



A Phenomenological Inquiry on the Role of Parenting Style to Support Student Learning

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Abstract

Parenting style plays a fundamental role in shaping children's learning experiences, academic engagement, and overall educational development. This study explores the lived experiences of parents in exercising their parenting styles to support the learning of Grade 4–6 pupils enrolled at Elizalde Elementary School and Kinuban Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, eight purposively selected parents participated in in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns across participants' narratives. The findings reveal that parenting practices are dynamic and responsive to children's developmental needs and family circumstances. Parents described balancing discipline with emotional support, monitoring academic activities despite work and household demands, and adjusting parenting approaches according to children's personalities and learning needs. They encountered challenges associated with limited time, insufficient academic knowledge, financial constraints, and children's behavioral difficulties. To address these challenges, parents adopted various coping mechanisms, including emotional regulation, seeking support from family members and teachers, strengthening communication with their children, and relying on faith and prayer. The findings further demonstrate that responsive parenting, active parental involvement, and positive parent–child relationships enhance children's motivation, responsibility, and engagement in learning. The study concludes that effective parenting extends beyond academic supervision by integrating emotional, behavioral, and relational support. It recommends strengthening home–school partnerships through sustained parent education programs, collaborative communication, and school-based interventions that promote meaningful parental involvement.

Keywords

parenting styles, parental involvement, student learning, phenomenology, elementary education

How to Cite

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Author Contributions

The authors contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing—original draft preparation, writing—review and editing, and supervision. The authors approved the final manuscript.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards.

INTRODUCTION

Parenting style remains one of the most influential factors shaping children's academic development because it affects learning behaviors, motivation, emotional regulation, and educational engagement within the family environment. Research has consistently shown that parenting characterized by warmth, responsiveness, appropriate discipline, and active

involvement promotes academic achievement, psychosocial development, self-regulation, resilience, and positive school adjustment. Likewise, emotionally supportive family environments and collaborative parent-school relationships strengthen children's motivation and overall learning experiences (Barger et al., 2019; Baumrind, 1991; Boonk et al., 2018; Epstein, 2018; Gross, 2015; Piquart, 2016; Wagner et al., 2025). These findings underscore the important role of parenting in fostering children's holistic educational development across diverse learning contexts.

In the Philippine context, parenting practices are strongly influenced by cultural values emphasizing family cohesion, educational attainment, and parental responsibility. Filipino parents generally regard education as a means of improving their children's future opportunities and therefore strive to support their schooling despite financial, occupational, and family-related challenges. However, increasing work demands, changing family structures, and socioeconomic pressures often limit parents' capacity to provide consistent academic guidance and active school involvement. Nevertheless, parental involvement, collaborative decision-making, and responsive parenting continue to be recognized as important contributors to students' academic achievement and educational success within Philippine schools (Alampay & Garcia, 2019; Cariaga et al., 2025; Cauad, 2025). These contextual realities demonstrate the need to understand parenting within the social and cultural conditions experienced by Filipino families.

Although previous studies have established significant relationships between parenting styles, parental involvement, and children's academic achievement, most have relied on quantitative, correlational, or meta-analytic approaches that primarily explain statistical associations among variables (Barger et al., 2019; Boonk et al., 2018; Cupar et al., 2025; Hassan et al., 2022; Piquart, 2016). Consequently, limited attention has been given to understanding how parents personally experience, interpret, and adapt their parenting practices while supporting their children's learning. Moreover, qualitative evidence remains limited within rural Philippine elementary school settings, where cultural values, socioeconomic conditions, and family responsibilities shape parenting practices differently. This methodological and contextual gap warranted an in-depth exploration of parents' lived experiences to provide richer insights into how parenting styles are exercised in supporting student learning.

This study explored the lived experiences of parents from Elizalde Elementary School and Kinuban Elementary School regarding how they exercised their parenting styles to support the learning of their Grade 4–6 children during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, the study examined parents' experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights in supporting children's learning at home. The findings contributed contextual evidence to the understanding of parenting practices within Philippine elementary education and provided insights that may inform parent engagement programs, strengthen home-school partnerships, and guide future qualitative research. Although the findings were limited to a small purposively selected group of participants and were not intended for statistical generalization, they offered meaningful perspectives on how parents navigated their educational responsibilities within their respective family contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design grounded in the interpretivist paradigm to explore parents' lived experiences in exercising their parenting styles to support their children's learning. The phenomenological approach was selected because it enabled the researcher to understand how participants interpreted and gave meaning to their parenting experiences within their natural contexts. Rather than measuring predetermined variables, the design focused on describing the essence of parents' experiences, including their parenting practices, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights. This methodological approach aligned with the study's objectives because it facilitated an in-depth examination of participants' subjective realities and the meanings they attached to their roles as primary educators within the family. Furthermore, the design provided rich, contextualized accounts that enhanced understanding of parenting beyond observable behaviors and academic outcomes.

Sampling

The study used purposive sampling to identify information-rich participants who possessed direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation. Eight parents of Grade 4–6 learners from Elizalde Elementary School and Kinuban Elementary School during the School Year 2025–2026 participated in the study. Four participants were selected from each school following a preliminary survey conducted among forty parents to identify their dominant parenting styles. Inclusion criteria required participants to be parents or primary caregivers of Grade 4–6 pupils, to have actively supported their children's education for at least five years, to demonstrate identifiable parenting practices, and to provide voluntary informed consent. Parents who did not satisfy these criteria were excluded from participation. The sample size was considered appropriate because phenomenological research emphasizes information richness and thematic saturation rather than statistical representation. The inclusion of eight participants is consistent with recommendations for phenomenological research, where sample adequacy is determined by information richness and thematic saturation rather than statistical representativeness. Qualitative scholars have emphasized that relatively small samples are appropriate when participants possess extensive experience with the phenomenon and provide sufficiently detailed narratives to capture its essential meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Malterud et al., 2016).

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews using an interview guide developed from the study objectives and the theoretical foundations of parenting styles. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the appropriate authorities and obtained informed consent from all participants. Individual interviews were conducted in locations that ensured privacy and participant comfort and generally lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented with field notes documenting non-verbal observations

and contextual information. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, verified for accuracy, and prepared for thematic analysis to preserve the authenticity of participants' narratives.

Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings across participants' narratives. The thematic analysis followed the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2019), which involved (1) familiarization with the interview transcripts, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) searching for potential themes, (4) reviewing and refining themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final analytical narrative. This framework was selected because it provides a systematic and transparent procedure for identifying patterns across participants' lived experiences while maintaining flexibility appropriate for phenomenological inquiry. The analysis followed a systematic process that included familiarization with the transcripts, generation of initial codes, categorization of related codes, development of preliminary themes, review and refinement of themes, and interpretation of findings in relation to the study objectives and existing scholarship. Throughout the analytical process, participant identities were replaced with pseudonyms or identification codes to maintain confidentiality. The resulting themes captured the shared and unique experiences of parents in exercising their parenting styles to support student learning.

Reflexivity

Throughout the investigation, the researcher maintained reflexivity to minimize the influence of personal beliefs, assumptions, and prior experiences on the interpretation of participants' narratives. Reflexive journaling was employed before, during, and after the interviews to document personal reflections and potential biases. Bracketing techniques were likewise applied to ensure that the findings remained grounded in participants' lived experiences rather than the researcher's preconceived perspectives. These procedures strengthened the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative inquiry. The researcher also acknowledged personal experiences and professional interests related to elementary education that could potentially influence data interpretation. Throughout the study, conscious efforts were made to maintain neutrality by continuously reflecting on assumptions, documenting analytic decisions through reflexive journaling, and grounding interpretations solely in participants' accounts. These procedures enhanced transparency while minimizing researcher influence on the construction of themes.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional authority before the commencement of data collection. All participants received complete information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and expected benefits before voluntarily signing informed consent forms. Confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms and secure storage of interview transcripts and digital recordings. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence. All research activities were conducted with respect for participants' dignity, privacy, and psychological well-being.

Limitations and Rigor

The study acknowledged several methodological limitations. The findings were derived from a relatively small group of purposively selected participants from two public elementary schools and therefore were not intended for statistical generalization. In addition, the study relied on self-reported experiences that may have been influenced by participants' recollections and personal interpretations. Despite these limitations, methodological rigor was maintained through purposive participant selection, prolonged engagement during interviews, systematic thematic analysis, reflexive practice, and member checking to verify the credibility of participants' responses. Trustworthiness was further strengthened by ensuring credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability throughout the research process. Trustworthiness was established through multiple quality assurance procedures. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement with participants, member checking, and continuous validation of interpretations during interviews. Dependability was enhanced by maintaining a comprehensive audit trail documenting methodological decisions throughout the research process. Confirmability was promoted through reflexive journaling and systematic documentation of coding procedures to minimize researcher bias. Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the research context, participant characteristics, and analytical processes, allowing readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion are presented according to the major themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the participants' narratives. Each theme describes the lived experiences of parents in exercising their parenting styles to support their children's learning and is interpreted in relation to existing literature to provide deeper insights into the phenomenon. The discussion highlights the findings, their meanings, supporting evidence, and implications for educational practice and home-school partnerships.

Theme 1. Parenting Practices in Supporting Student Learning

Parents described their parenting practices as flexible and responsive to their children's academic, behavioral, and developmental needs. One participant explained: "Even if I come home tired from work, I still check my child's assignments because I want my child to know that education is important." (Participant 2)

Another participant shared: "I try to discipline my child with love so that my child understands the reason behind every correction." (Participant 6)

Although participants differed in their approaches, they consistently emphasized providing guidance, monitoring learning activities, maintaining discipline, and offering emotional support. Their narratives indicated that parenting

extended beyond academic supervision to include fostering children's personal growth, responsibility, and overall well-being. Participants described various practices that reflected their day-to-day involvement in supporting learning. Some maintained firm discipline while remaining supportive of their children's educational needs. Others regularly assisted with homework, monitored academic progress, reminded children about school responsibilities, prepared them for school each morning, encouraged them to pursue their educational goals, maintained open communication, or relied on trusted family members when employment responsibilities limited their availability. These experiences demonstrated that parenting practices were continuously adjusted according to children's developmental needs, family circumstances, and available support systems. The findings indicate that effective parenting was characterized by a balance between emotional responsiveness and appropriate behavioral expectations. Rather than consistently applying a single parenting style, participants adapted their approaches according to the demands of specific situations, enabling them to address both academic and emotional needs while maintaining family stability. These findings are consistent with previous evidence indicating that parenting effectiveness is strengthened when responsiveness is balanced with appropriate behavioral expectations, emotional support, and active parental involvement. Such parenting practices have been associated with improved academic adjustment, motivation, self-regulation, and educational achievement among children (Alampay & Garcia, 2019; Barger et al., 2019; Baumrind, 1991; Boonk et al., 2018; Epstein, 2018; Pinquart, 2016).

The adaptive nature of participants' parenting practices further suggests that parenting is a dynamic process influenced by children's developmental needs, family responsibilities, and contextual realities. Parents continuously adjusted their strategies to maintain meaningful involvement despite occupational demands and other competing responsibilities. This flexibility allowed them to sustain educational support while responding to changing family circumstances.

These findings further support Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory, which proposes that parenting characterized by responsiveness and appropriate behavioral expectations promotes children's academic and socio-emotional development. The participants' experiences suggest that effective parenting is not confined to a single parenting style but involves adaptive combinations of warmth, guidance, and behavioral regulation in response to children's developmental needs.

Theme 2. Challenges Encountered in Supporting Children's Learning

Parents experienced numerous challenges while supporting their children's education. A participant expressed: "Sometimes I cannot help with homework because the lessons today are different from what I learned before."

Another participant stated: "Financial problems make it difficult to buy school materials immediately, but we always try our best." (Participant 1) The most frequently reported difficulties included limited time because of employment, insufficient knowledge of school lessons, financial constraints, competing household responsibilities, and children's behavioral concerns. These challenges often generated frustration, fatigue, and feelings of inadequacy, particularly when parents perceived that they were unable to provide sufficient academic assistance. Participants explained that balancing work and family responsibilities frequently reduced opportunities for direct involvement in homework supervision and school-related activities. Several parents also acknowledged difficulty assisting children with increasingly complex academic content because they lacked confidence in their own educational knowledge. Financial limitations further restricted their ability to provide learning materials and other educational resources necessary for their children's academic success. These findings demonstrate that parental involvement is influenced not only by parents' willingness to participate but also by socioeconomic conditions, educational background, and competing family responsibilities. Although participants remained committed to supporting their children's education, structural and personal constraints frequently affected the consistency and quality of their involvement. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that occupational demands, limited educational preparation, household responsibilities, and economic constraints reduce parents' opportunities to participate consistently in their children's education while increasing parenting-related stress (Cooper & Stewart, 2021; Garbe et al., 2020; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Ribeiro et al., 2021). Likewise, parents' limited confidence in assisting with schoolwork and the emotional burden associated with balancing multiple responsibilities have been identified as significant barriers to effective parental involvement (Kurata et al., 2021; Mikolajczak et al., 2020). Despite these challenges, participants remained committed to their children's educational development by continuously seeking ways to provide guidance and encouragement within their available resources. Their experiences illustrate that effective parenting requires continuous adaptation, resilience, and persistence despite personal and environmental constraints. From Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the challenges experienced by parents demonstrate how family, work, school, and socioeconomic environments interact to influence parental involvement and children's educational experiences.

Theme 3. Coping Mechanisms Used by Parents in Supporting Student Learning

Despite the challenges they encountered, parents demonstrated resilience by adopting various coping mechanisms that enabled them to continue supporting their children's education. One parent explained: "Whenever I become stressed, I pray first before talking to my child so I can stay calm." (Participant 7)

Another participant shared: "I ask my older children and relatives to help when I am working." (Participant 4)

Their experiences reflected deliberate efforts to balance academic responsibilities, employment, family obligations, and personal well-being. Rather than withdrawing from their parenting roles, participants adjusted their approaches according to changing family circumstances while maintaining their commitment to their children's learning. Participants described several coping strategies that helped them manage parenting responsibilities. These included adjusting parenting practices to suit their children's personalities and developmental stages, separating personal problems from parenting responsibilities, seeking emotional and practical support from spouses and extended family members, maintaining regular communication with teachers, encouraging their children through positive reinforcement, and relying on prayer and spiritual faith during periods of stress. Parents also emphasized the importance of remaining patient, understanding their children's learning needs, and maintaining positive relationships despite daily challenges. The findings indicate that effective

coping extends beyond solving immediate academic concerns and encompasses emotional regulation, adaptive decision-making, and the utilization of available social support systems. These coping strategies enabled parents to sustain their involvement in their children's education while minimizing the negative effects of stress and competing responsibilities. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that parental resilience is strengthened through emotional regulation, adaptive coping, supportive family relationships, and collaborative partnerships with schools. Parents who effectively manage stress and maintain positive emotional well-being are better able to provide consistent educational support and foster healthy parent-child relationships (Algorani & Gupta, 2023; Garbe et al., 2020; Gross, 2015; Ribeiro et al., 2021; Salin et al., 2020). Likewise, reliance on extended family members and supportive social networks has been recognized as an important protective factor that strengthens parents' capacity to respond to children's academic and developmental needs (Epstein, 2018; Sarkadi et al., 2008). The participants' reliance on spiritual faith further illustrates the cultural significance of religion in helping Filipino families manage adversity. Prayer and religious beliefs served not only as sources of emotional comfort but also as mechanisms that strengthened perseverance, optimism, and confidence while fulfilling parenting responsibilities. These findings suggest that coping strategies are influenced by both personal resilience and culturally embedded support systems. These coping mechanisms are likewise consistent with Family Resilience Theory, which emphasizes that adaptive coping, supportive relationships, and shared family resources strengthen families' capacity to overcome adversity.

Theme 4. Parents' Insights on Parenting Styles and Student Learning

Parents developed meaningful insights regarding the influence of parenting styles on their children's motivation, behavior, and academic engagement. One participant reflected: "Children learn better when they feel supported instead of being afraid." (Participant 3)

Another participant stated: "I realized that parenting changes as children grow older, so I also need to change." (Participant 8)

Through their experiences, participants recognized that children's learning is enhanced not only by discipline but also by consistent encouragement, emotional support, open communication, and positive parent-child relationships. They believed that effective parenting requires balancing authority with understanding while responding to children's individual needs. Participants explained that children became more motivated to study when parents consistently encouraged them, acknowledged their accomplishments, and provided emotional reassurance during academic difficulties. They also emphasized the importance of establishing discipline, teaching respect, instilling positive values, and maintaining open communication as essential components of children's educational development. Several participants further recognized that parenting practices should evolve as children mature, requiring greater flexibility, patience, and understanding.

The findings suggest that parents viewed effective parenting as a developmental process that continuously adapts to children's changing needs. Rather than emphasizing control alone, participants acknowledged the importance of nurturing independence, confidence, and responsibility while maintaining appropriate parental guidance. Their reflections demonstrate increasing awareness that supportive parenting contributes to both academic success and children's holistic development. These findings are consistent with previous evidence showing that responsive parenting, effective communication, emotional support, and appropriate behavioral expectations promote children's academic motivation, self-regulation, and psychological well-being (Amani et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2022; Holloway et al., 2016; Rutigliano et al., 2023). Similarly, reflective parenting enables parents to evaluate and improve their parenting practices, thereby strengthening parent-child relationships and supporting children's educational development (Berthelot et al., 2015; Wagner et al., 2025). Within the Philippine context, parenting has likewise been recognized as a continuous developmental process shaped by family values, cultural expectations, and collaborative educational engagement (Alampay & Garcia, 2019). The participants' insights further indicate that parenting effectiveness depends on parents' willingness to reflect upon their own experiences and modify their practices according to their children's developmental needs. This reflective process enables parents to strengthen emotional connections while promoting children's independence, resilience, and lifelong learning.

These reflections also reinforce Epstein's Framework of School-Family-Community Partnerships by illustrating that meaningful parental engagement extends beyond academic monitoring to include emotional support, communication, and collaborative relationships with schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored the lived experiences of parents in exercising their parenting styles to support the learning of their Grade 4-6 children. The findings revealed that parenting practices were flexible and responsive to children's academic, behavioral, and developmental needs. Parents supported learning through academic guidance, discipline, emotional encouragement, and consistent communication while adapting their approaches according to family circumstances. Despite experiencing challenges related to limited time, financial constraints, insufficient academic knowledge, household responsibilities, and children's behavioral concerns, they remained committed to fulfilling their educational roles by adopting adaptive coping strategies and seeking support from family members, teachers, and their spiritual beliefs. The findings further demonstrated that responsive parenting positively influenced children's motivation, responsibility, and engagement in learning. Effective parenting extended beyond academic supervision by fostering emotional security, positive relationships, and holistic child development. The study contributes contextual evidence to the understanding of parenting practices within Philippine elementary education by highlighting how parents continuously adjusted their parenting styles to address children's evolving needs while balancing multiple family and socioeconomic responsibilities.

Schools should strengthen home-school partnerships by implementing sustainable parent engagement programs that promote responsive parenting, effective communication, and collaborative learning support. Teachers and school administrators should provide regular parenting seminars, family education workshops, and structured parent-teacher

consultations that equip parents with practical strategies for supporting children's academic and socio-emotional development. Educational programs should also recognize the diverse socioeconomic realities that influence parental involvement and provide appropriate assistance to families facing educational challenges. Parents are encouraged to maintain responsive parenting practices that balance discipline, emotional support, and open communication while actively collaborating with teachers to monitor their children's educational progress. Future researchers may replicate this study in different educational settings using larger and more diverse participant groups or mixed-methods and longitudinal designs to further examine how parenting styles influence students' academic, behavioral, and emotional development across varying cultural and socioeconomic contexts.

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