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Effectiveness of the University Tutorial Program: A Narrative Inquiry from the Parents and Guardians

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the perceived effectiveness of the tutorial program implemented by the Basic Education Department of the University of Cebu – Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue (UCLM) within its adopted community. Using a phenomenological approach, ten parents and guardians of participating children were purposively selected to share their lived experiences and observations regarding the program's impact. Findings revealed that the tutorial sessions significantly improved children's literacy, numeracy, study habits, and overall academic performance. Parents consistently reported increased motivation, interest in learning, and enhanced confidence among their children. Beyond academic gains, the program fostered holistic development by promoting social, emotional, and cognitive growth, strengthening the university and community relationship. Parents expressed high satisfaction and strong support for the initiative, emphasizing its long-term benefits and advocating for its continuity. The study highlights the importance of sustained parental involvement, collaborative school–community partnerships, and well-structured, evidence-based instructional support in achieving positive educational outcomes. Recommendations include expanding the program to accommodate more learners, enhancing parental engagement through workshops and orientations, conducting regular program evaluations, and integrating complementary learning activities such as reading clubs or peer tutoring. The study underscores the tutorial program's value as a model for promoting academic equity, community engagement, and sustainable educational development

Keywords: *Cebu, Community Extension, Literacy and Numeracy Development, Parental Involvement, Philippines, Student Motivation, Tutorial Program*

INTRODUCTION

Community extension is a significant initiative that academic institutions undertake to contribute to the holistic development of their adopted communities. It serves as a bridge between the academe and society, promoting mutual growth and collaboration. According to Montebon et al. (2023), community service is not merely about giving back but fostering relationships that empower communities to grow and develop. In particular, the Basic Education Department of the University of Cebu has actively implemented a tutorial program as part of its community extension efforts, catering to the educational needs of children from adopted communities.

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One of the fundamental aspects of this initiative is the involvement of parents and guardians, whose role is pivotal in reinforcing the effectiveness of learning interventions. Research has consistently shown that parental involvement is directly linked to children's academic success. Shrestha (2023) emphasizes that when parents are engaged in their child's education, it nurtures positive attitudes toward learning and enhances academic performance. Even in cases where direct involvement is limited, parents' emotional support and values have a long-lasting influence on a child's motivation and outlook on education.

The University of Cebu has institutionalized its community extension programs through a dedicated office, encouraging employees, faculty members, and students to contribute knowledge, skills, and time toward impactful social engagements (Montebon et al., 2023). Within this context, the tutorial program allowed faculty members to share expertise in teaching while promoting educational equity. Munna and Kalam (2021) define the teaching and learning process as a transformation of knowledge, where educators craft and implement strategies that address learner needs. The tutorial sessions aimed to support academic development while exposing the faculty to real-world teaching and community dynamics beyond the classroom.

Evaluating the outcomes of such initiatives is essential for ensuring that their objectives are met. Loso (2021) affirms that evaluating community extension programs helps institutions determine their relevance and effectiveness, especially when aligned with curricular offerings. This is supported by Medina (2018), who stresses the importance of aligning community engagement activities with the actual needs of adopted communities. Likewise, Tijsma et al. (2020) assert that this alignment enhances social impact and institutional accountability.

From a broader perspective, volunteer work offers dual benefits—it enhances academic knowledge while developing soft skills such as leadership, empathy, and critical thinking (Montebon et al., 2023). It also cultivates a deeper understanding of societal needs among faculty and students. Rubio et al. (2016) and Ling (2018) highlight the value of building lasting relationships through community service, which not only uplifts the community but also contributes to the moral and ethical growth of the participants.

Given this background, the present action research seeks to explore the perceived effectiveness of the university's tutorial program from the perspective of parents and guardians whose children benefited from the initiative. Through narrative inquiry, the study will gather qualitative insights into their lived experiences, observations, and reflections on how the program has impacted their children's learning and engagement with the school. Understanding these perceptions will serve as a valuable foundation for enhancing future community extension efforts by the Basic Education Department.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore the perceived experiences of the parents and guardians of the university's tutorial program. Specifically, it aims to determine lived experiences and the perceived benefits of the program. This study seeks to uncover the significant experiences of the parents and guardians with their children's participation in the tutorial program.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research design that was conducted in the university's adopted community. A phenomenological approach was used to explore the lived experiences and the parents' perceptions towards the tutorial program offered by the Basic Education Department of the University of Cebu – Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue (UCLM) Campus as the community extension program.

A total of ten (10) informants were purposively selected based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. To be eligible for participation, informants must be parents or guardians of children who actively

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participated in the university's tutorial program, be of legal age, and currently reside in the adopted community. Furthermore, they must have voluntarily provided informed consent to take part in the study.

The researchers followed important ethical guidelines throughout the study and ensured objectivity, fairness, and respect for all participants. During the interviews, the researcher remained neutral and professional, avoiding any influence on the personal views or feelings of the parents and guardians.

As part of its social responsibility, the researchers aimed to make the findings useful for the partner community, the university, the faculty, and the students. Before the interviews began, all participants were clearly informed about the purpose, scope, and goals of the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each informant. The informants were also informed that they could stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

To help participants understand the questions better, the researcher translated the interview questions into the Cebuano dialect. Confidentiality and privacy were strictly observed. All information collected was used only for academic purposes, and the personal identities were not included in any part of the report to ensure anonymity.

The researchers also made sure to communicate clearly and respectfully, which helped build trust and encouraged honest responses. A careful and fair process was followed to collect and analyze the data. These ethical practices were observed to protect the participants' rights and maintain the study's integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Improvement in Literacy Skills

The tutorial program effectively addressed the foundational learning gaps among children in the community. Informants consistently reported marked improvement in their children's reading, writing, and numeracy skills, demonstrating that the program successfully enhanced core academic competencies and helped learners catch up with essential skills.

The majority of parents observed significant progress in their children's ability to read, write, and count. For instance, one parent shared, *"Kamao na mobasa"* (knows how to read), while another emphasized, *"Mas naka kat-on siya sa pagbasa ug sa pag-ihap sa mga numero"* (he/she learned more in reading and counting numbers). Similarly, another parent remarked, *"Kahibaw na mo basa"* (already knows how to read).

These statements collectively affirm that the tutorial program is achieving its primary goal of supporting basic education by equipping children with foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Belarmino and Tamban (2023) conducted a descriptive study involving 11 parents of Grade I pupils, who participated in a two-week online training program to strengthen their ability to support their children's literacy and numeracy development. The literacy component covered phonological awareness, alphabet recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension, whereas the numeracy component focused on counting, basic arithmetic, and number symbol identification. Findings from the pre- and post-intervention assessments revealed significant and measurable improvements in the participating learners' literacy and numeracy competencies.

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Positive Impact on Child Development and Parental Gratitude

The tutorial program enhanced the children's academic learning and positively influenced their holistic development by fostering confidence and a sense of achievement. Parents consistently expressed deep appreciation for the program, strengthening their trust in the university's commitment to the community.

Several parents highlighted the program's significant contribution to their children's progress. One informant shared, *"Dako kaayo nakatabang sa amoang mga anak"* (it greatly helped our children). At the same time, another remarked, *"Dako kaayo ug kausaban ang akong anak sukad nga ni-skwela siya sa UCLM"* (there was a significant change in my child since he/she started schooling at UCLM).

These statements reflect strong parental satisfaction and gratitude, affirming that the tutorial program is vital in both academic improvement and strengthening school-community partnerships. Duraku and Nagavci (2023) reported that tutoring programs substantially improved the academic performance and emotional wellbeing of children with disabilities, fostering positive attitudes toward learning, enhanced mood, and better social and communication skills, while emphasizing the value of family–institution collaboration in building parental trust and satisfaction. Similarly, Nabors et al. (2022) described a university–community after-school mentoring initiative for refugee children that promoted self-esteem, confidence, social skills, and emotional wellbeing; although direct feedback from children and parents was not collected, mentors observed notable gains in self-concept and development, reflecting a foundation of trust and appreciation toward the institution implementing the program.

Increased Motivation and Interest in Learning

The tutorial program motivated children to attend school and actively participate in their lessons. It catalyzed an increase in their eagerness to learn, transforming their attitude toward education from passive to enthusiastic. Parents observed notable improvements in their children's willingness and excitement to study, which are crucial for sustaining long-term academic success.

One parent shared, *"Mas nigana siya na moskwela kay daghan siya ug nakat-onan"* (he/she became more eager to go to school because he/she learned a lot), while another stated, *"Mas ganahan siya mo skwela kay nig human mo diretso sa tutorial kay naka-uyon jud siya kay malingaw daw siya"* (he/she enjoys going to school because after class, the tutorial keeps him/her interested and entertained). Similarly, other parents mentioned, *"Entresado na siya pag-eskuyla"* (he/she is now interested in schooling) and *"Wiling nga makakat-on"* (willing to learn).

These responses indicate that the tutorial program is not only remedial but also effective in nurturing positive learning attitudes and sustaining educational engagement. Roughton (2016) revealed that private, one-on-one tutoring had a substantial impact on enhancing students' motivation and improving their overall attitudes toward learning. The study, which employed quantitative and qualitative analyses, demonstrated that tutoring fostered greater confidence, active engagement, and a more positive disposition toward education. Notably, supportive and nurturing tutor–student relationships were identified as a key factor contributing to these positive outcomes.

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Enhanced Learning Outcomes and Study Habits

The tutorial sessions significantly contributed to improving children's academic performance, comprehension of lessons, and development of essential study habits such as reading, writing, and counting. Parents reported noticeable progress in their children's ability to keep up with their schoolwork and apply what they learned during the sessions.
One parent shared, *"Sukad naapil siya sa tutorial abtik na kaayo siya moihap ug pagsulat ug makahibalo na sad siya mobasa"* (since joining the tutorial, he/she has become quick at counting, writing, and can now read). At the same time, another mentioned, *"Gidugangan ang nakat-onan bahin sa ilang liksyon"* (his/her learning was supplemented with additional lessons).

These responses reflect the program's effectiveness in reinforcing classroom learning and building a stronger academic foundation for the children, making it a valuable educational intervention for the community. Brodeur, Roberts, and Roberts (2025) highlighted that structured tutoring programs, when closely aligned with classroom instruction, implemented in small groups, and facilitated by well-supported tutors, significantly improved students' performance in reading (grades 2–3) and mathematics (grades 4–5) compared to their non-tutored counterparts. While the primary focus was on academic achievement, this accelerated progress was also linked to increased motivation and active engagement, as learners gained tangible improvements and greater confidence in their academic abilities.

Similarly, Pelatti and Piasta (2017) reported that an after-school tutoring initiative for kindergartners substantially strengthened foundational literacy skills, including print awareness, phonological awareness, and comprehension strategies, through explicit and evidence-based shared reading sessions. As children developed these core competencies and experienced academic success, they cultivated a more positive attitude toward learning, fostering sustained motivation and continued participation in their educational journey.

Strong Support and Appreciation for the Tutorial Program

Parents expressed strong support and high satisfaction with the tutorial program, recognizing its positive impact on their children's learning and overall development. Their gratitude highlights the program's relevance and the community's appreciation for the university's initiative.
One parent stated, *"Maayo kining programa para sa mga bata"* (this program is good for the children), while another expressed, *"Dako kaayo kung pasalamat sa UCLM ug sa mga nagduma sa programa"* (we are very thankful to UCLM and those who manage this program).

These affirmations demonstrate that the program has gained the trust and approval of the community, reinforcing its importance and creating a strong foundation for continued collaboration and sustainability. Wei and Ni (2023) revealed that strong parental involvement—both within the home and through active participation in school-based activities—is crucial in enhancing parents' satisfaction and fostering stronger school–community relationships. Their study highlighted that meaningful engagement in governance and decision-making processes cultivates trust and promotes a sense of shared responsibility for the school's educational mission, even in cases where immediate academic improvements may not be evident.

Likewise, Setyarini, Putri, and Tyas (2021) emphasized that parents' satisfaction with educational services is significantly influenced by reliability, assurance, empathy, and personalized support. Their findings indicated that when schools provide inclusive, empathetic, and dependable learning environments,

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parents are more likely to develop higher satisfaction levels, reinforcing trust and sustained support for educational programs.

Desire for Continuity and Program Sustainability

Parents strongly expressed their desire for the tutorial program to continue, reflecting its perceived long-term benefits for their children's education. This highlights the importance of sustaining the program through ongoing partnerships, regular evaluations, and adequate resource allocation to maintain its positive impact.

One parent suggested, *"Padayunon lang permi"* (it should always continue). At the same time, another emphasized, *"Epadayonn pa nato ang tutorial para jud madasig ang mga bata"* (we should continue the tutorial so the children will be more encouraged). These statements reveal the community's strong support for the program's continuation and their recognition of its role in sustaining and improving children's learning progress. Benner (2017) highlighted the vital role of continuity in early childhood education in sustaining developmental progress. Their study, published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), revealed that even well-designed early interventions, such as the Head Start program, often experience a gradual decline in their benefits when there are gaps in educational continuity. To address this challenge, the researchers advocate for the PK–3 conceptual model, which promotes greater alignment and smoother transitions from preschool to the primary grades. This approach helps maintain educational momentum and supports long-term success for young learners.

In a similar manner to Sim et al. (2021), who conducted a study that examined strategies for increasing the uptake of parent education programs in preschool and school settings. Using a Delphi methodology, the researchers identified essential strategies to enhance program sustainability, including improving accessibility, strengthening family–school partnerships, and promoting programs more effectively. These measures foster stronger parental involvement and ensure sustained commitment to educational initiatives over time.

CONCLUSION

The tutorial program implemented by the Basic Education Department of the University of Cebu – Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue (UCLM) has significantly improved children's literacy, numeracy, study habits, and motivation toward learning within the adopted community. Parents and guardians expressed overwhelming gratitude and firm support, recognizing the program as a vital intervention that reinforced academic foundations and enhanced children's confidence, interest in school, and overall development. Their testimonies affirm that the program has successfully strengthened the partnership between the university and the community, creating a positive educational environment that fosters long-term benefits. Sustaining this initiative will ensure continued growth in educational equity and reinforce the university's commitment to its social responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sustain and expand the program by adopting a school to accommodate more children in the adopted community.
- Enhance parental engagement initiatives by conducting periodic orientations, workshops, and feedback sessions to strengthen home-based learning reinforcement.

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- Regularly evaluate the program's impact through systematic monitoring, assessment, and feedback mechanisms to continuously improve its relevance and effectiveness.
- Integrate complementary learning activities such as reading clubs, peer tutoring, or digital learning tools to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills further.

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