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# Parents' Awareness, Knowledge, And Attitudes Toward Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Intervention On Communication and Language

**Patrick Marvin P. Bulan[1], Jamilah C. Baragona[2]**

[1]Student, Graduate School, University of Perpetual Help System Laguna

[2]Faculty, Graduate School, School, University of Perpetual Help System Laguna

**ABSTRACT:** Speech-language pathology aims to support individuals with complex communication needs in participating in meaningful and functional interactions. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is a recognized intervention approach used to supplement or replace speech through unaided and aided systems. While AAC is increasingly integrated into professional practice, international literature suggests that parental beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions may influence engagement with AAC interventions. However, limited empirical data exist regarding parents' awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward AAC within the Philippine context, particularly in Metropolitan Cebu.

This study aimed to determine the levels of awareness, knowledge, and attitudes of parents toward AAC intervention on communication and language and to use the findings as a basis for the development of an AAC awareness program. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was employed involving parents residing in Metropolitan Cebu whose children had been receiving speech therapy for at least six months. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson r correlation.

Findings revealed that parents demonstrated a high level of awareness and relatively high knowledge of AAC, although some misconceptions remained, particularly regarding its impact on speech development. Parents also exhibited moderately positive attitudes toward AAC. Results further showed that there was no significant relationship between awareness and knowledge ($r = 0.034$, $p = 0.802$) and between awareness and attitude ($r = -0.233$, $p = 0.081$). However, a significant moderate positive relationship was found between knowledge and attitude ($r = 0.565$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of knowledge were associated with more positive attitudes toward AAC.

The study concludes that awareness alone is insufficient to influence parents' understanding and acceptance of AAC and that knowledge plays a critical role in shaping attitudes. The findings highlight the importance of structured educational and awareness programs that enhance parental understanding and confidence toward AAC implementation.

**KEYWORDS: A**ugmentative and alternative communication, AAC, parental awareness, parental knowledge, parental attitudes, speech-language pathology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Speech-language pathology remains a developing discipline in the Philippines, with services and practitioners concentrated primarily in major urban centers (Marzan, 2025; PASP, 2021). Consequently, public understanding regarding available communication interventions, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), remains variable. AAC is a clinical approach used to supplement or replace speech for individuals with complex communication needs through unaided and aided communication systems. Research consistently demonstrated that AAC supported communication, language development, participation, and psychosocial functioning and did not hinder speech development (Beukelman & Light, 2020; Griffiths, 2022; Light et al., 2025).

In the Philippine context, AAC service delivery and specialization remain limited despite national efforts to strengthen AAC-related training and professional development. Access to specialized AAC services continues to be uneven across regions, including Cebu. Beyond professional service delivery, the successful implementation of AAC heavily depends on family

involvement. Parents serve as primary communication partners and significantly influence AAC acceptance, consistency of use, and long-term implementation.

International literature indicated that parental beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions influenced engagement with AAC interventions (Lorang et al., 2022; Berenguer et al., 2022). Parents may encounter misconceptions regarding AAC, particularly concerns that AAC may replace or hinder speech development. Previous studies further emphasized that structured parent education and family-centered intervention approaches contributed to improved AAC outcomes and more positive attitudes toward AAC implementation (Fischbacher et al., 2024; Brydon et al., 2025). Despite increasing international evidence, empirical AAC research within the Philippine context remains limited. More specifically, quantitative data regarding parents' awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward AAC within Metropolitan Cebu remain scarce. Without baseline information regarding these variables, efforts to develop parent support and awareness initiatives may rely primarily on assumptions rather than evidence-based findings.

Anchored on Transformative Learning Theory, this study aimed to determine the levels of awareness, knowledge, and attitudes of parents toward AAC intervention on communication and language in Metropolitan Cebu and to determine whether significant relationships existed among these variables.

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the levels of awareness, knowledge, and attitudes of parents toward AAC intervention on communication and language in Metropolitan Cebu. Specifically, the study examined the relationships between awareness and knowledge, awareness and attitudes, and knowledge and attitudes toward AAC. The findings of the study served as the basis for the development of an AAC awareness program for parents.

## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional research design to determine the levels of awareness, knowledge, and attitudes of parents toward AAC and to examine the relationships among these variables. The respondents consisted of parents of children receiving speech therapy in selected therapy centers within Metropolitan Cebu for at least six months.

Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire designed to measure parents' awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward AAC. The instrument underwent face and content validation and reliability testing prior to implementation. Following institutional approval, eligible participants were informed regarding the objectives of the study and were asked to provide informed consent prior to participation. The study observed ethical principles involving confidentiality, voluntary participation, informed consent, and privacy protection. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, were utilized to determine the respondents' levels of awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward AAC. Pearson r correlation was used to determine whether significant relationships existed among the variables.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Parents' Level of Awareness Toward AAC

**Table 1. Parents' Level of Awareness Toward AAC**

| Indicator | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. AAC is one of the interventions given by speech language pathologists (SLPs). | 3.40 | High | 4.5 |
| 2. AAC is used by those who have difficulty speaking and/or hearing. | 3.46 | High | 1.5 |
| 3. Children can be given AAC as part of their therapy services. | 3.46 | High | 1.5 |
| 4. Parents can also use AAC to communicate with their child. | 3.40 | High | 4.5 |
| 5. AAC can be used by my child at home. | 3.42 | High | 3 |
| 6. AAC can be used by my child in school. | 3.35 | High | 7 |
| 7. AAC can be used by my child in the community (e.g., malls, parks, playground). | 3.37 | High | 6 |
| 8. AAC can be used by my child when playing with friends. | 3.30 | High | 8 |
| 9. AAC can be used by children who do not know how to use gadgets. | 3.12 | High | 9 |
| 10. AAC can be used by parents who do not know how to use gadgets. | 3.07 | High | 10 |
| Average | 3.34 | High Awareness | |

**Parents' Awareness, Knowledge, And Attitudes Toward Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Intervention On Communication and Language**

Table 1 shows that the parents obtained an average weighted mean of 3.34, interpreted as high awareness of AAC. This indicates that parents generally recognized AAC as a communication intervention for individuals with communication difficulties. Items 2 and 3 obtained the highest weighted mean (3.46), suggesting greater awareness regarding AAC use in therapy services. In contrast, Items 9 and 10 obtained the lowest weighted means, indicating lower awareness regarding the accessibility of AAC for individuals unfamiliar with technology.

The findings suggest that parents' awareness may have developed through exposure to speech-language therapy services where AAC is introduced and modeled by clinicians. Similar studies reported that parental awareness commonly develops through interaction with professionals and access to AAC-related information (Kim et al., 2021; Muttiah et al., 2022). However, awareness alone may not indicate comprehensive understanding of AAC systems and accessibility, particularly regarding low-technology and no-technology AAC options (Andzik et al., 2024; Leonet et al., 2022).

**Parents' Level of Knowledge Toward AAC**

**Table 2. Parents' Level of Knowledge Toward AAC**

| Indicator | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. AAC is an intervention that is only given to individuals who have difficulty with speech and communication. | 2.91 | High | 4 |
| 2. AAC would only further discourage my child from speaking. | 2.09 | Moderate | 10 |
| 3. AAC is an intervention that is given to individuals who have difficulty with speech and communication. | 2.72 | High | 7 |
| 4. AAC helps develop my child's speech abilities. | 3.23 | High | 2 |
| 5. AAC is only used if my child has problems speaking. | 2.74 | High | 6 |
| 6. AAC is only used if my child has problems in understanding instructions. | 2.81 | High | 5 |
| 7. AAC is used to address problems in written communication. | 2.95 | High | 3 |
| 8. AAC uses high-tech devices such as iPads and mobile phones. | 2.68 | High | 8 |
| 9. AAC can be used by my child anytime and anywhere there is a need to communicate. | 3.33 | High | 1 |
| 10. AAC should be used only as the last resort for communication and language problems. | 2.63 | High | 9 |
| Average | 2.81 | High Knowledge | |

Table 2 shows that the parents' obtained an average weighted mean of 2.81, interpreted as high knowledge regarding AAC. Item 9 obtained the highest weighted mean, indicating that parents recognized AAC as a communication system that may be used across various contexts. In contrast, Item 2 obtained the lowest weighted mean, suggesting that some parents still believed that AAC may discourage speech development.

The findings suggested that while parents demonstrated relatively high knowledge regarding AAC, misconceptions regarding its impact on speech development remained evident. Similar studies reported that misconceptions about AAC continue to persist among parents despite AAC exposure (Hettiarachchi et al., 2024; Lorang et al., 2022). In contrast, existing evidence demonstrated that AAC supports communication and may facilitate language development and communicative behaviors (Edgar et al., 2024; Dumitru, 2025). The findings highlighted the importance of strengthening parent education and functional understanding regarding AAC implementation.

**Parents' Level of Attitude Toward AAC**

**Table 3. Parents' Level of Attitude Toward AAC**

| Indicator | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. AAC should only be provided for individuals who have difficulty speaking or communicating. | 2.77 | High | 2 |
| 2. AAC should be included in all therapeutic services provided by Speech-Language Pathologists. | 3.21 | High | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. AAC should only be given as the last option for communication problems. | 2.47 | Moderate | 3 |
| 4. AAC should not be used by my child because it is not as good as natural speech. | 2.18 | Moderate | 7 |
| 5. AAC can discourage my child from developing speaking skills. | 2.16 | Moderate | 8 |
| 6. AAC is challenging and difficult to use for my child. | 2.33 | Moderate | 5 |
| 7. AAC is challenging and difficult to use for parents. | 2.21 | Moderate | 6 |
| 8. My child is too young to use AAC. | 2.07 | Moderate | 10 |
| 9. My child is too old to use AAC. | 2.09 | Moderate | 9 |
| 10. AAC is a costly intervention for my child. | 2.35 | Moderate | 4 |
| Average | 2.38 | Moderate Attitude | |

As shown in Table 3, the parents obtained an average weighted mean of 2.38, interpreted as a moderate attitude toward AAC. This suggested that while parents were generally receptive toward AAC, reservations regarding its implementation remained evident. Concerns regarding difficulty of use, cost, and perceived limitations compared to natural speech were likewise observed. The findings suggested that parents' attitudes toward AAC may have been influenced by personal beliefs, misconceptions, and contextual barriers related to implementation. Similar studies reported that parental attitudes toward AAC were shaped by professional support, perceived challenges, and misconceptions regarding AAC replacing natural speech (Alhuzimi, 2026; Vernekar & Rao, 2024; Yau et al., 2024). Previous literature further demonstrated that structured guidance and support improved parental confidence and acceptance toward AAC (Fischbacher et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings indicated that while parents were generally open toward AAC, cautious attitudes remained, highlighting the importance of parent education and support regarding AAC implementation.

**Relationship Between Awareness and Knowledge Toward AAC**

**Table 4: Relationship Between Awareness and Knowledge Toward AAC**

| Variables | Pearson r | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Awareness and Knowledge | 0.034 | 0.802 | Not Significant |

As shown in Table 4, there was no significant relationship between awareness and knowledge regarding AAC ($p = 0.802$), suggesting that awareness alone may not necessarily lead to deeper understanding of AAC. While parents may recognize AAC as a communication intervention, this does not automatically indicate comprehensive knowledge regarding its purpose, users, and practical applications.

The findings partially aligned with previous literature suggesting that awareness serves as a foundation for knowledge development through increased exposure to AAC (Kim et al., 2021; Muttiah et al., 2022). However, the findings also suggested that awareness, when not supported by structured education and guided experience, may remain superficial. Previous studies similarly reported persistent knowledge gaps among parents despite AAC exposure and emphasized that exposure alone does not guarantee competence or confidence in AAC implementation (Berenguer et al., 2022; Fjeldvang et al., 2023; Gardiner et al., 2025). Overall, the findings highlighted the importance of providing parents with continuous education, guided practice, and professional support to strengthen functional understanding regarding AAC.

**Relationship Between Awareness and Attitude Toward AAC**

**Table 5: Relationship Between Awareness and Attitude Toward AAC**

| Variables | Pearson r | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Awareness and Attitude | −0.233 | 0.081 | Not Significant |

As shown in Table 5, the results showed that there was no significant relationship between awareness and attitudes toward AAC ($p = 0.081$). This indicated that awareness alone did not significantly influence parents' perceptions or acceptance of AAC. While parents may recognize AAC as an available intervention, such awareness may not necessarily translate into favorable attitudes toward its use.

The findings suggested that attitudes toward AAC may be influenced by more complex factors such as personal beliefs, prior experiences, and perceptions regarding AAC effectiveness (Alhuzimi, 2026). Previous studies similarly reported that awareness without adequate guidance and meaningful experience may remain superficial and insufficient to positively influence attitudes toward AAC (Fayyaz et al., 2024; Dufek et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings highlighted the importance of providing parents with structured education and practical AAC experiences to promote more informed and positive attitudes toward AAC implementation.

**Relationship Between Knowledge and Attitude Toward AAC**

**Table 6: Relationship Between Knowledge and Attitude Toward AAC**

| Variables | Pearson r | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge and Attitude | 0.565 | 0.000 | Significant |

As shown in Table 6, the results revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between knowledge and attitudes toward AAC ($r = 0.565$, $p < 0.05$). This indicated that higher levels of parental knowledge regarding AAC were associated with more positive attitudes toward its use.

The findings highlighted the importance of knowledge in shaping parental perceptions and acceptance of AAC. Parents who possessed clearer understanding regarding AAC were more likely to recognize its benefits and demonstrate greater confidence toward implementation (Fischbacher et al., 2024; Fjeldvang et al., 2023). Similar studies likewise reported that increased knowledge was associated with greater AAC acceptance and more consistent use of AAC strategies in daily communication contexts (Alhuzimi, 2026; Berenguer et al., 2022). In contrast, misconceptions and limited understanding regarding AAC have been associated with negative attitudes and reduced AAC adoption (Hettiarachchi et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings underscored the importance of educational interventions that strengthen parental understanding regarding AAC to promote more positive attitudes and consistent AAC implementation.

**Proposed AAC Program**

**Table 7: Program for Sustaining Parents' Awareness, Knowledge, and Attitudes Toward AAC**

| Objective | Activity | Transformative Learning Phase | Time Frame | Persons Involved | Expected Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To organize and prepare the AAC awareness program | Program planning and coordination | — | Week 1 | Researcher, Speech-Language Pathologists | 100% of program materials, schedule, and resources are prepared prior to implementation |
| To identify and address misconceptions about AAC | Session 1: "Common Myths and Misconceptions About AAC" | Disorienting Dilemma | Week 2 | Researcher, SLPs, Parents | At least 80% of participants accurately identify and correct common misconceptions about AAC |
| To reinforce and sustain parents' existing awareness and knowledge of AAC | Session 2: "Revisiting AAC: What It Is and Who It Is For" | Reinforcement / Disorienting Dilemma | Week 3 | Researcher, SLPs, Parents | At least 80% of participants correctly identify key AAC concepts in post-session evaluation |
| To deepen parents' understanding of AAC concepts and benefits | Session 3: "Understanding AAC in Communication and Language Development" | Critical Reflection | Week 4 | Researcher, SLPs, Parents | At least 80% of participants demonstrate at least a 20% increase in knowledge scores compared to pre-session assessment |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| To promote reflection and shared understanding | Session 4: "How AAC is Assessed and Selected" | Critical Reflection | Week 5 | Researcher, SLPs, Parents | At least 80% of participants actively engage in discussion and correctly describe the AAC assessment process |
| To enhance understanding of the individualized nature of AAC systems | Session 5: Parent Sharing and Open Forum | Rational Discourse | Week 6 | Researcher, SLPs, Parents | At least 80% of participants express understanding that AAC systems are individualized based on child needs |
| To promote more positive attitudes toward AAC | Session 6: Reflection and Perspective Building Activity | Perspective Transformation | Week 7 | Researcher, Parents | At least 80% of participants demonstrate at least 20% increase in positive attitude scores based on pre and postprogram evaluation |
| To evaluate the effectiveness of the program | Program evaluation through feedback forms and reflections | — | Week 7 | Researcher, Parents | At least 80% of participants report increased confidence and willingness to use AAC as an intervention |

The proposed AAC awareness program was developed based on the findings of the study, particularly the presence of high awareness and knowledge alongside only moderate attitudes toward AAC. While parents demonstrated familiarity with AAC concepts, misconceptions and uncertainties regarding AAC remained evident, highlighting the need for structured educational support.

The program aims to strengthen parents' understanding, address misconceptions, and promote more positive attitudes toward AAC through guided discussions, reflective activities, and interactive learning experiences. The inclusion of educational and reflective components aligned with the significant relationship found between knowledge and attitudes, suggesting that improving parental understanding may contribute to more favorable perceptions toward AAC implementation.

The program's success indicators were developed using the SMART framework to support systematic monitoring and evaluation of participants' progress regarding awareness, knowledge, and attitudes toward AAC.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that parents of children receiving speech therapy in Metropolitan Cebu generally demonstrated high awareness and relatively high knowledge regarding AAC alongside moderately positive attitudes toward its use. However, awareness alone was insufficient to significantly influence parents' knowledge and attitudes toward AAC. In contrast, knowledge demonstrated a significant positive relationship with attitudes, indicating that greater understanding regarding AAC contributes to more favorable perceptions and acceptance of AAC.

The findings highlight the importance of structured educational and awareness initiatives that strengthen parental understanding, confidence, and informed decision-making regarding AAC implementation. Consequently, speech-language pathologists and therapy centers are encouraged to implement familycentered educational programs that address misconceptions and support consistent AAC use across everyday communication contexts. Future studies may further explore parental experiences and evaluate the effectiveness of AAC awareness programs using qualitative, experimental, or longitudinal research designs.

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