

From Ladle to Chalk and Pencil: Parents in the New Normal of Philippine Education System

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Abstract COVID-19, a pandemic that has engulfed the whole world, has posted paradigm shifts in all aspects of life's procedures and activities: one of these is our educational institutions from basic to higher education. Due to the health risks and protocols posted by concerned agencies, the opening of classes for the School Year 2020-2021 imposes parental engagement. Aimed at exploring the experiences of a group of parents in undergoing a webinar series centered on their tasks as parent-tutors in the new normal, this study employed Qualitative Research Design using Case Study as strategy for inquiry. The two major themes generated in the study, parents in the new normal and parents' problems in the new normal, amplified the inevitable roles and challenges of parent-tutors. Themes under the parents in new normal include Understanding the new normal (webinar: learning at home and learning the trend), Parenting (Assisting children in online classes and Assisting teachers in teaching), Building connection (Open communication and Rapport with colleagues), and Doing rewards and punishment while the Parents' Problems in the new normal include Playful children and Internet connectivity (Indulgence to gadgets and Liberty to search the internet). It was concluded that parents need to be educated for them

to function well as tutors and facilitators of their children's learning tasks – co-creators and co-constructors of the shared responsibility on the pursuit of providing continuous and responsive engagements that nurture love for learning among their children. It is concluded that they need to maintain a communicated parental aspirations and parental efficacy if they intend to function fully as tutors and facilitators of their children's learning engagement in this pandemic. A follow-up webinar series may be organized that will delve into the art of teaching including facilitating learning outcomes. In this manner, parents can assume full engagement in the education of their children as the first webinar series scratched only the surface of the multifaceted teaching and learning.

Keywords Project *New Normal*, New Normal in Education, Webinar, Parent-tutor, Facilitator

1. Introduction

Education is one of the greatly affected sectors in the occurrence of CoViD-19 pandemic. As approximately 1.6

billion learners worldwide are affected by this pandemic, countries continuously seek to provide solutions in order to cope up with the current situation of education in this public health crisis [1].

With the increasing cases of CoViD-19 in the Philippines, shifting of instructional modalities from traditional face-to-face to blended learning is suggested to assure that learning continues and remains unhampered. The utilization of online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook, among others to deliver webinars and classes becomes a trend – a new landscape in the Philippine Education System [2].

One of the widely used ways to adapt to the new normal of information dissemination is webinar. Webinar is a well-known computer-mediated communication system that is economical and can mimic the simultaneous exchange of information [3]. It is a favorable platform since physical interactions are limited due to the highly contagious disease. Educators and learners can also interact at their comfort and convenience [4]. However, online education can be challenging to learners with no gadgets and intermittent internet connection as the Philippines is one of the countries in Asia with the lowest average of internet connection [2-4].

With the limitations of online learning, the bulk of teaching and facilitating students is passed on to the parents. Parental involvement plays a key role in the children's education as it helps them achieve better performances in school. Having an effective parent-child communication will result to positive outlook in school, better attainment of skills, and more academic successes [5]. Since residential or face-to-face classes are suspended for the duration of the General Community Quarantine [6], both parenting and facilitating learning functions are assumed by the parents during their children's learning process.

Appositely, parents who are involved in the education of their children provide a safe and healthy environment, appropriate learning experiences, support, and a positive attitude about learning. Studies indicate that parental involvement is most effective when viewed as a partnership between educators and parents [7, 8, 9]. However, there is still a need to enlighten parents about the new normal in education to amplify effective supervision on their children's education as majority of them are not academically and emotionally prepared about their roles because of the sudden shift in our educational landscape.

The crux is: this research tries to fill the gap on preparing parents to become tutor or teachers of their children in the new normal – a robust and multifarious task that promotes successful student learning and student achievement; albeit confronted by time, poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources, and lack of awareness. Henceforth, the Provincial Government of Quirino, Philippines, in collaboration with the Quirino State

University system and the Department of Education, Schools Division of Quirino, conceptualized a webinar series called *Project New Normal: A Webinar Series* in order to educate parents in their roles in the new normal of education. It is the first ever project in the country and in the province that educates, equips, and enables parents to gain understanding on the competencies expected to be effective and efficient facilitators of students' learning.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Partnership Model. The Partnership Model centers on the idea that teachers are considered to be experts in education and parents are viewed as experts on their children [10]. The goal is to establish a partnership in which teachers and parents share expertise and control in order to provide the optimum education for children, each contributing different strengths to the relationship. Mutual respect, long-term commitment to a wide range of activities, and sharing of planning and decision-making responsibilities are the essential components for true partnerships between parents and teachers.

Moreover, reference [9] formulated seven Principles of Parental Involvement. This includes parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. The principles attached to the current study include parenting, communicating, learning at home, and decision-making. Under these principles, parents need to exemplify parental aspirations and parenting self-efficacy. It must be noted that parents who hold high aspirations for their children are most likely to be more willing to extend extra efforts in assuring the realization of their educational and occupational aspirations. Moreover, parenting self-efficacy, as outlined in Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, centers to an extraordinary, yet powerful determinant of effective parenting behavior. Parents with high self-efficacy in a specific area exert effort in that area, persevere in the face of difficulty, and respond resiliently to adversity [11]. Thus, the construct of self-efficacy is intended to be domain specific; particular experiences with respect to a given domain affect the individual's sense of confidence about acting efficaciously in that domain despite time, poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources, and lack of awareness [12].

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed the Qualitative Research Design using Case Study as strategy for inquiry. The informants, where qualitative data were generated, were the parents who participated in the conducted webinar series dubbed as *Project New Normal: A Webinar Series*. The webinar series was conceptualized by the Provincial Government of Quirino, Philippines, in collaboration with the Quirino

State University system and the Department of Education, Schools Division of Quirino.

To be qualified as informants of the study, they must have attended all the sessions contained in the webinar series and active participants as well. Active participants were those who participated in the open forum sharing their insights in the discussion board. The informants explained their experiences including a configural mode of understanding and principles – the meanings of their stories and experiences as part of an identity development [13].

One of the proponents personally interviewed the informants to gather the needed data in the study. Before the interview was conducted, the interviewer briefed the informants that their participation in the interview is voluntary and they can terminate it anytime. A consent form was signed by the informants. Transcripts of the interview were carefully transcribed and coded which were validated by a researcher whose credibility is beyond compare. Audit trail was employed in routing the transcripts of the interview to the informants in ascertaining the veracity of the claims. Audit trail is an in-depth approach to illustrating that the transcripts are based on the participants' narratives. It also involved a description on how the data were gathered and analyzed [14-15]. Henceforth, the data are considered verified and valid.

Moreover, the gathered data were analyzed through NVIVO qualitative textual analysis software.

On the basis of the foregoing, NVIVO is an approach in qualitative data analysis that systematically and rigorously synthesizing unequivocal qualitative data into curated and connected findings in a thematic framework of analysis and presentation [16, 17]. The presented themes in the succeeding section were formulated according to the word cloud from the informants as suggested by the NVIVO results which served as bases in an inquiry-based analysis vis-à-vis the research problem. Aptly, the analysis done in the research includes familiarization and organization, coding and recoding, and summarizing and interpreting [18].

3. Results and Discussion

The following themes were formulated based on the gathered data from the informants' interview. The themes were based on the word cloud output of NVIVO qualitative textual analysis software.

There are two general themes formed in the study: Parents in the New Normal and the Parents' Problems in the New Normal. Themes under the parents in new normal include Understanding the new normal (webinar: learning at home and learning the trend), Parenting (Assisting children in online class and Assisting teachers in teaching), Building connection (Open communication and Rapport with colleagues), and Doing rewards and punishment. On

the other hand, the theme on Parents' Problem in the new normal includes Playful children and Internet connectivity (indulgence to gadgets, and Liberty to search the internet).

It must be noted that parents as facilitators of their children's learning at home need to manifest the following if they intend to be as effective as expected – they need to be caring, enthusiastic and motivated, manifest positive expectations and attitude towards teaching their kids, exude fairness and respect, and practice social interactions with their kids [7, 9, 19, 20].

a). Parents as Teachers in the New Normal. Like a real teacher in the usual residential teaching and learning, parents in the new normal impinge extra credence on their ability, attitude, and disposition while facilitating their children in their learning tasks. However, they need to understand that teaching is a robust and multifarious task that needs introspection on designing an effective learning climate at their own home.

Theme 1. Understanding the new normal. Family-led learning is always vital and wanting. Successful parental involvement in the academic lives of their children elucidates the significance of understanding the nature of the processes involved. Parents need to understand what is contained in the new normal. Thus, parents play a key role in their children's attainment of their academic success especially in this time of pandemic. Henceforth, parental involvement begins inside their homes where constructive attitude towards learning is exuded [21]. Parents need to fully understand their unique roles so they can fully guide their children [19].

Parents who understand well the unique roles that they play in these engaging situations cultivate resiliency and self-efficacy among student-learners [22, 23]. Thus, parents may draw critical elements of connecting their children's activities to real life although they are just at the comfort of their homes [9, 24].

The following transcripts from the informants qualify the claim of this study that the webinar series made them understand the new normal in the context of learning at home through webinars as the new trend:

I am thankful because despite this pandemic, the government is doing something for the parents and it helped us in a way—to understand the new normal and learn the trend – P5

I was able to understand the new normal—in what to do in this pandemic – P1

Sub theme 1. Webinar: Learning at home

It was one of a kind—to have a seminar on the web. It was a great experience although there are many disruptions – P1

It was my first webinar—I was able to learn instantly at the comfort of my home – P4

Sub Theme 2. Learning the trend

It was pleasant in a way that I learned a lot (the trend) and I did not waste my time in it – P2

I am thankful because despite this pandemic, the government is doing something for the parents and it helped us in a way—to understand the new normal and learn the trend – P5

In the context of the transcripts of the study, Parents 1, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15 tried to understand the new normal particularly on their roles in the education of their children while Parents 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 17 and 18 learned the new trend of the so called new normal in education. On the basis of the Partnership Model of parental involvement in education, the gestures of the informants to learning the trend of the new normal are manifestations of their volunteerism to the education of their children. It can be construed then that the parents are in a stride of co-creating and co-constructing a shared responsibility with the teachers of their children – a facet of social constructivist framework of parental involvement [25].

It can be zeroed in that Parent 5 appreciated the initiative of the government to help and educate the parents in their role in the new normal. Based on the concepts of Partnership Model and Social Constructivism of Parental Involvement, parents and teachers assume shared responsibility on co-creating and co-constructing better learning engagement for their children [25]. In this study, the government particularly the Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) of Quirino had interfered with the creation and construction of responsibility in providing better learning engagement among school children in the new normal.

Theme 2. Parenting. Parental involvement corresponds to many constructs of parents' engagement to raise their children happy and healthy who become capable student-learners – a life-long commitment towards children's development, health, and safety including all home conditions supportive to the learning states of a learner. It is claimed that parents who exemplify parental aspirations and parenting self-efficacy are most likely to radiate better assistance to their children [7, 9].

Moreover, parenting self-efficacy, as outlined in Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, centers to an extraordinary, yet powerful determinant of effective parenting behavior. Parents with high self-efficacy in a specific area exert efforts in that area, persevere in the face of difficulty, and respond resiliently to adversity [11].

The following transcripts from the informants qualify the claim of this study that the webinar series made them realize the nature of parenting children in the new normal in the contexts of assisting their children in their online classes and assisting teachers in the education of their children:

I learned a lot especially on the tips for parents. It was

very helpful because I realized how to raise, guide, and teach my children. I also learned what I was doing wrong as I raise them – P3

I learned a lot in parenting—it was my best experience – P4

It was the nature of parenting in the new normal – P5

Sub Theme 1. Assisting Children in online class

The portion which discussed about guiding and facilitating the children in an online class—the new trend or the new normal – P2

I learned techniques in assisting our kids so we could maximize their learning experiences – P5

Sub Theme 2. Assisting teachers in teaching

In a way, we (parents) can really assist or help the teachers in teaching our children—we create a culture of partnership in educating our children despite the pandemic – P5

Based on the foregoing transcripts, it can be said that the parents are in full optimism to learn some techniques in assisting their children in the new normal – a manifestation of commitment among the informants for the academic successes of their children. The realizations brought by the webinar in terms of the tips in parenting, guiding them in their online classes and other learning experiences mark a significant point leveraging their capability in the new normal. Under the framework of reference [9], it is the obligation of every parent to ensure the child's health and safety. This includes parenting, nurturing a child, constant guidance and supervision, and maintaining discipline in all age levels. Moreover, parents must assure positive home conditions to reinforce positive behavior and learning attitude [26, 27].

In essence based on the transcripts of the study, parents need to be educated on their role-shift in this pandemic as expressed by Parent 9 while Parents 6 and 10 realized how difficult it is to assist children in their learning tasks. Aply, it must be noted that proper parenting forms an integral part in guiding and teaching children at home.

Aply, hands-on parents on the learning activities of their children are mostly to share parental aspiration and parental efficacy. In essence, parents form rich learning conditions towards enhanced academic opportunities and development for their children [28].

Theme 3. Building Connection. Building connection and rapport are very important things to be established in teaching as it is a two-way process. Parents, as tutors in the new normal, need to strengthen their communication skills among their children and eventually build rapport with them. References [20] and [29] explicated that the inability of parents to communicate clearly their motives as to their parental aspirations affect their parental efficacy. Henceforth, parents need to connect with their children underscoring their physical and emotional

presence in the overarching provision for encouragement and motivation to value their education. Furthermore, there is a relational component of encouragement and warmth – a special connection and an engaging strategy that supports higher accomplishments and achievements among child-learners [30].

In the same manner, parents need to maintain a support group from their peers and colleagues. The employment of constant communication with their colleagues brings bedrock of ideas to make things better – from inquiry to practice [32]. It was also claimed that there is an indelible connection between parents and their clouts and comrades – a factor that bridges realizations to their weaknesses and wrong doings, a stable tie in building trusting and caring relationship at the helm of helping each other to parent their children, and a group of support that strives to provide best communication avenue in perfecting home environment unique to a certain type of children [18, 32].

The following transcripts from the informants qualify the claim of this study that the webinar series made them understand the need to build connection with their child and colleagues:

It improved my connection with my kids—we became closer – P1

I learned to connect with my child on teaching. This enabled me to facilitate his learning – P2

It helped me to adjust in dealing with my kids. I tried to connect with them and it was successful – P4

Sub Theme 1. Open Communication

I learned to have an open communication—we needed to discuss things – P1

Sub Theme 2. Rapport with Colleagues

It was guidance to us. We were able to build rapport among my work colleagues. We talked about it whenever we had free time – P2

With regards to my colleagues and friends, it gave us the chance to see parenting in a new perspective. We talk about it every time. We build connection—we share – P5

In the light of the transcripts of the study, Parents 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 15 had the chance of learning to connect with their children while Parents 1, 7, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, and 19 looked at the need to discuss things openly. On the other hand, Parents 2, 5, 6, 7, and 10 got the chance to build rapport with their colleagues and friends. The foregoing transcripts amplify that the parents are resourceful enough to strategize in handling the children in the new normal.

Theme 4. Doing rewards and punishment. Doing rewards and punishment has been practiced to amplify better behavior among children at school or even at home throughout time. It is claimed that a behavior that has an amiable follow-up consequence is probable to be repeated

and a behavior with an unamiable follow-up consequence is less probable for repetition [34].

Researchers claimed diverging ideas in terms of the employment of rewards and punishments. Reference [34] claimed that learning improvement manifests when punishment is carried out while rewarding has no effects on learning. On the other hand, researchers claimed that education based on rewards produces better outcomes than education based on punishment. Authors further claimed that the employment of rewards in education, including the positive attitude and disposition of teachers and facilitators, predicts optimized learning [20, 23, 29, 35]. Hence, the foregoing results show the convergence of doing both rewards and punishments. Specifically, it can be construed that the employment of such improves their children's behavior.

The following transcripts from the informants qualify the claim of this study that the webinar series made them understand the proper usage of rewards and punishments:

I tried to implement their lectures such as doing rewards and punishments and it was effective. As a result, they behave better – P3

It was a good experience. It was a reminder to all—how to handle a troublesome child, how to reward or appreciate them, etc. – P4

The amplification of Parents 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10 on using rewards and punishment among their children made them realize how to handle their children better. The use of motivation and reinforcement was strengthened in the context of teaching their children. Parents 7, 8 and 10 claimed that teaching needs to be reinforced positively while Parents 10, 11, and 18 claimed that teaching need not to be punitive in nature. Aptly, Parent 6 claimed that reward and punishment need to be balanced as to their employment. Moreover, Parent 20 realized that there must be limits in using rewards although it is said to be good.

The foregoing claims amplify a reach academic acumen among the parent-informants as to employing rewards and punishment among their kids. The positive outlook of using rewards is a manifestation of their positive attitude towards teaching and learning.

In this way, the parents learned when and when not to employ rewards and punishment. Corollary to parental involvement, parents need to communicate with their children whenever they employ rewards and punishment as a rule of the thumb which the parent-informants failed to realize in the conduct of the webinar.

b). Problems and Challenges of Parents in the New Normal. Parents who instantly assumed the duties and functions of a teacher are still learning as co-creators and co-constructors of the shared responsibility on the pursuit of providing continuous and responsive engagements that nurture love for learning among their children. As such, they are confronted with mounting roadblocks which could

hamper their tasks of becoming parent-tutors: handling situations which are just but normal to children is already a cloud formation on their part. Henceforth, they must learn the principles behind these concordances and strategize in solving it.

Theme 1. Playful children. Children are naturally playful. According to Piaget's Theory on Cognitive Development which is reliant to biological factors such as maturity and stages, the concept of readiness plays a key role in their growth [36]. During a child's early childhood around ages 7-11, it is where the logical and operational insights begin [37]. During this stage, children are mostly observed to pay attention to things that do not require physical interactions such as playing gadgets, playing toys, among others. To young children, they lack awareness on the dividing line between play, care, and work [36, 38]. The current situation where the CoVid-19 pandemic prohibits children from going out of their homes favors their observable behavior which is to avoid physical interaction and leverage for them to just play.

The following transcripts from the informants qualify the claim of this study that the playfulness of the children posts problem on the part of their parent-tutors:

Another problem is my playful kid. I have a problem in handling this behavior – P3

They (children) just want to play and nothing more – P4

Parents 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18 were troubled in handling their playful children. Handling unfocused children is inevitable in teaching and learning. In this sense, parents need to strategize on how to keep them focused in their learning tasks.

The role-shift as claimed by parent 7 needs to be done in a favorable condition as the informant had a problem on shifting from a playmate to a

Theme 2. Internet Connectivity. Internet plays an important role in the new normal. In fact, internet connectivity is a great issue as it is a seamless platform. In the new normal, every family needs to be connected to the net in order for them to provide a learning condition at par. In the context of the current study, Filipino families are confronted with time poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources, and lack of awareness [12]. These factors threaten the involvement of parents in the new normal.

Excruciating the internet connectivity is the financial capability of the parents to provide better connections for them to go online. If the new normal centers in going online, parents need to secure stable internet connection.

The following transcripts from the informants qualify the claim of this study that internet connectivity posts problems on the part of the parent-tutors:

For me, the problem was on internet connection. Connecting via google meet was a problem—very poor

internet connection – P2

Internet connection is one of the problems – P4

Sub Theme 1. Indulgence to Gadgets

They (children) are fully engaged in their gadgets – P4

My problem is how to engage my children in learning because they are too focused and indulged in using non-academic related stuff on the internet like Facebook, YouTube, etc. – P5

Sub Theme 2. Liberty to search the internet

Probably because I came to learn that with the wide area of internet, if you give your child a laptop or an iPad with a very good internet connection, you give them the liberty to search the internet – P5

Corollary to the internet issues by most parents are the indulgence of children to gadgets and the liberty of children to search the net when they go online. In this scenario, the parental involvement particularly on their decision making when indulging to learning at home should be well practiced. In the model of reference [9] for parental involvement, parents need to exemplify communication effectiveness in delimiting the possible activities and concordances of their children in the net. Particular attention is the surfing time and surfing parameters. Parents need to practice prudence in allowing their children in going online, e.g., on what to search, where to search, among others. Parent 5 explicated well what is to be expected when children are given the liberty to search the internet. Moreover, Parent 20 suggested that parents need to be cautious about the children's freedom in searching the internet while Parent 12 realized that there must be limitations on the liberty of the children in using the internet. The following realizations from the participants of the study should serve as a warning to the parents who are serving as tutor-facilitators. They must be watchful on the activities of their children over the net as their limit is of no border.

4. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the Project *New Normal* of the Provincial Government of Quirino, Philippines, in collaboration with the Quirino State University system and the Department of Education, Schools Division of Quirino, paved ways among parents to realize their inevitable roles in the new normal of Philippine Educational System. Furthermore, it was concluded that parents need to be educated for them to function well as tutors and facilitators of their children's learning tasks – co-creators and co-constructors of the shared responsibility on the pursuit of providing continuous and responsive engagements that nurture love for learning among their children. It is also concluded that

they need to maintain a communicated parental aspirations and parental efficacy if they intend to function fully as tutors and facilitators of their children's learning engagement in this pandemic. The two themes generated in the study, parents in the new normal and parents' problems in the new normal, amplified the inevitable roles and challenges of parent-tutors. Themes under the parents in new normal include Understanding the new normal (webinar: learning at home and learning the trend), Parenting (Assisting children in online class and Assisting teachers in teaching), Building connection (Open communication and Rapport with colleagues), and Doing rewards and punishment while Parents' Problem in the new normal include Playful children and Internet connectivity (indulgence to gadgets, Liberty to search the internet).

5. Recommendation and Future Works

On the conclusion that the parents were still learning as co-creators and co-constructors of the shared responsibility on the pursuit of providing continuous and responsive engagements that nurture love for learning among their children, it is recommended that a follow-up webinar series be organized that will delve into the art of teaching including facilitating learning outcomes. In this manner, parents can assume full engagement in the education of their children as the first webinar series had scratched only the surface of the multifaceted teaching and learning.

A close monitoring program with the first batch of participants may be conducted to ascertain the impact of the webinar series offered by the Provincial Government of Quirino, Philippines, in collaboration with the Quirino State University-system and the Department of Education, Schools Division of Quirino.

Similarly, the Provincial Government of Quirino, in partnership with the Department of Communication and Information Technology, may come up with a project on providing wifi zones in every barangay. This will address the issue of the parents on internet connectivity as it is deemed costly by the *common taos* in the province.

Aptly, the three agencies in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and Development may come up with tangible extension activities to be offered for the parents in the far-flung areas of the province. This will ensure that the principle on no learner left behind in the wings of parental engagement will be assured in the new normal of our education climate.

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