

# OFFLINE AND ONLINE: STORIES OF TEACHER-PARENTS UNDER THE “NEW NORMAL” IN EDUCATION

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**Offline and Online: Stories of Teacher-Parents Under the “New Normal” in Education**

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### **Abstract**

This action research aimed to study the experiences of teacher-parents in the Division of Bataan to determine the challenges that they encountered in relation to the “new normal” in education brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and their adaptive strategies. This study, which is qualitative in nature, involved seventeen (17) teacher-parents who are residing in the town of Bagac, Bataan. Using thematic analysis method, the study revealed that the challenges of teacherparents in teaching their own children are the presence of distractions for their children in their home and the limited time to cater to all their responsibilities. In relation to teaching their students, teacher-parents are struggling with their students’ lack of attention to lesson and at the same time, they are overwhelmed because of additional work tasks given to them. As a response to the challenges, teacher-parents recognized the importance of communication between them and their children as well as good time management. In addition, they are also able to survive the current landscape through maintaining a positive attitude, practicing self-care as well as mere acceptance of the situation.

*Key words: offline and online teaching, stories of teacher-parents, adaptinve strategies*

## **Introduction**

Corona Virus Disease or widely known as COVID-19 is caused by a novel virus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2). The first case was reported in December 2019 in Wuhan Province, China and now it has rapidly spread across the globe and infected millions of people due to human-to-human transmission (Colizzi, et al., 2020).

The response of the government to contain the virus led to a change in our everyday lives. Human mobility was limited due to restriction in inter-border travels and implementation of strict community. This so called “new normal” brought by the COVID-19 caught the attention of researchers thus there are already studies conducted on the experiences of people during this pandemic.

In terms of education, The Department of Education issued an order last June 19, 2020 entitled, “Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in the Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency”. The said order states all the arrangements that need to be done as a response to the pandemic as well as the possible new learning modalities to be implemented in schools to ensure the delivery of education amidst the pandemic. These new arrangement in the education brought additional responsibilities to our teachers. Given the current social landscape wherein face to face interaction is limited, learning is done inside the home of the learners with the help of their guardians. Given this, the researcher aimed to study the experiences of our teachers who are at the same time teaching their own children in this time of COVID-19 Pandemic.

### **Related Literature and Studies**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought drastic changes in entire educational system. some schools adopt new learning strategies and methods such as modular, online, TV or radio and in some cases blended learning or combination of any of those methods. Because of this so called “new normal” in education, there are scholars who already conducted studies on education in this time of pandemic.

In a Policy Brief released by United Nations last August 2020 entitled, “Education During COVID-19 and Beyond”, the current COVID-19 Pandemic has affected an estimate of 1.6 billion learners around the globe and the closures of the schools have impacted 94% of the student population. As a response to this health emergency, several distance learning tools were used. It showed that the preferred modality of learning depends on the educational level and the resources of a country. Different regions have different access in terms of internet connectivity, learning resources and technology infrastructure.

In relation to new learning modalities, teachers are at the forefront of implementing these new methods thus capacitating or training them is a prerequisite. However, these development programs were done through online platforms due to the existing threat of COVID. These type of capacity programs draw some gap especially to teachers who have limited access to internet connection and gadget (United Nations, 2020).

In a study conducted by Alea et al. (2020), entitled “Teachers’ Covid-19 Awareness, Distance Learning Education Experiences and Perception towards Institutional Readiness and Challenge”, it showed that teachers have high awareness on COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. Likewise, the teachers also showed their readiness for distance learning. Through the interviews from the participants, despite their readiness for online learning, there are some

factors that made them worry on the new landscape for education such as lack of facilities and equipment and the access to capacity building for teachers. Other factors which affect the teacher’s readiness to distance learning are their length of teaching experience and specialization, and geographic location (Alea, Fabrea, Roldan, & Farooqi, 2020).

In a similar scope of study conducted by Hodges et al. (2020), they discussed the importance of partnership and linkages in improving the reach of teacher during distance learning. the result of the study showed that there must be an established partnership with parents and the community because they are the ones who are helping the children in their lesson at home and at the same time, strong support from the parents helps in alleviating the trauma brought by the pandemic (Hodges, Kerch, & Fowler, 2020).

The abovementioned articles showed the situation of our teachers and their role for distance learning as well as how parents and the community as a whole help our teachers in time of health emergency. In relation to this, the following section will focus more on the situation of parents in this “new normal”.

Azubuike and Aina (2020) wrote an article on how the parents are supporting their child’s learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria. It showed that distance learning widened the existing inequality of education. The educational and socioeconomic background of parents greatly affects the quality of learning received by the child. Children who have parents who can provide them enough learning resources can learn more than those children who came from lowincome household and have parents who have no time to teach their child (Azubuike & Aina, 2020).

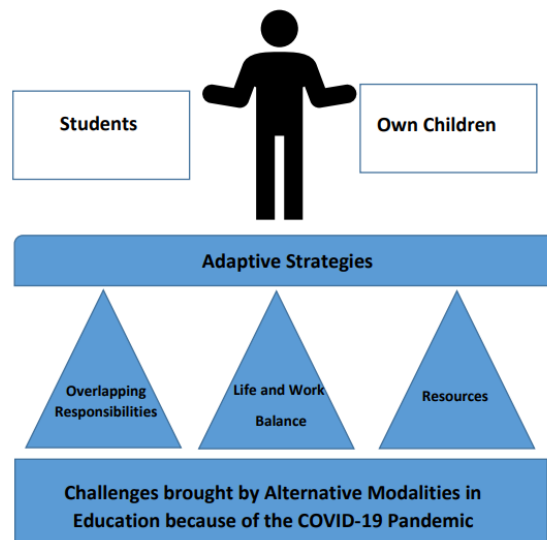
Consistent with the article of Azubuike and Aina, Di Pietro et al, in their study entitled, “The likely impact of COVID-19 on education: Reflections based on the existing literature and

recent international datasets”, also showed how parental support helps children to cope up with distance learning. Children who receive more non-financial support from their parents such as assistance time at home with children, and financial support such as digital resources at home, suitable home learning space, proper nutrition and affordability of extra school learning activities have more advantage in distance learning than those children who did not receive enough financial and nonfinancial support from parents (Di Pietro, Biagi, Costa, Karpinski, & Mazza, 2020).

Based from the literatures cited above, it was established that teachers together with the parents have a crucial role on the quality of learning that the child will receive under this COVID19 pandemic. However, in this kind of narrative, it is also important to consider that there are teachers who are also teaching their own children under the new modalities in education. Given this, the researcher aimed to fill up the gap in this narrative by studying the experiences of teacherparents.

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the research model that will serve as the framework of the study.



*Figure 1 Research Model*



The research model shows the objective of this study to provide a narrative analysis of the experiences of teacher-parents in the district of Bagac, Bataan. Through interview with the participants, the researcher aims to identify the challenges encountered by teacher-parents under this “new normal” in education in terms of overlapping responsibilities, life and work balance, and resources. In relation to the possible challenges, adaptive strategies of teacher-parents will also be studied.

### **Research Questions**

The study attempted to answer the question, what are the experiences of teachers who are also teaching their own children during pandemic?

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did the teacher-parents balance their time as a teacher and as a mother during the pandemic?
2. What are the problems encountered by teachers under the “new normal” in education in terms of teaching their own children and their students?
3. What are the adaptive strategies of teacher-parents regarding remote learning?

### **Significance of the Study**

Due to the threat of COVID-19, the education sector provided new modalities to ensure the continuity of education amidst the pandemic. However, this new approach brought additional responsibilities and tasks to teachers. This study aimed to further understand and provide deeper analysis of the experiences of teacher-parents during the “new normal”.

***Student and Parents.*** This study may be beneficial not only to the students but also to their parents by raising awareness on the experiences of teachers who are also at the same time teaching their own children. Since the start of classes for this school year, different issues were

raised in terms of the content of reference materials, its distribution, as well as the teaching modality itself. Through the data gathered from teacher-parents in this research, students and parents will understand the experiences of teachers, their struggles in teaching their students and at the same time their own children. Knowledge on the experiences of others may help the parents be more understanding on the current situation of the educators.

*Teacher-Parents.* For the teacher-parents, this study may be an instrument for them to communicate or let other people know and make them understand their experiences, struggles, and stories of being a mother and educator in this time of pandemic. Through their narratives in this research, they can make people understand them fully and know their real stories particularly how they manage their time in the middle of everyday household and school task that that they need to accomplish. Also, through this study, teacher-parents can know that they have a shared experience with other teacher-parents.

*School.* Aside from the students and their parents, this study may also be beneficial to school administrators and help them come up with a research-based program or intervention that can help our teacher-parents. This study will also be an avenue for them to know the experiences of their teachers in this time of pandemic and how they cope up with the responsibilities for their students and their own children

Likewise, the outcome of this study can be used as reference for future *policy makers* specifically in the education sector. Especially in this time of health emergency, education sector has an important responsibility in assuring the welfare of the teachers

### **Scope and Limitations**

This study focused on teachers who also have children studying in primary level. The term

“teacher-parent” will be used for this study to refer to teachers who are also parents. Due to the limited mobility and health hazard brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, participants for this study are teacher-parents who are residents of District of Bagac, Division of Bataan. The researcher included the stories of teacher-parents in relation to teaching experience in time of pandemic and their adaptive strategies on how they manage their time teaching their students and their own children. In acquiring the needed resources and data for this study, the researcher interviewed teacher-parents. Data from other published material were also used.

## **Method**

### **Type of Research**

Teachers who have children in the primary level of education and residing in the District of Bagac are the target participants for this research. This research is qualitative in nature and focuses on narrating and analyzing the experiences of teacher-parents. Narrative analysis is a method wherein researchers interpret or analyze stories that are told within a certain context and/or are shared in everyday life (Allen, 2017).

### **Participants and Sampling Method**

The participants for this research will be teacher-parents who are residing in the district of Bagac. Due to the nature of the study and its objectives, a purposive sampling procedure was used by the researcher in identifying the participants for this study. Purposive sampling technique is a non-probability method wherein the participants were chosen by the researcher based on his/her own judgment (Dudovskiy, n.d.). This kind of sampling is suited or appropriate if the number of participants needed for the study is limited and should have a shared experiences or characteristics which is in the case of this study, are teacher-parents.

**Sources of Data**

The primary sources for this study are interviews from teacher-parents in the district of Bagac. Aside from the narratives that were gathered, the secondary sources for this study were written sources such as published articles, journals and other works that tackles teacher-parents.

**Instruments**

Since this research is qualitative in nature and is open for any information from the participants, the researcher used a survey questionnaire. The said survey questionnaire went through a verification process from the Division Research Coordinator. Also, consent forms were signed by the participants after the researcher discussed thoroughly the nature and objectives of the study and ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected.

**Data Collection Procedure**

In acquiring the needed data for this study, the researcher identified potential participants by asking through an online survey form which includes data on their number of children. After the participants had already been identified, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the participants regarding their experiences as teacher-parents. The information given or said by the participants were properly documented and thematic analysis was used in analyzing the collected data.

**Ethical Considerations**

The researcher assured that all the sources used will be acknowledged. The intention of the study will be discussed clearly to the key informants and the researcher respected whatever their decisions especially their privacy and did not include in the study anything that they don't want to be written. Sources were cited properly and to prove that the work is not plagiarized, the researcher is willing to submit her work and check it for verification.

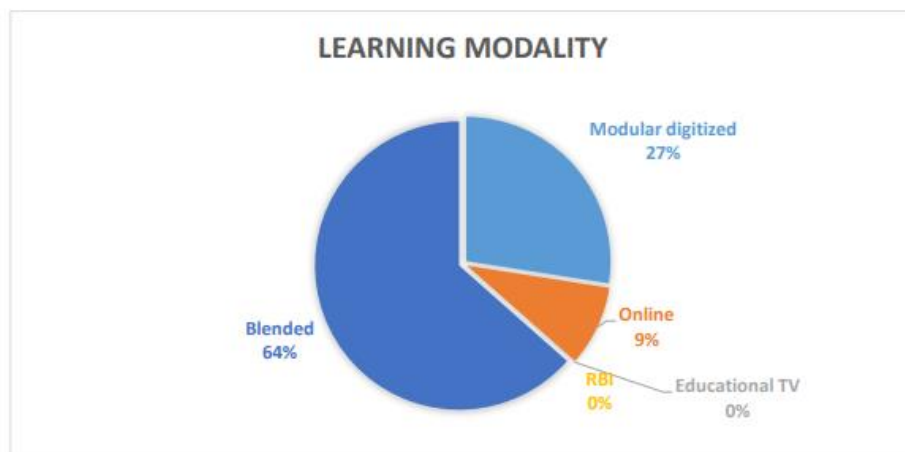
## **Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data gathered for this study, the researcher documented the response of the participants and based from the answers, thematic analysis was utilized. Thematic analysis is a method which focuses on identifying patterned meaning across the data gathered (The University of Auckland , n.d.). Based from the documented answers of the participants, the researcher came up with themes to answer the research question through word frequency or the recurrence of an answer to the same question to different participants.

## **Overview of Learning Modality in Bataan**

The Schools Division of Bataan, a medium category SDO, consists of 206 schools, 118 in the first congressional district and 88 in the second congressional district. The District of Bagac, which is the focus of this study, has a total of 13 schools, ten of which is offering primary education while the remaining three is offering secondary education.

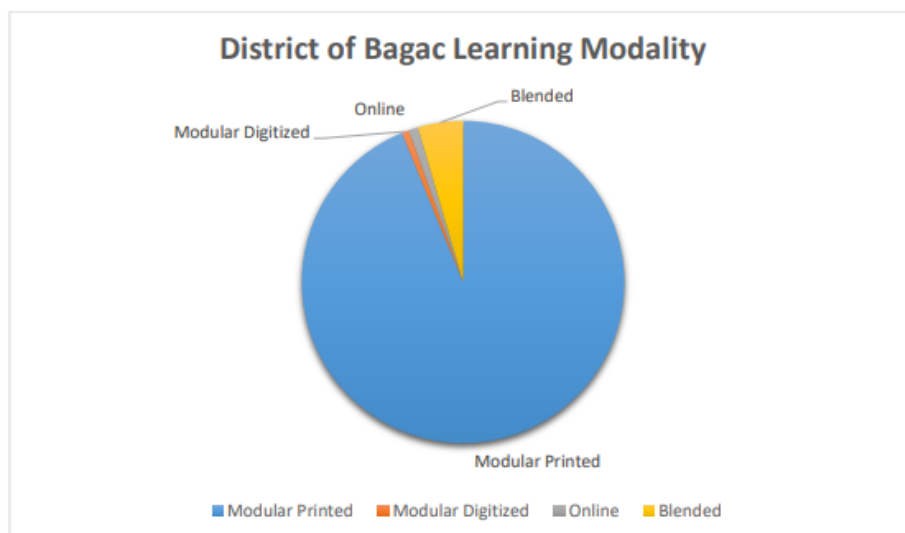
The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus changed the set-up of learning instruction for the current school year. Amidst the risk and hazards of the virus, DepEd ensures that the delivery of quality relevant education will not be hindered. In relation to this direction of the Department, a Learning Continuity Plan for SY 2020-2021 was released. Enclosed in the aforementioned continuity plan are the different learning modalities that schools will adapt. These learning modalities include Modular Distance Learning, Online Distance Learning and Radio/TV-Based Instruction. Figure 2 shows the modality report of SDO-Bataan retrieved from the Learner Information System (LIS).



*Figure 2 Learning Modality in SDO-Bataan*

The data extracted from the LIS shows that majority of the learners here in Bataan is using blended modality as their means in studying with 63% of the total enrollment. Blended learning is a modality wherein the learner is using a combination of two or more modality. One example of this are learners who are using both modules and online classes.

In the District of Bagac, out of 7, 423 enrollees, majority of the learners are using printed modules. In using printed modules as modality, the school provided learning materials which will be answered by learners. The school set up a time and day when the parent will pick up the modules and when they will return it for checking of the teachers.



*Figure 3 Learning Modality in the District of Bagac*

### Demographic Profiles of Participants

A total of 17 participants answered the survey questionnaire and in terms of their demographics, as shown in Table no.1, nine of them are teachers in the elementary level and eight of them are secondary teachers. In terms of sex, majority of the participants are female and only 11.76% or a total of 2 teachers are male. In the number of children, majority of the participants have number of children ranging to three to four.

Table 1  
Demographic of Participants

Variable	Responses	No. of Participants
Level	Elementary	9
	Secondary	8
Sex	Male	2
	Female	15
Number of Children	1-2	6
	3-4	9
	5 and above	1

### Discussion of Results

The sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic brought huge adjustments to all of us especially on the process of teaching. Because of the shift to modular and learning from home of the learners, parents also became the learning facilitator of their children. These new arrangements brought adjustments and some issues for teacher-parents. From the interview from the participants, as seen in table no. 2, the common problem encountered by teacher-parents in teaching their children at home are the presence of distractions and time constraints.

Table 2

Common Problems Encountered by Teacher-Parents in Teaching their Children at Home

Essential Themes	Thematic Statements
Presence of distraction at home	“Destructed due to noise outside home and other matters”
	“Naagaw ng gadget ang attention ng mga bata”
	“There are many distractions in learning such as cp, TV, etc. I have limited time in supervising them on answering their modules so usually my grade 2 kid was always left behind with her modules. I dont know if my
	grade 10 kids understand their lesson because I always have no time to check their answers”
	“They are more focused on their online games”
	“Their attention/focus”
	“Lack of focus,,enough time to answer all the modules due to great number of activities”
	“Span of attention”
Limited time for teacher-parents to cater all their responsibilities	“challenges if the both parents at work and time management for studying because the conflict of work”
	“Conflict with my works. Sometimes I felt so stressed with my youngest sons performance task.”
	“Working at home teach them at the same time”
	“Time”
	“Lack of time because I worked too”



	“ time management because it is an additional work for us.”
	“Lots of challenge (lack of time for one-on-one study, duration to answer the modules given, motivating my etc...)”

Aside from the different problems that our teacher-parents are experiencing, they are also having difficulty in teaching their learners because according to them, their learners are showing no or little interests on their lessons and the presence of additional tasks or paper works to them is a burden since they have already a lot of things to do.

Table 3

Common Problems Encountered by Teacher-Parents in Teaching their Learners

Essential Themes	Thematic Statements
Learners have no or little interest in their lessons	“Children were not interested in learning and their parents/guardian don't have time to teach their children because they are pre occupied by their work.”
	“Naaagaw ng gadget ang attention ng mga bata.”
	“Pupils with no interest in answering their modules. Sometimes, they will get the modules but will not answer them. Parents answering the modules of their children. Late submission of pupils' tasks, tests and answers in modules so I have to wait for them to comply with the requirements.”
	“Some students are not interested to attend online class”

	“interest and behavior of the learners, their capabilities to learn especially to those lessons which considered them difficult in their part”
	“The students become lazier.”
Teacher-parents are overwhelmed by additional task in school	“It's hard because, we are bombarded with different special assignment aside from teaching load. I don't know how to divide my time especially when I have given multi task because I am the property custodian,
	also a LIS coordinator. Considering that I am handling 5 sections teaching load and having four children studying.”
	Tons of paperworks- IDLAR, accomplishment reports, WHLP, PPT preparation, checking answer sheets, computation of grades, etc. ASAP reports, Incomplete submission of students SLMs, Less students joining Online Class, Unstable internet connectivity, Stress from Pandemic situation, Working overtime/overworked, Difficulty for teachers in reaching out to students, Performance pressure from school admin.

	ang pagtuturo ay di mabigat para sa akin, pagpiprint ng modules para sa limang subject na hawak ko ang talagang burden ko . may communication nman kami ng mga bata para sa kanilang mga katanungan.
	Distributing and retrieving of modules

Based from the responses of the participants, it is clear that children in this time of pandemic are having difficulty in focusing on their studies. According to them, gadgets are stealing the attention of their children every time they need to answer their modules. Aside from modules, they are also distracted by the outside noise from their house. The same reason may also be attributed on why the learners of our teacher-parents are showing less interests on the lessons.

This attitude of learners can be attributed on their current physical environment and its conduciveness to learning. Back to the time when there was still face to face classes and learners are still going to school, they are conditioned that the school is a place of learning. The classroom was also designed to facilitate easy learning of students. The school since it is an exclusive area for learning and socialization of learners as well as teachers, it is away from a lot of distraction such as social media, TV shows and other gadgets. Now that the learners are studying from their home, they don't need to strictly follow their schedule and they are not supervised by their teacher, their attention can be easily diverted into something else that is why their motivation level is getting low.

Another major theme that emerged from the interview of the participants regarding the common problems that the teacher-parents are experiencing in teaching their children is time constraint. Compared to the time when there were still a face to face classes, during the day, teachers are fulltime teaching their learners and only after school hours that they need to guide their own children. However, today the current arrangement is that, they are teaching at the same time their learners and children plus they need to do some house errands like cook their food and clean their home. In addition to teaching related and parenting-related tasks, another tasks or assignment that contributes to the problem of time constraint of our teacher-parents is the additional administrative and paper works. Because of additional tasks, teacher-parents need to divide their time to cater to their different responsibilities such as being a parent, teacher and a wife.

Teachers, just like their learners are struggling in a work from home set-up. Basically, a house is designed as a resting place, a personal place for some, and an area where household chores can be done. However, with teacher-parents working in their home, all their responsibility such as being a parent, teacher, and manager of the house are overlapping and this becomes too overwhelming for the teacher-parents. Also, for teacher-parents, their struggle in handling children in this time of pandemic is doubled since they need to face both their own children and their students who are having issues on motivation for distance learning.

Based from the aforementioned answers of the participants, the “new normal” brought new challenges not just for being a teacher but also for being a parent. The table below shows the emerging themes from the interview of the participants regarding the adaptive strategies of the teacher-parents in relation to these challenges.

Table 4  
Adaptive Strategies in teaching their own children

Essential Themes	Thematic Statements
Communicate with their child	“Encourage them to study and give them little rewards when they finished their task”
	“As much as possible I talked with them about their lessons if they have difficulties in understanding their lessons”
	“Talking to them to give focus on studying”
Practice time-management	“I adjust my work schedule”
	“I need patient and time management”
	“By making schedule”
	“Set an schedule”
	“make sure to follow home learning plan”
	“Time management”

In terms of the problem of the teacher-parents regarding their children showing less or no interest in studying, one of their common strategies is to talk to their children and encourage them to study their lessons. Also, teacher-parents recognize the importance of organizing a calendar and setting a schedule for every activity to maximize their productivity. Since teaching from home demands a lot from teacher parents because of overlapping activities, prioritizing of activities is important and sticking to the schedule is a necessity.

Table 5

Adaptive Strategies of Teacher-Parents in teaching their learners

Essential Themes	Thematic Statements
Acceptance of the current situation	“No choice, just accept the flow”
	“I need to adapt it because being a teacher every change is a challenge.... We are able to adapt everything”
	“accept the situation”
Maintain a positive attitude	“tinignan ng positibo ang lahat ng ito, at napakahalaga talaga ang time management para sa lahat ng gawain upang may panahon pa para sa pagtuturo ng anak.”
	“Be positive all the time and flexible”
Practice self-care	“Make yourself healthy and balance your work at home and in school.”
	“Habitual doing of activities at school and at home.”
	“Encouragement /support from co-workers, Stress Management, Time Management”
	“Self-learning, make a to do lists”
	“time management, patience and motivation are the keys to adopt new normal”

When teacher-parents were asked regarding their adaptive strategies for problems in teaching their learners, their common answers were acceptance of the current situation, having a positive attitude, and practicing self-care. For them no matter how hard the situation, they don't have a

choice but to accept the current arrangement. Aside from mere acceptance, they also maintain a positive attitude and practice self-care. According to them, good time management skills, and encouragement or support from their co-workers are some of the things why they are able to survive during this difficult time.

Based from the answers of the participants, it can be observed that in relation to the challenges that our teacher-parents have encountered in terms of encouraging their child to study, they practice active strategies such as talking and motivating their children. However, when it comes to encouraging their learners, teacher-parents are more passive and their strategies are more inclined on acceptance and improving or taking care of their selves rather than motivating their learners the same way that they are motivating their children.

Face to face interaction will always be different from online or other alternative modes of communication. This can be one of the reasons why learners are demotivated in learning and the teachers as well are passive to their answers when they were asked about their strategies about their concern on alternative mode of learning. Their responses are more focused on their own welfare in this time of pandemic. This may imply that due to the limited face to face interaction of teachers and learners, their relationship is low thus affecting the motivation of learners to study as well as the drive of the teachers to ensure that their students are learning.

## **Conclusion**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought drastic changes in our societal landscape. It does not only hamper the order of things but also it greatly impact the welfare on people. In the education sector, the pandemic made the Department to shift into new modalities to prioritize the health not just of teachers but especially learners who are under the vulnerable age group. This sudden shift in learning arrangement brought several challenges specifically on the part of teacher-parents. In

terms of teaching their learners, they are faced with problems relating to their learners’ attention together with the additional task that is being given to them. In relation to this, in terms of being a learning facilitator of their own children, they are also faced with the struggle of catching their children’s attention and also, lack of time since they are expected to take the responsibility of being a mother, parent and teacher at the same time.

In addressing the problems that the teacher-parents are facing, the common strategy that they are doing is to build relationship and communicate their concerns to their own children. When it comes to the problems that they are facing in relation to school, their adaptive strategy is more inclined on accepting the situation and having a positive attitude.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings obtained from the study, the following recommendations have been suggested. First, it was established in this study that one of the major challenges for teacher-parents is their children and learners’ attitude toward learning, so it is recommended for the Department as well as the school administrators to review the activities of learners and come up with nonstagnant or creative tasks that can be incorporated to the learning materials. Second, teachers are struggling on how they can balance their time in teaching, parenting, and additional task such as paper works and other reports to be submitted. It is recommended to review the additional tasks given to teachers and if possible to remove unnecessary workloads that is stopping the teachers to focus and give quality lessons to learners.

The pandemic has taken its toll on the mental health of our teachers specifically to teacherparents who are having additional struggles in teaching both their children and learners. It is recommended for school administrators and school staff to conduct “Kumustahan” session which aims not to monitor the work progress of teachers but to monitor their emotional well-



being. According to the result of the study, encouragement from their workmates helped in increasing their morale.

For researchers who are also in the education sector, it is recommended to conduct the same study in the different district in the Division of Bataan to provide a holistic and more comprehensive knowledge regarding the experiences of our teacher-parents in time of pandemic.

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