

# **Lived Experiences of Millennial Parents in their Involvement in their Children's Learning**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of millennial parents involved in their children's kindergarten education within a hinterland school in Southwest 1 District, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the research investigated how these parents describe their roles in supporting their children's learning and development, considering the unique challenges and opportunities presented by their environment. In-depth interview was done, and the responses were analyzed using the HyperResearch. The study filled a gap in understanding how millennial parents navigate their roles in early childhood education specifically in hinterland area. By examining the experiences of six (6) millennial parents, this research provided insights into how they foster a positive learning environment and contribute to their children's academic success and holistic growth. The findings reveal seven (7) themes: 1: Learning Approaches, 2: Support Systems for Learning, 3: Engagement in School Activities, 4: Barriers to Parental Engagement, 5: Integrating Routines and Spirituality 6: Social and Physical growth and 7: Meaningful Achievement Journey. It highlights the parental involvement to enhance collaboration between parents, schools, and communities in supporting early learners. The study recommends that future researchers may explore examining school policies and practices, such as communication strategies, and parent-teacher conferences influence parental involvement.

**Keywords:** parental involvement, millennial parents, hinterland, parental engagement

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study and highlights the significance of conducting a study about parental involvement. The importance of learning parental involvement in early childhood education has gained much significance these days as scholars Liu, Y., Sulaimani, M. F., & Henning, J. E. (2020), have so far concluded that parents play an important role in the educational progress of their children, especially on the academic achievements and developmental processes of children. This current research will enlighten the readers about parental involvement in early childhood education.

This research explores and explains the crucial roles of parents to the growth and development of preschoolers. This study describes how parents participate in their young ones' education beyond the classroom, creating a more enriching learning environment that would positively influence a child's educational success and holistic growth.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Parental involvement in early childhood education is shaped by a range of complex challenges that require

further research, particularly in the areas of economic constraints, digital literacy, and cultural diversity. Financial barriers remain a significant obstacle, especially for families from low socioeconomic backgrounds, limiting their ability to provide resources and participate fully in their children's education. While studies like Agorilla (2023) highlight these economic challenges, there is still a lack of focused research on how such barriers specifically affect kindergarten environments and shape parents' perceptions of their roles. Additionally, the increasing integration of technology in schools brings digital literacy to the forefront, yet its impact on parental involvement, especially in communicating with teachers and accessing school information, remains underexplored. Cultural and linguistic differences further complicate engagement, as parents from diverse backgrounds often face feelings of exclusion and lack targeted support, an issue noted by Haryana (2021) but not yet deeply analyzed in kindergarten contexts. Research by Syomwere (2022) suggests the need for more nuanced approaches that differentiate between emotional support, academic assistance, and other forms of engagement, examining how these interact to influence children's educational outcomes. Despite strong evidence that parental involvement positively affects cognitive abilities, literacy, and academic achievement, gaps remain in understanding the lived experiences of millennial parents, particularly those in rural or marginalized communities. Addressing these gaps is crucial, as barriers such as limited time, lack of interest, and feelings of being unwelcome can hinder participation. Future research should focus on the specific challenges and perspectives of diverse families to inform more inclusive and effective strategies for enhancing parental engagement in early childhood education

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Ethical Considerations**

The ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report Respect for Persons, Beneficence, and Justice form the foundation for conducting research with human subjects and are essential for ensuring ethical integrity in any study. Respect for Persons requires obtaining voluntary, informed consent and maintaining confidentiality, while Beneficence mandates maximizing benefits and minimizing risks to participants through careful risk-benefit analysis. Justice ensures the fair selection of participants, avoiding exploitation or exclusion of vulnerable groups, and calls for equitable distribution of the risks and benefits of research. Together, these principles guide researchers in protecting participants' rights, dignity, and well-being throughout the research process.

In practice, these ethical standards are upheld by securing both physical and electronic data, ensuring confidentiality, and disposing of data responsibly after the study's completion. Researchers must also provide clear information about the study, guarantee participants' autonomy, and follow institutional ethical guidelines. Adhering to these principles not only safeguards participants but also fosters trust and credibility in the research, ultimately enhancing the quality and reliability of the study's outcomes

### **Sample and Sampling Procedures**

#### **Sample**

In selecting the participants of this study, the following criteria were set: First, the researcher prioritized six (6) mothers of Kindergarten pupils, with the following criteria: 1) those who regularly participate in school activities like parent-teacher meetings and volunteer events, reflecting an involvement in their children's education; 2) parents who were involved in their child's learning at home, for example, by helping them with homework or participating in educational activities.

**Sampling Procedures**

The study used purposeful sampling, selecting participants based on specific criteria aligned with research objectives to ensure they possessed relevant knowledge, experience, or attributes, enabling the intentional selection of individuals likely to provide rich data about the phenomenon. As a qualitative technique, purposeful sampling prioritizes relevance to research questions, focusing on participants offering meaningful insights to deepen understanding.

**Data Collection****Data Collection Methods**

The study employed Seidman's (2013) phenomenological interview method, structured in three phases: The Focused Life History interview contextualized participants' backgrounds through narrative prompts, the Detail of Experience phase reconstructed daily practices and relationships shaping their involvement, and the Reflection on Meaning interview invited participants to interpret the significance of their experiences, prioritizing trust-building to uncover subjective meanings. In-depth interviews (IDIs), central to phenomenological research, captured nuanced perspectives through open-ended dialogue, emphasizing participants' own words to reveal emotional and cognitive frameworks, while face-to-face interactions enabled observation of non-verbal cues and rapport-building. Combined with methods like observations, IDIs provided a holistic understanding of parental engagement, where personal narratives and contextual factors are critical to uncovering lived realities.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher initiated the study by securing approval from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct in-depth interviews with millennial parents regarding their children's kindergarten learning during the 2024–2025 school year, followed by defining objectives, formulating guiding questions, and obtaining informed consent from six participants. In-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted one-on-one at the school, using an open-ended guide to explore motivations, challenges, and impacts on learning. Employing Seidman's (1998) three-interview framework and synthesizing insights and guided by Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological approach emphasizing trust-building and a relaxed environment, the study prioritized participants' narratives to uncover lived experiences and decision-making processes, offering a holistic understanding of parental roles in early learning contexts.

**Significant Summary of Findings**

The significant findings of this study on millennial parents' involvement in their children's education in a hinterland school reveal several key insights:

1. The lived experiences of millennial parents in the hinterland school demonstrate how they support their children's learning through a combination of traditional and modern methods. They function as part-time educators at home, particularly when working with printed modules, and intentionally focus on teaching essential life skills alongside academic content to provide a holistic educational experience.
2. Millennial parents in the hinterland setting create comprehensive support systems that include peer networks, teacher partnerships, and sibling collaboration to overcome resource limitations in their children's education. They creatively integrate household tasks with learning activities, share limited resources within the community, and utilize basic digital tools when available, relying heavily on

community connections and open communication to enhance their children's educational success. This multifaceted approach to parental involvement proves crucial for children's educational achievement, emotional well-being, and social development, while simultaneously strengthening the parent-child relationship and cultivating essential life skills.

3. Time constraints emerge as a significant challenge for millennial parents in the hinterland school, limiting their ability to be actively involved in their children's learning. Work commitments and extensive household responsibilities, coupled with difficulties arranging childcare, frequently impede their capacity to engage more fully in their children's educational activities despite their strong desire to provide support.
4. Millennial parents cope with these challenges by fostering strong collaborative relationships between teachers and parents, creating a supportive educational network. This strategic collaboration significantly enhances students' self-regulation abilities and academic performance, demonstrating the importance of school-home partnerships in overcoming the limitations of rural educational settings. The mutual support system helps parents navigate their educational responsibilities more effectively.
5. Millennial parents perceive their involvement as having profound impacts on their children's development, actively supporting social and physical growth through participation in school activities, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and vigilant attention to safety and well-being. Their active engagement in their children's education, through both home-based practices and school participation, proves vital for boosting academic achievement, building social confidence, and establishing foundations for lifelong success.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, this study concludes that millennial parents in hinterland schools actively engage in their children's learning through diverse approaches, comprehensive support systems, and collaborative relationships with teachers and other parents. They successfully navigate educational challenges by thoughtfully integrating available technology, drawing upon intergenerational wisdom, and adapting to evolving educational contexts like the K-12 curriculum.

Their involvement extends significantly beyond academics to encompass teaching fundamental values, fostering independence through practical life skills, and prioritizing their children's holistic well-being through consistent attention to physical health and emotional development. These parents view education as an integrated process that combines school learning with home-based instruction and character formation.

Despite facing substantial barriers such as limited resources, financial constraints, and time limitations due to work commitments, these millennial parents demonstrate remarkable resilience and creativity in supporting their children's educational journey. They leverage community networks, develop structured routines, and draw strength from spiritual practices to overcome challenges and maintain their involvement.

The positive impact of their engagement is evident in their children's noteworthy academic achievements, enhanced social-emotional development, and overall success as they progress through kindergarten. This study affirms that even in resource-limited settings, committed parental involvement serves as a powerful force in shaping children's educational experiences and outcomes, creating foundations for lifelong learning and development.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations may be drawn from the findings of this study:

**1. Early Childhood Educators** that they may:

- 1.1.continue to create a supportive climate that fosters active parental involvement and recognizes the value of parents as partners in education; and
- 1.2.enhance their partnership with parents by providing guidance and resources that empower parents to support their children's learning.

**2. School Administrators** that they may strengthen their collaboration between schools, families, and community organizations can create a more comprehensive support system for children's learning and development.

**3. Community Leaders** that they may develop initiatives and programs that promote and support parental involvement in education. These initiatives should aim to address systemic barriers that hinder parental engagement, such as socioeconomic disparities and limited access to resources.

**4. Parents** that they may continue to actively involve themselves in their children's education. They may also focus on providing holistic care that meets both the academic and emotional needs of their children.

**5. Future Researchers** may:

- 5.1.explore how cultural beliefs and practices shape parental involvement in different communities. This would help to develop culturally sensitive interventions and support programs for families; and
- 5.2.examine how school policies and practices, such as communication strategies, parent-teacher conferences, and volunteer opportunities, influence parental involvement. This could inform the development of more effective school-based interventions.

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