

Distance Learning in the Philippines

Nationwide Online Survey
September 23-30, 2020



October 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With schools in the Philippines shut down and prohibited from conducting face-to-face classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PH education department implemented a major shift in the mode of education delivery in the Philippines, to which primary decision-makers of PH households, particularly the parents and/or guardians of enrolled students in basic education have shared their current situation, perceptions, understanding, and preparations for the distance learning program this school year.

This nationwide online survey conducted from September 23 to 30, 2020 finds the following key insights:

- When asked what comes to mind when they think of “distance learning”, respondents’ answers revolved around “staying at home”, “studying at home”, and that it will entail being online or using the internet.
- 7 out of 10 respondents do not have internet connection at home, which may pose a challenge under the distance learning program.
- When given the opportunity to choose, over half of the parents/guardians opted for the modular (or offline) method.
- 9 out of 10 of respondents declared that they will be guiding their children under the distance learning program.
- For those who will actively guide their children, the majority (58.9%) reported that they are comfortable in guiding their child/ren for their schooling at home this school year. This may be related to the fact that most of the respondents (76.7%) reported to be at least high school graduates.
- Regarding the source of assistance they will seek help from, the child’s teacher (31.5%) is the respondents’ (n=3377) top choice. Other top choices are books and reading materials they have at home (22.9%) and searching through the internet (22.2%)
- Majority of the respondents (51.81%) claimed that they have satisfactorily prepared for the students’ distance learning this school year, but slightly more say that they are unprepared (27.72%) than those who claim to be prepared (20.47%).
- Majority of the respondents (58.9%) support the idea of implementing an academic freeze this school year.

BACKGROUND

Schools in the Philippines are shut down and prohibited from conducting face-to-face education delivery due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Education (DepEd) is tasked to ensure that Filipino children enrolled in public schools nationwide will continue to have access to quality basic education through modes of remote or distance learning, with the help and guidance of the household's primary decision-makers -- the parents and/or guardians of the students. Of the viable modes of distance learning that will be used by DepEd, television (TV) broadcast and online classes have the most expansive reach combined.

The implementation of this new mode of education delivery this year entails a lot of adjustments on all stakeholders, as it calls for new methods, requirements, and even vocabulary. Focusing primarily on the parents of public and private school students enrolled this SY 2020-2021, this study seeks to evaluate their understanding of the distance learning program, their sentiments towards it, and their level of preparedness for the new situation.

OBJECTIVES

1. To gather the concerns and feedback of parents and guardians with regard to distance learning
2. To gauge the public's understanding of what distance learning means and entails

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive and nonrepresentative study that aims to find out the sentiments of primary decision makers among households towards distance learning and their attitudes toward the new mode of education delivery for Filipino students this school year.

This study employed **convenience sampling** due to the current limitations on mobility, which made fieldwork and face-to-face data gathering for representative sampling impractical and risky. With convenience sampling employed for this survey, the researchers used Facebook as its main recruitment channel in order to reach the widest audience. Hence, results from this nationwide online survey **shall not** be construed as representative of the general Filipino population.

The online survey (hosted on SurveyMonkey) was published on Facebook at noon of September 23, 2020 (Wednesday) in two (2) posts: one in Filipino and another in English. Both posts on Facebook were boosted for audiences in the whole Philippines and within legal age.

The online survey form is mainly written in Filipino, with English translations provided for every question.

The form was closed at noon of September 30, 2020 (Wednesday). The responses were checked and validated. Incomplete survey responses and complete responses with invalid information (e.g., age, occupation) have been removed from the data set prior to data processing and reporting.

RESULTS

This online survey, conducted from September 23 to 30, 2020, reached and asked 3,644 respondents from all over the Philippines questions about their understanding of the distance learning program, their sentiments towards it, and their perception of theirs and others' level of preparedness for this program. This section summarizes the key insights from the survey, the detailed findings of which may be found in the Appendix.

Respondent Profiles

Sex

Of the 3,644 respondents that answered the survey, the majority were female (85.8%). This somehow gives us a glimpse of the distance learning set-up in Filipino homes, wherein women -- primarily mothers -- will be at the forefront of teaching and guiding schoolchildren in this educational set-up for the School Year 2020-2021.

Relationship to student

Eight in every 10 respondents (82.6%) are parents of students enrolled this school year. The rest report that they are guardians (12.7%), with some respondents specifying that they are either the older siblings, uncle/aunt, or grandparents (*Appendix, Chart 12*).

Educational Attainment

More than half of the respondents (see *Chart 1*) finished their secondary (high school) education -- with high school graduates (29.6%) leading the group, followed by college undergraduates (25.4%), and college graduates (21.7%). This may play an important role in the success of the program and in achieving learning outcomes for the students, as the primary responsibility of guiding and teaching students is assigned to parents and guardians in the remote learning set-up.

Educational Attainment

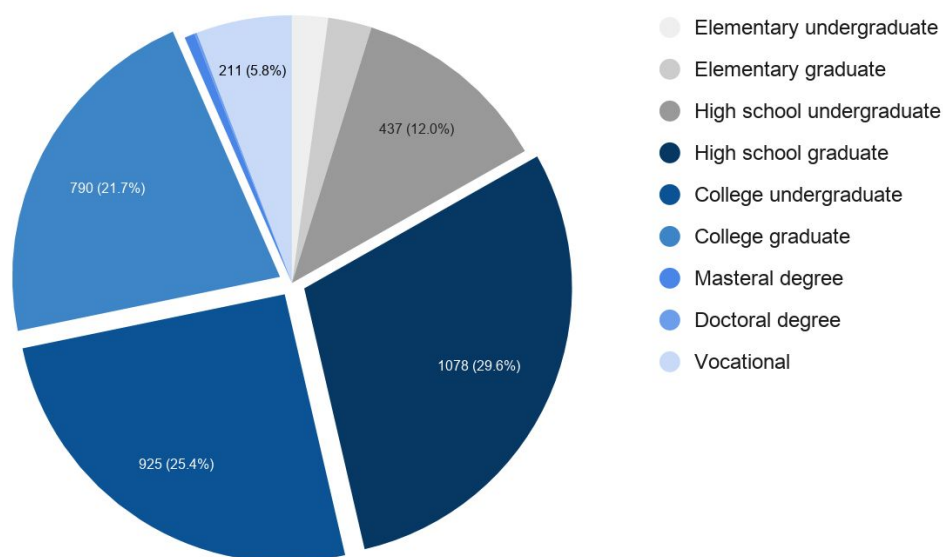


Chart 1. Respondents' reported educational attainment

Geographic distribution

Majority of the respondents of this online survey are from Luzon, with National Capital Region (NCR), Calabarzon (or Region IV-A), and Central Luzon (Region III) comprising the Top 3 (see Table 1).

Central Visayas (Region VII) and Davao Region (Region XI) are the regions with the highest number of respondents from Visayas and Mindanao, respectively.

Region	Count	%
National Capital Region (NCR)	1100	30.19%
IV-A	687	18.85%
III	471	12.93%
I	302	8.29%
VII	168	4.61%
V	166	4.56%
CAR	102	2.80%
XI	94	2.58%
Mimaropa	79	2.17%
X	79	2.17%
VI	77	2.11%
XII	67	1.84%
XIII	53	1.45%
BARMM	53	1.45%
VIII	50	1.37%
IX	50	1.37%
II	45	1.23%
Unknown	1	0.03%
Total	3644	100%

Table 1. Distribution of respondents from different regions in the Philippines

Monthly Income

Eight out of 10 respondents (80.5%) reported that their monthly income is below Php 11,000 -- the lowest income bracket used in the survey (see Chart 2). This indicates that a great majority of the respondents live on or even below the poverty line.

Monthly Income

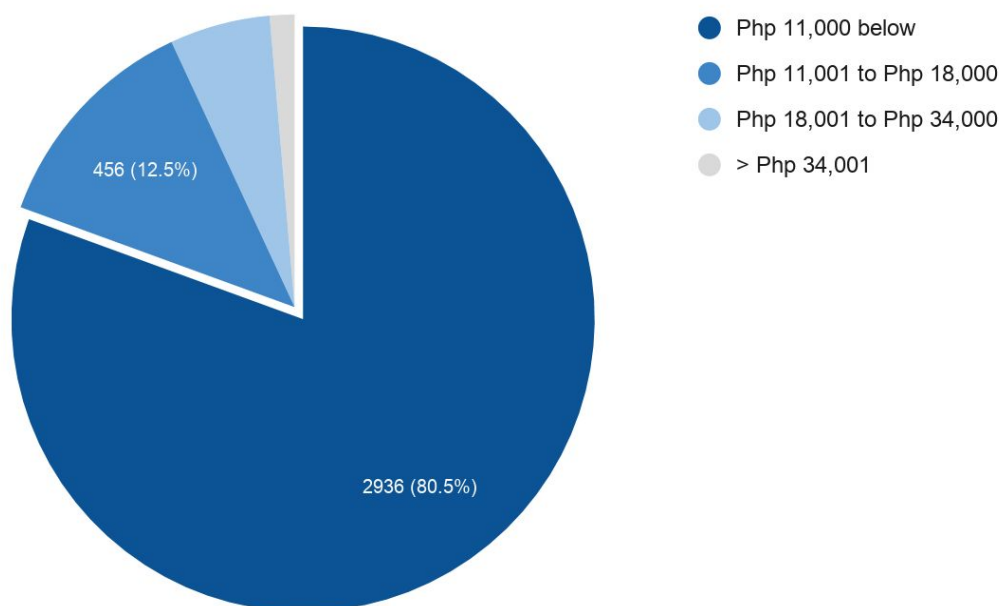


Chart 2. Respondents' reported monthly incomes

Self-assessed economic condition

Based on their self-assessment, majority of the respondents (63.7%) reported that they are Poor or *Mahirap*. Only less than a percent of respondents claimed that their self-assessed economic condition is that they are Rich or *Mayaman* (0.2%) (Appendix, Chart 13).

Perceived quality of life before COVID-19 and present

When asked to rate their quality of life, almost half of the respondents (49%) said they were happy during the period before the pandemic. At present, 63% said they are sad (see Table 2).

Perceived Quality of Life	Sad	Can't say	Happy
Before COVID-19 pandemic	28%	23%	49%
At present	63% ↑	22%	15% ↓

Table 2. Respondents' perceived quality of life before the start of the pandemic vs. at present

Devices / appliances at home for distance learning

Respondents were asked to select all the devices/appliances they have at home which can be used for distance learning this school year.

For this multiple response question, smartphones are the most owned device that can be used for distance learning, followed by television sets, and laptops in far third (see *Chart 3*).

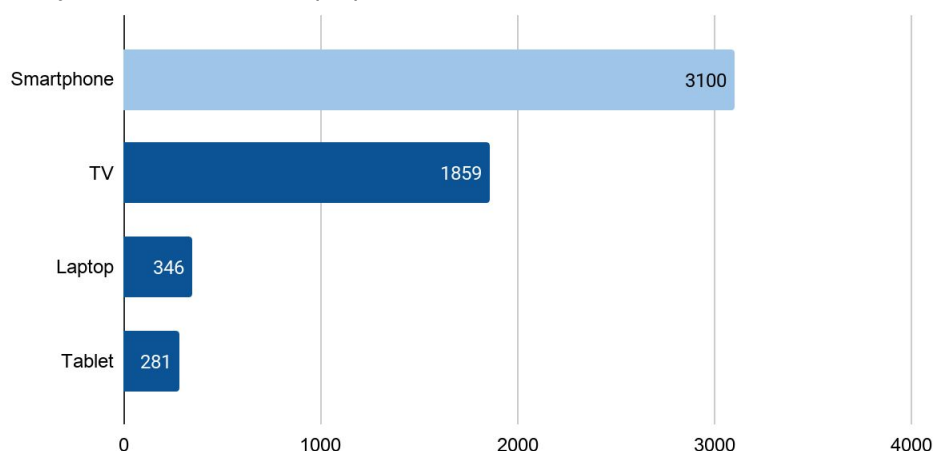


Chart 3. Respondents' declared ownership of devices which may be used for distance learning

While most of the respondents reported to own smartphones, this is still not an indication of their preparedness for the distance learning program. This is because smartphones are not among the recommended devices for online learning that were identified by the Department of Education (DepEd).

Internet Use and Access

Seven in every 10 respondents (70.9%) reported that they are not subscribed to home internet (*Appendix, Chart 15*).

Among those who reported that they do not have a home internet subscription at home (n=2,585), most of the respondents (84.7%) declared that mobile data subscription through their smartphone is their way to access the internet, followed by "sharing" their neighbor's internet connection (10%) (see *Chart 4*).

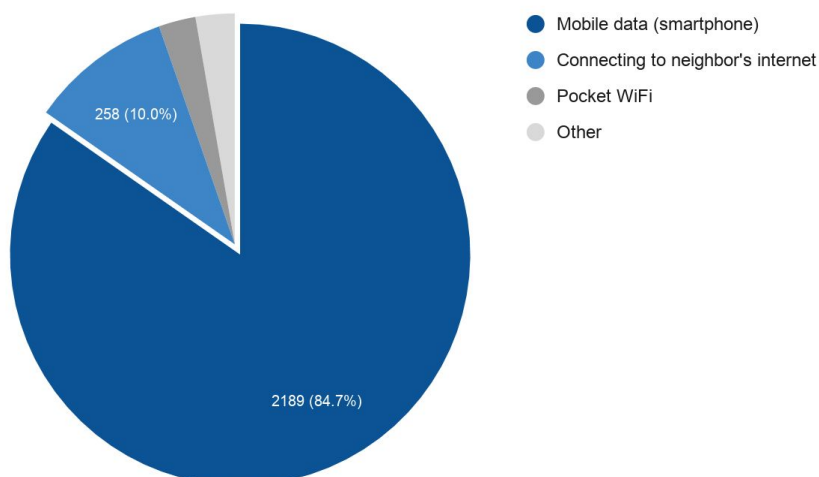


Chart 4. Respondents' (without home internet subscription) ways to access the internet

2. Lack of internet connection at home as a challenge

With the majority of the respondents (70.9%) reporting to not have home internet subscription, accessing the internet -- whether for online classes, communicating with the school and/or teachers, or for research -- will be a major factor in the effective implementation of the distance learning program and in the experiences and perceptions of students and parents.

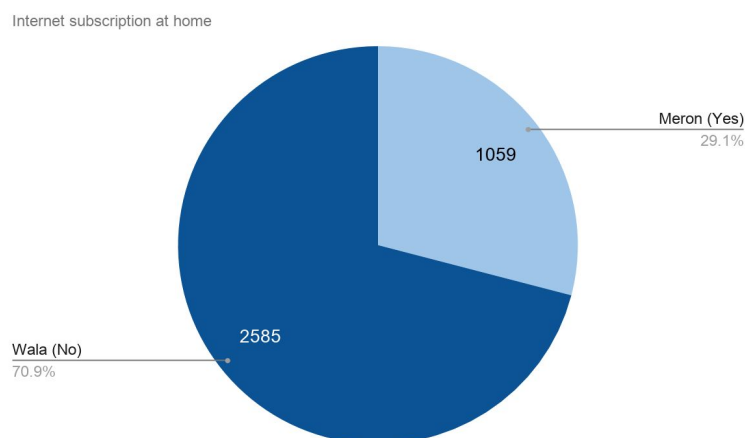


Chart 6. Distribution of respondents with home internet subscription

3. More parents/guardians prefer the modular method

Most of the respondents (87.7%) claimed that they were allowed by their child/ren's school to choose the mode of distance learning that will be used for the student's learning this school year (*Appendix, Chart 21*).

For respondents given the option to choose what method of distance learning they would prefer, the majority (53.4%) reported that they opted for modular learning -- the offline mode (*Appendix, Chart 22*).

When asked about how the parents can get a hold of the modules based on their understanding of the setup, the majority of the respondents answered that the modules will be picked up by the parents and/or guardians at the school (77%). Only 15.2% answered that the modules will be delivered straight to their houses (see *Chart 7*).

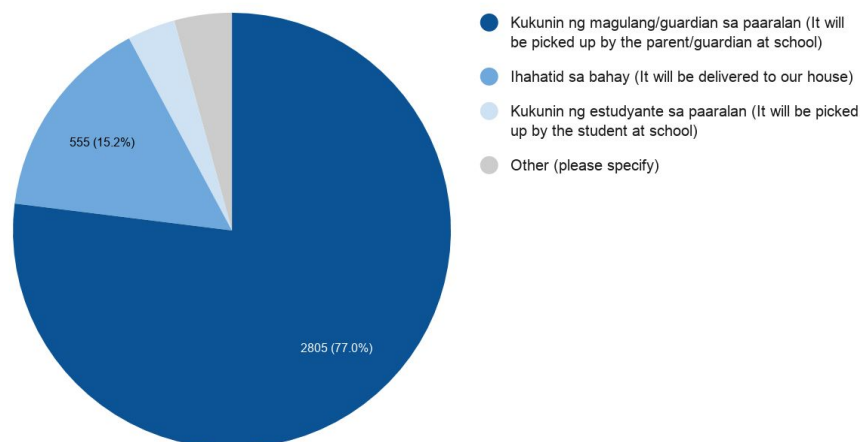


Chart 7. Distribution of respondents' understanding on how to get the modules under distance learning

As for the 12.3% who said that their school decided on what method to adapt, there are slightly more who said that the schools imposed blended learning (38.5%) as the mode of distance learning this school year, followed by modular learning option or the offline mode (37.4%) (*Appendix, Chart 23*).

4. Respondents generally comfortable with guiding their children under the distance learning program

9 out of 10 of respondents are committed to guiding their children under the distance learning program (*Appendix, Chart 26*).

For those who will actively guide their children, the majority (58.9%) find themselves comfortable in guiding their child/ren for their schooling at home this school year (*Appendix, Chart 28*). This may be related to the fact that most of the respondents reported to be at least high school graduates.

Despite this, the majority of those who will guide their child/ren at home are still looking to rely on other people/touchpoints for help in this area. Most (90.5%) reported that they will need help in teaching and/or guiding their children in the current mode of education delivery in the country (*Appendix, Chart 29*). Regarding the source of assistance they will seek help from, the child's teacher (31.5%) is the respondents' (n=3377) top choice. Other top choices are books and reading materials they have at home (22.9%) and searching through the internet (22.2%) (see *Chart 8*).

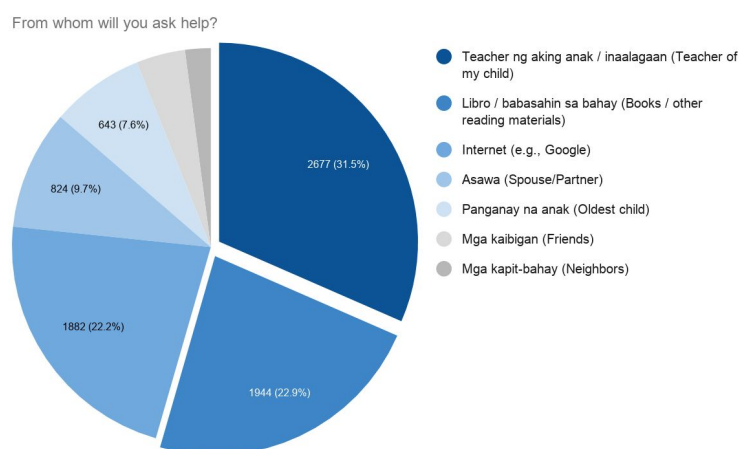


Chart 8. People/modalities respondents will seek help from

Assistance programs may also be very helpful and relevant for them, whether in the form of providing access to teachers, internet connectivity, or even free educational materials suited for the students in their respective households.

5. Not all respondents' children will be guided at home

Some respondents (7.3%) declared that they will not be guiding their child under the distance learning program. Among these respondents, almost a fourth said no one else in the household will be able to do so (*Appendix, Chart 27*).

That not all children will have a guiding figure at home may put students at a great disadvantage as the distance learning method relies on a combination of the use of modules, the expertise of the teacher, and the guidance of a figure at home. DepEd, local school administrators, teachers, and even the local government units (LGUs) must come up with ways to provide support to these students and others who need assistance.

6. Respondents “satisfactorily prepared” for the distance learning program

Majority of the respondents (52%) claimed that they have satisfactorily prepared for the students’ distance learning this school year. Meanwhile, there are slightly more parents who say that they are unprepared (28%) than those who claim to be prepared (20%) (see Table 3).

Perceived Preparedness for Distance Learning	Prepared	Satisfactorily prepared	Unprepared
Parent / Guardian	20%	52%	28%
Schools	44%	44%	12%

Table 3. Respondents’ perceived self-preparedness and preparedness of their children’s respective schools

Of the preparations done, parents and guardians evidently did a mix of activities that are traditionally done before school opening (**encouraging children to read/review before classes start** and **buying school supplies**) and preparations brought about by the distance learning setup (**reviewing the child’s subjects/topics this year** and **allotting a study area at home for children**) (see Chart 9).

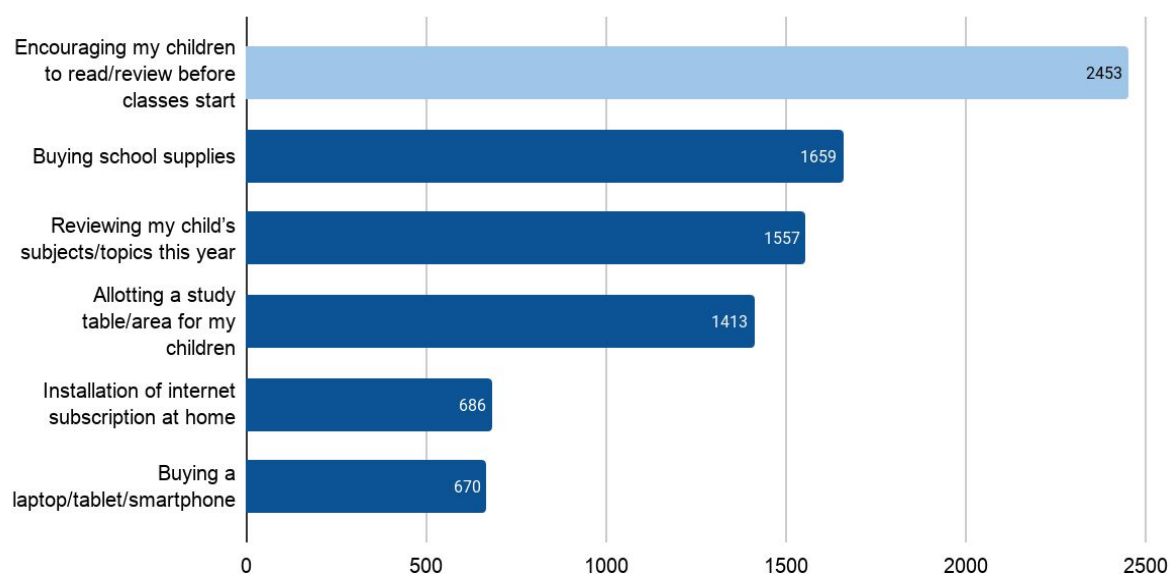


Chart 9. Respondents’ top preparations for SY 2020-2021

Other preparations that parents and guardians have undertaken are related to mustering resources that will allow them to purchase gadgets (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) and connect to the internet for the mode of learning implemented this school year (see Image 2).



While almost half of the respondents (48%) are not sure if the Department of Education's preparations for distance learning are enough, there are more respondents who found the Department's preparations to be lacking (29%) than those who thought it was enough (23%).

Table 4. Respondents' perceived sufficiency of the Department of Education's preparations

While 2 in every 5 respondents (41%) are unsure if their LGUs are helpful in their preparation for distance learning, there are more respondents who found their LGUs as unhelpful (34%) than those who found them helpful (25%).

Table 5. Respondents' perception on the helpfulness of their respective LGUs in relation to their distance learning preparations

APPENDIX Detailed Findings

Additional Respondent Information

Sex

Most of the respondents of this online survey are females (85.8%). This somehow gives us a glimpse of the distance learning set-up in Filipino homes, wherein women -- primarily mothers, will be at the forefront of teaching and guiding schoolchildren in this educational set-up for the School Year 2020-2021.

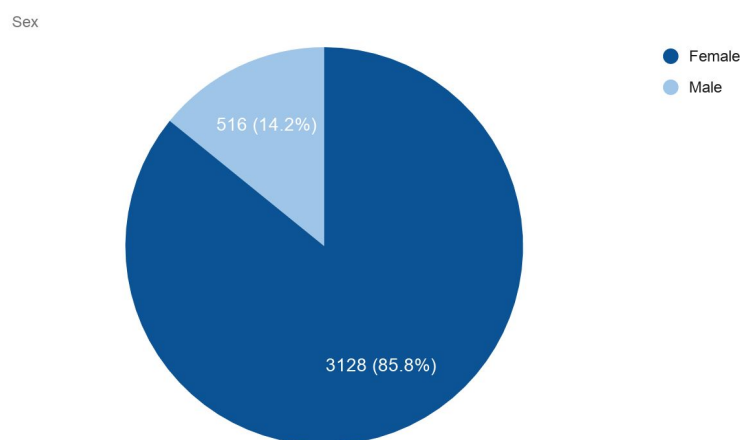


Chart 11. Distribution of sex of respondents

Relationship to Students

Eight in every 10 respondents (82.6%) of this online survey are parents of students enrolled this School Year. The rest are Guardians of children, with some respondents specifying that they are either the older siblings, uncle/aunt, or grandparents.

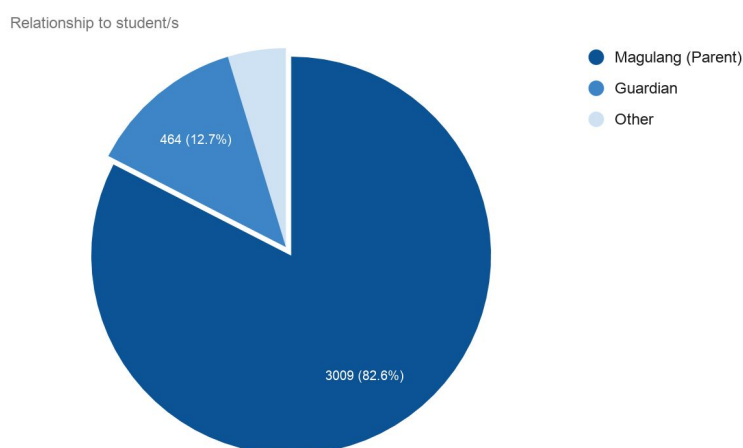


Chart 12. Distribution of respondents' relationship to the students enrolled this school year

Self-assessed economic condition

Based on their self-assessment, majority of the respondents (63.7%) reported that they are Poor (*Mahirap*). Only less than a percent of respondents claimed that their self-assessed economic condition is that they are Rich or *Mayaman* (0.2%).

Self-assessment: Economic condition

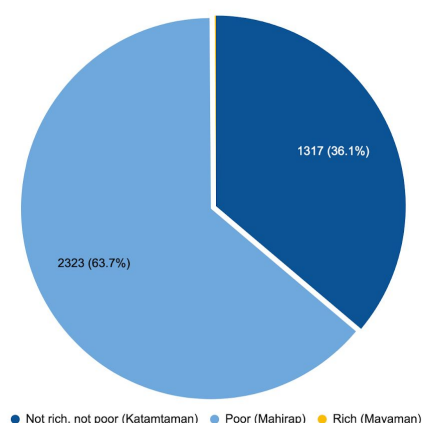


Chart 13. Respondents' self-assessed economic condition

Number of children enrolled this School Year

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the respondents reported that they only have one (1) child enrolled for School Year 2020-2021, followed by two (2) children at 31.9%.

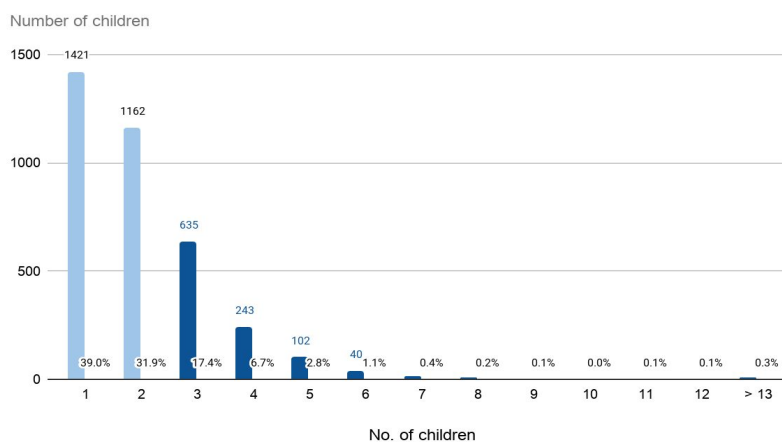


Chart 14. Respondents' reported number of children enrolled this school year

Daily internet use

Almost half of the respondents (42.3%) claimed that the number of hours they spend on the internet on a daily basis is limited to just between less than an hour (20.5%) to between 1-2 hours only (21.8%).

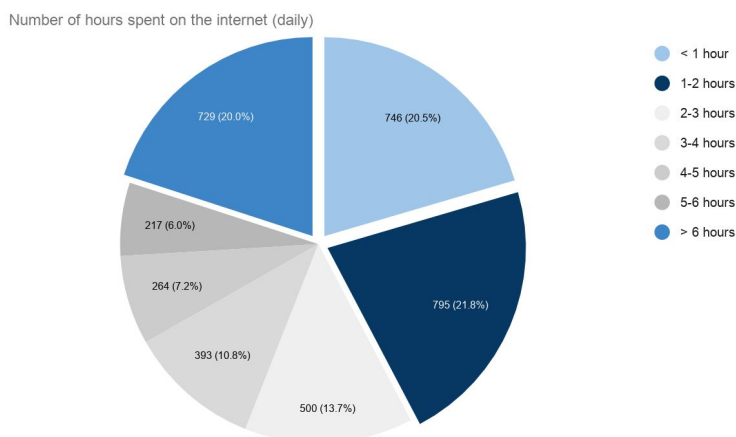


Chart 15. Respondents' reported daily internet use

Profiles of respondents' children

Information presented in this section is based on the answers provided by the respondents. The total responses for every item may not add up with the number of declared children enrolled this year (see *Chart 14* in the previous section) and with one another, as some respondents skipped answering the other fields.

Sex and Age of Children

According to the respondents' reporting of the sex, age, and other information about the students enrolled this school year, there are slightly more female students (51.9%) than male students (48.1%) (see *Chart 16*).

Majority of the children reported as enrolled this school year are between 7 to 12 years old (58%), with children aged 7 years old leading the group (1,345) (see *Chart 17*).

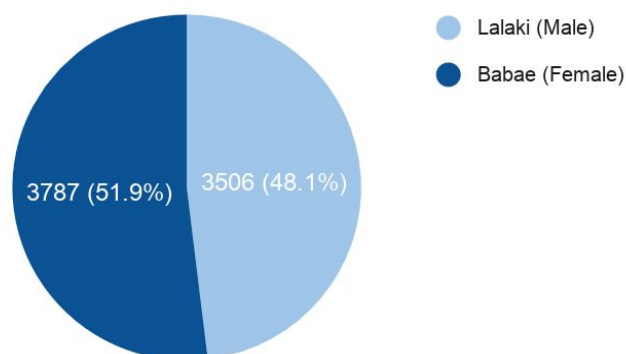


Chart 16. Distribution of sex of respondents' children who are enrolled this school year

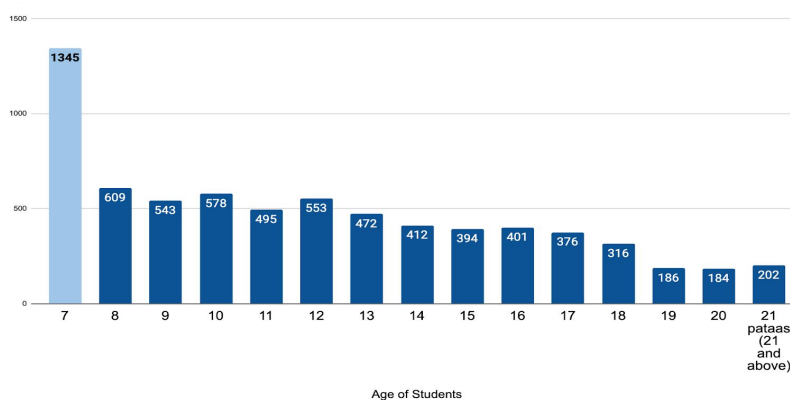


Chart 17. Reported ages of the respondents' children

School Type

Nine out of 10 children (90.7%) reported as enrolled for SY 2020-2021 are enrolled in Public Schools, while the rest are enrolled in Private Schools (9.3%).

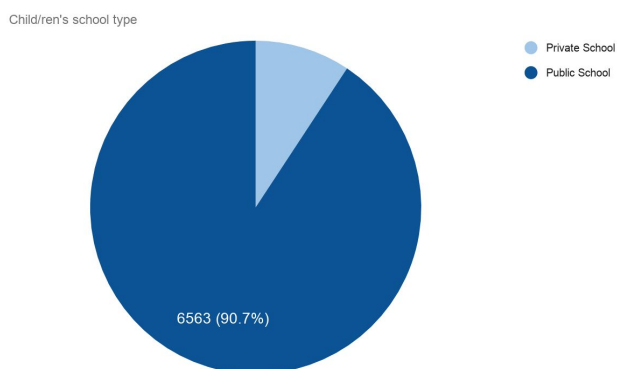


Chart 18. Distribution of school type

Grade Level

While Grade 12 has the highest number of reported enrolled students among grade levels (771), overall there are slightly more enrolled students in Elementary (47.8%) than in High School (44.2%) that were declared by respondents.

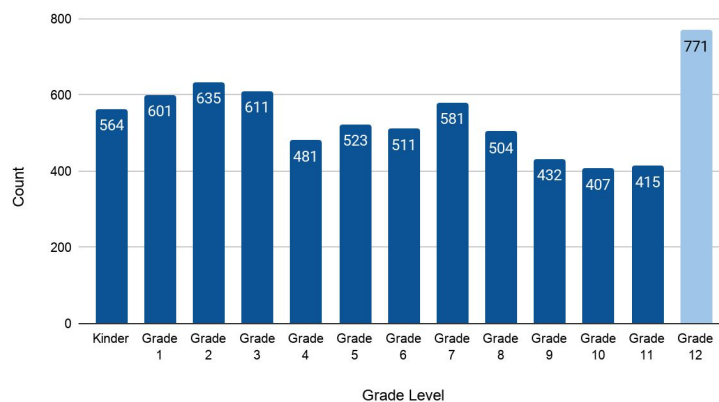


Chart 19. Distribution of reported grade levels this year of respondents' children

Distance Learning: Knowledge and Perceptions

Awareness of distance learning

Only a few respondents (9%) are not aware of the distance learning program, which is being implemented in the PH educational system for this school year. Those who are aware of distance learning (n=3315) were asked about their top of mind “definition” of distance learning and their top 3 sources of information about it.

Have you read/heard about distance learning?

Hindi (No)
9.0%

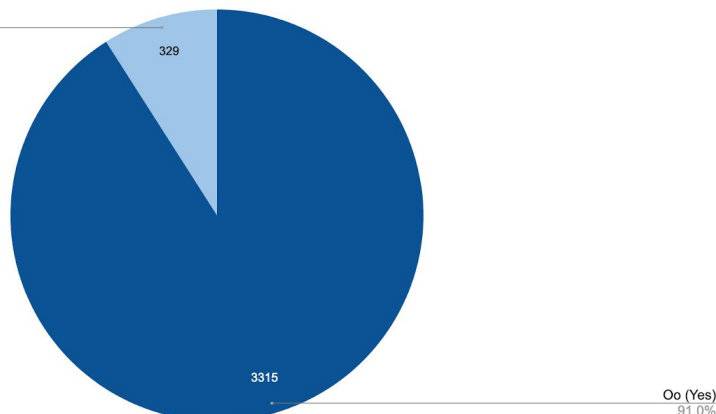


Chart 20. Respondents' awareness (read/heard) of distance learning

Choosing the mode of distance learning for the students' schooling

Most of the respondents (87.7%) claimed that they were allowed by their child/ren's school to choose the mode of distance learning that will be used for the student's learning this school year.

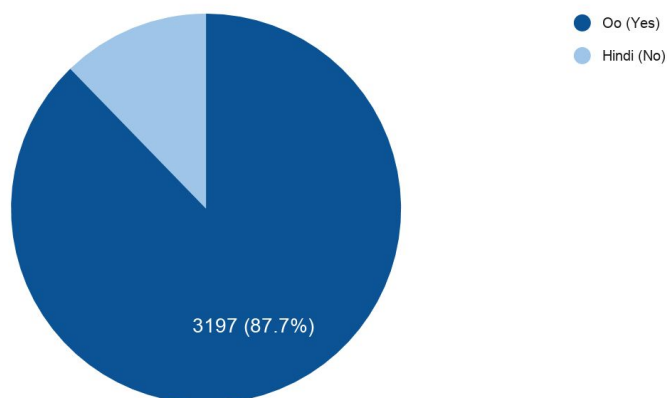


Chart 21. Distribution of respondents who were and were not allowed to choose the distance learning mode for the students

Chosen mode of distance learning for students

For respondents who were given the option to choose, majority of them (53.4%) reported that they opted for modular learning -- the offline mode. This was followed by the blended learning option (35.4%), wherein students will use both offline and online modes of learning for this school year.

The slightly larger preference for modules as the students' mode of learning may be related to the very high number of respondents who do not have home internet subscription -- an important component for online/blended learning.

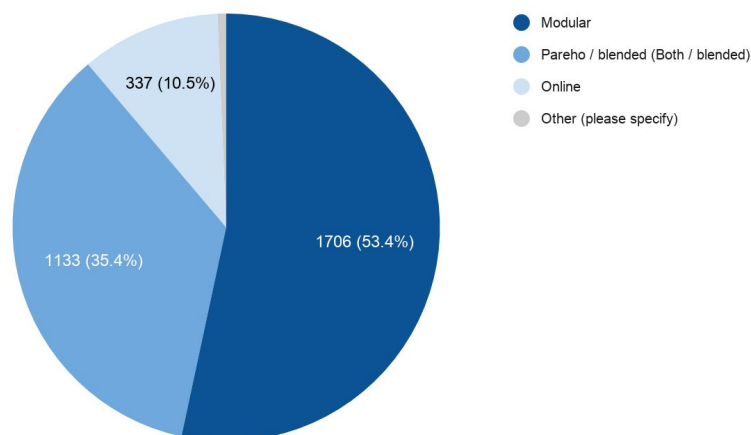


Chart 22. Distribution of respondents' chosen distance learning mode for students (n=3197)

Mode of distance learning imposed by the school

Some respondents declared that their child/ren's respective schools did not allow them to choose the mode of distance learning to be used for the student's learning (n=447). Among these respondents, there are slightly more who said that the schools imposed blended learning (38.5%) as the mode of distance learning this school year, followed by modular learning option or the offline mode (37.4%).

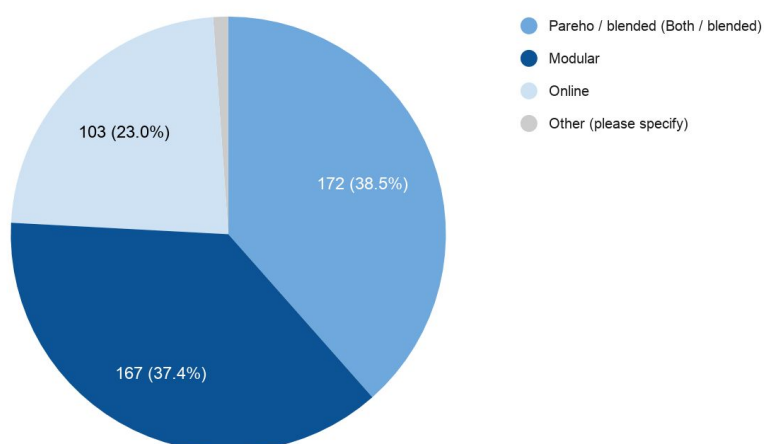


Chart 23. Distribution of distance learning modes implemented by the schools, as reported by respondents who were not allowed to choose for their children (n=447)

Schedule of school orientation for SY 2020-2021

Regarding when their child/ren's school held orientations for the coming school year, a majority of the respondents (73.71%) reported that it was held sometime between May and September 2020.



Chart 24. Respondents' declared orientation dates of their child/ren's respective schools

Opening of School Year 2020-2021

7 out of 10 respondents reported that their child/ren's classes began on October 5, 2020, which was DepEd's scheduled opening of classes after it was postponed from August 24.



Chart 25. Reported opening dates for School Year 2020-2021 under the distance learning program

Distance Learning: Preparations at Home

Actively Guiding Children under Distance Learning

Most of the respondents (92.7%) reported that they will actively guide their children as they go through the distance learning program implemented for SY 2020-2021. Those who will not actively guide their children (n=267) were asked who in their household will do such.

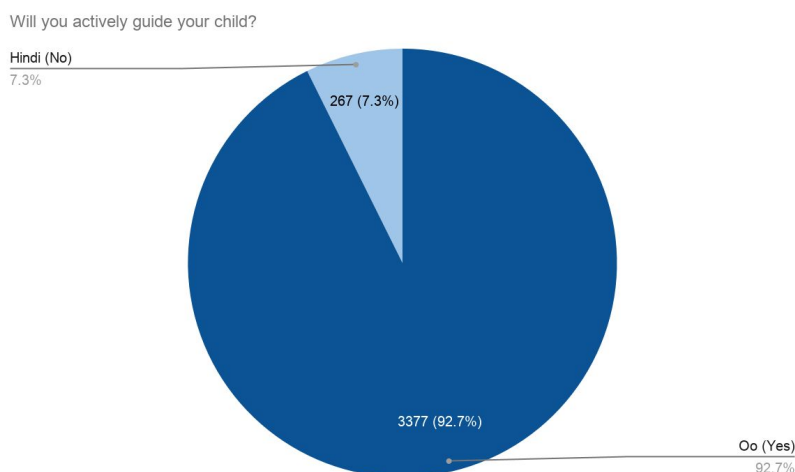


Chart 26. Distribution of respondents' participation in guiding child/ren under distance learning

Many of the respondents who will not actively guide their children (n=267) in the distance learning set-up reported that no one in their household will actively guide the children enrolled in school this school year (24.7%). Other respondents identified the oldest child (22.1%), the spouse/partner (16.9%), and the grandparents (14.8%) as the people who will guide the children under the distance learning program.

(If not)* Who will guide your child w/ their studies?

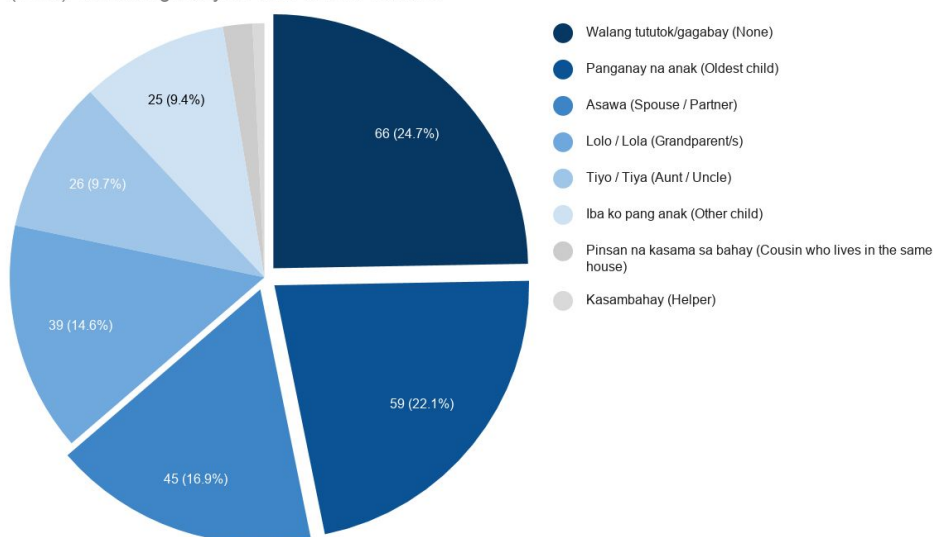


Chart 27. Household members who will actively guide the students in place of the respondents (n=267)

Comfortability in Guiding Children in Distance Learning

Majority of the respondents (58.9%) declared that they are comfortable in guiding their child/ren for their schooling at home this school year compared to those who feel uncomfortable (10.4%).

(If yes)* How comfortable are you with guiding them?

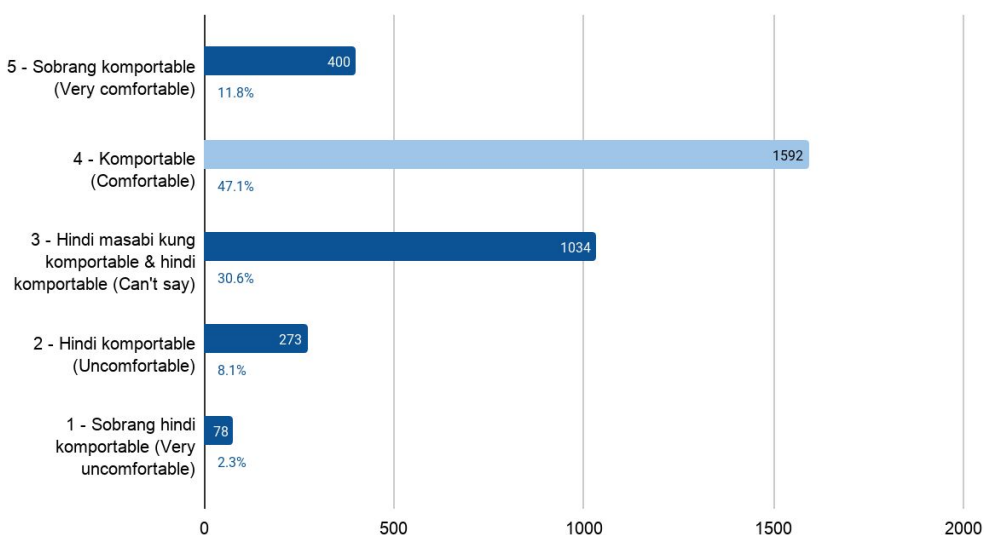


Chart 28. Level of comfortability of respondents who will guide their children under distance learning (n=3377)

Need for Help in Teaching/Guiding Children

Most of the respondents (90.5%) who will guide their children in distance learning (n=3377) reported that they will need help in teaching and/or guiding their children in the current mode of education delivery in the country.

(If yes) Will you need help in teaching/guiding them?

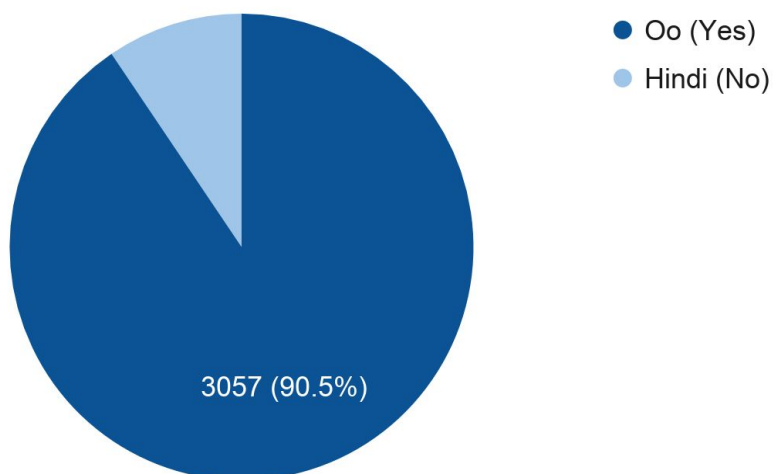


Chart 29. Distribution of respondents who will and will not need help in guiding their children (n=3377)