
Zoom as an Instructional Tool in Teaching Reading Among Kindergarten Learners During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of Zoom as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners of the three identified private schools, namely the Sae Young Christian Learning Center Inc. (SYCLC), Thrice Admirable Montessori School (TAMS) and Seed Childhood Education and Learning Center Inc. (SCELCI) during the School Year 2020 - 2021. It utilized a quasi-experimental design to gather the needed data on the effectiveness of Zoom as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners in the three identified schools. There was a total of 30 Kinder 2 learner respondents. Each school has five (5) learners for modular instruction and another five (5) for blended instruction. Results showed that the reading performance of the kindergarten learners during the pretest and post-test was between “Good” and “Easy.” It was found that there is a significant difference in the reading performance of both the pretest and post-test in TAMS and SCELCI, while there is no significant difference in both the pretest and post-test in SYCLCI. Lastly, the effectiveness of Zoom as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners of the identified private schools was very satisfactory. Thus, the researchers recommend using the Zoom application as an instructional tool for teaching reading among kindergarten learners.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, reading skills, Quasi-experimental, Cebu, Philippines

1. Introduction

Computer Technology plays a positive role in children's development and learning (Fonsén & Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2019). Gjelaj et al. (2020) added that the role of computer technology in early childhood education from birth to eight years old is a crucial topic. Parents and teachers are concerned about its potential benefits and harmful effects on young learners, especially during the pandemic (Jalongo, 2021). Nowadays, according to (Bacolod, 2022), computer technology allows learning to continue even when staying at home. Zoom application, for example, allows teachers to access more innovative and improved teaching methods that promote understanding and create an active learning environment for learners. Alongside the use of digital platforms in delivering the lessons, educators are concerned that this application will take away from other valuable activities in the classroom that contribute to the social, physical, and educational development of young learners (e.g., by replacing games that build social skills and promote physical exercise) (Haleem et al., 2022). To this end, adults must guide learners toward learning and ensure that their exposure to computer technologies is balanced.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) provides the standards in basic education for both public and private education. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen the foundation stage of education in which Kindergarten years play a vital role. The first step in enhancing education quality is closing the technological gaps in the Philippines' Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

The Philippines is still catching up regarding online learning by using Zoom as an instructional tool in early childhood education. The ethical and responsible use of desktop computers, laptops, projectors, tablets, cell phones, and other devices can significantly enhance the learning capability of learners, for it has been generally known through studies that learners can better grasp and understand their lessons in a more relaxed environment, without the prying (and sometimes mocking) eyes of classmates or teachers. Emerging technologies can be a powerful tool in education. During the pandemic, the Department of Education budget allows schools to provide computers, fast Internet service, digital devices, and software for learners. Thus, investing in e-learning benefited both teachers and learners.

With e-learning, teachers can quickly disseminate their lessons and assignments, and learners can work on their studies at home. Gradually, the country can introduce changes to the system by adopting a more comprehensive array of learning platforms using technology. Through computer technology, schools (and teachers) can tap several "partners" in carrying out their mission to educate learners with Zoom. Hence, audio and video lessons can be delivered to learners through social networks and webcams. In this case, kindergarten learners can now attend classes in e-classrooms, teachers can send lectures through email, and schools can issue communications similarly.

Computer technologies such as social networking, online teaching, class blogs and wikis, podcasting, interactive whiteboards, and mobile devices are now used vastly in classrooms. Cebu, specifically in Talisay City and Minglanilla, is also engaging with computer technology as

a tool of instructional materials in early childhood education during the pandemic. Thus, there are many ways in which one can benefit from these newly created computer technologies. Computer technologies make distance learning easier. It also allows faster feedback and improved collaborative efforts between large groups of people, even during a pandemic.

Zoom, an e-learning tool, allows learners to learn and participate in discussions even when they miss classes due to sickness. Mobile devices enable teachers to deliver information to parents lightning-fast. Consequently, online teaching and distance learning are a fast-growing industry. Hence, people are no longer confined by geographical or cultural boundaries since these individuals want to learn and share information.

Because of technology, the world is growing smaller; classrooms are not just confined to traditional schools' four walls. Education through computer technology is the way of the future, especially since the pandemic. Consequently, computer technology positively affects learners' engagement, enabling learners to retain and learn more information.

Most schools used smartphones for classroom activities, while others were entirely technology-free environments. Even though there have been passionate voices both for and against computer technology in childhood development, it is essential to note that the effectiveness of using Zoom on childhood development may be more characterized than simply a "good" or a "bad" thing. Ideally, by better understanding the overall effect, they can collectively enhance the positive and work to reduce the negative.

Therefore, kindergarten teachers are responsible for critically examining Zoom's use as an instructional tool for young learners and using it for their benefit. Moreover, this study's primary purpose was to determine if Zoom's use as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners during the COVID-19 pandemic is effective.

2. Literature Background

This research is anchored to Abraham Maslow's need theory, Ivan Pavlov's Behaviorist Learning Theory, and Lev Vygotsky's Constructivist Learning Theory. It is supported by some legal bases, such as Republic Act No. 10157, the Kindergarten Educational Act of 2012, Republic Act No. 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, and DepEd Order No. 7, s: 2019, the Policy Guidelines on the K-12 Basic Education Program of 2019.

In applying Abraham Maslow's Need Theory to teaching reading to kindergarten learners via Zoom, creating a nurturing and supportive virtual environment that caters to their developmental needs is crucial. (Nyamwange, 2023). It starts with ensuring that basic physiological needs are met, establishing clear online safety protocols, and fostering a sense of belongingness and connection among the students, which can help create a secure learning space. According to (Robichaud et al., 2024), praise and encouragement should be given generously to boost their self-esteem and confidence as emerging leaders. Lastly, it provides diverse reading materials and opportunities for self-expression to help children progress toward their reading goals, thus supporting their journey toward self-actualization in literacy.

Moreover, Ivan Pavlov's Behaviorist Theory posits that learning occurs through associating stimuli and responses primarily through conditioning (Egner et al., 2020). In the virtual classroom setting, visual aids, auditory cues, and interactive activities are presented to the students via Zoom, eliciting their responses. Zoom allows for interactive engagement through features like chat and virtual hand raising, providing immediate feedback to students' responses, akin to Pavlov's reinforcement principle.

In addition, the constructivist learning theory emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing their understanding and knowledge through hands-on experiences and interaction with their environment (Chuang, 2021). Zoom's interactive features, like screen sharing, breakout rooms, and chat functions, allow educators to facilitate collaborative learning experiences where students actively engage with reading materials, ask questions, and share their insights. Besides, Zoom enables teachers to provide personalized instruction and scaffolding based on each child's unique needs and learning pace, fostering a supportive learning environment.

Some of the legal bases that supported this study are the following.

First, Republic Act No. 10157, or the Kindergarten Educational Act of 2012, made Kindergarten the first stage of compulsory and mandatory formal education. According to the law, a 5-year-old child must take up Kindergarten in preparation for entry in Grade 1. Kindergarten Level was known to improve a learner's performance in grade school and prevent early dropout incidence. (Alvarado & Marciano Radam Lopez, 2020; Bustos-Orosa, 2022)

Second is Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. This act aims to enhance the quality of education by providing students with additional time to develop their skills and competencies, better preparing them for higher education, employment, or entrepreneurship. It emphasizes the adoption of a K-12 curriculum aligned with international standards. (Mirasol et al., 2021)

Third is DepEd Order No.7, s. 2019, referred to as the Policy Guidelines on the K-12 Basic Education Program of 2019. This provides a comprehensive framework for implementing the K-12 program in the Philippines. The guidelines emphasize the holistic development of learners, with a focus on key competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. (Wei et al., 2022)

With the foundation of the theories and the support of the legal bases, the researchers came up with a study about the effectiveness of Zoom as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners of the three identified schools in Minglanilla, Cebu, and Talisay City, Cebu.

3. Purpose of the Study

This research aimed to determine the use of Zoom as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners in the identified private schools in Cebu during the School Year 2020 – 2021. The findings of this research served as the basis for enhanced instructional

materials. Specifically, it sought answers to questions about the profile of the kindergarten learners, their reading performance during the pre-test and post-test, test of the significant difference in the reading performance of both pre-test and post-test and the issues encountered by the teacher concerning kindergarten learners.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1 Research Design

This study used a quasi-experimental design to gather the needed data on Zoom's effectiveness as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners in the three identified schools. The collected data were subjected to pre-test and post-test assessment, analysis, and interpretation.

4.2 Respondents

The respondents were the kindergarten learners of the three identified private schools in Cebu during the academic year 2020-2021. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique.

4.3 Instruments

The researcher utilized the researcher-made test focusing on the pre-test and post-test to gather data. Through post-test and pre-test, the researcher investigated the usage of Zoom as an Instructional Tool in Teaching Reading among Kindergarten Learners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.4 Gathering of Data

Before the data collection, the research instrument was prepared and submitted to the research adviser for editing and approval. Upon approval, the researchers asked permission from the supervisors of the respective division offices through a letter request signed by them and noted by the adviser and the college dean. After this, the researchers distributed the survey questionnaire to the teachers for profiling and the learners' assessments for their pre-test and post-test. All participants involved in this study were assured that the results were confidential and for research purposes only. The data were gathered and tallied and were subjected to statistical treatment.

3.5 Treatment of Data

After collecting the data, the researcher employed appropriate statistical tools to acquire valid and accurate results. A statistician supervised the researchers to ensure the correctness of applying statistical tools to the data. The study utilized the following Statistical treatment: Frequency, Percentage, and Weighted Mean. Frequency and simple percentages were used to determine the profile of the teachers, such as gender, internet connection, and gadget being used. Weighted Mean was used to determine the extent of the quality of teaching by early childhood teachers and the areas of problems encountered in teaching early childhood. Thematic Analysis was used to analyze the data on the issues encountered by the teacher concerning kindergarten learners.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Profile of the Learners

Table 1 presents the profile of the Kindergarten learners regarding their age, gender, internet connection, and gadgets used.

Table 1 Profile of Kindergarten Learners (n = 30)

	Frequency	Percentage
A. School		
SCELCI	10	33.33
SYCLC	10	33.33
TAMS	10	33.33
B. Year Level		
Kindergarten 2	30	100.00
C. Age		
Five years old	30	100.00
D. Gender		
Female	17	56.67
Male	13	43.33
E. Internet Connection		
PLDT	19	63.33
Globe lines	10	33.33
Mobile Data	1	3.33
F. Gadget Used		
Desktop PC	10	33.33
Laptop	14	46.67
Tablet	4	13.33
TV	1	3.33

The data show that the three research environments comprise 33.33 percent of ten kindergarten learners. There are 56.67 percent female Kindergarten learners, and 40 percent of them are males. Meanwhile, 63.33 percent of the respondents' Internet Connections are PLDT, 33.33 percent use Globe lines, and 3.33 percent use Mobile Data. Of the gadgets kindergarten learners use during online classes, 33.33 percent use desktop personal computers, 46.67 percent use laptop computers, 13.33 percent use tablet computers, and about 3.33 percent use television.

The data show that the majority of the respondents were using PLDT. The researchers observed that PLDT was faster, proven, and tested by most users.

Findings of the study of George show that the lack of competition in the Internet connectivity market, among other reasons, is at the root of the dilemma of slow and costly Internet

connection. Assessing the accomplishments of the Republic of Korea and other broadband-leading countries has provided practical insights and recommendations to promote competitiveness. Furthermore, related literature argues how ISP practices may affect Internet speed and cost. This study offers an approach to improving Internet connectivity in the Philippines by bridging the gap between the Internet infrastructure market and government policies.

5.2 Reading Performance of the Kindergarten Learners

Table 2 presents the reading performance of the kindergarten learners during the pre-test and post-test.

Table 2 Reading Performance of Kindergarten Learners (n = 30)

Score	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Frequenc y	Percentage	Frequenc y	Percentage
6	2	6.67	-	--
7	1	3.33	-	--
8	1	3.33	1	3.33
9	1	3.33	-	--
10	25	83.33	29	96.67
Mean :	9.533		9.933	
StDev :	1.167		0.365	

Table 2 shows the pre-test and post-test results of the reading performance of kindergarten learners. Results showed that during the pre-test, most learners (25,83.33%) got a score of 10. Few got a score of 6 (2, 6.67%), and one got scores of 8 and 9, respectively (1,3.33%). The score increased during the post-test (29, 96.67%). Only (1,3.33%) got a score of 8 during the post-test. The computed mean of the kindergarten learners' reading performance during the pre-test is 9.533, with a standard deviation of 1.767. During the post-test, the computed mean is 9.933, with a standard deviation of 0.365.

The researchers observed that the teachers' teaching methodologies were effective. Teachers use the following teaching methods: repetition to help the learners master the lesson; gamification, learning through play; and visualization, learning through picture and video presentation.

Clemens et al. (2020) found that first-grade students' growth in oral reading fluency (ORF) was predicted by their kindergarten letter-naming and letter-sound fluency using growth curve analysis. Both skills significantly predicted first-grade reading growth. Hierarchical multiple regression using initial first-grade ORF and kindergarten letter-sound and letter-naming fluency showed that kindergarten letter-naming fluency uniquely contributed to predicting first-grade reading growth. On average, students with limited growth in first-grade ORF produced only eight letter names per minute in kindergarten. In addition, we found that Native American and Hispanic students did not reliably differ in their reading growth from the other students. The

discussion highlights letter-naming fluency as an early screen for ethnically diverse students in ORF.

The study of Coulter-Glazier (2022) indicated that five kindergarten variables (letter identification, sentence imitation, phonological awareness, rapid naming, and mother’s education) uniquely predicted reading outcomes in second grade. In addition, Koutsouris et al. (2021) showed that mean classroom outcomes were significantly higher when teachers reported using integrated language arts and phonics more often. However, as measured by direct achievement measures, children with low initial performance benefited less from integrated language arts teaching. Different instruction effects were not noticed for teacher ratings of children’s achievement and learning style.

5.3 Test of the Significance of the Difference

Table 3 presents the test of the significant difference between the pre-and post-test of the kindergarten reading performance.

Table 3 Significant Difference in the Reading Performance of Both Pretest and Post-Test (n = 30)

Variables	Mean	StDev	SE Mean	t Value	P-Value	Result
Pre-Test	9.533	1.167	0.213	-2.18	0.037	Significant
Post-Test	9.933	0.365	0.067			
Difference	-0.400	1.003	0.183			

Table 3 presents the data about the significance test of the difference between the learners' pre-test and post-test reading performance. The computed p-value of 0.037, less than the 0.05 significance level, indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and concludes that a significant relationship exists between the pre-test and post-test scores.

The data show a significant difference between the pretest and post-test conducted by the researchers as the researcher perceived that the learners productively grasped what the teacher had discussed.

The findings of the study by(Sokal et al., 2020) emphasized the feasibility of early identification of dyslexia risk points to the heterogeneity of risk profiles. These findings have significant implications for improving outcomes for children with dyslexia through more targeted interventions.

Moreover, Casacchia et al. (2021)demonstrate the significance of phonological awareness in predicting later literacy. Evidence indicates that high letter knowledge in kindergarten might also reliably predict better literacy skills. Results also suggest a developmental effect in the emergence of phonological processing skills in verbal memory between the ages of 4 and 8.

5.4 Issues Encountered by the Teachers Concerning Kindergarten Learners

This part presents the data on the issues based on the teacher's experience with kindergarten learners.

The first question asked to the research participants relates to their conditions during the pandemic. There is only one theme developed out of their narrations.

1. Embracing Changes. The sudden shuttering of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic forced teachers to face rapid changes in lesson delivery. The teachers left their physical classrooms and embraced creating an online learning environment. As challenging as that dictate was, it represents the best-case scenario in what has proven to be an incredibly inequitable landscape during the pandemic.

According to Participant 1 that,

This pandemic has been brutal for us because we have many adjustments to make. There are many challenges, but so far, so good. I am happy since my entire family is safe.

While Participant 2 said that;

There is a big adjustment at first because we are not allowed outside. The usual things you do every day. For example, you are attending school with the pupils in your class. It is different when it is held in the school. Strolling around is optional. Stay at home after school; we cannot stay outside due to viruses. Hearing masses, I do not know how many months I did not attend. However, eventually, people started attending gatherings. People are already adjusting to the conditions.

According to Sokal et al. (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic presented an urgent need for an unplanned change in education on a global scale: As schools closed around the world to protect students' and teachers' health, many teachers quickly shifted to technology-assisted remote teaching. Educational researchers have repeatedly stressed the importance of teachers as the front-line workers in academic reform, and the dedicated, sustained behaviors of teachers will be imperative to a successful intellectual response to the current pandemic. However, to understand teachers' behaviors related to COVID-19, models of planned behavior suggest that it's important to take teachers' attitudes into account. Given the attention to attitudes as precursors of behaviors, the teachers' attitudes toward change and teachers' attitudes toward technology related to resilience and burnout while teaching during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ansong-Gyimah (2020) says that COVID-19 has become the most pressing virus that has affected the world negatively. This virus has brought many setbacks in all aspects of life, including education. This study was carried out in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the desire to learn more about how technological innovation was incorporated into education. It was determined that technological advancement has become crucial in E-learning. Another finding was that numerous developing countries still need to work on enjoying E-learning as internet connectivity is a significant problem. It was advised that non-governmental organizations use their resources to enhance internet connectivity in the majority of developing countries so that they can enjoy E-Learning. To educate students and teachers about using E-Learning globally, adequate training and workshops should be organized.

The second question asked to the research participants concerns the teachers' difficulties in teaching modular and blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Technology as a Tool. The response to COVID-19 has demonstrated how technology can help transform the teaching-learning process. Nevertheless, the push for change started long before the pandemic struck, and it will go on long after the threat subsides. School administrations have been investigating innovative K-12 education strategies for years that go beyond just online learning at home. In the new normal, technology for teaching has been embraced by most teachers worldwide.

According to Participant 1,

The first difficulty I ever encounter is the adjustment from face-to-face to online. At first, I was afraid I could not do it, and the know-how. As a person, I have difficulty in front of the camera if people watch me. I prefer to do these with the kids because I know how to manage them. At first, it was tough because I went back to square one. Because there are numerous things, we must learn in order to hold students' attention. One thing is if we have a stable Internet connection. The second is how to catch the attention of the learners. The third is how to make sure that the learners will learn online

When the researchers interviewed Participant 2, this was her response.

Yes, so many to mention because most of my classes are Kindergarten 2. They can read sentences when they are in Kindergarten 1. The learners must know to read their CVC. Then in reading, there must be physical contact to teach a child to read to catch their attention, especially in online learning. It is not easy to teach face-to-face how much more if it is online. This made me struggle. In reading, we need to open our mouths for the child to get the sounds. At least, I will inform the parents that we must help each other. If we are the ones to adjust, we need to set up the class. What we need to do is help the children. Whatever I do, that is also what you will do for consistency for the child not to be confused.

According to Padillo et al. (2021) teachers emphasized the importance of pursuing ongoing professional development by attending webinars and reading current publications related to education. They identified the need for a remote teaching/learning course in early childhood teacher preparation programs. Teachers need more professional training on technological resources available to them and their students in their institutions. Many expressed an interest in making remote learning more dynamic and less teacher-centered. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected early childhood educators', students', and families' daily lives. The range of issues teachers have responded to varies greatly, not between countries, but by the socioeconomic status of the families they serve. In many ways, the pandemic has emphasized the gap in teaching and learning experienced by less affluent children. Teachers' responses to the

issues experienced by their students and families have also varied due to the availability of resources.

According to Sharfstein and Morphey (2020), regardless of the measures used by schools, some teachers may be unwilling to return to the classroom, and some families may be reluctant to send their children to school. To accommodate these families, school systems should use the summer to identify and train teachers at high risk to serve as remote learning experts, with the potential to flex and incorporate other students and teachers during periods of quarantine or school closure. The likelihood of blended learning for many students, as well as periodic returns to fully remote education in case of the rising community spread of COVID-19, school systems should identify appropriate curricula with in-person and remote strategies, leveraging technology that is age-appropriate and linked to specific learning objectives.

2. We Need to Embrace. Despite the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Filipino teachers have a unique way of finding means to survive and look at it from a different perspective. Teachers embrace this call for change in the teaching-learning process. The pandemic has changed the method of teachers holding modular or blended learning classes. These changes have turned into what we call the new normal. It was an unprecedented event, and nobody was ready. It is a time when most educators would define it as going to battle unarmed and ready to lose.

According to Participant 1 that,

I adjusted first so that I would not be embarrassed. First, I made a trial to my co-teachers, making sure that I had a strong PowerPoint presentation with the images and videos the learners would need. I guarantee that all things will be easier for the learners to learn. Despite difficulties using the Internet, I ensured that they learned in my online class. In terms of modular learning, I cannot assure them that they will learn. With the use of modules, the parents will guide the learners. Though learning is a two-way process from parents to teachers, the cooperation of the learners is needed. Regarding reading, we cannot rely on the learners themselves. If the learners are not willing to learn, they cannot comprehend. They remember because these lessons were discussed when they enrolled in Kindergarten 1, so it was easier for them to understand.

While Participant 2 answered that;

I am not in favor of modular. I cannot monitor if the child can read before passing the module. How will I know if the child is answering the module? I have to check the penmanship. However, we cannot test who responded to their test, whether the child or the mother made it perfect. So I made a comparison of their scores online. In my case, I would let them read as much as possible, particularly on syllables. They have to undergo syllables in Kindergarten 1 to make them familiarize themselves with the sounds of letters. I gave them the test to see if they could read syllables, after which the number. There aren't many of them in the class, so I can accommodate all of them.

Participant 2 added that;

What I want is to try the CVC. At least, they can focus by eagerly calling their attention. I want to ensure that my PowerPoint presentation catches their eyes using the monitor. Although, sometimes, we cannot avoid their heads swinging. Nevertheless, I am trying to catch their attention. We have blended our L lesson so far, being careful to create the right sounds. I also tested their appearance the first time they saw the letters, especially the blending. The following vowel after a letter matters in how to read the word. Since it is mostly blending using two consonant letters before the vowels.

Participant 2 further added that;

Need to discuss slowly in a step-by-step to produce the ending sounds. You can see how the child loves to learn how to read. All you have to do is to put more colors on the letters. It is with the teacher on what to do with their PowerPoint presentation to make it more appealing. I can say that modular is effective if the parents will follow the procedures found in the activities. It is difficult to hold classes using online learning, so hopefully next year we can return to the in-person discussion.

The study by Casacchia et al. (2021) concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic and social-distancing measures may have created physical distance and minimal face-to-face interactions between teachers, students, and their families. The knowledge-building theory has helped to forge a greater sense of communal belonging among teachers and also helped to assemble a community of learners who constructed collective inquiries and solutions for authentic problems and responded to emerging situations and needs. The onset of the pandemic may have elevated teachers' and students' awareness of the need to use knowledge building as a promising foundation for a responsive and progressive approach to teaching and learning. This study has provided evidence that even through trying times, teachers and students in schools are revitalized and stimulated to continue striving towards a new normal that involves greater integration of technology for interaction and collaboration in schools. Knowledge building has also provided the opportunity for more unique perspectives of classroom practice and teacher professional development, supporting the deviation from an expected norm of working with students and their parents.

According to Spiteri (2021), it is hoped that the negative impacts of COVID-19 will be short-lived; it is too early to anticipate when education systems around the world will resume their regular activities. Instead of implementing effective early childhood curricula, authorities are more concerned with reducing the virus' adverse economic effects. As a result, many countries have temporarily suspended the initiative to implement effective programs to ensure a sustainable world. With the disruption of the education trajectory of so many children, many of whom do not have support at home, substantial global efforts are needed within the next decade to ensure the successful performance of the agenda. It is essential that the UN critically consider the limitations that have slowed down its implementation in many contexts and take further action to accelerate its success.

The third question asked to the research participants concerns their coping mechanisms for teaching modular and blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. In the Nurturing Hands of Teachers. As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, one thing is certain: it will negatively impact the educational system. The children have controlled access to socialization, play, and even physical contact, which is critical for their psychosocial well-being and development. School closures prevent children from accessing learning and limit their interactions with peers. It is deemed necessary that learning must continue despite the pandemic with the help of a nurturing teacher during this time.

According to Participant 1 that;

First, I learned things needed, like how to make PowerPoint presentations. I ensured that the PowerPoint presentation's audio was audible enough for the audience to pay attention and understand the lesson. So far, the big problem with the online class is poor Internet connectivity due to video streaming.

While Participant 2 replied;

Hardships. Before anything else, I will ask for Divine guidance because we don't always make significant changes. However, I cannot do all of these because of the adjustment. Besides, teaching a child is difficult, particularly reading. What I did was that when I saw a child having difficulty, I would automatically correct them because they do not have the same subject every day. Since it's not every day that I handle classes, I usually monitor them online since they cannot manipulate the computer by themselves. The guardian will inform me of the things they need in the lesson. At least in an online class, I can directly respond if they find it challenging to do the task.

The researchers asked the participants whether it was effective or not.

According to Participant 1,

It is effective; I ensure learners learn in an online class. However, there are times when we have doubts about whether they are the ones answering the modules. I check what they write by showing them the answers.

Also, Participant 2 answered that;

I have one student who has audio difficulty. Even if he did not focus on the monitor, he could still read. Then, every time I ask a question, he can still answer it. Is it practical? Maybe.

I will address where he finds it difficult by nodding his head. I will tell them that what I did is not for myself. I do this for you. Since you enrolled, you must also assist yourself so that you won't be intimidated or find it difficult to read a letter.

For you not to be afraid, whatever I told you, you have to follow. So far, it is okay with the parents' guidance, particularly with the collaboration to address the problem.

So far, no parent has approached me in modular to let me know that their children are having trouble. Maybe the children have already adjusted. I made a step-by-step

discussion online on how to use the module since we have the same reference on what module I gave.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, Tokić and Vukašinić (2020) claim that schools have been closed in numerous nations globally. Starting March 16th, 2020, the entire educational system in Croatia has transferred to online teaching. Teachers from compulsory school education level to high school and university levels offered different online ways to connect and communicate the specificity of their subjects to their students. Due to this, it was relatively easy to organize the transfer from direct teaching to online teaching. Teachers and students interact, learn, and communicate through various virtual platforms from elementary through tertiary education.

According to Gayatri (2020), Early childhood education has been impacted by school closures. Most children experience online learning to reduce the outbreak's spread, primarily when face-to-face learning cannot occur. Parents and teachers are significant in supporting children to improve their cognitive and social development. However, the implementation of home learning causes some difficulties concerning the self-regulation of very young children, the readiness to utilize digital technology and learning materials, parents' beliefs and attitudes on online learning compared with traditional education, and requirements of demanding time and knowledge to accompany the children. Therefore, it is essential to have good communication between parents and teachers to support early childhood online learning during the outbreak.

Murray (2020) states that well-qualified early childhood educators have the potential to make an exceptional contribution to supporting young children and their families throughout the pandemic and to leveraging post-COVID-19 global recovery. These workers have the knowledge and skills to optimize young children's development and learn at the most likely to enhance lifetime outcomes. They can share that knowledge with young children's primary caregivers. Equally, early childhood educators promote families' economic and emotional well-being by providing early childhood education and care that enables parents to work. In these ways, early childhood educators can strengthen and support families, young children, and the economy now, at a time of global crisis, and lay the foundations for a better future that we can all hope for. The time is right, then, for many more governments to recognize the value of early childhood educators than is currently the case and to realize their duty of care to these educators as members of the education workforce.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, the use of Zoom as an instructional tool in teaching reading among kindergarten learners during the COVID-19 pandemic was determined to be effectively demonstrated, as manifested in the result of the inferential statistics conducted on the pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, using Zoom as an instructional tool for reading positively affects the learners' reading skills.

In light of the study's findings, the researcher recommends using the Zoom application as an instructional tool for teaching reading among kindergarten learners, as it helps improve their reading skills.

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