



Inside the homes, beyond the classroom: Teacher's home visitation experiences

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe the lived experiences, challenges, and insights of teachers in an elementary school in the District of Pandan, Division of Antique which were the basis of the proposed intervention program for teachers. On the other hand, the phenomenology research design was used in this study. The study utilized five elementary teachers as research participants. The data was analyzed and interpreted using the thematic analysis of Collaizzi's method. The research instrument used was in the form of the interview guide. The teachers' lived experiences with home visitation highlight three key themes: teacher's commitment and mission, student's struggles, and school-family connectedness. The home visitation challenges highlight three main themes: geographical problems, seasonal labor-dependent students, and personal safety. Support systems to address these challenges in home visitation programs. The study documents teachers' insights in home visitation to improve academic performance. It identifies three key themes: innovation in teaching, conferencing, and parental involvement. The proposed intervention program was the Educational Empowerment for All (EEFA) Program.

Keywords: *phenomenology, lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, home visitation*

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Introduction

Home visitation programs aimed to support families in promoting healthy child development, school readiness, and positive parent-child interactions. High-quality programs reduce risk and increase protective factors. School readiness is most effective when delivered at the community level through a comprehensive early childhood system. This approach includes home visiting services, community services, and referrals to preschool programs. This comprehensive approach helps close the gap in school readiness and child well-being associated with poverty and early childhood adversity (Kelley et al., 2022).

Robles (2021) highlights that teachers faced challenges conducting home visitations due to financial issues during the pandemic. Similarly, they had to reschedule visits and provide transportation expenses. Despite the lack of school funds, teachers followed the IATF's minimum health protocol, wearing masks and shields, disinfecting hands, and maintaining physical distance from students and parents. The pressure to promote all students was high, forcing teachers to resort to home visitation even if their health was at risk. Wright et al. (2015) acknowledge that implementing home visitation practices can be demanding for the teachers and school staff on K-12 students' classroom behavior, academic achievement, and parent involvement. They have to navigate the complexities of balancing their personal and professional responsibilities while ensuring effective communication and support to the parents.

The need to conduct a study on implementing home visitation practices arises from several factors, such as certain issues among the learners, including inconsistent class attendance, difficulties in completing take-home activities, and low level of literacy and numeracy skills. These challenges can significantly impact the academic progress and overall development of the students. By implementing home visitation practices, the school aimed to address these issues and provide additional support to the students and their families. The home visits allow teachers and school staff to directly engage with parents and guardians, understand their unique circumstances, and collaborate on strategies to overcome the identified challenges. This personalized approach can help create a stronger partnership between the school and the families, leading to improved student outcomes. In this light, the purpose of this study was to describe the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of teachers in an elementary school. It also highlighted if the conduct of home visitation of the teachers relates to changes in learners' academic performance.

Methodology

In this study, phenomenological qualitative research design was utilized in order for the researcher to comprehensively capture the research questions appropriately and adequately. According to Moustakas (2009), phenomenological research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participants. The researcher used this design for its relevance and appropriateness to the research problem being undertaken most especially in drawing out the participants' first-hand experiences on conducting home visitation, challenges and coping mechanisms.

The study was conducted in an elementary school located in the mountainous area in the District of Pandan in the Division of Antique part of the Panay Peninsula. The participants of the study were (5) five teachers in the District of Pandan, Division of Antique. Purposive sampling was used in the study. Moreover, the researcher used inclusion criteria in the identification of the participants: 1) must be teaching as a public-school teacher; 2) has been teaching in an Elementary School for at least three years; and 3) must divulge the whole truth and their story must fit to the study being conducted to answer the research questions.

The researcher-made interview guide was used as the data gathering instrument. Questions included in the interview guide were open-ended or unstructured in nature so that it enables the researcher to insert follow-up questions to extract the most comprehensive and substantial information. The interview guide was divided into three parts, namely: Part 1. The lived experiences of teachers in conducting home visitation; Part 2. Challenges encountered by the teachers in conducting home visitation; and Part 3. Insights of the teachers in conducting home visitation.

Prior to data gathering, permission was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Antique and the District Supervisor of Pandan. A letter of informed consent explaining the purpose of the study and the extent of participation was given to the five teacher-participants for signature. An in-depth interview was scheduled and arranged by the researcher based on their availability and most convenient time. After the approval of the permits and confirming the availability of the participants, the researcher personally gathered the qualitative data from the 5 teacher-participants through the conduct of the in-depth interview that was conducted from November 2022 to January 2023.

All the gathered data were carefully recorded, transcribed, interpreted, and individually categorized according to themes. The researcher used thematic analysis in analyzing the different

answers of the participants after the focus group discussion. The verbatim responses of the participants in the interview were interpreted by providing the closest possible meaning which were categorized to formulate themes. The themes represented the perceived response to questions utilized during the interview. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for 'identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic. Collaizzi's method of data analysis was used in interpreting the qualitative research data gathered to identify meaningful information and organize it into themes or categories. The following steps represent the Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis (Sander, 2003; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007).

1. Each transcript was read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense of the whole content of the study.
2. For each transcript, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under study was extracted. These statements were recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and line numbers.
3. Meanings were formulated from the significant statements.
4. The formulated meanings were sorted into categories and clusters of themes.
5. The findings of the study were integrated into an exhaustive description under the phenomenological approach.
6. The fundamental structure of the phenomenon was described.
7. Finally, validation of the findings was sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

Results

The teachers' lived experiences with home visitation highlight three key themes: teacher's commitment and mission, student's struggles, and school-family connectedness. Home visitation allows teachers to understand students' lives, tailor instruction, and address their struggles, especially those from under-resourced backgrounds. It also strengthens relationships between teachers, students, and families, fostering a supportive environment where parents actively participate in their children's learning.

The home visitation challenges highlight three main themes: geographical problems, seasonal labor-dependent students, and personal safety. Geographical problems involve safety

risks, while seasonal labor disrupts attendance and affects academic focus. Personal safety concerns include unfamiliar environments and potential harm to personal well-being. The study calls for strategic solutions and support systems to address these challenges in home visitation programs.

The study documents insights of the teachers in home visitation to improve academic performance. It identifies three key themes: innovation in teaching, conferencing, and parental involvement. These insights enhance student motivation, engagement, and academic success. The study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between educators and parents for holistic development. It supports the continued use of teacher home visit programs for improved student behavior and academic outcomes.

The proposed intervention program, the Educational Empowerment for All (EEFA) Program, is a visionary and multifaceted initiative addressing key challenges within the education system. Comprising the Mission-driven Educator Empowerment Program (MEEP), Family Engage Initiative, and HarvestEd, the EEFA Program focuses on enhancing teacher training, elevating parental involvement, and supporting elementary students engaged in seasonal labor.

Conclusion

Teachers visiting students' homes is like a helpful tool. It helps them teach better, solve student problems, and make strong connections with families. This makes a big impact on students' success, showing how working together is important for good education. Finding problems like safety worries, missed classes, and personal concerns imply the need for smart plans and strong support in home visit programs. Solving these problems is not just about making things work better; it's really important for fair education, keeping students safe, and making a nice, welcoming place to learn. The ways teachers deal with problems, like trying new teaching ideas, talking more with parents, and making lessons fun, all help students want to learn more and do better in school. These ways work together to make a big impact on how well students do and how everyone works together in education.

This study recommends teachers leverage coping mechanisms, especially focusing on innovative teaching, conferencing, and parental involvement. Incorporate these strategies into the teaching practices to further enhance student motivation, engagement, and academic success during home visits. Similarly, the Department of Education should consider integrating teacher home visit programs, such as the proposed EEFA Program, into broader educational policies.

Allocate resources and provide training to support the implementation of home visitation, addressing geographical challenges, seasonal labor dependencies, and safety concerns. This will contribute to a more inclusive and effective educational system, aligning with the holistic approach identified in the study.

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