*”, *pero sa pinsar ko, nahuya ako kay indi ako makamaan*” (“Do your modular activities for I am busy, but in my mind, I am ashamed because I do not also know how to answer.”), as Dodong stated hesitantly.

This hesitation of parents to help their youngsters is supported by the research findings of Lase et al. (2022), stating that the shortfall of parents’ participation in their youngsters’ educational undertakings at home was because of parents’ inadequate time and capability to be an effective household teacher of their youngsters. Moreover, parents with low academic achievement seem to have unfavorable view of the role of schools and the education process (Chavez, 2023; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991, as cited in Murro, 2024). Another similar study reported that parents with low scholastic success have low level of self-confidence, so they do not have the courage to help their children (Chavez, 2023, as cited in Murro, 2024). And, parents have self-notion that they may not fully help their children in distance learning, for they have inadequate knowledge in content and principles of pedagogy, and feel disconnected (Daniela et al., 2021, as cited in Murro, 2024).

#### 4.2.2 Theme # 2: Personal and Educational Challenges

The second theme describes the difficulty encountered by solo parents when teaching or helping their youngsters, using the MDL, related to their “limited knowledge” and their being unable to read and write.

Basically, solo parents may not be able to fully assist their youngsters since they were slightly or could not read what were written on modules and answered the activities since they could not write also in English. For example, Lola Inday revealed “*Indi ako kamaan magbasa kag magsulat kay wara ako kaagi eskwela bisan grade 1 lang*” (“I do not know how to read and write because I haven’t attended school, even in grade 1 level only.”). In addition, Dodong stated, “*Paano ako makabulig sa babayi ko nga bata kay indi ako masyado makaintiendi kag makamaan bisan magsulat ka ininglis*.” (“How could I help my daughter... since I could not even fully understand and even write in English language.”).



The aforementioned theme faced by solo parents is aligned with Anzaldo's (2021) findings that other parents were unlearned or uneducated, so it was a hindrance for them in facilitating knowledge to teach their children's lessons. Likewise, Epstein (1995, as cited in Murro, 2024) advanced that parents with low scholastic success were not ready for the abrupt transition from in-person to homeschooling, so they were challenged intellectually, financially, and efficiently to simulate teacher and gender roles, as modular distance learning demand for greater involvement. Aligned with this finding, Murro (2024) posited that attending to the challenges faced by the parents with low scholastic success in promoting home-based education while fulfilling family duties will provide valuable insights for them to learn more about the art and science of parenting.

4.2.2a Subtheme # 1: Could not Help the Youngsters. Lola Inday narrated, "*Indi ako makabulig sa apo ko kay bisan magbasa kag magsulat indi ako kamaan*" ("I could not help my granddaughter since I could not even read and write.") Furthermore, Dodong narrated, "*Paano ako makabulig sa babayi ko nga bata kay indi ako masyado makaintiendi kag makamaam bisan magsulat ka English.*" ("How could I help my daughter...I could not even fully understand and write in English language.").

The abovementioned experience or theme is supported by the findings of Guan and Benavides (2021, as cited in Cudillo et al., 2022) that learners faced challenges in working with their parents because some of the parents had limited understanding on the topic and they were not equipped to teach. In addition, parents believed that the shift to MDL forced them into teaching roles. Further, according to Bauyon et al. (2022), parents struggled to manage another responsibility like teaching for they were not equipped, and it was a burden for parents who have less or no formal education at all.

#### 4.2.3 Theme # 3. Limited Parent-Youngster Teaching-Learning Interactions

The third theme that emerged from the responses of the participants describes the challenge that solo parents faced because of inadequate time that they spent with their youngsters during the MDL sessions.

Solo parents could not fully help and guide their youngsters in their modular distance learning and activities because they prioritized their jobs to secure their expenses in their daily lives. For example, Eddie narrated, "*Bilang construction worker, naga unpisa ako sa ubra mga ala siete sa aga kag nagapuli mga ala singko sa hapon kada Lunes hasta Sabado, . . . amo na nga kapoy gid ako kag kalabanan nagapanyapon lang ko kag magturog, pero kon kaisa nagabulig ako sa mga module sang mga kabataan kon Domingo lang*" ("As a construction worker, I start my work around 7 a.m., then I go home at around 5:30 p.m. from Monday to Saturday, in a week, so I am quite tired and I usually eat dinner and sleep, but sometimes I help my children in their modular activities during Sundays only"). In addition, Dodong also mentioned, "*Wara ako tiempo sa babayi ko nga bata kay kalabanan permi lang ko masako*" ("I don't have time for my daughter for I am always busy"). Furthermore, Neneng also narrated, "*Kabudlay sang pangabuhi, nagapangita kaw sang dugang nga ma incoman kag ang tiempo ko sa mga kabataan gamay lang*" ("Life is difficult; I had to look for extra income and my time with my youngsters is too limited.").

The theme *limited parent-youngster teaching-learning interactions* is aligned with the theme *time constraints* in the study of Llames. According to Llames (2021), parents "expressed the problem or dilemma of time constraints in their child's literacy instruction because of work and other responsibilities" (p.13). This experience of solo parents is related to the findings of the study by Cluver et al., (2020; and Owusu-Fordjour et al., 2020, as cited in Cudillo et al., 2022) that parents were confronted with personal challenges, particularly in time management between work and study schedule, ability to deal with behavioral issues in children and financial hardships during the implementation of modular distance learning. This can be a tough experience for working parents with limited parental expertise or may have rarely faced the responsibility of supervising their children or helping with their homework. Moreover, based on the World Databank, 2017 (as cited in Ahmed et al., 2024) some people in developing countries that stay in the countryside are more deprived in terms of education and economy compare to those in the urban areas. In another study by several authors (Malik et al., 2020; and Mughal, 2020; as cited in Ahmed et al., 2024), published that it is often observed that parents who are actively responsible for sustaining their households and supporting their families struggle to allocate limited resources (such as time and money) toward their children's education.

In a similar study, Williams and Sanchez (2013, as cited in Ahmed et al., 2024), reported that many challenges were faced by the parents like financial hardship, limited resources, access limitation, and knowledge gap which make it demanding for parents to take an active role in their children's educational journey.

4.2.3a Subtheme #1. Difficulty to Balance Schedule. Solo parents struggled in balancing their time between their livelihood and their presence with their youngsters in modular lessons and activities, for most of the time they had no choice but to prioritize their work first because they were the main providers of their families knowing that they were

solo parents. For example, Eddie emphasized that while he was working in the construction site, he was also looking after his two youngsters. Eddie revealed that “*Naga ubra ako bilang construction worker kag naga atipan man sa akon mga kabataan sa ila pag eskwela*” (“I am working as a construction worker and the same, I am also looking after for my children at school”). In addition, Neneng also mentioned that “*Pirmi lang ako masako kay wara ako pirnamenti nga ubra, amo na nga nagalibot ako sa barangay kag naga pamangkot kon sin o gusto magpalaba o mapatinlo sa anda balay. Samtang nagalibot, nagapangita man ko sang garatong nga kahoy sa aragyan kag dar-on papuli kon may makita, kon damo ron, ibaligya ko para may extra income man*” (“I am always busy since I have no stable job, so I roam or travel around the barangay and ask for some people if they need home services, like laundry work, home cleaning; and at the same time, look for scattered pieces of firewood along my way and bring them home if I can find, then if I have plenty of firewood, I will sell them to have extra income.”)

In the case of Neneng, she narrated, “*...Amon ran, wara gid ako masyado tiempo sa mga kabataan bangod sang ubra ko*” (“...That is why, I do not have much time with my children because of my job”). Furthermore, Dodong also said that “*Pirmi lang ako masako sa ubra ko bilang manughurma ka hollow blocks, amo na nga wara gid ako tiempo sa babayi ko nga bata sa ana nga mga ulubrahon sa module*” (“I am always busy for my job as a hollow block laborer/molder, that is why I do not have time for my daughter to help her in modular learning sessions”).

The aforementioned subtheme is aligned with the research findings of Lase et al. (2022) that some parents who did a work- from- home arrangement were preoccupied with household chores, thus, may not be able to assist their children in modular learning modality. In addition, parents are having a hard time in balancing duties, developing learner enthusiasm, finding resource access, and facilitating educational results (Garbe et al., 2020, as cited in Murro et al., 2024). Equally, according to Dong and other authors’ study (2020; as cited in Murro, 2024), parents are having a hard time accumulating to children’s inadequate self-control, along with a shortage of time and professional skills. Additionally, Chaavez et al. (2023, as cited in Murro et al., 2024) reported that parents are not fully equipped in facilitating distance education for children. In the same manner, attending their children at home resulted in a decrease in parents’ financial productivity (Zaharah et al., 2020, as cited in Murro et al., 2024), and when families are confined at home, parents may be deeply worried about their financial well-being, so learning at home is challenging particularly to those children who had low level of enthusiasm and motivation to learn (Skulmowski, 2020, as cited in Murro et al., 2024).

**Table 2.** Challenges Experienced by Solo Parents as Parent-Educators to Their Youngsters Using the MDL Modality

Themes	Subthemes	Solo Parents’ Experiences
<i>Pedagogical Challenges</i>	Not being trusted by their youngsters	“Sometimes, my daughter won’t allow me to answer the activities in the module maybe she thought I do not know the right answer”. <i>(Jeana)</i>
	Hesitant to help the youngsters	“Do your modular activities for I am busy”. <i>(Dodong)</i>
<i>Personal and Educational Challenges</i>	Could not help the youngsters	“I could not help my granddaughter since I could not even read and write”. <i>(Lola Inday)</i> “How could I help my daughter, since I could not even fully understand and write in English language”. <i>(Dodong)</i>
<i>Limited Parent-Youngster Teaching-Learning Interactions</i>	Difficulty to balance schedule	“I am working as a construction worker and at the same time I am also looking after my youngsters at school”. <i>(Eddie)</i> .  I am always busy since I have no stable job . . . That is why, I do not much time with my youngsters because of my job”. <i>(Neneng)</i>  “I am always busy with my job as a hollow block molder, so I don’t have time for my daughter’s modular activities”. <i>(Dodong)</i>

### 4.3 Coping Strategies Used by the Solo Parents to Address the Challenges Associated with MDL Modality

The solo parent-participants in the study capitalized these coping mechanisms (see Table 3) to address the challenges associated with the use of the MDL modality.

#### 4.3.1 Theme # 1. Help Seeking Behavior

The first coping strategy theme means that solo parents would usually ask someone/somebody or even research or find answers in the net if they could not understand and did not know how to answer the modular lessons of their youngsters. This action of asking someone for help to improve the performance of the learners is supported by the findings of Pentang (2021a, as cited in Carbonilla et al., 2022) that learners performed better in their modular tasks when they are with someone to help them.

4.3.1a Subtheme # 1. Researching from the Net Using Cellphone. With the advent of technology, solo parent may also use this technological advancement with the use of internet in their cellphone to facilitate knowledge and understanding for some subject matters. For example, Neneng stated, "*Kon ang leksyon mabudlay, naka gamit ako ka internet sa cellphone para maguiyahan man ko sa iban nga mga ulubrakon sa mga kabataan*" ("If the subject is complicated, I use the internet through my cellphone to guide me in some assignments of my youngsters.").

Align with the above-mentioned subtheme, Budao (2021, as cited in Abujejo et al, 2022) reported that because of limited vocabulary, pedagogical mastery and English communicative competence, understanding skills and financial deprivation restricted parents' potentials to offer intellectual support, which resulted in adopting multiple parenting techniques such as utilizing Google Translate to interpret unfamiliar words, browsing the internet for necessary information, referring to a dictionary to clarify vocabulary, and seeking assistance from more informed relatives.

Similarly, according to Barcenas and Bibon (2021), teachers may use cellphone as a strategy to let their students be actively involved in their modular tasks. Similarly, teachers may also use social media through phones for information such as inquiries and clarification using the language that is easily understood for the students.

4.3.1b Subtheme # 2. Seeking Help from Neighbors. Solo parents sought help from their neighbors especially if no one could help in their house. Eddie stated, "*Palihog pamangkuta si auntie nyo o kon mga ingod balay ta kon wala to sya para magbulig ka assignment nyo*". ("Please ask your aunt but if she is not there to help, our neighbor to help your assignment."). This help seeking behavior is supported by the study of Ramirez, et al., (2022) that published that when parents faced challenges within the lessons of their SLMs, they turned to their knowledgeable neighbor for help for explanation.

Further, the learning resources available in the village like the expertise of local residents, along with community clubs, groups, and associations that foster citizen-led learning, and local institutions create remarkable educational opportunities (McKnight, 2018).

4.3.1c Subtheme # 3. Seeking Help from Siblings. Basically, solo parents sought help from siblings especially if they were staying in one roof or around in the neighborhood. For example, Jeana said, "*Pamangkuta palihog ang babayi ko nga libayun kay naka iskwela sya sa college kag damo sya nabal-an*" ("Please ask for my younger sister to help you because she reached college and she knew more."). Furthermore, Dodong also mentioned "*Pamangkuta mga pakaisahan mo kay buligan ka na nila*" ("Ask your cousins because they will help you.").

In relation to the aforementioned, Sacay (2023) revealed that to some extent, learners sometimes seek help from their parents, guardians, siblings, and others to finish the LAS early, seek assistance from classmates in Group Chat of Facebook and sometimes view DepEd TV and utilize DepEd Commons and some educational supports from DepEd. Further, some family members take on the role of para-teachers to assist learning at home (Toquero, 2020, as cited in Ramirez et al., 2022).

4.3.1d Subtheme # 4 Seeking Help from Youngster's Teacher. Solo parent realized that their knowledge was too limited because they were just elementary graduates, so sometimes they would ask the teachers of their youngsters to explain further the lessons or activities to them or help them on how to answer modular activities especially Sciences and English. For example, Eddie sometimes asked the teachers of his youngsters to help him in answering the modular activities if the siblings were not available. Eddie said; "*Bali, kon kaisa kon indi makabulig mga parenti ko sa mga ulubrahon sang mga kabataan sa anda nga mga module kag masako man ako pirmi, nagakadto ako sa anda nga mga maestra para mangayo bulig kay pirmi lang ako masako*" ("Well, sometimes If my siblings could not help my youngsters in their modular activities and I was also busy in my work, I went to their teachers and ask to help them since I am always busy.").

According to Wright et al. (2018, as cited in Carbonilla et al., 2022), the teacher's home fosters a favorable impact on

learners' mindsets. It may also create and preserve a cooperative relationship between parents and teachers. Similarly, teachers should be considerate and receptive of parents' concerns and they can inquire the teachers if parents may not understand the lessons.

Likewise, students benefit greatly when parents and teachers join forces to build a dynamic classroom environment, for they are instrumental in fostering children's academic development, impacting both their personal growth and classroom achievements (Bauyon et al., 2022).

4.3.1e Subtheme # 5. Seeking Help from Somebody in a Variety Store. Solo parent would tell their youngsters to go to a variety store to seek help from somebody who knew their lessons and if they could help them on how to answer their modular activities since there were many people there. Lola Inday revealed; "*Ok, kadto kaw sa tiengge o balaligyaan sa mga grocery kay damo to tawo kag pabulig ka to sa imo module*" ("Okay or fine, go to a sundry or a variety store for there are a lot of people there and asked somebody to help you in your module.").

This aforementioned experience and action is related to the findings of Barcenas and Bibon (2021), that the lack of immediate support encourages students to seek guidance from those with more expertise and educated individuals within the community, who they trusted to answer the modules. Aside from parents and other members, students can receive tutoring from their peer group, as well as a diverse group of volunteers (Suico et al., 2022).

#### 4.3.2 Theme # 2. Parental-Teacher Influence

The second theme that emerged means that solo parents, doing both roles as parents and para teachers (parent-educators), encouraged their youngsters to do their assignment.

Due to some intellectual limitations, solo parents may just simply say to their youngsters to do their modular tasks by themselves for they could not also understand the modular learning activities and even read the text written in modules. For example, Lola Inday narrated, "*Indi ako makabulig sa imo "apo" kay indi ako kamaan magbasa kag magsulat kay wara ako kaagi eskwela*" ("I could not help you my granddaughter since I do not know how to read and write for I have not attended school."). Furthermore, Dodong stated, "*Kamo na lang bahala sa inyo nga mga modules, kay indi ako makaintiendi kong ano ginasulat da sa inyo mga 'modules'*" ("Take care of your modules, for I may not be able to understand what was written on your modules.").

Encouraging the learners to do their assignment is supported by the findings of Jaiswal's (2017, as cited in Gevero, 2021) study, which reported that parents contribute significantly to their children's academic progress by supplying learning tools and inspiring them to achieve.

Likewise, monitoring, as a set of parenting skills, involves being able to track and oversee things effectively, with excellent monitors showing great attention to detail. In today's educational landscape, parents are the primary facilitators of learning and one of their vital obligations is to track students' adherence to MDL guidelines (Suico et al., 2022).

4.3.2a Subtheme # 1. Reminding the Youngsters to do their Assignments. Solo parent may keep on reminding their youngsters to open their modules and look if there were activities to be done. For example, Lola Inday mentioned, "*Apo, paki lantaw ka mga modules mo basi may ulubrahon kaw.*" ("My granddaughter, could you check your modules?... maybe you have assignments."). Moreover, Jeana also stated to her daughter, "*Paki lantaw ka mga modules mo kag sabtan ta ang mga ulubrahon kon may ara*" ("Please check your modules and we will answer your modular activities if you have.").

According to Sacay (2023), it is noteworthy to see parents and guardians not only remind their children to complete the Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) everyday, but also check them and ensure these assignments are submitted to school on time. Thus, this indicates that parents are informed about the LAS that their children must finish for the week.

Moreover, Jaiswal (2017, as cited in Gevero, 2021) argued that parents play a key role in supporting their children's academic growth by assisting with homework, providing motivation, creating an ideal study environment, and setting a positive example, such as engaging in reading for enjoyment at home. In modular learning, parents play a crucial role in sustaining their child's desire to learn and stay engaged with the lessons.

4.3.2b Subtheme # 2. Checking on Youngsters Bag if there were Activities. Solo parent would usually check the bag of their youngsters if there were activities to be answered so that they may work on those activities. Jeana told her daughter; "*Ok, gina lantaw ko ang bag sang bata ko kag tawgon ko tana kag ubrahon namon kay ga buliganay kami*" ("Ok, I check the bag of my youngster, then I will call her to do it since we usually help each other.").

As a "Bundy clock", parents must consistently check their children's schedule or weekly work plan. Given the numerous subjects and tasks, it is important for parents to make sure their children stick to the plan to avoid last-minute

rushes or late submissions, which could negatively affect their performance (DepEd Order No. 12, 2020).

In addition, Panol et al. (2021, as cited in Suico et al., 2022), reported that parents support their kids at home by working through the modular activities with them and by ensuring that every module is finished. Though parents may be busy with work, they still prioritize giving their children the time needed to complete every task in their modules.

4.3.2c Subtheme # 3. Pretending to be Busy. Sometimes, solo parents may resort to pretension that they are busy in their jobs, but they may not have actually understood the lesson. For example, Dodong was hesitant to help his youngster and he let his youngster did in answering the modular activities based on their knowledge and he would tell his youngster that he was busy in his job but actually he was just hesitant since he did not understand. Dodong said, “*Ubraha nyo ang mga ulubrahon nyo sa module kay masako ko*”, *pero sa isip indi ako kamaan*” (“Do your activities on modules for I am busy, but in my mind, I don’t know how to answer.”).

Accordingly, Guan and Benavides (2021, as cited in Cudillo et al, 2022) published that learners faced challenges in collaborating with their parents. They shared that their parents are too busy with work to give assistance with their modules. Additionally, some parents also lack familiarity with the topic, which prevents them from effectively facilitating the learning process.

Further, Anzaldo (2021), the difficulty some parents face in teaching their children suggests that financial challenges could be a significant barrier to providing complete educational support.

#### 4.3.3 Theme # 3. Parental Involvement in Education

The third emergent theme means both solo parents and their youngsters collaborate to minimize the challenges in teaching and learning processes brought about by the modular learning modality.

In detail, in their eagerness to give the best even though they had limited knowledge, the solo parents may find ways to give the best help that they could provide to their youngsters. For example, Jeana mentioned, “*Mabuliganay kita para madasig kag mahapos.*” (“We will help each other so that it will be faster and easier...”).

Although parents encounter many difficulties in teaching their children, they demonstrate exceptional effort by using cooperative learning methods, where both the parent and child read and write together. Although viewing educational materials on television, YouTube, and other modern platforms plays a key role in children's learning by offering clear explanations and demonstrations; nevertheless, parents are still the best persons who can carefully guide their children (Solomo et al., 2023).

Moreover, Valoroso et al. (2022) stated that parents would therefore be required to engage in the learning process actively. When parents participated in remote learning, they would be the ones to guide and assist their children through the modular sessions.

4.3.3a Subtheme # 1. Brainstorming for Preferred Correct Answer. Solo parents may seem to devise a strategy to help in the modular tasks of their youngsters although they had limited understanding of the lessons. For example, Jeana stated, “*Ok, kon kapoy ron ikaw kag kamaan ako sang sabat, buligan ta ikaw kag kon man – an mo man kong paano sila sabtan, ubraha lang*” (“Fine, if you are tired and I know how to answer the assignment, I will help you, but if you know how to answer them, then you do it by yourself.”).

This specific coping mechanism is aligned with the findings of Wang and other authors’

(2020) that when parents and students engage in educational activities together, it strengthens their bond and increases their productive “teaching-learning” time together.

Undeniably, during the times when the learners are seeking answers for their assignments, parents can act as a source of support by easing their children's anxiety and stress, and by talking with them to manage their fears (Bhamani et al., 2020, as cited in Carbonilla et al, 2022). In the same manner, Alicamen and Abadiano (2020, as cited in Carbonilla, 2022) affirmed that parents need to be their children's “study buddies” or academic partners while at home, and Bayod et al. (2021, as cited in Llames, 2021) reported that although parents faced many obstacles, they found a positive aspect—the chance to learn meaningfully alongside their children in modular distance learning modality.

**Table 3.** Coping Mechanisms Used by Solo Parents as Parent-Educators to Their Youngsters Using the MDL Modality

Themes	Subthemes	Solo Parents' Experiences
<i>Help Seeking Behavior</i>	Doing research from the internet, using cellphone	"If the subject is complicated, I would use the internet through my cellphone to guide me in some assignments of my children". ( <i>Neneng</i> )
	Seeking help from neighbors	"Please ask your aunt, but if she is not there to help, you ask our neighbors to help you in your assignment". ( <i>Eddie</i> )
	Seeking help from siblings	"Please ask for my younger sister to help you because she has reached college level and she knew more than me". ( <i>Jeana</i> ) "Ask your cousins, because they know more, and they will help you". ( <i>Dodong</i> )
	Seeking help from youngster's teacher	"Well, sometimes if my siblings could not help my youngsters in their modular activities and I was also busy in my work, I would ask their teachers to help them since I am always busy". ( <i>Eddie</i> )
	Seeking help from somebody in a "sari-sari" or variety store	"Ok, go to a variety store for there were a lot of people there and asked somebody to help you in your modular activities". ( <i>Lola Inday</i> )
<i>Parent-Teacher Influence</i>	Reminding the youngsters to do their assignment	"My granddaughter, could you check your modules, maybe you have assignments to do". ( <i>Lola Inday</i> ). "Please check your modules and we will answer your modular activities if you have". ( <i>Jeana</i> )
	Checking on youngster's bag if there were activities	"I checked the school bag of my youngster, then I would call her to do it, since we usually help each other". ( <i>Jeana</i> )
	Pretending to be busy	"Do your modular activities alone for I am busy, [ <i>but in my mind</i> ], I don't know how to answer". ( <i>Dodong</i> )
<i>Parental Involvement in Education</i>	Brainstorming for preferred correct answer	"Ok, if you are tired and I know the answer, I will help you, but if you know how to answer them, just do it". ( <i>Jeana</i> )

#### 4.4 Themes and Subthemes

The recurring themes that emerged for the challenges faced by solo parents as parent-educators were: (1) *pedagogical challenges*, (2) *personal and educational challenges*, and (3) *limited parent- youngster teaching-learning interactions*. Congruently, the subthemes for these challenges were: (1a) not being trusted by their youngsters, (1b) hesitant to help the youngster, (2a) could not help the youngsters, and (3a) difficulty to balance schedule for not understanding.

The aforementioned challenges are supported by several literature. Conclusively, according to Abucejo et al. (2022),

“Modular Distance Learning has become a viable alternative to traditional schools, such instances allow parents to experience different challenges. This new method of learning was unusual for parents and caused extensive disruption of routines in their daily lives” (p. 11).

Correspondingly, based on the data gathered, three themes on solo parents’ coping strategies emerged, namely: (1) *help seeking behavior*; (2) *parent-teacher influence*, and (3) *parental involvement in education*. Then, the subthemes for the coping strategies solo parents in the modular distance learning of their youngsters were: (1a) seeking help from internet using cellphone, (1b) seeking help from neighbors, (1c) seeking help from siblings, (1d) seeking help from the youngsters’ teachers, (1e) seeking help from anybody in a variety store; (2a) reminding the youngsters to do their assignments; (2b) checking on youngsters’ school bag if there were activities; (2c) pretending to be busy, and (3a) brainstorming for the preferred correct answer. Related to these coping strategies, Llamas (2021) opined that: “the pandemic struck and everything seemed to be disarray and chaos. However, we, humans, have always find ways to cope with whatever problem or dilemma is presented in front of us...” (p. 16)

## 5. Conclusions

Solo parents, serving as parent-educators to their youngsters, in the MDL modality setting, face interrelated challenges in helping their youngsters learn through modular learning sessions. In context, these are pedagogical, personal and educational, and limited parent-youngster teaching-learning interactions problems and limitations that hinder effective teaching and learning.

Notwithstanding these challenges brought about by the complexities of the teaching-learning process and the limitations of MDL as a teaching modality, solo parents showed resilience, unconditional parental love, and high level of support for the education of their youngsters through various coping strategies, such as: help seeking behavior, parent-teacher influence, and parental involvement in education to maximize their youngsters’ learning experience.

The implementation of MDL, like other emergent pedagogies and teaching-learning modalities, naturally brings the challenges associated with it. Interestingly, there are also coping mechanisms that can be used by solo parents to effect meaningful learning to their youngsters. Moreover, with the strong partnership in the teaching-learning process that is actively adopted at learners’ home, nurtured by the unconditional love that binds the parent-educators and their youngsters, challenges and problems are more effectually addressed, resulting in improved learners’ academic achievement.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers present the following recommendations:

Solo parents should strengthen their partnership with the teachers and school administrators, in the same way that these teachers and school administrators should also strengthen their partnership with other education stakeholders.

Equally important, the school, in collaboration with parent organizations (e.g. Parent-Teacher Association or PTA, PTCA, etc.), should offer programs and activities, like seminars and workshops, that can enhance the tutorial-teaching competence of solo parents for them to effectively serve as *para-teachers* when the modular distance learning modality is utilized in the teaching-learning process.

In addition, the school may also offer remedial teaching and tutorial programs for learners, especially for those whose parents could afford to pay, and free peer tutoring for those who could not avail of the tutorial services that require payment. Moreover, solo parents should include in their weekly schedule the allotted time for interaction with their youngsters. This will help both solo parents and their youngsters to have high level of closeness, trust, and rapport. The weekly meetings will also establish routine interactions between them. This scheduled interaction will bring a feeling of comfort and will become part of their weekly routine. Likewise, solo parents should consider setting a *feedback day*, to include giving positive criticisms with their youngsters for their personal and educational development. (Please FOLLOW, as it is, the corrected statement written in red) By providing positive criticism and encouragement, parents can help improve the youngsters’ motivation to study; thus, the goal of improved youngsters’ academic performance is ultimately achieved.

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### **Authors contributions**

Both have contributed equally to this study and have reviewed and approved the final research article manuscript prior to submission.

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