

Parental Support for Information and Communication Technology Learners

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Abstract

ICT plays a vital role in increasing parental involvement in children's education. Parents can more easily monitor their children's academic progress through educational apps and online communication platforms, communicate with teachers and schools, and provide learning support at home. In this context, this study aimed to assess the parental support for learners in ICT in a public secondary school of a medium-sized division in Central Philippines for the school year 2024-2025. A descriptive research design was used, and a self-made 30-item survey questionnaire was utilized to gather data from two hundred sixteen (216) parents. The results revealed that the level of parental support to learners in terms of early exposure to ICT was moderate. In contrast, it was low in modeling positive use and encouraging exploration of ICT. Moreover, a significant difference was found in the level of parental support in early ICT exposure when compared to their educational attainment. At the same time, a significant difference was also found in the level of parental support in encouraging exploration of ICT when compared according to their ages. The study calls for education planners and policymakers to increase investment in ICT infrastructure and digital literacy training programs for parents, and internet safety needs to be expanded to help them use technology effectively and safely.

Keywords: Parental Support, ICT, learners, early exposure, modeling positive use, encouraging exploration

Bio-profile

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Introduction

Rationale

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is rapidly growing, covering almost all areas worldwide, and connects users of all ages. Most children spend their time on ICT, including television, computers, the internet, video games, and mobile devices, which play an essential role in everyday life (Plitponkarnpim et al., 2019). This rapid development opens up opportunities and, at the same time, creates new challenges, considering that children must learn to manage information and online risks and understand digital ethics. Along with this, the role of parents becomes increasingly important in guiding their children through the complexities of the digital environment (Nababan et al., 2023).

Currently, schools and teachers cannot meet a child's developmental needs. Parents' support is critical, as they play an important role in shaping their values and attitudes toward learning, which they believe cannot be adequately addressed by their teachers, particularly in ICT. According to Granada and Luzano (2023), parents' support refers to the involvement and assistance provided by parents in their children's education and overall development. Parents serve as a helping hand in their children's educational journey.

In public secondary schools, the researcher observed that many parents do not take the subject of ICT seriously. Most parents rely on and pass all the responsibilities to the teachers and school, including the educational materials needed for their children's hands-on activities and learning tasks. In addition, some parents rarely discuss and guide their children's assignments and projects. They seldom attend their parents' meetings and school activities because they prioritize earning a living to feed the family.

In line with this, the researcher strongly believes that parental support is a significant factor to consider in the learning development of the learners in ICT. Technology significantly benefits children's education and development; however, risks such as inappropriate content, dangerous online interactions, and digital insecurity are also part of their reality. Therefore, it needs to be understood that parents are supervisors and proactive mentors in forming children's holistic understanding of technology. Thus, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study to deepen her understanding of the level of parental support to learners in ICT development in the sincere hope that its findings could address the problems and the study's findings could serve as a foundation for proposing interventions and as the foundation for future research.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview of parental support, which is considered one of the strongest factors in student academic success. According to Shahzad et al. (2023), parental support plays a pivotal role in a child's schooling and is one of the most potent factors in their education, positively related to their academic performance. Parental support is used to observe its impact on



students' academic performance; it is closely associated with financial, emotional, and educational support provided by parents and other family members at home. Parental support and ICT tools are the main factors that define the extent of children's involvement with technology from birth. Studies have shown a solid connection between parents' attitudes toward the media and how their children use technology. Hence, the parents are telling them how they can easily access the technological tools the children need and guide them in their interaction with the ICT tools. Although parents are worried about screen time and the possible adverse effects, most parents regard technology as an essential part of their children's development; the children acquire their abilities via vocabulary, cognitive, and early learning skills.

Early exposure of children to ICT has both advantages and disadvantages. Advocates of ICT use in early childhood education argue that technology can offer numerous benefits when utilized appropriately. These include providing interactive and engaging learning experiences, fostering early literacy and numeracy skills, enhancing problem-solving abilities, and nurturing creativity and curiosity (Sung et al., 2016). In addition, ICT can expose children to diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives through multimedia content, enriching their worldview. However, critics raise valid concerns regarding potential risks of early and excessive ICT use. Such risks include sedentary behavior, diminished face-to-face social interactions, sleep disruption, and attention-related challenges (McOptom, 2017). Parents must provide their kids with various digital technologies, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, enabling them to explore new ways of exploring, creating, and learning. Aside from this, parents play an essential part in the supervision and directing of the use of technology by the children, the aim of which is to promote the responsible and balanced use of ICT tools; that is to say, digital experiences should be the support of the children's development and well-being and not the reason for them to get into problems (Gjelaj et al., 2020). McCloskey et al. (2018) also prove that parents have a positive attitude toward using digital technologies in early childhood education. Besides, they also support the procedure of giving their children technology supplies, saying that the technology has a good effect on their children's development. Alelaimat et al. (2020) showed that parents and teachers completely agreed with the part of technology, digital media, that forms child culture.

Meanwhile, modeling the positive use of ICT for children is significant. Their parents' technology use influences children. This means that being a role model for healthy technology use is a good way to help your child learn to use responsibly. According to Maaghop and Que (2024), in instilling good values in the use of ICT, the parents also use ICT as a tool to equip themselves, and ICT is used as the opportunity to instill values directly. Parents' efforts include learning something new, joining their adolescents in their technological journey, and providing their software and hardware needs to help them learn more about their interests and passions. This flexibility in choosing what to learn while at home is facilitated by free resources online, from software tutorials to help sourcing equipment and new venues for additional content. In learning about these, the parents model how to use digital resources and show how important their adolescents' interests are to them. Lou et al. (2023) reported that approximately 60% of parents did not consistently participate in their children's technology usage. While Rideout et al. (2020) affirmed that parental companionship plays a crucial role in the cognitive development of young



children when using ICT. Wood et al. (2016) also demonstrated that parental companionship, characterized by various forms of support, can scaffold young children's learning during ICT use.

Further, encouraging exploration not only aids in cognitive development but also nurtures a sense of independence and self-esteem in the children. Technology develops rapidly every day, and the use of the latest technologies differs from what we have had before. As parents, it is compulsory to learn about the latest devices or internet sites that have just emerged so that they can always control every technology that is presented to their children. Do not limit children's internet access opportunities to specific websites and certain chat rooms unthinkingly. Discuss with the children what they need and where their interests and talents will be developed. Also, explain all the limitations faced by the family, including financial ones, so that internet access should not be done all the time for all things (Haddock et al., 2022).

Ramadhanti et al. (2024) reported that one of the main challenges is the digital divide, which refers to differences in access to and ability to use technology between individuals. This is often related to economic conditions, geographical location, and education level. The digital divide may prevent some parents from fully engaging in ICT-based education systems as they may not have access to the necessary devices or a stable internet connection. Parents should possess ICT literacy to support the teaching and learning process. In order to assist the children with specific learning tasks, parents should at least possess basic Microsoft skills, such as typing and editing text, creating spreadsheets and formulas, and opening and preparing slide presentations (Anthony & Herrera, 2022).

Additionally, they should possess technical proficiency in internet browsing, as numerous applications serve as online learning platforms. Parents who lack ICT literacy find it challenging to assist and support their child's learning since online distance learning requires ICT literacy. The domino effect might happen if parental support in accomplishing online learning tasks fails.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study is anchored on Parental Development Theory (PDT) by Mowder (2005). Parental Development Theory is a valuable theoretical perspective for understanding individuals' parenting perceptions and behaviors. Closely aligned with social learning and cognitive developmental theories, the PDT posits how individuals construct and modify their parenting point of view over time. More specifically, parenting is viewed as a social role that includes a specific group of individuals called parents involved in a parent-child dyadic relationship and performing behaviors associated with the parental role. PDT reveals that individuals tend to perceive the parent role as including six primary characteristics: bonding, discipline, education, general welfare, protection, responsibility, and sensitivity. While most individuals view these characteristics as important components of parenting, their relative weight in importance and frequency varies developmentally. What a parent does in parenting an infant differs from parenting children at other developmental points in time. This theory is useful in understanding and working with parents and exploring parental similarities and differences and child development outcomes (e.g., social development).



Parents play an important role in ensuring the child develops properly from early to adolescence. Providing the educational support needed and emotional and social support can significantly influence the development of their children's skills and abilities, particularly in ICT. As a link to the present study, the researchers used this theory to guide the study because it emphasized how important the support of parents for learners is in ICT development. The amount of time and support provided by the parents by providing material, emotional, and social support and involvement in school activities may have a tremendous impact on the child's development.

Objectives

This study explored the role of parental support in enhancing students' learning experiences in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Specifically, the study wanted to 1) determine the level of parental support to learners in ICT across three key areas: early exposure, modeling positive use, and encouraging exploration, and 2) determine if there is a significant difference in the level of parental support to learners in ICT when grouped and according to the respondents' demographic variables.

Methodology

This portion presents a discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedures for data analysis.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the level of parental support for ICT learners in a public secondary school. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), descriptive research is valuable for providing facts on which scientific judgment may be based when assessing the present study. Furthermore, a descriptive design is appropriate for studies that aim to find out what prevails in the present conditions, practices, held opinions, processes, and developing trends. This research design is a scientific method that involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way.

Respondents

The study's respondents were 216 parents from a total population of 489 in a public secondary school. Since the number of respondents was substantial, a stratified random sampling technique was used, and the Cochran formula was used to find the sample size. To get the percentage, the respondents from each grade level are divided by the total number of respondents and multiplied by the sample size. Using the lottery technique, the researcher randomly selected the respondents from each grade level.



Instrument

This study utilized the researcher-made questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part comprises the personal profile of the learners in terms of age, average family monthly income, and parents' highest educational attainment. The second part of the questionnaire answers the question of parental support for learners in ICT. Parental support was split into early exposure, modeling positive use, and encouraging exploration. It was composed of 10 items per area with 30 items. The respondents were asked to rate each item using the five-point Likert scale, which contains the following scores: 5 – Always; 4 – Often; 3 – Sometimes; 2 – Rarely; and 1 – Never. The research instrument was subjected to validity (5.00-excellent) and reliability (0.837-good).

Data Gathering Procedure

For the smoother conduct of the study, the researcher employed the following procedures: The researcher asked permission through written communication from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Siquijor and the school head of the subject school, requesting to allow the researcher to distribute the questionnaires to the target respondents. After granting permission, the researcher distributed the survey questionnaire to each respondent. The purpose of the study was adequately explained to respondents by the researcher. The researcher ensured that there was no distraction in the classes. The researcher gave the respondents enough time to ensure that all items in the questionnaires were answered. The questionnaires were personally retrieved by the researcher after the allowed time was passed to ensure a 100 percent retrieval of the checklist and questionnaires.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective 1 used the descriptive analytical scheme and weighted means to determine the level of parental support to the learners in ICT regarding early exposure, modeling positive use, and encouraging exploration. Objective 2 used the comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U-test as statistical tools to determine the significant difference in the level of parental support to learners in ICT when grouped according to demographic profiles.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure the protection of the study's participants, the researcher gave importance to the respondents' voluntary participation, informed consent, risk of harm, confidentiality, and anonymity. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the respondents could withdraw without consequences. We informed them about the study's academic purpose. Only the researcher(s) had access to the data, ensuring confidentiality. Moreover, during the study, the researcher strictly observed the governing guidelines and policies of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to ensure security measures are in place to protect personal and sensitive information. This commitment to ethical standards fostered trust among participants and enhanced the integrity of the research findings. By adhering to these guidelines, we aimed to uphold professionalism in our research process.





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Results and Discussions

In this section, the data gathered were further treated, presented, analyzed, and interpreted to focus on the study's specific objectives.

Table 1

Level of Parental Support to Learners in ICT According to the Early Exposure

| Items | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|-------------|-----------------|
| <i>As a parent, I.</i> | | |
| 1. urge my child to watch educational programs using the available technology at home. | 2.54 | Moderate |
| 2. allow them to play educational games on mobile phones. | 2.77 | Moderate |
| 3. provide access to computers/laptops for homework and assignments. | 2.41 | Low |
| 4. encourage them to listen to stories through the use of ICT | 2.80 | Moderate |
| 5. teach them basic computer operations. | 2.45 | Low |
| 6. guide them on how to use Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint presentations. | 2.96 | Moderate |
| 7. provide them with the budget for calls and texts with classmates and other school acquaintances. | 2.53 | Moderate |
| 8. teach them how to browse on the internet. | 2.83 | Moderate |
| 9. allow them to use Messenger and have Facebook with friends. | 2.60 | Moderate |
| 10. allow them to use online video calls with peers and relatives to develop my communication skills. | 2.49 | Low |
| Overall Mean | 2.64 | Moderate |

Table 1 presents the level of support to learners in ICT in early exposure. The respondents obtained an overall mean score of 2.64, interpreted as a moderate level. Going deeper into the analysis, respondents obtained the highest mean score of 2.96 on item No. 6, stating it guided them on how to use Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint presentations, interpreted as a moderate level. On the other hand, the lowest mean of 2.41 was on item No. 3, stating to provide access to computers/laptops for homework and assignments, interpreted as a low level.

The findings suggest that many respondents lack the capacity to provide access to ICT resources for their children, especially the availability of support materials like computers, laptops, and gadgets for assignments and homework. This is likely due to the economic conditions of the respondents, wherein the majority of them belonged to an average-income worker. As a result, many students may struggle to complete their assignments effectively, which can hinder their academic performance and overall learning experience. This gap in access to technology not only affects individual students but can also perpetuate broader educational inequalities within the community. Hence, parents must ensure that all of their children have access to the resources they need to improve their learning because students cannot concentrate on their studies and achieve the intended academic results without materials and a comfortable environment at home.



The finding is supported by Gjelaj et al. (2020), wherein parents who provide their kids with various digital technologies, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, enable them to explore new ways of exploring, creating, and learning. Aside from this, parents play an essential part in the supervision and directing of the use of technology by children, the aim of which is to promote the responsible and balanced use of ICT tools; that is to say, digital experiences should be the support of the children's development and well-being and not the reason for them to get into problems. McCloskey et al. (2018) also prove that parents have a positive attitude toward using digital technologies in early childhood education. Besides, they also support the procedure of giving their children technology supplies, saying that the technology has a good effect on their children's development. Alelaimat et al. (2020) showed that both parents and teachers completely agreed with the part of technology, digital media, that forms child culture.

Table 2

Level of Parental Support to Learners in ICT According to the Modeling Positive Use

| Items | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>As a parent, I.</i> | | |
| 1. monitor and limit their use of ICT. | 2.33 | Low |
| 2. block and filter inappropriate content and material in their gadget. | 2.14 | Low |
| 3. balance their time spent on technology and physical activities. | 2.48 | Low |
| 4. teach them how to take care of their gadgets and other technologies at home. | 2.19 | Low |
| 5. remind them to be polite and use appropriate language when using the technology. | 2.34 | Low |
| 6. remind them not to share my personal information and people's addresses, contact numbers, emails, etc. | 2.43 | Low |
| 7. instill in them the serious consequences of cyberbullying. | 2.01 | Low |
| 8. remind them not to create, access, store, or distribute files that could cause hurt or upset anyone. | 2.19 | Low |
| 9. instill in them that they will only copy, upload, publish, or distribute appropriate materials. | 2.69 | Moderate |
| 10. remind them not to meet up with anyone offline who only meets online without a parent or trusted adult | 1.92 | Low |
| Overall Mean | 2.27 | Low |

Table 2 discloses the results on the level of parental support to learners in ICT in modeling positive use. Respondents obtained an overall mean score of 2.27 and interpreted it as a low level. However, for further investigation, the respondents obtained the highest mean score of 2.69 on item No. 9, stating to instill in them that they will only copy, upload, publish, or distribute appropriate materials, interpreted as a low level, while the lowest mean of 1.92 was on item No. 10, stating to remind them not to meet up with anyone offline that only meets online without a parent or trusted adult, interpreted as a low level.



The result implies that most respondents appeared to have less supervision and monitoring of their children's ICT use. Many parents forget to monitor their children, whom they meet online and offline. This is because some parents are already worn out from doing housework, and some parents work throughout the day, which leaves them with less time to interact and devote to their kids' learning activities. As a result, this lack of engagement may make children more vulnerable to online risks and negatively impact their overall development. It highlights the need for parents to establish better routines and support systems to ensure they can actively participate in their children's digital lives. Hence, they are obliged to instill values in children to control the use of the internet to avoid the opposing side. Parents must be closer to their children so they can monitor or ask about their children's activities in school.

The result is supported by Lou et al. (2023), wherein approximately 60% of parents did not consistently participate in their children's technology usage. While Rideout et al. (2020) affirmed that parental companionship plays a crucial role in the cognitive development of young children when using ICT.

Table 3

Level of Parental Support to Learners in ICT According to the Encouraging Exploration

| Items | Mean | Interpretation |
|--|------|----------------|
| <i>As a parent, I</i> | | |
| 1. encourage them to explore educational websites that could help improve their learning. | 2.44 | Low |
| 2. encourage them to join and subscribe to online platforms such as YouTube with educational-related content. | 2.22 | Low |
| 3. suggest to them that alternative online video and messaging be used as another means of communication. | 2.13 | Low |
| 4. encourage them to explore new emerging technologies that will be helpful in my studies. | 2.31 | Low |
| 5. urge them to explore multimedia presentations and online learning resources suited to my learning styles. | 2.23 | Low |
| 6. encourage them to enroll in online tutorials/training related to ICT. | 2.40 | Low |
| 7. encourage them to join online forums, discussions, and media platforms that provide me the opportunity to interact with and share ideas. | 2.42 | Low |
| 8. encourage them to access online libraries, databases, and DepEd portals to provide them with up-to-date information related to my studies. | 2.15 | Low |
| 9. encourage them to register for online assessments, quizzes, and adaptive learning platforms that can help identify my strengths and weaknesses in a certain subject or topic. | 2.43 | Low |



| | | |
|---|-------------|------------|
| 10. urge them to explore useful online applications that could help enhance vocabulary, numeracy, and communication skills. | 2.09 | Low |
| Overall Mean | 2.28 | Low |

Table 3 divulges the data on the level of parental support to learners in ICT in encouraging exploration. Respondents obtained an overall mean score of 2.28 and interpreted it as low. However, conducting a thorough analysis, the respondents perceived a highest mean score of 2.44 on item No. 1, stating to encourage exploring educational websites that could help improve my learning, which is interpreted as a low level, while the lowest mean of 3.05 was on item No. 10, stating to explore useful online applications that could help enhance vocabulary, numeracy, and communications skills, which is interpreted as a moderate level.

The result implies that respondents rarely urge their children to explore useful online applications that can help improve their vocabulary, numeracy, and communication skills. This is because not all parents and learners have their own gadgets and internet connectivity, which hinders them from doing so. In addition, some parents may lack technological literacy, making it difficult for them to utilize digital platforms provided by schools to support their children's education. This lack of access to technology and the internet creates a barrier for both parents and children, limiting their ability to utilize available resources for educational enhancement. Consequently, this situation may contribute to the slower development of essential skills in vocabulary, numeracy, and communication. The finding is supported by Ramadhanti et al. (2024), who states that one of the main challenges is the digital divide, which refers to differences in access to and ability to use technology between individuals. This is often related to factors such as economic conditions, geographical location, and education level. The digital divide may prevent some parents from fully engaging in ICT-based education systems as they may not have access to the necessary devices or a stable internet connection.

Table 4

Difference in the Level of Parental Support to Learners in ICT According to the Early Exposure When Grouped According to Profile Variables

| Variable | Category | N | Mean Rank | Mann Whitney U | p-value | Sig. level | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------|----------|----|-----------|----------------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| Age | Younger | 10 | 109.4 | 5721.50 | .821 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| | Older | 4 | 9 | | | | |
| Average Family Monthly Income | Lower | 11 | 107.5 | 5395.00 | .564 | | Not Significant |
| | Higher | 2 | 8 | | | | |



| | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---------|------------|---------|------|-------------|
| Parents' Highest Educational Attainment | Lower | 15 6 | 103.0 7 | 3832.50 | .037 | Significant |
| | Higher | 60 | 122.6 3 | | | |

Table 4 summarizes the comparative analysis of the level of parental support for learners in ICT in early exposure when grouped and compared according to age, average family monthly income, and highest educational attainment. The computed p-values for variables age and average family monthly income are 0.821 and 0.564, respectively, which are all greater than the 0.05 level of significance and thus interpreted as not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of parental support for ICT learners in the area of early exposure when grouped and compared according to age and average family monthly income is accepted. However, for the variable parents' highest educational attainment, the computed p-value is 0.037, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, thus interpreted as significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of parental support to learners in ICT in the area of early exposure when grouped and compared according to parents' highest educational attainment is rejected.

The result suggests that the level of parental support for early ICT exposure among learners varies depending on their highest educational attainment. This is because parents with rich ICT experiences were more knowledgeable and could understand how to use ICT to support the learning activities of their children. Consequently, these parents are more likely to engage in meaningful discussions about technology and provide resources that enhance their children's digital literacy. In contrast, those with limited educational backgrounds may struggle to offer the same level of guidance, potentially hindering their children's early exposure to crucial ICT skills. This also suggests that parents with higher education levels tend to strike a better balance between recognizing the positive value and potential negative impacts of ICT on their children. They adopt an open and accepting approach to their children's ICT usage while simultaneously controlling the time spent on ICT to avoid addiction and dependency. This enables children to effectively harness ICT for educational and learning purposes. According to Anthony & Herrera (2022), to assist children with specific learning tasks, parents should at least possess basic Microsoft skills, such as typing and editing text, creating spreadsheets and formulas, and opening and preparing slide presentations. Additionally, they should possess technical proficiency in internet browsing, as numerous applications serve as online learning platforms. Parents who lack ICT literacy find it challenging to assist and support their child's learning since online distance learning requires ICT literacy. The domino effect might happen if parental support in accomplishing online learning tasks fails.

Table 5

Difference in the Level of Parental Support to Learners in ICT According to the Modeling Positive Use When Grouped According to Profile Variables



| Variable | Category | N | Mean Rank | Mann Whitney U | p-value | Sig. level | Interpretation |
|---|----------|----|-----------|----------------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| Age | Younger | 10 | 115.0 | 5139.50 | .134 | | Not Significant |
| | Older | 4 | 8 | | | | |
| Average Family Monthly Income | Lower | 11 | 102.3 | 5373.00 | .564 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| | Higher | 2 | 9 | | | | |
| Parents' Highest Educational Attainment | Lower | 88 | 105.5 | 4352.00 | .424 | | Not Significant |
| | Higher | 6 | 0 | | | | |
| | | 15 | 106.4 | | | | |
| | | 60 | 113.9 | | | | |

Table 5 compares parental support for modeling good use based on age, average family monthly income, and highest level of education. The computed p-values for variables age, average family monthly income, and highest educational attainment are 0.134, 0.564, and 0.424, respectively, which are all greater than the 0.05 significance level and thus interpreted as insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of parental support for ICT learners in modeling positive use when grouped and compared according to age, average family monthly income, and highest educational attainment is accepted.

The results suggest that the level of parental support for learners in ICT, particularly in the area of modeling positive use, remains consistent regardless of age, average family monthly income, or highest educational attainment. Since most parents were busy with work and other activities, their lack of ICT literacy prevented them from helping their children learn. This indicates that even though parental support is steady across different demographics, the inability of parents to engage effectively in ICT education due to their own limitations in digital skills can hinder their children's learning. Consequently, enhancing parental ICT literacy may be essential for improving student outcomes in this area. Parental support is considered to be one of the strongest factors in student academic success. According to Shadzad et al. (2023), parental support plays a pivotal role in a child's schooling and is one of the most powerful factors in a child's education, which is positively related to their academic performance. Parental support is used to observe its impact on the academic performance of students; it is closely associated with financial, emotional, and educational support provided by parents and other family members at home.

Table 6

Difference in the Level of Parental Support to Learners in ICT According to the Encouraging Exploration When Grouped According to Profile Variables



| Variable | Category | N | Mean Rank | Mann Whitney U | p-value | Sig. level | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|----------|----|-----------|----------------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| Age | Younger | 10 | 117.7 | 4865.50 | .034 | | Significant |
| | Older | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| Average Family Monthly Income | Lower | 11 | 99.94 | 5576.00 | .900 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| | Higher | 2 | 4 | | | | |
| Parents' Educational Attainment | Lower | 88 | 109.1 | 3947.00 | .070 | | Not Significant |
| | Higher | 12 | 108.0 | | | | |
| | | 8 | 6 | | | | |
| | | 15 | 103.8 | | | | |
| | | 6 | 0 | | | | |
| | | 60 | 120.7 | | | | |
| | | | 2 | | | | |

Table 6 analyzes the comparative analysis of the level of parental support in encouraging exploration when grouped and compared according to age, average family monthly income, and highest educational attainment. The computed p-values for variables average family monthly income and highest educational attainment are 0.900 and 0.070, which are all greater than the 0.05 level of significance and thus interpreted as not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of parental support in encouraging exploration when grouped according to average family monthly income and highest educational attainment is accepted. However, for the variable age, the computed p-value is 0.034, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance and thus interpreted as significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of parental support in encouraging exploration when grouped and compared according to age is rejected.

The result implies that parental support in the area encouraging exploration varies according to age. This is because those older parents with children in the higher grade level gave less attention to their child's school activities, believing that their child could manage on their own, particularly in using ICT. Younger parents, especially those with lower grades, focused more on their children, believing they still required their help in using ICT. Parents should possess ICT literacy to support the teaching and learning process. In order to assist the children with specific learning tasks, parents should at least possess basic Microsoft skills, such as typing and editing text, creating spreadsheets and formulas, and opening and preparing slide presentations (Anthony & Herrera, 2022).

Additionally, they should possess technical proficiency in internet browsing, as numerous applications serve as online learning platforms. Parents who lack ICT literacy find it challenging to assist and support their child's learning since online distance learning requires ICT literacy. The domino effect might happen if parental support in accomplishing online learning tasks fails.



Conclusion

Early exposure by learners to ICT was average due to the family's socio-economic situation. There was less supervision and monitoring of their children's ICT use. The lack of access to ICT resources hinders learners and parents from exploring online applications. Further, there was a variation in the parental support given to learners in early exposure to ICT concerning their educational attainment. There was also a variation in parental support for learners in encouraging exploration of ICT concerning their ages. This calls for education planners and policymakers to increase investment in ICT infrastructure, digital literacy training programs for parents, and internet safety needs to be expanded to help them use technology effectively and safely.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this study. He affirms that no financial, personal, or professional relationship with other individuals or organizations has compromised the research work's objectivity, integrity, or impartiality. Finally, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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