



Research Article

Lived experiences of parents in teaching children in the new normal

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ABSTRACT

Parents served as the most significant primary role models in the immediate surroundings of their young children. This phenomenological research aimed to delve into the lived experiences of parents who act as tutors, learning supervisors, and homeschooling teachers for distance learning during pandemic. A total of 20 participants were involved in this qualitative research. The findings revealed that participants concurred on the efficacy of the educational policies to combat the pandemic, such as nationwide school closures, delayed class re-openings, and various teaching techniques. Lockdowns and a sudden switch to homeschooling strengthen family relationships while protecting the learners' safety at home. Parents, on the other hand, face numerous challenges associated with distance learning, such as the virtual environment, instruction delivery, and unsatisfactory academic outcomes; issues with technology use and availability; personal factors regarding their child's health, stress, and learning style; and financial struggles associated with working for the family during a lockdown. Whatever difficulties they encountered, parents employed coping methods to teach their children. Furthermore, this study served as a foundation for developing comprehensive and holistic education policy that took into account the learners' parents' perspectives throughout the epidemic.

Keywords: *Home Learning; Modular Remote Learning; Pandemic*

1. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has a detrimental influence on both the social and financial sectors in which it operates. In a few of months, this extremely contagious virus has spread across the world and in different nations (Zhou et al., 2020; Lu et al., 2020). Because of the changing properties of the coronavirus, research shows that an infected individual can spread the virus to two to three more people after becoming infected themselves (Guarner, 2020).

Furthermore, most countries are transitioning away from face-to-face interaction and toward remote learning opportunities. In contrast, learners from middle-class backgrounds face more challenges, such as technological marginalization, long-term academic disengagement, poor technology management, technological marginalization, more serious psychological difficulties as well as more serious psychological problems (Drane et



al., 2020). Moreover, according to UNESCO (2020), during the COVID-19 pandemic, almost 40% of lower-middle-income nations failed to provide assistance to underprivileged children and adolescents. Modular distance learning, on the other hand, is designed to overcome these issues by providing more flexible and accessible educational access options. This asynchronous learning mode allows students to study at their own pace and requires continual evaluation while removing face-to-face interaction between the teacher and the other students and allowing learners to work alone (Dutton & Mohapatra, 2020). There was a shock in education in general, where teaching had previously been organized as a face-to-face process in which students learn under the supervision of teachers, as this process of learning had to be shifted into distant education in a short period (Hodges et al. 2020), as well as the concept of "home education," which had previously been recognized as an effective technique of educating specific groups of individuals at home (Carlson, 2020; Ray, 2017).

Although attempts have been made to assist parents in the difficult work of teaching their children, challenges are unavoidably encountered (Garbe et al., 2020). For example, Lee et al. (2020) reported, that half of the American parents polled felt overwhelmed by their homeschooling responsibilities during the severe phase of the COVID-19 crisis. This resulted in considerable despair and severe anxiety for half of the parents. Further, Dong et al. (2020) concluded that Chinese parents perceived and experienced the deployment of online learning as difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic, in part because they were not equipped or prepared to accept online learning.

Moreover, many authors have posited that home learning benefits both parents and children. For instance, Wang et al. (2020) discovered that when parents and children participate in educational activities, they spend more time together. Parents can help their children relax by reducing pain and anxiety and talking with them in these situations. In like manner, Garcia and Thornton (2014) show that including families in learning enhances student success, reduces absenteeism, and reunites parents with their children. Parents involved in their children's education performed better in grades, social skills, and behavior. The Manila Times (2020) commended parents in the Philippine educational setting for their vital involvement in the development of numerous remote learning choices amid the COVID-19 crisis. As schools reopened, the Department of Education (2020) released a strategy for ensuring learning continuity. One of the plan's components is using remote learning in various modes while considering the communities' resources and circumstances. The technique highlights the critical role of parents in implementing the system's multiple methods of instruction (Pimentel-Tibon, 2020). The Department of Education's learning continuity plan has yet to be studied in terms of its effect on the quality of curriculum delivery. Recently, most parents were found to facilitate learning at home, and study on the subject in the local setting like Quirino province is limited, particularly in light of COVID-19. By contributing to the current body of knowledge, the researchers delved deeper into the experiences and challenges that parents faced during the pandemic, with a particular emphasis on the perspective of the learner's parents, who are equally important to consider when developing learning policies in response to the health emergency. Further, the purpose of this study is to shed light on how parents

engage in their children's remote learning during the COVID-19 crisis. It also identifies the coping mechanisms they employed in teaching their children at home.

2. METHODOLOGY/MATERIALS

This current study employed a qualitative research design utilizing phenomenological techniques to explore and interpret parents' lived experiences in their kid's distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. A phenomenological research strategy is when the researcher identifies the core of participants' human experiences with a phenomenon. Understanding lived experiences distinguishes phenomenology as a philosophy and a practice. It entails studying a small number of subjects in depth and over an extended period to build patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell, 2009).

This study involved 20 parents of learners purposely selected from the municipality of Cabarroguis, in the province Quirino, with 60% ages 20-40 and 40% ages 41-50. The purposive sampling was used to determine the eligibility of participants based on the following criteria: 1) Parent of an elementary level for the School Year 2020-2021; 2) Children who used remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; and 3) Voluntary participation in the interview; 4) Parent has an active cell phone number and messenger.

Before collecting data, the researchers obtained permission from the principals and advisers. When approval was granted, the researchers requested from the individual advisers a list of pupils with the corresponding names of parents included in the study. To ensure ethical consideration in research, all participants were told about the study's details, procedures, and the extent of their involvement. Participants were notified in various ways, including text messages, phone calls, and messenger. Following their agreement to participate, the researchers needed them to complete an informed consent form and send it via messenger. Further, the researchers informed them about their rights as participants in the said study. After acquiring the necessary permissions, the researchers received approval from participants to record the interview and discard the recording after the data analysis. All discussions took place through video/phone calls in compliance with the IATF protocols.

Moreover, the study used an in-depth and semi-structured questionnaire to gather data on parents' experiences educating their children in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also identifies the coping mechanisms they employed in teaching their children. Further, the researchers used a three-part interview guide that includes exploratory, engaging, and closing questions. In certain instances, supplementary questions are included to explain specific issues and solicit additional clarification. The researcher developed the interview guide, which experts have evaluated. To ensure the data's accuracy, the participants were interviewed using dialogues in Ilocano, their native language, and Filipino, their "lingua franca." Furthermore, each participant's interview lasted 30-45 minutes. Nonetheless, the time restriction was extended since multiple comments were requested from participants to guarantee that enough data was gathered from the conversations and the saturation point was reached.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the utterances were translated, evaluated, and checked to verify that the articulations retained their original meaning. The data were collected and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) descriptive phenomenological technique. This method of data analysis is rigorous and robust, ensuring the results' authenticity and reliability. It enables scholars to grasp novel subjects and their entwined links. Additionally, significant themes and meanings were investigated through thorough data analysis to generate the research study's composite findings. Finally, correspondence and critical friendly techniques were utilized to verify the data's integrity and reliability.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The participants shared their experiences and stories in educating their children at home. Following the video/phone call interview, several themes emerged: They are as follows:

3.1. THEME #1. FACING A MYRIAD OF CHANGES

At home, parents have to play new roles in their kids' distance learning because of the pandemic. Thus, parental involvement in their children's distance learning makes a lot of changes. These changes require a time of adjustment and adapting to the important role parents play, which now requires a new level of commitment from them. The parents think the situation is going to change a lot about how their kids learn. This can be seen in the following comments from the people who took part:

"There are many changes in educating our children today. I have to adjust because I serve as a teacher to my child. I need to change my routines in life because my children's education depends on me." Parent 2

"I must balance time because it is subject to change. I do work from home, and I am also responsible

for household chores." Parent 8

The statements above suggest that parents must adjust to the many components of family life since most formal learning must take place at home. Other parents believe that their engagement leads to significant changes. Others acknowledged that as part of the transition process, they would need to change some areas and behaviors at home. On a more serious note, such parental actions demonstrate a determination to change despite the recent terrible circumstances.

The study's findings reflect Lee et al. (2020) conclusions that the COVID-19 problem affected most parents. The changes include changes to online resources and task and responsibility balancing. Many parents struggle with it while they adjust to changes in other aspects of their lives, such as careers. Bhamani et al. (2020) argue it is difficult if both parents work from home or have rigorous schedules. In the absence of domestic workers, parents struggle to control their children and let them do their own. More parents are claiming detrimental effects of homeschooling on themselves and their children, according to Thorell et al. (2021). They also reported stress, worry, social isolation, and marital strife. Other parents, on the other hand, have unfavorable opinions regarding online learning and

education. Because to the COVID-19 epidemic, their children are unable to regulate their emotions, manage their time, or gain professional skills (Dong et al., 2020). Creating a balance between the motivation, accessibility, responsibilities, and learning results of their children may be difficult for parents to achieve (Garbe et al., 2020).

3.2. THEME # 2. CULTIVATING A STRONG CONNECTION WITH THE CHILD

One advantage of home learning is that parents are more active in their children's education. The

parent-child interaction in the learning process is a vital concept in parents' involvement in their children's remote learning. This may be observed in the following statements:

"Completely hands-on, taking up all my time. I had to be a mother and a teacher simultaneously, which was challenging to manage. Your patience will be tested since your children will be distracted and unable to concentrate, which will drive you nuts." Parent 1

The above statements mean that parents give priority to their children's schooling rather than doing domestic jobs. Others also admitted that they devote their time attending to their children's educational needs and cultivating a sense of patience. Some parents function as a "guide" for their children. It occurs when their children are unable to complete a task due to its difficulty. These findings indicate a link that transcends physical proximity and is founded on the emotional concern.

Furthermore, "cultivating a close relationship with the child" represents the current comprehensive character of parental engagement in children's distant learning. Zainuddin et al. (2020) argued that parents and children could interact; hence this at-home learning method fosters physical and emotional bonding. Similarly, Jaiswal (2017) posited that parents are active in their children's growth. They provide financial, emotional, material, and motivational support. Moreover, the participants also revealed the positive and negative aspects of parent-child relationships during the pandemic. The following statements made by participants demonstrate the positive impact:

"We got to spend more time together. We had a great bonding. It was the first time that we became aware of being a family. We did various activities together, such as answering modules, reading lessons, preparing meals, watching movies, and playing basketball". (Parent 6)

The participants' statements emphasized the importance of spending time together and stated that these activities influenced their views about "family." Additionally, parents established rapport with their children, which resulted in more significant family interactions. Similar research discovered that good changes occurred in parent-child relationships during the pandemic (Koçak-Sevgili, 2020; and Demirbaş-Kurt 2020), and that, in addition to activities with family members (Aksoy & Başaran 2020), periods of interaction increased (Lee & Ward, 2020).

Meanwhile, prior research has revealed difficulties in the parent-child relationship during a pandemic, including undesirable scenarios such as social isolation and extreme stress

(Brown et al., 2020; Amakiri et al., 2020), nutritional disturbances, technology addiction (Usta-Yüksek & Gökcan, 2020; Başaran & Aksoy, 2020), an increase in physical and psychological punishment neglect, difficulties following the educational process, and a failure to spend time productively were all common (Chung et al., 2020).

3.3. THEME # 3. EXPERIENCING A VARIETY OF OBSTACLES DURING THE PROCESS

Parents frequently run into roadblocks with little time to plan for the changes necessary to accommodate their children's remote learning. As a result, challenges are integral parts of parents' experience who engage in their children's distant learning.

"Poor internet connection, absence of online class devices, and inability to concentrate since there is no teacher to explain because not all parents are educated and unable to teach their children. As a result, children don't learn anything because they can't explain everything well to the children." P16

"I experience teaching my child in her modules without prior knowledge in all her subjects, and sometimes it is difficult for her to understand." P7

As shown above, parents struggle to participate in their children's remote learning. An unstable internet connection is a major challenge for online education. Some parents may cite pedagogical issues due to "a lack of knowledge with diverse instructional approaches." As a result, they usually struggle to inspire and motivate their kids to learn. Other parents report having relationship troubles when their child does not obey. They see that children behave differently at home than in the classroom. The finding of the study implies that "a variety of difficulties during the process" provides the challenging points in parental involvement in children's distant learning during the pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis hampered personal, social, moral, and professional support in wider institutional contexts (Alevizou, 2020). This is also true for parents who have had to pay for their children's home-based education. As parents become more aware of their children's remote education, they encounter structural, pedagogical, and relational obstacles. Furthermore, Zainuddin et al. (2020) concluded that problems related with educational transition to remote learning exacerbate inequality, especially for the poor. In this paper, parents and their children face personal challenges such as stress, health issues, and social engagement with others. The statements exemplify the challenges of the participants:

"Learning isn't as interesting for my child since she thinks she's confined in a room, and she wanted to mingle with her classmates and neighbors." Parent10

The transcripts above indicate that children's motivation to learn had decreased due to many academic tasks that must be performed quickly, by the less enjoyable ways of learning, and the limited interaction with friends. Thus, this scenario greatly affects the way parents educate their children at home. Additionally, the participants mentioned the inability to learn well online, a disturbed home environment, or a lack of proper study areas as impeding factors in home learning. As reported by CNN Indonesia (2020), "42 percent of parents said their children's enthusiasm to learn decreases with time during the pandemic." Virtual classes might be tough to manage at times. Students struggle with

deadlines, assignments, and evaluations that are inconsistent (Nell et al., 2020). The learning and home environment also contributes to decreasing children's desire for learning (Daugherty, 2020; Cahyani et al., 2020). While the lockdown allows time for family bonding, the new instructional design impedes child interaction. According to Spinelli et al. (2020), the difficulties of quarantine affect both parents and children. Parental stress, particularly dyadic stress, mediates the effect of quarantine on children's behavior and emotions.

3.4. THEME # 4. FACING THE DEMAND OF NEW PARENTING CHALLENGES

Oby et al. (2020) has stated that parents' traditional tasks included teaching, directing, and nurturing children to become critical members of their communities. When children enter formal schooling, most parents allow them to assume responsibility. Informal education, parents are more of a provider, ensuring that their children have the resources and support they need to participate in the teaching and learning process. In this study, parents actively respond to the COVID-19 catastrophe's demand for new parenting issues. They adapt to their environment as much as they can and try to focus on the primary goal of learning. The following transcripts from the participants highlighted their role in responding to the demand of new parenting challenges:

"I lessen my expectations for the future. I am constantly reminded that the most important thing is that my child is learning. It makes no difference whether she is an honor pupil or not." Parent 12

The verbal excerpts above imply that parents play a significant role in molding their children's educational development. Indeed, parents remain optimistic despite the challenges brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic. According to them, they learn from this experience. They see the situation as an opportunity to learn how to support their children better. When it comes to their children's education, parents' expectations frequently change. They always remind themselves that the most important thing is that their children are learning throughout these trying times.

Additionally, they educate themselves on how to deal with reality. This level of acceptability is related to the fact that learning from home is currently how learning occurs. Moreover, the theme, "accepting the demand of new parenting problems," demonstrates the resolution of parental engagement in children's remote learning in the current circumstances. A timetable enables children to feel less restless and more productive. This study substantiates Bhamani et al.'s (2020) claim that parents can overcome distance learning obstacles by keeping a strict schedule and entertaining youngsters with innovative activities. Further, parents must be resilient in the face of adversities. Finally, Ntekane (2018) argues that parental involvement in education fosters children's love of learning and inspires them to do their best to make their parents proud.

Meanwhile, several parents embraced negative attitudes toward their parental roles during the pandemic. According to them, educating their children at home presented them with difficulties. Some parents disclosed:

*“Our condition is challenging at the moment, especially because I do not have any formal education. How do I assist my child on how to answer his modules?”
Parent 15*

“We are simply struggling financially; how am I to afford my son's online class when my salary barely covers our daily expenses?” Parent 19

The preceding remarks imply that parents' educational backgrounds affect how they fulfill their responsibilities as home educators. Additionally, the economic status of the parents also affects how parents educate their children. According to Aman et al. (2019), parental education influences children's academic participation. Parents are also concerned about their ability to provide for their family, stressed, tired, having problems balancing their relationships and their children's academic pursuits, and also experienced poor mental and physical health (Brown et al., 2020).

3.5. COPING MECHANISMS OF PARENTS IN HOME LEARNING

Despite the difficulties experienced by parents in educating their children at home, they still manage to perform their roles effectively through the following coping mechanisms.

3.6. THEME # 1. MAINTAINING A STRICT TIMETABLE

Basri et al. (2015) believe that time is a precious resource that people cannot regain or restore. It is a limited resource if duties are not planned properly. In this paper, the parents mentioned that maintaining a strict timetable is very important in educating their children at home. The following extracts illustrate the participants' experience of managing strict schedules:

“My son has a good routine in a set, waking up at 8:00 a.m. for his online studies. He works till 4:00 p.m. to finish each subject's allotted task; at that time, we both sit together to offer my help in finishing the assigned school tasks. I make sure there is still time to sleep and rest.” Parent 11

The participants' utterances show that they practiced managing their time to attend to their children's educational needs. They are understandably concerned about the extent to which their children's routines are interrupted. To address this issue, they created timetables that ensure children have something to do at all times and maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle. A timetable enables children to feel less restless and more productive. This finding corroborates Bhamani et al. (2020), who claimed that maintaining a strict timetable, employing creative activities, and keeping a positive attitude help parents overcome distance learning obstacles. Finally, Cerretani (2020) emphasized that children's schedules had been changed and that parents had provided emotional and psychological support.

3.7. THEME # 2. ENGAGING A CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Parents agree that the lockdown has given them practically unlimited time to try out new activities and ideas and that this may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They believe that

working with children benefits both parties and makes the days seem more productive. As participants mentioned:

"Thinking creatively...prepare exciting activities and games that are related to their lessons and self-experiences." Parent 14

"While staying at home, we performed more activities together. This also helped us to develop our communication and bonding." (Parent 13)

It's remarkable to note that parents spent time engaging in educational and recreational activities with their children. This assists their children in feeling relaxed and secure, which prepares them to learn. This is evident from the participants' direct statements above. This practice is consistent with the ideas of (Kalil et al. 2012; Guryan et al. 2008, Musick et al. 2016) that parental time includes recreational activities such as educational activities, sports activities, arts, and crafts, routine basic care activities.

3.8 THEME # 3. MOTIVATING THROUGH REWARDS

In real-life scenarios, rewards can lead to a shift in interest, such that an activity that was disliked becomes cherished, if only for the short-term gain and the desire may be retained. The third coping strategy employed by the participants in educating their children at home is offering a reward. As indicated in the following verbalizations from the participants:

"Plan, I see to it that I motivate my kids by preparing snacks if they participate actively in their online classes." (Parent 2)

"I give him money or toys as a reward so that he will be motivated to answer his modules." (Parent 18)

The statements above imply that parents offer rewards to their children in snacks, money, and toys. They believe that these rewards motivate children to participate actively in their online classes and accomplish their modules effectively. This finding validates the concepts of Ilegbusi (2019) that a child is driven to work hard if they expect they will be rewarded for finishing a task. Moreover, Aquino (2019) revealed that rewards and punishments influence student behavior, particularly academic accomplishment. Thus, teachers should always complement and encourage students' achievements in class. Ghazi et al. (2010) underlined that parents should ensure their children consume a balanced diet and receive enough medical care. Parents should use positive reinforcement methods to encourage children to attend school, rather than using physical punishment.

Contrary to the present study's result, Niu (2016) postulated that academic readiness, demography, and family socioeconomic position are all controlled for the students to succeed.

3.9. THEME # 4. PATIENCE

Parenting is a challenging experience, and it is not an easy path to take. As parents in these pandemic times, they expect numerous setbacks along the way. The participants possess

the value of patience in dealing with their children's behavior. This is apparent from the following transcripts from the participants:

"Besides parental duties, I need to be a teacher too, and it was hard to manage/divide your time as a mother and as a teacher at the same time. Your patience will also be tested because most of the time, your kids will be destroyed by something and not concentrating that will drive you nuts." (Parent 4)

The statements above mean that parents' patience is used in coping with their children's behavior. The participants kept their positive mood and interacted appropriately with their children, which allowed them to handle everything smoothly. Some of them expressed that being rude or arrogant does not help with child discipline during the interview. According to Bishara (2020), parents who encouraged their child's emotional expressiveness had more effective dynamic management. Children who grow up in unsupportive emotional settings (unpleasant, coercive, or unpredictable) are less capable of managing their emotions.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings that widespread school closures, delayed class re-openings, and various teaching approaches were beneficial in combating the pandemic. Lockdowns and abrupt transitions to homeschooling improve family bonds while ensuring student safety. However, parents encounter challenges related to virtual environments, instruction delivery, inadequate learning outcomes, and issues related to technology use and availability. Despite obstacles, parents used coping mechanisms to educate their children. Thus, these findings provide a foundation for developing complete and holistic educational policies that include learners' parents' perspectives. As a result, schools should give parents training on effective home learning, how to manage their child's learning style and technological support for online learning. It is also vital to educate parents on remote learning tools, pedagogical concepts and provide opportunities for teacher-student-parent communication.

The study's conclusions should be viewed in light of many limitations. To begin with, the non-random sampling and limited sample size render it unrepresentative of the participants. Because of the study's limited sample size, the findings cannot be generalized to all Filipino parents. Future studies may attempt to cover a broader geographic region, particularly in distant areas, and may employ several survey approaches to accommodate many people. Furthermore, qualitative findings cannot be effectively generalized to larger populations as quantitative data can. Future research may use a triangulation technique to optimize the benefits of these strategies while minimizing their limitations.

Author Contributions:

Roselle M. Soriano, Baltazar G. Damance, & Lilibeth C. Valerio gathered data from the participants through an interview from the participants. Lilibeth Valerio contributed to the conceptualization of the manuscript specifically on the introduction and methodology parts. Marivic Acio helped in the gathering related review of literatures and studies, while

Abigail Ambonon helped in the formal analysis of the data gathered. R.M. and A. A. prepared the first draft. Finally, all authors contributed substantially to the finalization of the manuscript

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The study was conducted according to the guidelines stipulated in the University Research Manual and approved by the Institutional Review Ethics Committee of QUIRINO STATE UNIVERSITY last October 24, 2021.

Informed Consent Statement:

Written informed consent has been obtained from the participants for publication of this paper.

Data Availability Statement:

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, R.M.

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Conflicts of Interest:

The authors have declared that no conflict of interests exist.

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