

Social Skills of Low-Income Parents During COVID-19 Pandemic: Basis for Educational Support Program

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Abstract

Parents would be more confident in pursuing positive adjustments during the condition of COVID-19 pandemic; managing parental task, and undertaking their functions and social responsibilities as parents. This study documents the social skills of the worldwide health crisis to families who are low-income earners in the Schools Division of Zambales, Philippines. This research investigated the upshot of COVID-19 could have on family's social skills and speaks directly to ways in which families may be impacted socially by the effects of COVID-19. Parents strongly agreed that they need to learn how to support their children emotionally and in their daily school task, they need to communicate with teachers to be prepared for remote teaching and flexible learning to facilitate a sustainable children's learning and well-being, parents decide on how to monitor and filter their children's exposure and access to the internet and how to educate them. While parents agreed that pandemic is also disconnecting children from family, friends, schools, and familiar routines. The study concluded the need of Social Support Program for parents to help overcome the undesirable social skills effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Schools Division of Zambales. This study recommended that schools are encouraged to foster ways of continuous communication and productive activities between parents, teachers, students during the remote distance learning.

Keywords: Social Skills; COVID-19 Pandemic; Low-Income Parents; Support Program

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nation's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the COVID 19 Crisis released in 2020 warns that "The COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale. In response to this crisis, the technical lead for the socio-economic response, United Nations Development Programme, UN Resident Coordinators, UN Regional Economic Commissions, other UN Agencies and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) are in close collaboration to assess the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on economies and communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic required significant measures to ensure infection control that resulted in public health, social and economic challenges worldwide (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The pandemic is also disconnecting children from family, friends, schools, and familiar routines and placing significant stress on their parents, who are struggling to balance multiple responsibilities as providers, caregivers, and educators simultaneously (Karpman, Gonzales & Kenney 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic poses an acute threat to the well-being of children and families due to challenges related to social disruption (OECD, 2020). The consequences of these social difficulties are likely

to be longstanding, in part because of the ways in which contextual risk permeates the structures and processes of family systems.

This study represents a first step toward rigorously documenting the effect of socio-economic conditions of the worldwide health crisis (COVID-19 pandemic) on families who are low-income earners living in the province of Zambales, Philippines. The research underscores the upshot of COVID-19 could have on families' economic sufficiency and social upliftment. This research speaks directly to ways in which families may be impacted socio-economically by the effects of COVID-19, as well as how decision-makers could shape policies to mitigate negative impacts. Efforts to provide relief should target the most vulnerable sectors of our society and economy.

1.1. Objective of the Study

This study investigated the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on low-income families. Respondents are parents whose children are enrolled in the Schools Division of Zambales during the school year 2020- 2021.

The following research questions were answered:

1. How may the profile of the parent-respondents be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 sex;
 - 1.2 civil status;
 - 1.3 occupation; and
 - 1.4 size of family.
2. How may the parent-respondents perceive the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of social skills upliftment?
3. Is there a significant difference on the perceived effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the social skills of the parent-respondents when grouped according to their profile?
4. What is the social skills support program for the parents of the Schools Division of Zambales, Philippines?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

The study made use of the descriptive research with a quantitative approach using a Likert scaled survey questionnaire.

2.2. Respondents

A total of two hundred seventy (270) parents were identified as respondents to this study from the thirteen (13) districts of the Schools Division of Zambales, Philippines.

2.3. Instrument

The survey questionnaire was adopted and modified from the works of Alon, et al. (2020), Fisher, et al. (2020), Inter-American Commission of Women (2020). Subedi, P & Poude, K. (2020), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020) and Weaver & Swank (2020). A survey questionnaire was used as an instrument for the data collection of this study. The survey questionnaire was composed of two (2) parts. Part 1 identified the respondent's profile. Part 2 determined the Social Skills Upliftment effects of COVID- 19 Pandemic on families. The respondents assessed the indicators of part 2 using a four- point scale from (4) Strongly Agree, (3) Agree, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency counts, and means) and inferential statistics specifically ANOVA. The scale which was used to assess the perception of the respondents in the items/indicators of the research instrument was a four-point scale. Ranking was used in the perceived effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic to the parent- respondents' social skills upliftment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Profile of the Parent- respondents

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the parent-respondents as to their sex, civil status, occupation and size of family. The respondents were composed of 158 or 58.52% females and 112 or 41.48% male. Majority (174 or 64.44%) of the respondents are married. Almost half of the respondents (113 or 41.85%) were self-employed. The family members is 4.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Parent- Respondents' Profile

Sex	Frequency (f)	Percent (100%)
Male	112	41.48
Female	158	58.52
Total	270	100.00
Civil Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	91	33.70
Married	174	64.44
Widower	5	1.85
Total	270	100.00
Occupation/Source of Income	Frequency	Percent
Professional	103	38.15
Entrepreneur/ Business Owner	2	0.74
Worker/ Laborer	41	15.19
Farmer/Fisher	10	3.70
Self- Employed	113	41.85
Others	1	0.37
Total	270	100.00
Size of Family	Frequency	Percent
7 and above	46	17.04
4-6	90	33.33
1-3	134	49.63
Total	270	100.00
Mean = 4.02		

3.2. Perceived Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic to the Parent- Respondents' Socio-Economic Conditions as to Social Upliftment

Table 2 presents the perceived impact of COVID-19 pandemic to the parent-respondents' socio-economic condition as to social upliftment. Indicator 6, "Parents need to learn how to support their children emotionally and in their daily school tasks" obtained a weighted mean of 3.59 and was ranked 1st. Indicator 1, parents communicate with teachers to be prepared for remote teaching and flexible learning to facilitate a sustainable children's learning and wellbeing obtained a weighted mean of 3.57 (Strongly Agree) and indicator 13, parents decide on how to monitor and filter their children's exposure and access to the internet and how to

educate them obtained a weighted mean of 3.57 (Strongly Agree) rank 2.5 respectively. While perceived agreed was Indicator 14, parents see that the pandemic is also disconnecting children from family, friends, schools, and familiar routines obtained a weighted mean of 2.68(Agree) ranked 15th. The overall weighted mean for the perception was 3.25 interpreted as Agree.

By looking at the situation of the parents, they are now the learning facilitators to their children. A task that requires them to render quality time with their children in terms of guiding and assisting their learning with due respect to the learning delivery modality they chosen. Parents as learning facilitators means that the parents serve as the teachers of their children at home. They are the one who will explain the content of the lesson, provide samples for better understanding the lesson, assess the learning outcomes, check the finished outputs, and providing enrichment activities. It is really a difficult task for the parents most specially those who are working or findings means for a living. But this is the only way that their children learn the lessons during this time of COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2. Perceived Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic to the Parent- Respondents' Socio-Economic Conditions as to Social Upliftment

Social Upliftment	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Rating	Rank
The COVID-19 pandemic and the related lockdown may lead to more tension, irritability, and family conflicts or worse	3.20	Agree	7.5
Parents as the leaders in the family are put to task to generate hope; nourish relationships and emotional security	3.16	Agree	10
Parents act as buffer/shield to children against the risks of social disruption, negotiate family rules, rituals, and routines.	3.51	Strongly Agree	4
Parent-child interactions are beneficial in terms of reducing children's psychosocial problems and parental stress during prolonged school	3.20	Agree	7.5
Parents need to be knowledgeable about children at different ages express distress and the importance of sharing and talking about fears	3.48	Strongly Agree	5
Parents need to learn how to support their children emotionally and in their daily school tasks.	3.59	Strongly Agree	1
The quarantines limit the opportunities for social participation, and leisure and recreation, which affects their overall well-being	2.96	Agree	14
Despite uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, this increases the sense of social connectedness and shared social identity and	3.15	Agree	11
Parents promote children's wellbeing, and prevent the onset of more severe behavioural and emotional problems	3.17	Agree	9
Parents as home teacher are able to organize support for their child based on the child's personal learning style	3.09	Agree	12
Parents communicate with teachers to be prepared for remote teaching and flexible learning to facilitate a sustainable children's learning and	3.57	Strongly Agree	2.5
Constant and detailed communication between parents, teachers, and the school is a fundamental element of a successful distance learning	3.34	Strongly Agree	6
Parents decide on how to monitor and filter their children's exposure and access to the internet and how to educate them	3.57	Strongly Agree	2.5
Parents see that the pandemic is also disconnecting children from family, friends, schools, and familiar routines.	2.68	Agree	15
Parents perceive that social media is an inexpensive and engaging tool, ideal collaborative public health messaging.	3.08	Agree	13
Overall Weighted Mean	3.25	Agree	

3.3. Analysis of Variance on the Difference in the Perceived Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Parent-Respondents When Grouped According to Profile Variables

The significant value for sex (0.065), civil status (0.765), occupation (0.055), and size of family (0.181) is higher than (0.05) alpha level of significance therefore do not reject the hypothesis. There is no significant difference on the perceived impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the social upliftment of the parent-respondents when grouped according to sex, civil status, occupation and size of the family.

Attributed to this result could be the similarity of parent-respondents knowledge, understanding and experiences on the impact of COVID19 on the social upliftment. For parent respondents the COVID-19 pandemic affects all components or fragment of the population and is particularly detrimental/harmful to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance on the Difference in the Perceived Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Parent-Respondents When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	Sig.	Interpretation
Sex	Between Groups	0.048	1	0.048	0.651	Do not reject Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	62.529	268	0.233		
	Total	62.577	269			
Civil Status	Between Groups	0.125	2	0.063	0.765	Do not reject Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	62.451	267	0.234		
	Total	62.577	269			
Occupation	Between Groups	2.505	5	0.501	0.055	Do not reject Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	60.072	264	0.228		
	Total	62.577	269			
Size of Family	Between Groups	0.797	2	0.399	0.181	Do not reject Ho Not Significant

3.4. Social Skills Support Program for Parents to Help Overcome the Undesirable Socio- Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

A proposed intervention plan of activities was developed to help overcome the undesirable socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Table 4. Social Skills Support Program for Parents

KEY AREAS and OBJECTIVES	PROGRAMS/ ACTIVITIES	ORGANIZATION INVOLVED	TIME FRAME
Social Upliftment			
Continue implementation of social safety nets for vulnerable 4P's household recipients (e.g., provision of subsidies and loans especially for agriculture-based sectors).	"Cash-for-Work and Food-for-Work programs" "Scholarship Programs"	Local Government Units	December 2021 onwards
Intensify Social Welfare Programs	"Barangay -Based Feeding Program" "School -Based Feeding Program" "Food Rations"	Barangay Health Workers & Nutrition Experts	December 2021 onwards

<p>Offer scholarship programs to help support low-income earners of their children’s education during distance learning.</p> <p>Distribution of the needed instructional provisions to learners such as additional learning and reading materials for distance learning.</p> <p>Improve Nutrition Programs of the LGU</p> <p>Improve health practices at home. Ensure that students not only remain educated, but also safe from the dangers of COVID-19.</p> <p>Constant communication between parents and teachers for a successful distance learning strategy and to facilitate a sustainable children’s learning and wellbeing.</p>	<p>“Seed and Fertilizer Subsidy”</p> <p>“Rice Price Subsidy”</p> <p>“Financial Education Assistance”</p> <p>“First Aid and Health Kit”</p> <p>“Family Welfare Program/Workers with Special Concerns”</p> <p>“Parents-Teachers Engagement: A Key to Successful Distance Learning”</p> <p>“Barangay Free Wifi Internet Service”.</p>	<p>DepEd</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)</p> <p>National Food Authority (NFA)</p> <p>Department of Agriculture (DA)</p> <p>Local Government Units (Barangay and Municipal)</p> <p>DepEd</p> <p>TESDA, SUC, LCC</p> <p>Non-Government Organizations (NGO)</p> <p>Private Institution/ Individuals</p> <p>Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)</p> <p>Local Government Units (Barangay and Municipal)</p> <p>DepEd</p> <p>TESDA, SUC, LCC</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)</p>	<p>December 2021 onwards</p> <p>November 2021 onwards</p>
<p>Coping with the Challenges during COVID 19 Pandemic</p> <p>Compliance with strict protocols to be safe from the threat of the viral outbreak</p> <p>Intensify the health promotion, public’s safety and well-being.</p> <p>Help develop proactive in attitude and control of the uncertain situation</p>	<p>“Training or Orientation on Efficient and Effective Health Practices”</p> <p>“Barangay Recreation and Wellness Activities”</p> <p>“Training or Orientation on Appropriate Coping Mechanism”</p> <p>“Case Management and Counselling Services”</p>	<p>Barangay Officials/Council Barangay Health Workers</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)</p> <p>Parents \Family Members</p> <p>Non-Government Organization</p> <p>Private/Civic Organization</p>	<p>December 2021 onwards</p>

4. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that majority of the parent-respondents are female, married with 4 family members who are bachelor's degree holder, self-employed and are low-income earners. There is no significant difference on the perceived effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the social skills upliftment of the parent-respondents when grouped according to sex, civil status, occupation, and size of the family. A proposed Social Support Program for Parents to help overcome the undesirable social skills effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Schools Division of Zambales.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommended that schools are encouraged to foster ways of continuous communication and productive activities between parents, teachers, students during the remote distance learning. It also encourages other researchers to conduct of future study with wider scope for validation of the findings.

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