

Exploring the Impact of Parental Absence on Students Academic Achievement

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Abstract— Several perspectives have been conveyed every time that parental absence is in discourse. This qualitative study offered some valuable stances on the experiences of the learners in their academic journey in the absence of parents and how this condition creates an impact on their academic progress. The challenges encountered in the absence of parents and how they cope with them are also vital features of this research work. The accounts shared by the informants disclosed their challenging academic journey as evidenced by a mix of self-directed learning, feelings of exclusion, and reliance on alternative support networks for academic assistance. They are exposed to the negative impacts of parental absence, including difficulty with homework, managing academic duties, and underachievement. They have limited financial resources, and restricted opportunities for recognition and awards and some of them are deficient in numeracy and literacy. They are able to cope with those circumstances by seeking support from friends, engaging in hobbies, and connecting online. Noting such concerns that the research informants have been dealing with, interventions to support learners in the absence of parents including peer networks, academic support, mental wellness resources, and family collaboration are proposed.

Keywords— academic achievement, academic journey, alternative support networks, mental wellness, parental absence, peer networks.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a critical role in shaping one's future success and this has been extensively debated. Among all factors that contribute to success at school, parental involvement is among the most important. Parents are unanimously recognized as the first and the most important teachers for children with an important role in their development. From helping children sort out friendships and relationships to encouraging a thirst for learning and emotional health goals, parents are important support every step of the way in this lifelong educational journey. When they are actively engaged, parents not only improve their children's academic performance but also cultivate important traits such as resilience, self-confidence and love of learning that extend beyond the classroom. Parents play an influence that is very substantial to children as they grow up.

Active parental involvement in education creates a positive and enriching learning environment, which not only enhances academic performance but also fosters a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom. Parents are key partners in their children's education, as their influence extends far beyond providing a supportive home environment. By being emotionally engaged with their children and taking an active role in school activities—such as attending parent-teacher meetings, school events, and volunteering—parents can significantly impact their child's academic success.

Research consistently shows that children whose parents are actively involved in their education are more likely to exhibit positive behavior, develop stronger social skills, and achieve better academic outcomes (Garcia & Thornton, 2014; Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000).

The absence of parents stands as a major international issue since it impacts numerous children throughout the world. Statistics reveal complex patterns of family structures and social dynamics across different regions. A total of 140 million children were found to have lost their mother or father during the period between 2020 and 2023 according to UNICEF projections. The UNICEF Global Child Welfare Report (2024) has established that 25% of children worldwide experience parental absence (UNICEF).

Statistically 25% of children worldwide endure major separation from their parents while growing up. Statistics show that single-parent families raise 15-20% of children whereas 10% of worldwide children lack any form of parental figure.

Children without parental presence during their early years develop psychological difficulties which affect their emotional aspects as well as their social relationships together with their intellectual capability development. Research indicates such children face an increased danger of experiencing feelings of

abandonment as well as anxiety alongside depression and low self-esteem. Research published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry (2020) demonstrates that extended periods without parental involvement can create connection problems alongside behavioral disturbances that extend to challenges in establishing good interpersonal relationships during adulthood. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) children obtain essential legal safeguards that protect their right to receive family care and get protected and supported. Two main federal legislation in the United States protect vulnerable children: the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) together with the Foster Care Independence Act that establish guidelines for support systems. The Strengthening Families Act of 2014 focuses its provisions on children in difficult family circumstances by establishing access to academic resources and health services and mental health assistance. UNICEF promotes legal measures with UNICEF advocating for protecting both psychological and social growth of children who lack parental presence because they understand how early childhood experiences shape individual development trajectories.

Parental engagement creates a link between household and educational institutions to deliver continuous backing which enables students to tackle educational obstacles and develop their resilience leading to better academic outcomes and enhanced wellness (Marsiglia & Amato, 2001). Children achieve better results in school and their well-being improves when parents actively participate but such involvement is crucial due to physical or mental reasons according to McLanahan & Sandstrom (1996). Children whose parents are absent because of factors such as migration or divorce or socioeconomic challenges commonly face psychological issues together with poor academic results and behavioral problems (Fagan & Davies, 2009; Amato & Crouter, 1999). These children often choose to either leave school or achieve under average academic levels according to McNeal (2000). The absence of parents because of war conflicts or family relocation or separation creates major development obstacles that negatively impact children's education.

The Philippines attaches great importance to education; for them, education is a way for their children to be successful and achieve their dreams. The Child and Youth Welfare Code of the Philippines provides that children are one of the most important investments of the Philippines as a country and that their welfare

depends on the moral strength and support given by parents or other persons having the care of the child or children. However, as education is becoming more inclusive and adaptive to 21st-century learning, parents have a great responsibility to oversee how different learning environments facilitate children's learning needs. Although education in the Philippines has progressed, there are several obstacles hindering learners and parental involvement: Like many nations, parents of Filipino children are proud of their children's education, but due to limited resources, families tend to prioritize necessities over getting actively involved in school activities and performance. One of the issues is that the Philippines also depends on remittances from Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) since they are of great importance in the development of the Philippine economy (ABD, 2019). However, this financial benefit often comes with the downside of parental absence, resulting in both physical and emotional detachment from children's educational journeys (Asis & Ruiz-Marave, 2017; Ancheta, 2006).

Parental absence is also a pressing issue in the Philippines, deeply influenced by economic migration and overseas employment. According to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2020-2022), approximately 1.8 million Filipino children were estimated to be living without one or both parents. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) play a significant role in this dynamic, with around 2.2 million Filipinos working abroad as of 2024, many of whom leave their children behind. This has led to an estimated 9-12 million "left-behind children" experiencing significant parental separation due to overseas work.

Labor migration leaves noticeable effects on household arrangements throughout the Philippines. Affecting ten to fifteen percent of Filipino families remain when at least one parent works in a foreign country. Also, approximately five to seven percent of Filipino youths receive care from their grandparents. Researchers estimate that up to 40% of Filipino children experience parental overseas work as 14-16% of all families consist of single parents and 30-40% of children face such situations. Children with missing parents demonstrate the highest numbers in Central Luzon as well as in Metro Manila. Various laws and provisions serve to protect children who experience parental absence. The Special Protection of Children Against Abuse Exploitation and Discrimination Act (Republic Act No. 7610) of the Philippines establishes how the state should protect children's welfare including absent parents. Republic

Act No. 9710 known as the Magna Carta of Women along with Republic Act No. 9262 referred to as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act create legal standards to defend children against abuse and neglect.

Local conditions, including industries that employ migrant workers, influence the levels of parental absence among children. Agriculture, fishing, and factory jobs bring migrant workers away from their homes. These people are in search of improved wages as compared to those they earn back in their home regions. As a result, they take their children and leave them with grandparents or other relatives and end up experiencing neglect and hopelessness. The absence of parents stems from migration and various other local factors which include family separation and parental death as well as incarceration and parental abandonment.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to explore the influence of parental absence on pupil’s academic achievement.

1. What are the lived experiences of the learners in their academic journey in the absence of their parents?
2. How does parental absence impact learner’s academic progress?
3. What challenges are encountered by the learners in their academic journey in the absence of parents?
4. How do learner’s cope with the challenges they encountered in the absence of their parents?
5. What interventions can be proposed to assist learners in their academic journey in the absence of their parents?

Significance of the Study

Curriculum Makers. The study can help curriculum makers understand the specific challenges faced by students with absent parents. This knowledge can inform the creation of targeted learning materials and strategies to address potential gaps in their knowledge or skills.

School Administrators. The research findings can help school administrators identify specific challenges faced by students with absent parents. This knowledge allows them to develop targeted interventions and support systems tailored to the local context of Sorsogon.

Parents and Guardians. This study can offer insights into the perspectives and experiences of parents/guardians, potentially revealing underlying factors that contribute to their absence. This shift in focus can lead to a more holistic understanding of the issue.

Students. Understanding the specific challenges faced by students with absent parents allows for the development of targeted support systems and educational interventions. By identifying challenges and developing targeted support systems, we can help ensure these students can thrive academically and emotionally.

Future Researchers. This study may help future researchers comprehend how to improve the educational experience and well-being of children with parental absence, resulting in a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study provided insight into how parental absence impacts students’ academic achievement. This understanding helped close the achievement gap for children facing this problem. The researcher collected data using a descriptive survey approach, which included questionnaire and interviews, to gain a comprehensive understanding of this issue.

The Research Participants

This study included 15 students from Sorsogon City to obtain a comprehensive understanding. Participants were chosen to ensure a diverse sample and were specifically selected based on their experience with parental absence. This targeted approach collected detailed information from those directly impacted by this situation.

Table A. The Research Participants

Key Stage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Key Stage 3 (Junior High School)	7	46.7%
Key Stage 4 (Senior High School)	8	53.3%
Total	15	100%

The data presented in the table indicates a total of 15 participants in the research. Out of these, seven (7)

students, accounting for 46.7%, were from Junior High School, and eight (8) were from Senior High School.

Among the research participants, seven (7) participants were male, and eight (8) were female. All participants were between the ages of 15 and 17 years old.

Sampling Technique

In this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select 15 students from different areas in Sorsogon City. This method was chosen to ensure that the sample included students who have experienced parental absence, providing a focused and relevant group for the research.

Students were purposefully recruited based on their experienced with parental absence, with the consent of their guardians or schools. This approach ensured that the sample is both diverse and relevant to the study's objectives, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of parental absence on academic achievement.

Data Gathering Procedure

To gather data for the study exploring the impact of parental absence on students' academic achievement in Sorsogon, a letter of permission to conduct the study was sent to the Dean of the Graduate School, Maria Gina D. Dichoso, Ed.D., for approval. Following this, the researcher prepared another letter addressed to the respondents, requesting their time and cooperation for the research study. This letter was accompanied by a parental consent form to ensure ethical compliance and the voluntary participation of the students.

The researcher employed a mixed-methods approach to collect data, which included the personal distribution of questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with selected students. Students who have experienced parental absence were purposefully recruited for the study, with prior consent obtained from their guardians or schools. The research instrument, which included both surveys and interview guides, were enhanced based on the adviser's suggestions, research objectives, and the study's purpose. The selection criteria for participants, the extent of their involvement, and the ethical considerations were thoroughly discussed and clarified during the planning phase.

Research Instrument

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of parental absence on students' academic achievement in selected students experience parental absence in Sorsogon City, this study employed qualitative approach. Through in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires, the research focused on exploring the

lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of students who have experienced parental absence. This method allowed for a rich, detailed exploration of the phenomenon, capturing the personal narratives and emotional dimensions of the students' experiences.

The research instrument for this study was a self-constructed questionnaire and interview guide, designed to explore the following key areas:

- a. The Lived Experiences of Students Without Parental Support
- b. Impacts of Parental Absence on Students' Academic Journey
- c. Challenges Faced by Students Without Parental Presence.
- d. Coping Mechanisms Used by Students Without Parental Presence
- e. Proposed Interventions or Strategies for Students Without Parental Presence

Statistical Treatment of Data

In this study, descriptive statistics are utilized to summarize and describe the data collected from 15 participants through surveys and interviews. Descriptive statistics provided a clear and concise summary of the data, enabling a straightforward interpretation of the study's findings.

Additionally, the study employed thematic analysis to explore the qualitative data gathered from interviews. Thematic analysis allowed for the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to the participants' lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms in the context of parental absence. This qualitative approach provided a richer understanding of the participants' perspectives.

This mixed approach ensures that the qualitative aspects of the data were thoroughly examined, resulting in a more nuanced and holistic interpretation of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parental involvement is one of the major factors in molding a child's character, particularly, in education. When parents are not actively involved, it drastically impacts children's educational performance which in turn somewhat cripple their overall life experiences.

Based on the stories shared by participants, students who grow up without parental support face a variety of experiences, particularly in their academic duties, emotional and social realms. Without the needed support and guidance of parents, students often usually

have trouble motivating and strengthening themselves. This can lead to a cycle of frustration and underperformance, preventing them from attaining their full potential.

Socially, the parent's lack of involvement can be the most substantial hurdle for learners who wish to bond with their peers. They may possibly sense a lack of camaraderie or worse, the realization that right next to them are students whose parents are somehow always present. This can lead to feelings of being stigmatized which further isolates them and makes it harder to feel like they belong. Mkhize & Dlamini (2020) stated that on emotional level, children often felt a deep sense of loneliness, abandonment, and longing for their parents, Jian & Tian (2010) which can take a toll on their mental health. These feelings often contribute to low self-esteem and increased anxiety, making it even harder to cope with the demands of school. The neurobiological consequences of parental absence, as explained by Dr. Bruce Perry, a child psychiatrist, include the disruption of critical brain development processes due to prolonged separation, potentially leading to challenges in emotional regulation, stress response, and social interactions.

These hurdles can create a sense of frustration that not only impact their academic performance but also their ability to form meaningful relationships with peers. Such relationships are crucial for emotional well-being and academic success. This highlighted just how important parental involvement is not just for academic guidance but also for emotional support and establish meaningful bonds. Parents help children navigate the ups and downs of school life, and their absence creates a ripple effect that touches every aspect of a student's life, from their grades to their mental health and social connections.

Self-Directed Engagement

In face of the peculiar hurdles of having no parental support, some students have the courage to be resilient and maintain an optimistic view of parental absence, adapting their education approach to self-directed learning. They seek out their own goals and essential resources independently Participant No. 1 stated "I create a personal study schedule to keep myself focused and organized" emphasized self-engagement through proactive planning, such as creating a personal study schedule reflects their commitment to staying focused and organized independently. Participant no. 4 also testified "I experience attending activities in our school

by myself, which makes me feel independent." demonstrated self-engagement through independent participation, noting that attending school activities alone fosters a sense of autonomy and self-reliance. Participant no. 5 also stated " Participating in school events like graduation or recognition ceremonies without parental guidance was a unique experience that taught me a lot about being independent and self-reliance." highlighted self-engagement through experiential learning, explaining that participating in school events without parental guidance taught them valuable lessons about independence and self-reliance. Participant no. 6 stated "In the absence of my parents, I have become independent and I've learned to depend on myself for problem-solving and decision-making." underscored self-engagement through skill development, stating that the absence of parents led them to depend on themselves for problem-solving and decision-making. Finally, Participant no 9 stated "Without parental guidance was a mixed experience. I found it challenging and had to develop my own routine to manage my time in school effectively." illustrated self-engagement through adaptive strategies, as the challenge of lacking parental guidance prompted them to develop their own routine to manage time effectively. Together, these responses reveal how self-engagement becomes a crucial mechanism for navigating independence and personal growth in the absence of parental support.

Feeling Left Out

A person has an innate need of belonging and form meaningful social connection, Baumeister & Leary (Social Exclusion Theory). Due to the absence of parental presence, students may feel isolated, left out, and unlikely to be motivated. Especially when they observe other parents actively participating in their children's education. These emotions can lead to the loss of student learning opportunities, as students may shut themselves out from a positive learning experience by choosing to be alone or not being open to the experience of learning. Participant no. 2 stated "Nahihirapan akong makilahok sa mga school events" (Having difficulty participating in school events.) highlighted the difficulty in participating in school events, directly linking to a feeling of exclusion from the school community and its activities. Participant no. 3 said "In my experience having no parents support makes feel most left out during and jealous in school events that require parents to attend as I witness a complete family in school events" it emphasized the lack of parental support, particularly during school events, leading to

feelings of being left out due to witnessing the involvement of other families. Participant no. 9 also stated "I experience my parents was busy working and can't be there to attend my graduation" expressed feeling excluded because of parents' inability to attend important milestones like graduation due to work obligations, emphasizing a sense of missing out on shared celebratory moments.

Stigmatized by Others

Being stigmatized by peers or others can lead to inability to fit in and feeling of isolation, which can profoundly impact the emotional and social well-being of the individual. They internalized their differences from peers with parental involvement and label themselves negatively, feeling judged or misunderstood, leading them to believe that their achievements were less rewarding, not valued, and their hard work unnoticed. This sense of isolation can make it difficult for them to form healthy relationships and may leave them feeling a lack of belonging. The participants' responses highlighted feelings of isolation and stigma linked to the absence of parental support during school events. Participant no. 9 testified "Felt a bit isolating or bittersweet. These events are often deeply tied to family involvement, and not having that support might have made me feel like I was missing out on the celebratory aspect of it." emphasized the bittersweet and isolating nature of such experiences, noting that the lack of family involvement made them feel like they were missing out on the celebratory aspect, which can lead to feelings of being stigmatized or different from peers. Participant no. 11 also testified "Nalulungkot ako, lalo na pag may mga events sa school at kailangan ang parents, kasi habang nakikita ko yung iba kong kaklase na may magulang, nahihiya ako kasi sometimes ako lang ang walang parents na umattend. Kaya minsan feeling ko iba yung trato nila saakin kasi nga wala akong parents"(feels sad, especially during school events that require parents because when seeing classmates with their parents, it feels embarrassed since sometimes he is the only one without parents attending.) expressed sadness and embarrassment, particularly during school events requiring parental presence, as seeing classmates with their parents made them feel singled out and treated differently due to their parents' absence. Participant no. 14 said " The absence of my parents often made me feel unsupported, particularly during events or activities where parental involvement, I felt overwhelmed and feels different from my classmates, especially when I saw my classmates receiving support from their parents." described feeling unsupported and

overwhelmed during events involving parental involvement, noting that the visible contrast between their situation and classmates receiving parental support intensified feelings of being different or stigmatized. Together, these testimonies reveal how the absence of parental support during significant events can foster feelings of isolation, embarrassment, and perceived stigma among students.

Self-directed Studying

Amidst the emotional hurdles, students continue to aspire for academic excellence, driven by their own motivation and the goals. They develop self-directed learning as they take greater responsibility for their education, setting their own learning goals, managing their time, and seeking out resources. Participant no. 4 testified "In my experience, it's very hard for me growing up without guidance of my parents especially when it comes to my study, no one is teaching and guiding me in my school activities that's why I set my own way of studying or create a study routine." creating a self-made study routine due to a lack of parental guidance, demonstrating an independent approach to learning driven by necessity. Participant no. 7 also stated "I was asking questions and seek help whenever I struggled with some of my subjects. This experience required me to take more initiative in finding help and resources." actively seeking help and resources when facing academic challenges, showcasing initiative and resourcefulness in self-directed learning. Participant no. 10 also testified "When I don't understand our lesson, I find ways to improve and study to understand it." proactively finding ways to improve understanding of lessons, underscoring a self-driven approach to mastering academic content.

Reasons for Parental Absence

Life is uncertain and full of difficulties. There are situations when the parent may be distanced from the child either physically or emotionally. The absences may be due to a multitude of reasons, like sickness unexpected events, a job that keeps them quite busy, migration or personal life transition. Participant no. 2 stated "Madalas wala ang mga magulang ko dahil sa kanilang mga trabaho. Hindi sila madalas nasa bahay kaya mahirap ito, pero naiintindihan ko dahil para naman saaming pamilya to." (Parents are often away because of their work. They are rarely home, which makes it difficult, but it's understandable because it's for the family.) emphasized the challenge of parental absence due to work commitments, acknowledging the sacrifice made for the family's well-being. Participant

no.5 testified "Wala na akong mga magulang, pareho na silang nawala." (No longer have parents, they're both gone.) highlighted the profound impact of complete parental loss, reflecting the deep sense of absence and grief. Participant no. 6 also stated "My parents worked abroad for many years to provide for our family. I grew up mostly with my grandparents and other relatives while they were far away" described the experience of growing up with relatives while parents worked abroad, underscoring the sacrifices made for financial stability. Participant no. 8 implied that "My father left our family when I was young, and we haven't had much contact since. Growing up without him has been difficult, especially during important moments in my life." underscored the difficulty of growing up without a father, emphasizing the emotional struggles and lack of support during significant life events. Each participant's response points to various reasons for parental absence, whether due to work, loss, or abandonment, illustrating the diverse ways in which this absence affects their lives.

Alternative Caregivers and Support Networks and its Roles Extended

Students demonstrate resilience by having an alternative source of support, such as friends, tutors, or extended family members. These alternative forms of support can offer guidance and assistance with homework and other academic tasks, helping students bridge the gap caused by parental absence. According to Gibson (2002) stated that students who is raised by alternative caregivers, particularly the grandparents, they often adapt their resilience and encouragement. This support enabled them to achieve their academic goals despite the difficulties they face. They also offer emotional support, give helpful knowledge, and promote a feeling of belonging. By providing a secure and understanding environment, support groups assist the participants in managing challenging situations, developing resilience, and finding strength in similar experiences. Furthermore, even without direct parental assistance, students often found studying enjoyable and achievable by depending on other resources such as instructors, classmates, and school activities. Like what Participant no. 1 said "I learned to manage time, use resources, like books and online tools, and also in the internet." highlighted self-reliance and resourcefulness, utilizing books, online tools, and the internet to manage time and tasks independently. Participant no. 2 also stated "Okay lang naman saakin dahil may tumutulong din saakin sa bahay gaya nangin pinsan ko" (It's okay because there is help at home, such as from a cousin.) underscored the importance of family support, particularly from a

cousin, in providing assistance at home. Participant no. 4 testified "I find other people who could help me such as my friends or my cousins or aunties or even in social media platform, also I had developed my own routine in managing my time effectively." emphasized the value of diverse support systems, including friends, cousins, aunties, and even social media platforms, alongside developing personal routines for effective time management. Participant no. 6 also testified "Since my parents were absent, my grandparents helped me with my learning task. But when they can't help me, I would do it myself. Sometimes I would also ask help from my classmates". points to the role of grandparents in helping with learning tasks, while also relying on classmates when additional support is needed. Participant no. 11 said "Minsan nalulungkot ako pero ok lang, kasi andyan naman ang mga friends ko at nagpapatulong nalang ako sa classmate or cousin ko or family." (Sometimes it feels sad, but it's okay because friends are there, and I can just ask for assistance from a classmate, cousin, or family) acknowledged feelings of sadness but finds comfort and assistance from friends, classmates, cousins, and family members. Participant no. 13 also stated "I joined some school activities or even program in which it helps me in my academics and lessen my frustrations and sadness." highlighted the role of school activities and programs in providing academic support and emotional relief. Participant no 14. Also said "My Grandparents put a lot of effort in my studies especially when they taught me to read and do math. My grandmother likes to read. Because of this, I also got into reading novels." credits grandparents for their significant effort in fostering academic skills, such as reading and math, which also cultivated a love for learning. Participant No. 15 testifies "It's okay because I have my ate who is also my comfort zone and teaches me, particularly in math." expressed gratitude for the guidance and emotional support provided by an older sibling, particularly in academic subjects like math. Together, these responses illustrated how alternative caregivers and support networks—ranging from family members and friends to school programs and online resources—play a vital role in helping students cope with and thrive despite parental absence.

How Parental Absence Impacts Learners' Academic Progress

The absence of parental involvement has a significant impact on students' emotional well-being consciously or subconsciously. Without assistance, students may find it difficult to concentrate and stay motivated, which can hinder their academic journey. At the same time, the

lack of guidance and support often leads to lower academic performance and engagement, as success typically requires a supportive and encouraging environment that an absent parent cannot provide. This can lead to struggles in academic duties, which in turn results in underachieving in school.

Battling to Get Through Homework

Students without parental presence often lack the guidance and support that parent typically provide, such as encouragement and support in their academic journeys. In such cases this can make it a struggle for students to complete tasks like homework. The student's difficulty then extends to managing overall academic responsibilities, including staying organized and meeting deadlines. As for participant no. 1 stated "It's quite hard to accomplish my homework especially there is no one to help me" highlighted the difficulty in completing homework due to a lack of assistance, emphasizing the need for support in tackling assignments. Participant no. 2 also testified "Nahihirapan akong tapusin ang homeworks at projects ko. Madalas kulang dahil walang gabay at Nahihirapan sa pag organisa nag oras"(Have difficulty finishing homework and projects. They are often incomplete due to lack of guidance, and struggle with time management) emphasized struggling to finish homework and projects, often resulting in incompleteness due to lack of guidance and poor time management, revealing a multifaceted challenge in handling academic tasks independently. Participant no. 8 also testified "Attempt to understand my homework, but without someone to support to assist me, I sometimes end up making mistakes." focused on making mistakes while trying to understand homework without support, highlighting the negative impact of lacking assistance on accuracy and comprehension.

Struggling to Manage Academic Duties

Participant no. 8 stated "I often get less motivated to learn." emphasize a decline in motivation to learn, reflecting the impact of external factors on their academic drive. Participant no. 9 also testified "Sometimes, I don't feel like going to school anymore." highlighted the occasional desire to skip school, indicating a struggle with maintaining consistent attendance. Participant no.13 also said "Nakaka stress and draining lalo na pag madaming projects and activities'pag wala kang pwedeng mahingian ng tulong"(It's stressful and draining, especially when there are many projects and activities, and have no one to ask for help) underscored the stress and exhaustion from

numerous school projects and activities, compounded by the lack of available support. Each participant's response illustrated the various ways in which they struggle to meet academic duties, whether through diminished motivation, attendance issues, or overwhelming stress due to a lack of assistance.

Underachieving in School

Participant no. 1 said "Some of my subjects my grades are not good." points to poor grades in some subjects, indicating specific areas of academic struggle and potential underachievement. Participant no. 2 stated "Minsan nawawalan talaga ako gana mag aral kaya minsan medyo mababa po ang mga scores ko lalo na sa math."(Lose the motivation to study, so sometimes scores are quite low, especially in math.) Highlighted a lack of motivation leading to low scores, particularly in math, suggesting that emotional or psychological factors contribute to underperformance in specific subjects.

Challenges Encountered by the Learners in Their Academic Journey in the Absence of Parents

Students who experienced parental absence testify that having no parental support leads to challenges in their overall well-being and academic development. They stated that they were experiencing several factors, such as limited financial resources and limited opportunities for recognition. This showed how essential parental involvement is, as it plays a vital role in a child's academic success. Without proper support, students may struggle to reach their full potential.

Navigating Emotional Well-Being and Self-Esteem.

Students facing parental absence experience a significant impact on their emotions and overall well-being, parental involvement is vital for a child's academic and social development; its absence results in learning and socialization gaps, leading to academic and behavioral problems. As a result, the emotional issue can affect their concentration on studies and well-being. They may also more likely to develop lower self-esteem and confidence while navigating their learning journey. Participant no. 2 stated "Nakakawala talaga nang confidence lalo na minsan feeling ko hindi pa good enough yung ginagawa ko sa school compared sa ibang classmates ko na kumpleto sila." (It really takes away the confidence, especially the feeling of not doing good enough in school compared to others peer who have complete families.) emphasized the loss of confidence, particularly when comparing themselves to peers with complete families, which created feelings of inadequacy in school. Participant no. 5 also stated "Naging

mahiyain ako kaya minsan nawawalan ako confidence kasi parang feel ko jinajudge nila ang sitwasyon ko.” (Became shy and lost confidence because of the feeling of being judged.” described how shyness and a lack of confidence stem from the fear of being judged for their family situation. Participant no. 8 testified that “I felt jealous when I see kids my age get support from their parents. Because of this I would often feel sad. Since I have no one to talk to at times, except for my grandparents, I end to bottle my emotions.” expressed diminished confidence in school activities, especially those requiring parental involvement, which exacerbates feelings of insecurity. Participant no. 9 also testified “I feel anxious and sad, whenever there are important moments in my life and they were not around.” shared feelings of anxiety and sadness during significant life moments when parental support is absent, highlighting the emotional toll of missing key familial connections. Participant no. 15 said “There are certain moments when I feel overwhelmed thinking about them, especially when I think about my future without them” revealed moments of overwhelm and uncertainty about the future, particularly when reflecting on navigating life without their parents. Together, these responses illustrated how parental absence can deeply affect emotional well-being and self-esteem, often leading to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and sadness, particularly in social and academic contexts.

Limited Financial Resource for Schooling

Due to parental absence, learners often face situations such as financial constraints that can hinder their access to education, as they may struggle to afford educational necessities or even participate in activities. This can lead to distractions, a lack of motivation, or even skipping school altogether. The constant worry about money can make it difficult for them to focus on their studies and may impact their overall learning experience. Participant no. 2 testified “Isa sa mga challenges na narasanasan ko ay nammroblema sa mga pang ambag o kailangan nang pera sa school.” (One of the challenges I experienced was struggling with financial contributions or monetary requirements for school) emphasized the challenge of contributing money for school-related expenses, highlighting financial difficulties as a barrier. Participant no. 7 also testified “I sometimes didn’t join in educational programs or activities that needed money, because my grandparents doesn’t have enough for it “underscored the inability to join educational programs or activities due to insufficient funds, reflecting the limitations imposed by their grandparents’ financial constraints. Each

participant's response illustrates the struggle with limited financial resources for schooling, whether through the inability to afford contributions or to participate in enriching activities, showcasing the impact of economic hardship on their educational experiences.

Navigating in Various Academic Areas

Navigating academic subjects presents significant challenges for students who lack parental involvement in their education. Pong et al. (2003) said that the absence of one or both parents have profoundly impact childrens academic achievement, particularly in core academic area. Students stated that they encounter difficulties in certain academic areas, such as math and English. It highlights that they struggle to grasp and understand concepts. Because of this, students' academic performance becomes uncertain and overwhelming, as they lack home-based academic support.

Participant no .2 stated “Kinakaya pa naman po pero minsan nahihirapan din lalo na sa math lalo na pag minsan hindi ko maintindihan yung formula o solution, eh minsan wala naman akong matanungan sa bahay.”(I can manage it, but sometimes I struggle, especially with math, particularly when I don't understand the formula or solution, and sometimes there's no one at home I can ask for help.) shared that they struggle with math, particularly when they cannot grasp formulas or solutions and have no one at home to ask for help. Participant no.13 also stated “Sometimes I end up getting low scores because I couldnt rally understand some concepts” mentioned that their difficulty in understanding certain concepts often leads to low scores. Participant 15 testified “The hardest subject for me is maybe english, especially when we have activities like essays. Because I really don’t have someone to ask in our house, I have to do it all by myself.” Pointed out that English, especially essay writing, is particularly challenging because they have no one at home to guide or assist them. These responses underscored the critical role of family support in fostering academic success, as the absence of such guidance forces students to navigate difficult subjects independently,

Restricting Opportunities for Awards and Accolades

Having parental support, such as motivation, attending events or activities, and assistance, is strongly linked with the ability of children to excel in school. Hill and Tyson (2009) stated that the absence of parents during these essential moments made certain students feel sad

and disappointed, leading them to perceive their achievements as less rewarding and their hard work as unnoticed. Furthermore, students also stated that receiving honors or acknowledgments from school without parental involvement is a bittersweet experience. Additionally, they may feel resentful toward their peers who they see that their parents were being involved. Due to this emotional burden, their academic performance can be hindered in various ways, affecting their motivation and engagement in school. Participant no. 3 testified “The absence of my parents felt the I limit my opportunities for honors and recognition due to less involvement and support” emphasized that parental absence limits opportunities for honors and recognition due to reduced involvement and support, highlighting a direct connection between family support and academic achievement. Participant no. 4 also testifies “I feel jealous sometimes when every PTA meeting, there is no one attending it lessen my motivation to achieve recognition and reduces my self-esteem” focused on feeling demotivated and experiencing reduced self-esteem due to the absence of parental attendance at PTA meetings, suggesting that lack of parental presence negatively impacts motivation to pursue recognition. Participant no. 8 also testified “Not having my parents to support me I've had to become more independent in my studies which also influenced my ability to acquire honors and recognition from the school, but sometimes it made me feel less rewarding” highlighted that while independence in studies is fostered by a lack of parental support, it sometimes leads to feeling less rewarded, suggesting that the absence of parental involvement can diminish the sense of accomplishment from achieving honors. Participant no. 10 also said “I find it getting hard to be an honored student because of lack of encouragement and motivations to be on top” points to difficulty in becoming an honor student due to a lack of encouragement and motivation, underscoring the importance of external support in driving academic success and recognition.

How Learners Cope with the Challenges

Resilience Theory by Masten et al, (1990) stated that students have the ability to adapt and seek alternate sources of support and encouragement. These sources can help minimize the effects of parental absence by providing a sense of validation and pleasure in their accomplishments. Seeking help from friends and guardians can provide social connection and serve personal growth opportunities. Extracurricular activities, hobbies, physical or sporting activities can all assist in diverting focus away from stress and fostering

personal growth. Furthermore, focusing on academics, creating a planned daily routine, and seeking assistance from school network can help improve academic achievement and establish normalcy. Participating in social media, volunteering, or doing community service may also provide opportunities for social connection and personal growth. Moreover, reading self-help books or educational resources can provide helpful insights and coping strategies for navigating these difficult times. Despite emotional hurdles, students continue to strive for academic achievement, motivated by their own determination and the expectation that their efforts will be appreciated.

Relying on Friends for Support

Relying on friends for support can provide a sense of security and belonging. This support may make students feel even less isolated and serve as a valuable resource for students navigating their education without parental presence. Participant no. 1 testified “Because of my hardwork and also the support of my friends and siblings, luckily, I have gained awards in my school.” highlighted the importance of hard work combined with the encouragement of friends and siblings, which contributed to their academic success and recognition in school. Participant no.2 stated “Pag nahihirapan ako, andyan naman ang mga friends ko na tumutulong saakin maka learn.” (When having a hard time, friends are there to help) underscored the reliance on friends for assistance during challenging times, particularly in learning and overcoming difficulties. Participant no. 5 also testified “While it is difficult to study with parental absence, I find alternative support and resources which is my friends that helps me in my study and try to get high grades. Even if I’m not an honor student, I’m still doing great.” acknowledged the challenges of studying without parental support but finds strength in the alternative support provided by friends, who help them strive for academic achievement despite not being an honor student. Together, these responses illustrated how friends serve as a vital support system, offering both practical help and emotional encouragement to navigate the challenges of parental absence.

Taking Up Family Interests

Meanwhile, some students who have experienced parental absence are getting involved with family interests. Family-oriented activities and interests represent an archetype of good coping strategy. This appreciation is providing a sense of belongingness and support, which is crucial for their overall well-being

while experiencing parental absence. By providing a supportive environment, it acts as a buffer against isolation and encourages resilience, which relates to better academic performance and emotional well-being. Participant no. 8 said "Because my grandma enjoys reading, which I also like, this has been a great way for me to cope with my parents' absence. These resources provide important insights and inspiration to help me manage my daily life." Participant 8 emphasizes the shared interest in reading with their grandmother as a meaningful way to cope with their parents' absence, finding comfort and inspiration in this family activity. This response illustrates how taking up a family interest can provide emotional support and practical insights, helping to manage daily challenges despite the absence of parents.

Engaging in School Activities and Online Communities

As narrated by the respondents, one way of coping that the students adapt is by becoming involved in school activities, amidst being huddled by parental absence and lack of parental support. Such school activities provide the avenues for skill development, a sense of belonging, and the supportive relationships that students deprived of parental backing are in need of. Participant no. 2 stated "Sumasali ako sa mga activities sa school kasi nakakatulong ito saakin mentally, at nag eenjoy din ako sa mga ginagawa at sa mga natutunan ko." (Joining school activities as it is good mentally, fun to do and learn new things.) emphasized that joining school activities provides mental benefits, enjoyment, and new learning experiences, highlighting the positive impact of participation on well-being and personal growth. Participant no. 4 said "By being active in extracurricular activities, these activities help me stay focused and provide a sense of accomplishment and belonging." focused on how extracurricular activities help maintain focus and provided a sense of accomplishment and belonging, emphasizing the value of these activities in fostering motivation and social connection.

Proposed Interventions to Assist Learners in Their Academic Journey in the Absence of Parents

A variety of interventions can be proposed to assist students who find themselves facing their educational journey without parental presence. Certain interventions, such as additional academic support-tutoring, additional books, programs, or activities-should be implemented. These will furnish resources and guidance needed to aid these students in overcoming academic challenges, improving their study skills,

raising their self-esteem, and enabling them to achieve and reach their full potential. Emotional and social supports is also vital to be offered to the students as this help them in coping and building resilience and social skills, affirming that they are worthy, cared for, and empowered. Family and community involvement, then, can provide the additional resources and support that learners need, alongside valuable encouragement and assistance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Learner informants have experienced feelings of isolation and stigma, leading them to adopt self-directed learning and rely on alternative support networks for academic help. They have also faced challenges due to parental absence, such as struggles with homework, managing academic tasks, and underperformance. Additionally, they encountered difficulties in handling emotions, maintaining self-esteem, balancing academic responsibilities with limited finances, and having fewer opportunities for recognition. To cope, they sought support from friends, engaged in meaningful activities, and connected via social media. Proposed interventions to assist these learners include peer networks, academic assistance, mental wellness resources (guidance and mentorship programs), scholarships, virtual communities, and collaborative approaches.

Recommendations

To support learners experiencing parental absence, academic assistance should be provided through peer learning networks, collaborative efforts, and academic workshops. Strengthening peer academic networks—along with partnerships with community organizations—can offer essential resources like tutoring, counseling, and social-emotional learning programs to build resilience, communication skills, and stress management.

Counseling programs should also be implemented to address emotional and psychological needs, while scholarships can help ensure educational access for those lacking family support.

Additionally, social media can foster virtual communities for peer mentorship and educational resources, and collaborative efforts with guardians and the community can further strengthen support systems. These interventions should be adopted by schools and other responsible institutions to ensure effective implementation.

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