A project evaluation on parent-teacher partnership for flexible learning

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Article info.	ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to evaluate a parent-teacher partnership project implemented in one laboratory school in Metro Manila. Parent-teacher partnership is a collective effort by parents to work together for the benefit of learners. A project aims to address a particular problem and can be an intervention which ends once it has been implemented and regularly used. Participants are middle-income parents. Convenient sampling was used to identify the participants. After planning and designing a project in support of parent-teacher partnership, it was implemented to equip the parents with the necessary strategies to assist their children in flexible learning. After close collaboration with the parents, the researchers evaluated the project using a survey questionnaire. The results show that the objectives of the project were met, and the content was helpful in supporting parent-teacher partnerships. Also, relevant findings revealed that parents perceived the project as informative, as they gained strategies and tools to support their child's academic learning and were equipped with socio-emotional strategies to manage their child's socio-emotional needs and to teach them how to navigate the educational technologies used in the school. The results of the study provided insights into revisiting policies to engage parents so they can develop the preparedness to support their children's learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (2021), one of global partnership strategies for early childhood is to derive from the core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, "leaving no child behind" by recommitting countries and partners to ensure that early childhood care and education services are fully inclusive, accessible, affordable, gender-responsive, equitable and developmentally appropriate for each child. One of its principles is family-focused services promoting the provision of home visits, hybrid home and centre-based services, parenting programs, mental health services to ensure nurturing care, the empowerment and rights of parents and legal guardians as full partners in child development, and ensuring each child has a family and is never placed in an orphanage.

Likewise, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2022) sets program standards for relationships with families in the early childhood setting. In line with this, 2 domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers and School Heads focus on building connections between the school and the community (Department of Education, 2017; 2020b) As such, school implements programs and projects to support and involve parents. After implementation, the project is

evaluated to determine whether the intervention successfully addressed a particular problem within a short period of time. This paper aimed to determine how useful the parent-teacher partnership project was and how parents perceived it after participating.

Flexible learning, also known as distance learning, distance education, online learning, e-learning, external studies, or massive open online courses (MOOCs), features a learning modality where the teacher and learners are separated in terms of space and/or time (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020a). They use media and technology to communicate and deliver the learning process that requires a new set of teaching, learning, and guidance strategies so that the implementation of flexible learning will be successful (United Nations Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020b). Support systems like teachers, parents, household members or even community partnerships are important so that the flexible learning program can be successfully implemented. (Department of Education, 2020). Parent's active participation in their children's social, emotional, and academic development can influence their achievement (Castro et al., 2015).

School implements programs that incorporate formal and informal activities to support, educate, and involve parents. Add-on parenting programs target a group of parents to help improve children's early academic skills, behaviour, and self-regulation (Magnuson & Schindler, 2016). Parent support programs strengthen the parenting skills and promote the development of new parental competencies because they gain the knowledge and skills for them to carry out their responsibilities. The focus of some parenting programs are as follows: universal access for families, early support to families, and family involvement at all levels (Trivette & Dunst, 2014) .

Socio-emotional and behavioral skills can also be part of parenting programs. These include prosocial skills, independence, self-regulation, and attention (Magnuson & Schindler, 2016). Happiness and home learning had a significant positive impact on the emotional competence of preschool children in India (Kaur & Sharma, 2022). For instance, the Peace Education Foundation (PEF) socio-emotional development program aims to promote preschooler's social skills and reduce behavior problems. It was provided in English and Spanish to preschool teachers, parents and children in Miami, Florida. After the evaluation of the program, results showed that PEF program promotes positive socio-emotional development to those children who are in diverse, private preschools.

Technology can help in improving parenting programs. It can reach more parents with less effort and cost. It can also overcome other barriers to improve parenting practices (Magnuson & Schindler, 2016). Web-based parenting programs with new technologies offer opportunities for sharing social support, consulting professionals and training parental competencies (Nieuwboer et al., 2013). Likewise, mothers who received the technology-based supportive educational parenting intervention program were satisfied. These include phone-based perinatal educational sessions after childbirth, and in a mobile health app (Shorey & Ng, 2019). Furthermore, parents and teachers place a high value on proactive involvement, and they want to maximize the use of technology to maintain connections and communication. With the continuous investment in technological facilities (websites, phone calling systems, parent portals, and online curriculum) connecting schools to home, there is also an increasing demand focused on the effectiveness of technologies to intensify parent involvement (Olmstead, 2013).

Furthermore, parent coaching programs were designed to enrich the home numeracy and literacy environments of parents and their children. After conducting numeracy, dialogic reading, early literacy skills training in a 12-week intervention, children in the numeracy group gained basic and complex numeracy skills. Children in the dialogic reading group showed increased vocabulary knowledge and print and word awareness. Also, children in the early literacy skills training group gained improvement in alphabet recognition, phonological awareness, and print and word recognition skills (Dulay et al., 2019). In addition, Latinx mothers who attended workshops significantly increased their early childhood knowledge, and children whose mothers attended workshops significantly increased their Spanish expressive vocabulary. Yet, the workshop has no significant effect on parental technology knowledge and literacy knowledge, although effect sizes were moderate (Baker et al., 2019).

Evaluation is a systematic investigation of the effectiveness of social intervention like policies, programs, projects to achieve improvement in the social, economic and everyday conditions of people's lives (Linzalone & Schiuma, 2015). It is a

judgment of quality made after a completion of the program (a summative purpose) or during program development (a formative process). Moreover, it systematically investigates the quality of programs, projects, subprograms, subprojects, and/or any of its components or elements, together or singly; for different purposes. This may include decision making, judgments, conclusions, findings, new knowledge, organisational development, and capacity building that respond to the stakeholders' specific needs, which aims in improving and checking the accountability of the user's programs and systems contributing to the organization or social value (Yarbrough et al., 2011).

Evaluation can be a project or program evaluation. A project, as a temporary initiative, aims to create a unique product or service. Having a set of unique set of activities, it is designed to produce a definite result to be completed within a definite day, allocating clear resources. It has the following characteristics: clear and specific goals, clear and shared purpose with clear expected output and less technical risk. On the other hand, a program is a group of related projects. It is cooperatively managed rather than individually to achieve a level of benefits and control. A program is part of complex strategic initiative, while project is part of a program (Linzalone & Schiuma, 2015).

After the implementation of such programs and projects, evaluation is needed to determine their effectiveness. This paper is a project evaluation that aims to address a particular problem by introducing a new or different intervention within a short period of time (Spector, 2013). Project evaluation helps meet project objectives within the proposed timeline. Also, conducting project evaluations can determine whether the operations are satisfactory or need modifications. Some of the project evaluations might include specific critical components to check their contribution to the success or failure of the overall project (Frechtling, 2002). Thus, evaluation has interrelationships with implementation. It is not separated out or added to a project; it is part of the planning process from the beginning.

The abovementioned studies focused on different parent programs and projects that provide socio-emotional, technology, and academic support in different contexts. Hence, the aim of the current study is to investigate parents' perceptions of a parent-teacher partnership project. This study is important since parents are one of the support systems for their children in a flexible learning

setup. The study is limited only to parents in terms of equipping them with the necessary parenting skills as they guide their children.

Research questions:

1. To what extent is the parent-teacher partnership project useful to parents?

2. What are the parents' perceptions after participating in parent-teacher partnership project?

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

For the research design of this study, a mixed-methods research design was employed, wherein it collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). Data were collected through an online survey adapted from Richey's validation questions (Richey, 2005), covering usability documentation (usefulness in meeting needs and recommendations) and field evaluation (program description, documented implementation, and parent surveys).

The research site for this study was a laboratory school in Metro Manila. Parents were between 30 and 45 years old and were middle-income earner employees from different government and private institutions. They were residing in urban city of Metro Manila and had a child or children studying in the laboratory school. Convenient sampling was used to identify the participants who are readily available and commit to attending the 3-day activities conducted every Wednesday. Overall, there were 120 kindergarten to Grade 3 parents in the mentioned research site. During the first session, 56 or 46% participated, while 49 or 40% and 25 or 21% on the second and third sessions respectively. The average number of participants for three days is 43, who are mostly mothers (41) and fathers (4).

The parent-teacher partnership project is part of the flexible learning program of the school. To address the identified problems, the project was implemented to equip parents with necessary skills to guide their children during flexible learning. Once a day for three weeks, K-3 parents were invited to attend the three-day parent partnership online activities where respective speakers prepared topics on socio-emotional, technological and academic support. Specific topics for socio-emotional such as parenting techniques to support their children, providing quality time with their children, among others were included. For technological support, the topics were navigating the learning management system (LMS) and

teleconferencing applications like Zoom and Google Meet, saving files to Google Drive, and using email for communication through tablet and phone. Lastly, topics for academic support were strategies to improve literacy and mathematics skills. For three consecutive weeks, parents attended the partnership project. They listened and communicated with the speaker on different ways to help their children during flexible learning. The sessions were recorded to give parents an opportunity to re-listen to the presentations. Also, they were encouraged to send communications using their child's email address or message in their LMS if they seek further assistance on the topics being discussed. Also, regular parent-teacher conferences and after-class talks with parents were encouraged to help in monitoring their children's activities during flexible learning.

A daily monitoring was conducted to capture the perceptions of parents who attended the said activity. After that, parents evaluated the overall project. Google forms were sent to their child's email to gather data.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The weighted mean was computed based on a 4-point Likert scale. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) was used to analyze the qualitative data. It includes the following steps: familiarizing with the data, generating labels to code the data, labeling each parent with a "P" and a number as a symbol for each participant, generating themes to meaningful patterns, and reviewing the themes to check the relationships between the code and the generated themes. Both the quantitative data and qualitative data were analyzed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the evaluation of the parent-teacher partnership project.

3.1. The usefulness of parent-teacher partnership project

As shown in Table 1, the evaluation showed that the objectives of the parent-teacher partnership project were met with a weighted mean of 3.72, rated as outstanding, and its content is helpful in supporting parent-teacher partnership, with a weighted mean of 3.72, rated as outstanding. The findings showed that parents observe that the objectives of the program were met and the content helps them to participate in parent-teacher partnership. The results are similar with the findings of Altafim et al. (2024) where most parents found that the program content of the "Born

Learning" digital parenting is very interesting, and parents engaged adequately with the program strategies. It also supports caregivers by enhancing their parenting skills and decreasing child behavior problems.

Table 1. A quantitative evaluation on parent-teacher partnership

	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
1. To what extent were the objectives of the project met?	3.72	Outstanding
2. To what extent was the project content helpful in supporting parent-teacher partnership?	3.72	Outstanding
3. To what extent did the project meet your needs in assisting your child in a flexible learning set-up?	3.52	Outstanding
4. To what extent are you motivated to learn more about the parent-teacher partnership project?	3.68	Outstanding
5. To what extent are you satisfied with the overall project?	3.64	Outstanding

In addition, Table 1 shows that the project was able to meet parents' needs in assisting their children in a flexible learning setup; hence, they evaluated this as outstanding, as indicated by a weighted mean of 3.52. Parents were also motivated to learn more about partnership, with a weighted mean of 3.68, rated as outstanding. The results showed that the project met their needs and they are motivated to learn more about ways to continue the parent-teacher partnership. This is similar to the study of Amini (2017) that meeting parents' needs is the main strength of parental education programs. By doing so, it can provide a solution to their problems with child development.

Lastly, Table 1 shows that parents were satisfied with the overall project with a weighted mean of 3.64, rated as outstanding. These findings reveal that parents are satisfied with the parent-teacher partnership project. This result is similar to the findings of Shorey & Ng (2019) where Singaporean mothers who received the technology-based

supportive educational parenting program intervention were overall satisfied and it highlights the need to supplement the standard care in hospitals with technology-based educational programs. It is important that academic and community-based organization partnerships will deliver and evaluate parent training programs (McGrane Minton et al., 2024).

3.2. Parents' perceptions after participating in the parent-teacher partnership project

For qualitative results, parents perceived that they gained valuable knowledge as they participated in the project based on the responses below:

P24 I feel happy, grateful and contented because I attended this project that is very helpful to us.

P17 I feel well-informed and lucky to have attended the program

This result provided insights into the parents' voices about attending a parent-teacher partnership program. In a meta-analysis, Spencer, et al. (2019) found that online parenting programs had stronger effects that can increase positive parenting and parents' encouragement. Attending such programs can increase parent confidence, positive child behavior and parenting satisfaction.

Moreover, parents mentioned what they learned from the project. First, parents expressed that they gained socio-emotional strategies such as parenting and discipline (11), understanding and supporting my child's needs (17), engaging quality time and communication for the family (6) as shown below:

P10 Setting rules for good parenting and modelling are very important for the child's growth and development;

P20 (Our) children need our time rather than material things;

P17 We should listen to the needs of our children and tailor-fit the assistance/support based on these needs.

Together, these results provided insights into the importance of including socio-emotional strategies in parent-teacher partnerships to help parents understand their children. This result aligns with Project HOPE. Helping our parents be educators (HOPE), a parent training program designed to foster parental accountability and empowerment. After participating in HOPE projects and conducting a parent forum, the results revealed that their participation helped them communicate better

with their child. Also, they reported a change of and had demonstrated a great sense of self-efficacy. (Wright & Wooden, 2010)

Aside from socio-emotional strategies, parents expressed that they gain knowledge on technological skills like navigating the learning management system (LMS) (18), and other technological tools (16) based on these responses:

P19 (I learned ways in) accessing and navigating the school's learning management system (LMS) website, and video editing techniques.

P25 (I learned ways in) using the student portal and how to assist with (in) submitting my child's assignments using Moodle.

These results give importance to the availability of technological tools and online applications to provide strong support for parenting programs and online learning. By providing web-based parenting programs using new technologies, it offers new opportunities such as shared social support, consultation with professionals and training of parental competencies (Nieuwboer et al., 2013).

Moreover, gaining knowledge on enhancing reading and communication skills at home (18) based on these responses:

P2 Activities at home with my daughter to practice her communication skills

P24 I learned how to teach them how to develop their reading skills.

Collectively, the results showed that parents support their children's academic learning, including enhancing reading and communication skills. Similarly, parents who gained confidence in their abilities to help and assist their children are more likely to get involved in their children's education, which can result in the advancement of literacy and positive behavior (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015).

Lastly, parents recommended the said project based on these responses.

P2 Yes, parents can learn a lot from this project, a learning that they can use and even share to their friends and colleagues.

P7 Yes, I highly recommend the project to be used for parent-teacher partnership because. Learning starts at home and as a mother I am the teacher at home and the teachers are my child's parent at school.

Overall, the parent-teacher partnership was able to help parents as they assisted their children's learning. Indeed Bornstein et al. (2022) explained that the goal of parenting programs is to improve the lives and well-being of the parents directly by providing knowledge, resources, and caregiving; and to indirectly improve the lives, well-being and development of their children.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the partnership project was outstanding, and most parents gained knowledge and strategies; thus, they recommend the project. It is recommended that parents' work schedule be considered to maintain active participation, and the topics to be included are contextualized based on needs assessment results.

This study acknowledges its limitations regarding participants, as it included only parents who attended the parent-partnership project. Moreover, the results cannot be generalized since the study was conducted in a laboratory school who are characterized as middle-income earners and are capable to attend parenting projects using available resources (Wi-Fi connection, tablet, phone) at home.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors should disclose any financial or personal ties in the manuscript that could be perceived as inappropriately biasing their work.

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