

Competency Level on Life Skills in Using Modules to Learners with Special Educational Needs

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-method research determined the competency level of the life skills of the Learners with special educational needs (LSENs) at identified SpEd Centers in Oroquieta City Schools Division during the COVID 19 pandemic. There were 30 parent respondents, chosen through purposive sampling, evaluated the 46 learners' life skills performance and gave the challenges they encountered in teaching them. Researcher-made observation questionnaires used underwent pilot testing and passed the validity and consistency test. The quantitative data gathered were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Findings divulged that in terms of the learners with special educational needs' (LSENs) profile: nine (9) of whom had learning disabilities and 37 had multiple disabilities, had showed average life skills on nutrition and personal hygiene. The aggregated level of competency of different life skills were: washing of hands independently was done with limitations; brushing the teeth properly was done with limitations; uses spoon in eating/proper eating of finger food was done competently; consuming food-opening and drinking of bottled water was done with limitations. When grouped by its learners' profile, there was no significant difference on the level of competency of various Life Skills. The challenges encountered by the parents relative to the teaching of Life skills to Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs) were: execution of Life Skills, behavior management of the child, and work balance. It was recommended that the module should be continually used and enhanced for the continued benefit of the parents and the learners with special educational needs (LSENs) while distance learning is still in place due to pandemic.

Keywords: Mixed method, Learners with Special Educational Needs, Modules, Modular learning, Special Education, Oroquieta city

I. INTRODUCTION

COVID 19 has brought a huge problem to the world and infected millions of people. To prevent widespread of the virus, all nations worldwide have closed close schools, offices, restaurants, malls, and other establishments for an indefinite period and ordered the implementation of alternative delivery of services. In the education field, the government and the educational institution officials have respectively undertaken initiatives to ensure continuous access and delivery of quality education despite these trying times.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented flexible distance learning where the learners and parents had to choose: online approach or synchronous -- an electronic-web-based instruction where the teachers and learners attend a real-time class or video-conference through Google meet, Zoom, Facebook, or other platforms; the modular learning or asynchronous -- the learners were just given a copy of self-learning modules (SLM) by the schools; and blended learning -- a combination of the two modes mentioned above wherein the teachers commonly conducted the discussion online, while tasks, assignments and activities were done offline (DepEd Order No. 8, series of 2020).

The implementation of the new pedagogical approaches are tough for the students considering the lack of technological resources, stable internet connectivity, and parents' lack or limited knowledge to explain the modules' contents (Ofori (2018) as they would serve as substitute or para-teachers in the new normal. The burden is a lot heavier for the learners with special educational needs (LSENs) taking into accounts the complexity and extent of their characteristics and conditions; and the disruption of disability-focused services (Marshall et. al., 2020). The students with special needs got easily distracted with external stimulus. Many of them were not interested to attend online classes. Several of the students with special needs also received no support from education services, and there were

less communication and cooperation among teachers, families, and students (Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2021).

For many teachers, the lack of real-time communication made it difficult to keep students motivated, especially younger students; and meet the LSENs (Cavanaugh & DeWeese, 2020), the government however has no choice but to exercise precautionary measures and adapt the distance learning to prevent virus' transmission as its priority is at all times the safety and welfare of the people. Given that instant scenario, collaboration between families and teachers therefore plays a vital role in the attainment of quality educational outcomes (Mustafa, 2020). Teachers have to carefully assess and examine the modules' quality contents and appropriateness to a particular learner's unique needs. Teachers should serve as a guide for the parents or guardians as to how they would facilitate the discussions and handle assessment tasks for the learners to acquire the basic life skills (DepEd Order No. 8, series of 2020).

In this unprecedented time, no doubt, the parents' involvement, competence, dedication, and tenacity in facilitating the delivery of the module's contents are highly imperative for the learners to acquire the targeted competencies. However, parents, as the family's breadwinners, had to juggle with the newly-installed teaching obligations with their jobs and household chores (Zhou et. al. 2020), and this would hamper the teaching-learning process. Hence, this study was conceptualized to determine the life skills' level of competency of the learners with special educational needs (LSENs); and the parents' encountered challenges in teaching life skills learning to their children amidst the quarantine period due to Covid-19 pandemic to improve the delivery of educational services.

II. Review of Related Literature and Studies

Transactional Distance theory by Michael Moore described that the

psychological or communicative space that separates the instructor from the learner in the transaction between them distinguished from physical to temporal distance, transpiring in the intended learning situation. According to Giossos et al, 2009, the nature of the transaction developed among teachers, students and parents in distance learning needs to consider three factors: dialogue, structure, and learner's autonomy. Dialogue means that there should be clearly defined educational targets, cooperation and understanding on the part of the teacher should be more evident for the parents to be guided as they would be highly involved in facilitating the discussions of the modules' contents to their children. The course structure (Zhang, 2003) emphasized the course goals and objectives; the pedagogical model used in teaching the course; the nature of course assessment relevant for the individual student needs. Giossos et al, (2009) explained that learner's autonomy largely depended on the quality discussions, and assessments done by the teachers to ensure an effective skills or knowledge acquisition.

The distance learning had shifted largely the teaching obligations to the parents. Considering that parents did not study for years to master the art of teaching, they have to be acquainted with the foundation of learning process and be in close communication with the teachers for clarifications and feed backing purposes (Petretto et. al., 2020). Though, the learner's independence and acquisition of life skills is closely tied in with a learner's sagacity of self-rule or self-determination, it should be noted that learners' with special educational needs have to treated differently as their disability or learning weakness demanded a different form of understanding and considerations. Bin Nordin et. al. (2021) discussed that in distance learning, the parents' role in the teaching-learning process became highly essential and co-relational for the learner with special needs to possess the life skills which they badly needed in their daily lives for independence and to (Hornby, 2015) achieve their maximum inclusion and full participation in the community when they leave school. Special education is an exclusive way of learning that allows students with exceptional needs, such as learning, mental or physical disabilities, to grow and enhance they are in individual ways. Educators recognize the

importance of Individualized Education Plans (IEP) aimed at addressing the child's weaknesses and improving his life skills in which (Ofori, 2018) the success of the program implementations depends on the stakeholders, instructional materials, facilities, equipment, parents.

Alajmi (2019) found out that the use of e-portfolios improves capabilities, and life skills. It also encourages student teachers to know about tendencies, trends, and interests by preparing the file and compiling its content. Baragash et. al. (2020) studied the efficacy of augmented reality (AR) in teaching individuals with special needs found out that AR enabled the development of their daily life skills. Jaya et. al. (2018) illustrated that life skill skills for students with special needs are very important and valuable for them to be able to live independently by not / less dependent on others. Archer Hughes (2011) discussed that this has been a colossal task to undertake but so long as that clear lessons goals; a step-by-step procedures; use clear and concise academic language; use guided practice with supports in place; closely monitor student progress; provide affirmative and/or corrective feedback; help students make connections with the contents; and provide multiple opportunities for students to practice skills independently are written in the modules and administered properly (Morris et. al (2021), the physical gap between the teachers and students would become inconsequential as the parents, technology, teachers' guidance and instructional materials have already bridged it (Phillips, 2005).

Alwell & Cobb (2009) made a systematic review of functional life skills curricular interventions for youth with disabilities and the findings provided that efficacy of the use of functional or life skills curricular interventions across educational environments, disability types, ages, and gender in promoting positive transition-related outcomes appeared to work as clearly manifested and consistent of empirical evidence that the covered studies presented. Behroz-Sarcheshmeh et. al. (2017) supported that the effectiveness of life skills training including cooperation, assertion, and self-control on social skills of high school students with intellectual disabilities was evident.

Maryam et. al. (2011) indicated that life skills training lead to significant increase of self-esteem that caused to increase the necessary skills in students and decline school and educational problems. deRecat (2019) found out that the use of video and peer modeling to teach specific life skills is valuable to special education students. Nevertheless, the lack of life skills standards and curriculum readily available were barriers that deter them from implementing life-skills based programs.

Life skills is a set of essential skills taught through learning and/or direct life involvement that allow learners with special educational needs to efficiently handle matters and problems normally encountered in daily basis (Jaya et. al. 2018). Hence, the presence of barriers to acquiring competency in life skills has to be addressed for it contributed to life skill deficits (Donnellan & Mathews, 2020). Otherwise, it would more likely affect learners with or without special needs in handling and overcoming difficulties and challenges in life as life skills do not only bridge the gap between basic functioning and capabilities, but also strengthen the ability of an individual to meet the needs and demands of the present society (Prajapati et. al., 2017; Rupley, et al 2009) for the rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance of disabled persons and their integration into the mainstream of society (Republic Act No. 7277).

The numerous studies' findings, theory and legal basis mentioned above accentuated the significance learners' acquisition of life skills. In the light of Covid-19 lockdown where the delivery of educational services have changed; and in congruence with DepEd Order No. 12 Series, 2020 mandated the Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021, where inclusiveness was strengthened so that more women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), learners with special needs (LSNs), and members of Indigenous Peoples (IP) and marginalized communities are reached, this study was conducted to determine the life skills' level of competency of the learners with special educational needs (LSENs); and the parents' encountered challenges in teaching life skills learning to their children during the distance or flexible learning administration for

the continuous improvement of quality educational outcomes amidst the pandemic crisis.

III. OBJECTIVES

This study determined the Competency Level of the Life Skills using Modules with Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs) at identified SpE Centers in Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental school year 2020-2021

Specifically, this ought answers the following queries:

1. What is the demographic profile of the learners as to:

1.1 Type of Disabilities, and

1.2 Life Skills Status?

2. As perceived by the parent respondents to what level of competency of different life skills has been demonstrated by the learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs) as to:

2.1 Self -Care / Caring for Personal Needs

2.1 Washing of Hands Independently

2.2 Brushing the teeth properly.

2.2 Consuming Food

2.1 Proper Eating, and

2.2 Opening and drinking of Bottled water?

3. When group by its learners' profile, is there any significant difference on the level of competency of various Life Skills?

4. What are the Challenges encountered by the parents relative to the teaching of Life skills to Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs)?

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quanti-quali approach. The 30 parent respondents, who evaluated the 46 learners' life skills performance, were chosen through purposive sampling. Informed consent and other ethical considerations were undertaken. Researcher-

made observation questionnaires used underwent pilot testing and passed the validity and consistency test with 0.73 Cronbach Alpha (CA) values. Ethical considerations were done and adhered with. The data gathered were then subjected to descriptive statistic in presenting the learners' profile; and the teacher-respondents' perceived level of competency of different life skills demonstrated by the learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs). While, inferential statistics was utilized in testing the significant difference between the learners' profile, and their level of competency of various Life Skills. Thematic analysis was done in generating the themes of Challenges encountered by the parents relative to the teaching of Life skills to Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSENs) through NVivo software. Relevant analyses, interpretations, and implications were then given and interlaced.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To appropriately respond to the objectives of the current study, this part here does involve a sum of seven (7) table presentations with corresponding data analyses. The first table is more on the respondents' profiling while the other four (4) tables have dealt on the level of competency towards life skills. Moreover, the last two (2) tables speak well on the test of significance on the difference on the level of competency of various life skills when grouped by the learners' profile and the challenges encountered by the parents relative to teaching their children with special educational needs, respectively.

Table 1. Profile of learners as to life skills status and type of disabilities

Life Skills	Learning Disabilities				Multiple Impairments				Total	
	Male	Female	Sub-Total	%	Male	Female	Sub-Total	%	Both	%
All (skills)	3	1	4	8.70	3	1	4	8.70	8	17.392
Good Grooming	2	—	2	4.34	4	2	6	13.04	8	17.392
Health & Habit	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nutrition	1	—	1	2.17	7	6	13	28.26	14	30.435
Personal Hygiene	1	—	1	2.17	5	3	8	17.39	9	19.566
Personal Safety	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Habits	1	—	1	2.17	3	3	6	13.04	7	15.217
Sub-Total	8	1	9	19.57	22	15	37	80.43	46	100.00

Note: Percentage has been rounded off to 2 decimal places to approximately derive the 100%.

In general, the Table reveals that these learners with special educational needs (LSENs) have more showing of such life skills on nutrition and personal hygiene albeit the categories on

good grooming and all (skills) also both have gotten a fine marking. However, the two (2) equally important life skills that these LSENs must acquire, specifically on personal safety as well as on health and habit, have obtained a zero rating from the survey. Definitely, these data imply a clear and present issue to deal with among all parties involved. Although the non-acquirement of these essential life skills could be at least explained by these learners' certain

level of dependency from their parents or guardians, the same should not be left within such form. In fact, this case could entail a non-favourable perspective among these LSENs knowing that their parents or guardians will never be permanently around to assist them in all of their lives. In return, the necessity of acquiring the lifelong skills is a concern that must be appropriately intervened. It is imperative therefore that parents, as shadow teachers at home, should be exposed or trained on the foundation of learning process (Petretto et. al., 2020). With a demand from the new normal to compel usage of modules during the delivery of instruction for these learners to scholastically engage, the matter on life skills' acquisition among the LSENs should be timely addressed. How these modules must be crafted to achieve the intended learning outcome on the

psychomotor domain is an educational requisite that the Subject and Master Teachers must both look into and correspondingly carry out. Hence, the inclusion of parents during planning and outlining the instruction, if only so possible, is vital in working out the attainment of those competencies. Previous studies pointed out that explicit instruction has been empirically evaluated to boost the achievement as well as the success of learners where teachers break down intricate skills and convert them into smaller parts (Archer & Hughes, 2011). In this way, those life skills that have been perceived to be so difficult to possess among the LSENs can be nonetheless actualized by such instructive approach – whether using the module or not.

Table 2. Level of competency of different life skills (washing of hands independently) demonstrated by the learners with special educational needs

Life Skills	SPED Center-1		SPED Center-2		SPED Center-3		Overall Results	
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description
Turn on the faucet	3.88	COMP	3.00	DBWL	3.07	DBWL	3.32	COMP
Wet hands	3.75	COMP	3.00	DBWL	3.00	DBWL	3.25	COMP
Soap the hands	3.38	COMP	2.71	DBWL	3.00	DBWL	3.03	DBWL
Rub each other's palms	3.50	COMP	2.71	DBWL	2.53	TIS	2.91	DBWL
Rub the back of each other's palm	3.50	COMP	2.71	DBWL	2.40	TIS	2.87	DBWL
Rub palms that are clenched together	3.50	COMP	2.71	DBWL	2.33	TIS	2.85	DBWL
Rub the back of the fingers	3.25	COMP	2.71	DBWL	2.27	TIS	2.74	DBWL
Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.54	COMP	2.79	DBWL	2.66	TIS	3.00	DBWL

Note: 3.25-4.00 Competent (COMP); 2.50-3.24 Done but with limitations (DBWL); 1.75-2.49 There is progress (TIS); 1.00-1.74 Beginners (BGN)

Combining all results, the average weighted mean shows that the LSENs can perform the various skills in the aspect of washing their hands independently but were done with certain

limitations. Notably, there are two (2) life skills where the LSENs are able to gain a higher competency level – these are the turning on the faucet ($x=3.32$) and wet hands ($x=3.25$), respectively. The Table further discloses that there were three (3) life skills that have earned a lower rating among the other indicators within this DBWL category, which primarily deals on rubbing the back of each other's palm ($x=2.87$), rubbing palms that are clenched together ($x=2.85$) as well as rubbing the back of the fingers (2.74) in that order. Data on the latter indicators entail that there is still a need for the concerned children to hone their life skills with regards to washing the hands independently. It is culturally known that many Filipinos with extended families, who are living together in one roof, are not so into washing the hands before every meal. Accordingly, previous findings have disclosed that children mirror the behaviours that they observed in other people (Nabavi, 2014). Hence, this could explicate the reason why these LSENs could not fully do the rubbing of their palms and back of the fingers as the people within their immediate surroundings have not exhibited,

too, such manner. Consequently, the expected life skills may not after all be acquired fully by these learners with such identified type of disabilities (refer to Table 1). Findings from previous empirical investigations pointed out those students with special needs who received no full support from education bureau and with less cooperation being noted among the teachers and families have deprived them to obtain the intended life skills (Yazcayir & Gurgur, 2021). As such, this articulated need specifically calls on the Subject Teachers and parents to consider as they facilitate a home-based instruction among the LSENs during the new normal. Expressly, it is so crucial here that the learning modules must be outlined and carried out to allow the them to well engage in those activities while at home – where the less achieved competencies shall be addressed. In fact, previous findings have pointed out the compelling need to accordingly act on those impediments specifically in the acquisition of life skills as the same shall eventually caused deficits if left unattended (Donnellan & Mathews, 2020).

Table 3. Level of competency of different life skills (brushing the teeth properly) demonstrated by the learners with special educational needs

Life Skills	SPED Center-1		SPED Center-2		SPED Center-3		Overall Results	
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description
Pick up toothpaste and brush his/her teeth	3.50	COMP	2.71	DBWL	3.00	DBWL	307	DBWL
Put toothpaste to the toothbrush	3.50	COMP	2.71	DBWL	2.73	DBWL	2.98	DBWL
Wet the toothbrush	3.75	COMP	2.71	DBWL	3.00	DBWL	3.15	DBWL
Brush the front teeth	3.38	COMP	2.43	TIS	2.73	DBWL	2.85	DBWL
Brush the upper left side of the teeth	3.38	COMP	2.43	TIS	2.27	TIS	2.69	DBWL
Brush the upper right side of the teeth	3.50	COMP	2.43	TIS	2.33	TIS	2.75	DBWL
Brush the lower left side of the teeth	3.38	COMP	2.43	TIS	2.40	TIS	2.74	DBWL

Brush the lower right side of the teeth	3.50	COMP	2.57	DBWL	2.40	TIS	2.82	DBWL
Gargle	3.75	COMP	2.57	DBWL	2.67	DBWL	3.00	DBWL
Spit	3.63	COMP	2.57	DBWL	3.07	DBWL	3.09	DBWL
Wash the toothbrush	3.50	COMP	2.57	DBWL	2.87	DBWL	2.98	DBWL
Wipe the face	3.25	COMP	2.57	DBWL	3.07	DBWL	2.96	DBWL
Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.50	COMP	2.56	DBWL	2.71	TIS	2.92	DBWL

Note: 3.25-4.00 Competent (COMP); 2.50-3.24 Done but with limitations (DBWL); 1.75-2.49 There is progress (TIS); 1.00-1.74 Beginners (BGN)

Another important life skill that any child with special needs must be primarily taught by parents is to properly brush his/her teeth. Jaya et. al. (2018) illustrated that life skill skills for students with special needs are very important and valuable for them to be able to live independently by not / less dependent on others. To increase the competency level of the latter, this fundamental training at home can be supplemented in school when the child undergoes the usual formal education in school – at least when this pandemic sees it end. As can be observed, the average weighted mean for this aspect derived a rating which, if interpreted, imply that these LSENS from the three (3) research environments can perform such basic life skills but with limitations. Somehow, the data from the Table disclose that

there are three (3) indicators which garnered a better competency level particularly on how the child can wet the toothbrush ($x=3.15$), spit($x=3.09$), and pick up toothbrush and brush the teeth ($x=3.07$), respectively. On the other hand, there are two (2) indicators which obtain a lesser marking in terms of their competency level – these are the brushing of the upper right side ($x=2.75$) and lower left side of the teeth ($x=2.74$). These results simply imply how the child is able to do such life skills but with certain limitation. As observed, many of the parents of these LSENS are either high school or elementary level where several of them were having no regular jobs at all. Consequently, such exhaustions from work would cause them to often reach out to their children special needs while at home. This condition was supported by an empirical investigation which disclosed that the parents' jobs were conflict with the LSENS' schedule of conduct of the sessions, which would eventually hamper the teaching-learning process (Zhou et. al. 2020).

Table 4. Level of competency of different life skills (uses spoon in eating/proper eating of finger food) demonstrated by the learners with special educational needs

Life Skills	SPED Center-1		SPED Center-2		SPED Center-3		Overall Results	
	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description	Weighted Mean	Description
Pick up and hold the spoon properly	3.63	COMP	2.86	DBWL	2.93	DBWL	3.14	DBWL
Spoon the food	3.75	COMP	2.86	DBWL	3.13	DBWL	3.25	COM

				L				P
Put into the mouth	3.63	COMP	3.00	DBWL	3.00	DBWL	3.21	DBWL
				L				L
Close the mouth	3.88	COMP	3.14	DBWL	3.20	DBWL	3.41	COMP
				L				P
Chew the food properly	3.88	COMP	3.00	DBWL	3.13	DBWL	3.34	COMP
				L				P
Keep spooning the food until it runs out	3.50	COMP	3.00	DBWL	2.93	DBWL	3.14	DBWL
				L				L
Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.71	COMP	2.98	DBWL	3.05	DBWL	3.25	COMP
				L				P

Note: 3.25-4.00 Competent (COMP); 2.50-3.24 Done but with limitations (DBWL); 1.75-2.49 There is progress (TIS); 1.00-1.74 Beginners (BGN)

Utilizing of spoon in eating or even proper eating of finger food, the Table reveals that the LSENs from the SPED centres have demonstrated such ability with certain level of competence in an overall assessment ($x=3.25$). However, there are three (3) of these indicators that have garnered a lower rating within this category specifically on the ability to pick up and hold the spoon properly ($x=3.14$), put the spoon into the mouth ($x=3.21$), and keep spooning the food until it runs out ($x=3.14$). The data, nevertheless, entail the need still to further guide and assist these LSENs attain the desired competency level. It is vital that parts in the module preparations, the Subject Teachers should take into consideration how their parents are able to reinforce the delivery of intended lessons that will correspondingly respond on the latter target especially when the instruction is done at home. As pointed out by many knowledge facilitators, the actual communicative disconnection between the teachers and LSENs or between their parents

and the child(ren) have been contributory on the latter's declining interest to academically engage in such modular learning during the new normal (Cavanaugh & DeWeese, 2020). Ordinarily, the action to be taken here only warrants simple approach – that is to consistently motivate these LSENs to adapt such particular life skills while regularly monitoring their progress, too. It is in this manner that the competency level of the concerned child(ren) may be enhanced as regards utilization of spoon and proper eating of finger food while at home during the pandemic. Thus, it is essential that the concerned Subject Teachers, with collaboration of the parents, should design that academic instruction that will wholly intervene and correspondingly act on those matters which will help the LSENs achieve the life skills as they engage in those practical lessons during the pandemic. This mentioned matter was reaffirmed by another scientific study that expounded the link with the curriculum contents and the manner from where the modules have been crafted to purposively provided the students to practice and acquire that life skills alone when instruction is properly facilitated (Morris et. al (2021),

Table 5. Level of competency of different life skills (opening and drinking of bottled water) demonstrated by the learners with special educational needs

Life Skills	SPED Center-1		SPED Center-2		SPED Center-3		Overall Results	
	Weighted	Description	Weighted	Description	Weighted	Description	Weighted	Description

	Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean	
Place the water bottle on the table in front of the child and hold half the bottle	3.50	COMP	2.86	DBWL	3.33	COMP	3.23	DBWL
Position the right hand on the table	3.50	COMP	2.86	DBWL	2.87	DBWL	3.08	DBWL
Cover the bottle on the left side	3.63	COMP	2.86	DBWL	2.80	DBWL	3.10	DBWL
Keep turning the lid as far as it will go	3.50	COMP	2.86	DBWL	2.80	DBWL	3.05	DBWL
Remove the lid and ready to drink	3.38	COMP	2.86	DBWL	3.00	DBWL	3.08	DBWL
Aggregate Weighted Mean	3.50	COMP	2.86	DBWL	2.96	DBWL	3.11	DBWL

Note: 3.25-4.00 Competent (COMP); 2.50-3.24 Done but with limitations (DBWL); 1.75-2.49 There is progress (TIS); 1.00-1.74 Beginners (BGN)

The average weighted mean ($x=3.11$) for the three (3) SPED centres apparently speaks on how the LSENs are able to consume their food, particularly on the aspect of opening and drinking of bottled water. Nonetheless, there is an item which has gotten a higher rating ($x=3.23$) against another item which obtain a lower marking (3.05) among the other indicators based on the data. The latter indicator, which points to the LSENs ability to keep turning the lid as far as it will go, somehow imply that these learners can do it alone but with certain limitations. Behroz-Sarcheshmeh et. al. (2017) supported that the effectiveness of life skills training including cooperation, assertion, and self-control on social skills of high school students with

intellectual disabilities was evident. Hence, it is a better trail to expose these LSENs to such form as the study posited. Furthermore, the case which was mentioned earlier, if further evaluated, could be explicated by other factors that may have caused it to deter the ease of turning the bottle such as an issue on slippery or degree of tightness of such lid. Another probability could be attributed to the limiting physical strength that a child could push himself/herself in turning the lid as far as it can go. Given this circumstance, the concerned parties, who are responsible in shaping the life skills of the LSENs, must integrate in the crafting of modules the involvement of activities which will expose these learners to such nature of activities that will hone their competencies along this aspect. Given that instant scenario, collaboration between families and teachers therefore plays a vital role in the attainment of quality educational outcomes (Mustafa, 2020).

Table 6. Test of significance on the difference on the level of competency of various life skills when grouped by the learners' profile

	SPED Center-1			SPED Center-2			SPED Center-3		
Variables in Comparison	Comp. Value	Critical Value	Decision	Comp. Value	Critical Value	Decision	Comp. Value	Critical Value	Decision

Learners' type of disabilities	4.71	5.99	Accept H ₀	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.23	4.68	Accept H ₀
Learners' life skills status	4.05	5.41	Accept H ₀	0.56	6.94	Accept H ₀	0.64	3.49	Accept H ₀

*Test at 0.05 level of significance

Table 6 reveals that the variables in comparison from these research environments do have lower computed values against the critical values when statistically tested at 0.05 level for their possible differences. With this, there is enough evidence to accept the null hypothesis. The scientific results explained that there was no difference being noted on the level of competency of the various life skills when grouped by the learners' profile. It means that whether the LSENs from these SPED centres are with learning disabilities or with multiple impairments, the ability to acquire such life skills status has no particular bearing to the latter categorization. Positively, the formative dependency of these LSENs from their respective parents as well as the nurturing role of the latter are the causative factor that has been contributory to their aptness to perform the expected life skills while at home during the pandemic. This in itself is a better scenario to ponder among all concerned stakeholders when working out the modular learning at home as the success of these LSENs to deal the practicality and reality of life is indeed vital

particular during these trial times. Result from previous studies divulges that such learning approach jointly facilitated by the Subject Teachers and parents have also strengthened the ability of an individual to meet the needs and demands of the present society (Prajapati et. al., 2017). As asserted earlier, the concerned stakeholders must crucially look into the manner how the academic instruction, following a distance learning, should be definitively formulated to permit the transfer of knowledge and the eventual acquirement of life skills among these LSENs. A similar study discussed that in distance learning, the parents' role in the teaching-learning process became highly essential and co-relational for the learner with special needs to possess the life skills which they badly needed in their daily lives for independence Bin Nordin et. al. (2021).

On the other hand, Table 7 shows the emerging themes from the respondents' responses after being asked about challenges encountered by the parents relative to teaching their children with special educational needs.

Table 7. Challenges encountered by the parents relative to teaching their children with special educational needs (LSENs)

Themes	Frequency (n=30)	Percentage
1. Execution of Life Skills	17	56.67
2. Behavior Management of the Child	19	63.67
3. Work Balance	14	46.67

Theme 1. Execution of Life Skills

It is understood that these changes in educational landscape brought by Covid-19 has been making everyone's life difficult in many ways. Table 4 first theme is execution of life skills, and has the frequency of 12. The parents have conveyed that they had difficulty truly in facilitating the lessons of teaching their child the life skills. They did not realize the gravity of the new obligations as they were not accustomed to teaching their kids. They

emphasized that teaching they oftentimes lost patience as their kids could not easily follow their instructions on the proper procedures of washing hands, tooth brushing, and proper eating. Much of their desire to really help their kids to acquire the life skills; however, it takes time for them to master the art of teaching learning process. The parents should possess sufficient knowledge in formulating effective teaching strategies with the help of relevant teaching aids in order to achieve quality learning outcomes, and could be made possible

with the help of the teachers (Raja Abdullah & Daud, 2018 as cited by bin Nordin et. al., 2021) for this pandemic left them no choice but to carry out the obligations as teachers for their kids with special educational needs while the distance learning modality is still operative (Petretto et. al., 2020).

Theme 2. Behavior Management of the Child

Although parents are trying to the best of their abilities to keep their child/children engaged in performing the life skills, still they cannot stop certain challenges specifically the behavior of their children that they encountered during the life skills teaching-learning process. As evident in table 4, second theme: behavior management of the child emerged with 10 frequency. This meant that the parents have aired out that it had been so challenging when they commanded their children to do the tasks for suddenly the kids threw tantrums that required so much time, effort and patience to let it subside. Parents were remorseful that sometimes they got emotional outburst and scolded their kids. It was always the caused why the session with their kids became so lengthy and exhausting. There were even times that the kids walked out, went to room, and did not want to continue the session. Eventually, the parents would call the teachers and sought help in addressing the child's behaviour. Yazcayir & Gurgur (2021) argued that parents should understand that their children were perhaps develop psychosocial problem due to being very bored and overwhelmed with quarantine. Unicef (2021) encouraged that parenting programs be made available to parents of children with disabilities that would teach them positive parenting techniques and self-care. Through this, the parents could be equipped with knowledge, skills and attitude to establish a playful, fun, and stimulating interaction to the young children with disabilities that would not just provide them the life skills, but also positively and permanently strengthen the child's ability to cope with the unusual situation of the pandemic.

Theme 3. Work Balance

It is really a dilemma to many parents in handling the pressure of keeping their job or work while trying to act as teachers to their kids. The last theme as shown in Table 4 is work balance with the frequency of 14. This displayed that the parents considered the juggling of many tasks to be a stressor that caused them to be pre-occupied, disturbed and emotionally battered. The parents recounted that they loved their children, which is why they let them continue, despite the pandemic, the non-graded schooling for the kids to learn the self-help or life skills that would usher them hopefully to become less dependent or fully independent individuals who could manage to live a normal, meaningful, and productive life. However, when the call of work, and the necessity of conducting the session collided, they could not help but had an emotional breakdown as they love to perform both and other several obligations but there were times that they had to embrace it by priority, and therefore chose their jobs over their kids' session. Freisthler et. al. (2021) emphasized that parents who are juggling their employment and their children's schooling needed some form of respite to reduce stress. Otherwise, the parents' jobs and students' learning outcomes would both be compromised (Zhou et. al. 2020). So, the parents should take time once in a while for them to effectively discharge several obligations, and manage the stress to ensure that they are in good condition in teaching their kids the life skills in the wake of this pandemic (Mindtools.com, 2020).

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that in terms the learners with special educational needs' (LSENs) profile: nine (9) of whom had learning disabilities and 37 had multiple disabilities; and they had showed average life skills on nutrition and personal hygiene. The aggregated level of competency of different life skills were: washing of hands independently was done with limitations; brushing the teeth properly was done with limitations; uses spoon in eating/proper eating of finger food was done competently; consuming food-opening and drinking of bottled water was done with limitations. When grouped by its learners' profile, there was no significant difference on

the level of competency of various Life Skills. The challenges encountered by the parents relative to the teaching of Life skills to Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEnS) were: execution of Life Skills, behavior management of the child, and work balance. It was recommended that the module be continually used and enhanced for the continued benefit of the parents and the learners with special educational needs (LSEnS)

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