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## **MA'AM KO SI NANAY: A PORTRAIT OF HOME SCHOOLING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN A BARRIO SCHOOL OF INFANTA, QUEZON**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The results of the study revealed that parents and learners of Tuduran Elementary School in time of COVID-19 pandemic can be described as unprepared. Since the pandemic was so sudden, parents experience difficulties in balancing their work, household chores and teaching responsibilities. They also had experienced challenges since the burden of teaching their own children at home were laid on their shoulders. On the other hand, learners find it hard to deal with a new set-up of education where their parents act as their teachers. The challenges experienced by both the parents and the learners were as follow: lack of knowledge in content pedagogy, balancing responsibilities and dealing with multiple children/sibling but despite those circumstances, they were able to overcome it with the support of the people around them like the teacher-advisers, who act as a primary supporters of the parents, their relatives and siblings. The utilization of gadgets and the use of technology help them better in overcoming the challenges they encountered. Significant insights that can be drawn from the experience of a parent and learner participants. The importance of having a good relationship or partnership among the parents, teachers and school. Teachers should be more empathetic and patient towards parents and learners at this time of crisis and pandemic. They should never forget to put their shoes on the shoes of the parents who have varied life circumstances.

**Keywords:** *home schooling, COVID-19 pandemic, learning modules, balancing responsibilities*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

“Things may never go back to normal. You may need to create a new normal.”- Bri House.

Due to the threat brought by the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, many nations experienced a shutdown of their economies which affected different sectors and industries on a global pedestal. Nearly 200 countries shut down schools with over 90% of these learners ranging from early years through higher education facing some sort of disruption to their education (UNESCO, 2020). The Philippine education sector was not exempted from this. Face to face engagement of the teachers and learners within the school were also suspended. We are only beginning to understand the economic impacts of COVID-19, but many other issues have emerged and need to be urgently addressed, like the closure of schools and its impact on learning and the burden of education on students, parents and teachers hence the Department of Education (DepEd) is addressing the challenges in the basic education for the school year 2020-2021 through its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) under DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020.

Many teachers, families, and learners have been unprepared for this sudden shift, bringing some of the hardships and issues of increased parental involvement to the surface while engaging and trying to assist their children in various levels and types of distance learning (Garve et al., 2020) parents particularly the mother had to assume the full time role of educating their children and support their learning in distance learning. The feelings of parents towards distance learning are mixed. Some parents feel more connected to their child's schoolwork while others see this as an additional burden (Selwyn et al., 2021).

The teaching profession is seen as mainly feminine, a female-dominated occupation, with a significant concentration of women serving as teachers (Sargent, 2004). In case of homeschooling at this time of pandemic, teaching of children was solely a burden laid on the shoulder of a mother. Parents, particularly mothers have the biggest influence on their children's lives. While most people learnt from many great teachers, the greatest and the most influential of all is the mother. The role of mother is probably the most important role a Filipina will assume in the course of her life. Since the mother oversees household matters and responsibility of the children lies mainly with her, she is in a position of power.

Thus, this research explored the experiences of mothers and their children in homeschooling in Tuduran Elementary School amidst the Covid pandemic in response to the learning distance modality as imposed by DepEd this SY 2020-2021. Furthermore, this research undertaking explored the problems and challenges in home schooling encountered by both mothers and learners and their coping mechanism. Much more, this study helped the parents reflect on the nobility of teaching profession in times of pandemic which needs appreciation from the community.

**Research Question:**

This research aimed to describe and explore the home-schooling experiences of parents and learners in Brgy. Tudturan, Infanta Quezon who are currently enrolled in Tudturan Elementary School for the School Year 2020-2021 during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Specifically, it sought to answers the following questions:

1. How may the home-schooling experiences of parents and learners be described and analyzed?
2. What are the challenges in home schooling encountered by parents and learners?
3. How do they cope up and overcome with their challenges?
4. What insights may be drawn from the findings?

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## 2. BRIEF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

### MOTHER AS A TEACHER AT HOME :

“Mother is the first and the best teacher. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”. It is the mother who sees the first smile on the lips of the child and makes it a permanent one with her teaching.”This proverb exhausts that mother is the only personality who teaches the first word to call her and morality that the child has to follow throughout the life in order to make her child grow into a total personality. Whatever the mother teaches her child it creates permanent impression in the heart and mind of the child and so the life of the child gets embodied with the mother’s teaching. The influence of mother over her children will be strong that she will make a dull child into a brilliant child.

Parents play a pivotal role in shaping the character of children as they grow towards adulthood(Ndhine, 2020). According to him,with schools closed, parents have had to take up the role of being both parent and teacher. At this time, most parents may feel like their space has been raided by their children and they are all trying to figure out how to balance between working from home and ensuring our children stay on track with their learning. They are all adapting to a new routine and as crazy and hectic it may seem; it is important that our children feel supported in their academics as this is also a new adjustment for them.

### WHAT IS HOME SCHOOLING?

“The home is the first and most effective place to learn the lessons of life”- David O. Mckay. This means that when a home serves as a school, then parents must be the first teachers from the moment a child is born and as they mature into adults.

Home school or homeschooling has been defined by several websites in many ways. Merriam Webster defined it as “educate (one’s child) at home instead of sending them to school”. Wikipedia’s definition is “the education of children at home or a variety of other places. Gerald Heubner, Chairman of the Global Home Education Exchange (GHEX), as quoted from the book Why You Should Homeschool, defined homeschooling as “parent-led, home-based education”.

Heubner’s statement is supported by Isla (2020), wherein he defined homeschooling has as a parent-led form of education with one or both parents as the main educator.Parents are now considering homeschooling their children to keep them safe from coronavirus and ensure their continued learning amidst this pandemic.Addition to this,pupils thrive when their parents become part of the classroom.

### CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HOMESCHOOLING:

The pandemic spread of Novel Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has significantly disrupted every aspects of human life, including education. The alarming spread of the virus caused a havoc in the educational system forcing educational institutions to shut down. According to a UNESCO (2020) report, 1.6 billion children across 191 countries have been severely impacted by the temporary closure of the educational institutions. This Covid-19 pandemic has shaken up families all over the world. As homes function simultaneously as school, office and living space, parents are finding themselves in a bind. Even though parents now have more time for their children, the pressure to juggle multiple roles is stressful and they are unable to devote time to parenting. As children and parents stay confined to their homes, parents are finding it difficult to focus on different aspects of their child’s overall development.

Marchetti(2020), defined the school year with pandemic in one word which is stressful. She stated that the sudden lockdown and the closure of schools have forced parents to re-arrange their work, couple and family life, to deal with homeschooling and fear for their health, with no clue on the length and the development of the general situation. Moreover, our country was not ready to provide adequate psychological support for families and parents, resulting in a worsening of the mental well-being of the general population.

### COPING MECHANISM IN HOMESCHOOLING:

Coping mechanisms are the strategies people often use in the face of stress and/or trauma to help manage painful or difficult emotions. Coping mechanisms can help people adjust to stressful events while helping them maintain their emotional well-being (Psychepedia 2018).

According to the study of Guevarra and Cimanés, (2017) students' major coping strategy is social support. Social support refers to getting advice from others, talking to someone with similar experience, discussing feelings, getting sympathy, or talking someone how you feel.

Lundgren (2020), claimed that with many schools and workplaces closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, many have found themselves dealing with a new, and often very stressful, family situation. As well as having to work from home and run the household, parents likely also trying to keep their kids on track with their virtual school work—all while enduring the restrictions of social distancing and even being cut off from the support of friends and loved ones. With the whole family often occupying the same space day after day, the strain can seem unrelenting. If parents have been furloughed or lost your source of income, the financial pressure can add even more stress. Left unchecked, that can be a recipe for burnout.

**Synthesis:** The above collection of reviewed related literature and studies provide information to the researcher about the home schooling and the role of parents specifically the mother in teaching their child in the new normal education. As stated, COVID-19 pandemic has brought drastic changes in the Philippine educational system, thus varied learning modalities were being imposed. In addition, homeschooling is one of the options the Department of Education proposed, which is safe and beneficial to both parents and learners for it offers comfortable bond between and among them.

### **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:**

This case study focused on the exploration and analysis of learners and parents in Tudturan Elementary School. This study described their challenges as well as their coping mechanisms in overcoming their challenges. The locale or setting of the study is Barangay Tudturan, Infanta, Quezon where the school located. The necessary data were expected to be collected and accomplished in the months of May-July 2021.

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## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This research utilized a case study which highlighted the homeschooling experiences of learners and parents in Tudturan Elementary School. According to Yin (2009), case study research is concerned with investigating single or multiple units of study, using familiar research methods for data collection such as interviews or surveys. Case studies are empirical investigations, in that they

### **RESEARCH SETTING:**

Tudturan Elementary School was the research setting of the study. It is a public non-central school situated at Barangay Tudturan, Infanta Quezon. It is 3.5 kilometers away from the town proper. There are 7 buildings consisted of 11 classrooms of which 9 are instructional and 3 used as non-instructional. At present, It has nine teachers and one full-pledge school principal with pupils' population of 307. It service area covers the five barangays of Maypulot, Antikin, Silangan, Cawaynin and Tudturan which popularly known as the cluster barangays of MAYSICAT.

### **RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS:**

The research participants of the study were the five parents and five learners from Barangay Tudturan Infanta, Quezon who were currently enrolled in Tudturan Elementary School. The first participant was a bachelor degree holder who is currently working as a government employee, the second was a mother of eight children, a parent who was an elementary undergraduate was the third participant, the fourth was a solo parent with one child, and the last one was a working mother who was low income earner. These participants were chosen among many of those who were qualified because of the significant experiences that they shared to the researcher. This study used judgemental or purposive sampling technique. According to Etikan (2017) judgemental sampling design is based on the judgement of the researcher as to who will provide the best information to succeed for the objectives of the study. The person conducting the research need to focus on those people with the same opinion to have the required information and be willing of sharing it.

### **RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS:**

The research instrument used in this study was interview coupled with observations. Interviews are primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers (Creswell, 2012). Open-ended questions were asked during interviews in hopes of obtaining impartial answers. Another method that the researcher done was the observation which is seen to be effective for identifying varied emotions and mannerism relative to the experiences and ideas shared by the research participants.

### **DATA GATHERING PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES:**

These were the data-gathering procedures being used into consideration for a systematic data collection and consolidation:

A letter of permission to conduct the study was forwarded to the school head of Tudturan Elementary School and District Supervisor. The researcher also secured a permit from Barangay Captain of Tudturan for the purpose of undertaking the study. Initial interview was also done by the teacher for a background check.

Meanwhile, the researcher explained to the participants the overview and focus of this study which is geared toward investigating their experiences in homeschooling in this time of COVID-19 health threat.

To collect the needed inputs in this study, the researcher employed different techniques in qualitative research such as the interview, participant observation and storytelling.

#### **DATA EXPLICITATION AND ANALYSIS:**

In this research study, all information and data gathered were processed into the two stages of explicitation under case study method. This is also called the thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a systematic process of coding, examining meaning, and provision of a description of the social reality through the creation of theme (Berg and Latin 2008). The researcher in this study examined the codes and interpret them into concepts. The similar concepts will then be grouped into themes, structuring the results to answer the stated purpose of this research. The theme is the main product of this data analysis (Greenet al. 2007).

#### **RESEARCH ETHICAL CONSIDERATION:**

The ethical considerations were ensured throughout the study. The researcher explained to the participants the overview and focus of study. The participants were given an informed consent letter and were asked to volunteer for the study understanding all the rights of withdrawal and refusal. There was no data seek which could exhibit participants' direct identity like names, telephone numbers, address, area or national identification number.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **PORTRAIT OF HOME SCHOOLING**

#### **Mom Straddling Between Two Rivers (Balancing work, time and responsibilities)**

Homeschooling for parents has never been easy for them. It is said that the parents are the first teachers to their children, but for some parents who are busy at work, especially parents who have not even stepped into high school, homeschooling for them is a pool of burden. As described by the participants they prefer to work and put food on the table than to make their kids learn but soon die to hunger; they feel guilty because they admit that even they can guide and assist their children, they can no longer help since they got tired from work; while some of the participants has the urge of helping their children accomplishing the tasks in the modules despite their lack of knowledge and skills since they were not able to finish schooling way back then.

*"My husband and I are both essential workers, we go to work from Mondays to Fridays, the two remaining days were reserved doing household chores. I really don't have time to help my children in schooling since we need to work for us to live."*

*"Finding balance and time management has been my biggest struggle. I am trying to manage my time while working, giving quality time to my 4 children, doing household chores at the same time and keeping my own mental health strong." I feel guilty sometimes because I know that I can teach them but stress from work hit me, so I would just rest first."*

*"I really am willing to help my children in schooling, only that I have to work at the same time. Plus, how can I help them I have only completed grade 3 in elementary?" I always tell my children to be good in school so they will not experience the same struggle I had countered before... I don't even understand the lesson... I can't explain to them the concept."*

These responses of the participants revealed that the pandemic has really brought a drastic changes in the lives of the participants for they have to manage their time while working and teaching their children at the same time.

These findings are congruent to the study of **Marchetti** (2020), where he defined the school year with pandemic in one word which is stressful. Likewise **Spinelli, et.al** (2020), concluded that dealing with quarantine is a particularly stressful experience for parents who must balance personal life, work, and raising children, being left alone without other resources. Most parents balance their work and time just to do their responsibility in teaching their children. (**Aten, 2020**) affirmed this by stating that parenting is simultaneously the most challenging and rewarding task for many people, and during the pandemic, it has become even more difficult as time went by.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), also explained that most families do not have someone to take on the full-time role of supporting remote education. It is not surprising that shouldering additional responsibilities directly resulted in struggles for adults.

#### **MY PUNITIVE AND RESTRICTIVE PARENT-TEACHER (TOUGH LOVE OF A MOM)**

*"Love without discipline is negligence, discipline without love is punishment."*

Parents are the ones responsible in providing basic needs, love, support, attention, especially knowledge among their kids. They are indeed the best teachers of their children. Parents serve as the role model, they want nothing but the best for their children. In this time of pandemic, parent took on the teaching role as their children accomplishing their modules and activity sheets. The power is in the hand of a parent, whether their children will follow or not. Most of the pupil participants noted that their mother is strict-type and authoritative teacher.

*"My mother is very strict! She wanted us to finished and accomplished my module and passed it on time, when I did wrong in a module she always nagging at me."*

All of the pupil participants agreed that their mother was very strict, they got easily angry to them especially in the middle of doing their module. When I asked them the reasons most of them told me-

*"Because I am naughty and stubborn."*

*"My mother got easily angry when she was teaching me. She would easily lose her temper that is why sometimes, she would just answer and accomplished the module because I can't understand what she was explaining to me to me and she would tell me to do the household choir like washing the dishes, taking care of my younger siblings just to finish my module."*

A quick shift from traditional learning to remote learning made most learners worried about daily life. Uncertainties about when life will get back to "normal" bring about anxiety (Daniel, 2020). Thus, uncertainty about the future may negatively affect learners' motivation related to remote learning. Non-positive motivation leads parents to worry about their children's academic progress and achievement at home. While parents are anxious about the future, supporting the schooling of children with low motivation can be challenging (Daniel, 2020).

## **CHALLENGES OF HOME SCHOOLING**

### **Mother's cross heavily laden, Home schooling, additional burden**

The pandemic resulted in multiple stressors for mother. This included financial difficulties, fear of sickness and additional to these are teaching their own children because of the closure of school. Struggle is real on the part of those parents who cannot teach their children well because they do not have enough knowledge, skills and experience. Lack of content pedagogy is one of their biggest problem, most of the respondents noted that they did not attend college. "How can I teach my children, I am not an educator!" aside from telling that they don't have degree, they also noted of having lack of understanding the learning content of the module.

"I am not a teacher, I do not know how to explain the lesson to my child, instead of explaining it to him, I let my child copy the answers on the module or I let him answers by his own."

Another struggle or problem of a mother is assisting multiple children in the home with learning.

*"Trying to help my four children at once with different subjects are one of my biggest struggle."*

*"My children don't mind learning, but they hate having a mom-teacher. They don't listen to us. They want their own teacher back."*

Despite of their responses about having lack of understanding in the content of module, and not having a degree they still trying their best to help their children in accomplishing their learning task. According to the study of Bhamani, Makhdoom, and Bharuchi (2020) entitled Home learning in times of COVID, wherein they give emphasize that parents are trying to the best of their abilities to keep their children engaged in meaningful activities although they have experience some challenges and problems.

### **STARLIGHT, STAR BRIGHT, I WISH MY MOM IS A MA'AM**

The new normal set up of education faced students with various problems. These include doing household chores, taking care of the younger siblings and answering the module alone because of parent's having lack in content of pedagogy.

When I asked my pupils about their problem in home schooling, 3 out of 5 participants stated that their mother doesn't know the content of the module. Their mother always tells to them that they didn't comprehend the content of the learning module, and that they could hardly understand the instruction from the given tasks.

*"I am not a teacher; your teacher is the one who knows the answer."*

*"I struggle to understand the lesson especially in Math. It's very hard to understand it alone, and not having someone to explain it to me is very hard because even my mother she didn't know it also. We actually have a messenger group chat where our teacher accommodate questions about the lesson that we do not understand but I still find it very hard. I really want to go to school and physically listen to her explanation."*

Sometimes I try to ask my parents about my lessons, but they cannot explain it to me because they cannot understand English

*"Sometimes I try to ask my parents about my lessons, but they cannot explain it to me because they cannot understand English."*

These responses of the participants showed that they experienced problems in understanding the lessons in the module and that they need someone to explain to them the lessons that they have difficulty understanding. It is also evident in their responses that their difficulty to understand usually roots from their inability to comprehend the meaning of some difficult words or terminologies.

## **COPING MECHANISM**

### **A Helping Hand is a Magic Wand**

The coping mechanisms of parents and learners in dealing with their problems in the new normal varies. Mothers and pupils wrote and stated the detailed reason on how they coped up with the problems.

*"I am fortunate that I have children who can assist and helped my elementary grade level pupils in accomplishing their learning modules. We have internet connectivity at home, if we did not know how to answer it, my older daughter would browse them to google or youtube, if we did not understand it clearly, that was the time for us to contact their teacher. Using social media platforms such as fb and messenger really helped us a lot."*

*"Whenever I didn't understand the content of the module, I would contact my son's adviser through messenger. I asked her some questions, and I sometimes ask favor like extending the deadline of submission. I appreciated the adviser being so considerate. She did not give me a hard time. She allowed me to answer my modules on my own pace."*

As for the response of the pupils on how they cope-up with the problems and challenges. Here are their statements:

*I try to cope with my struggles by asking help from my parents and brothers. I know I can't really survive this modular distance learning on my own. So, I asked them for help but I didn't just copy answers from them. I try to let them explain to me what they understood. Especially in Math, I asked them how they come up with their answers."*

*"When I don't have any idea with the content of the module or when the lessons are very difficult, I browsed it through the assistance of mother or my siblings in youtube. There are many youtube content that can help to answer my queries in accomplishing the module."*

Based on mothers' and pupils' responses, it can be inferred that asking assistance is an effective way of coping with their problems in modular distance learning.

According to the result of the study of Guevarra and Ciman, (2017) where students' major coping strategy is social support. Social support refers to getting advice from others, talking to someone with similar experience, discussing feelings, getting sympathy, or talking to someone how you feel. Mothers and pupils feel that their feelings towards the uncomfortable situation or the problem are valid when they feel that they are heard.

Kai Lundgren and Robert Segal, M.A (2020) enumerate some of the important things that will help mothers in coping up with their child's stress. These are: **join forces with other parents, connect with your child's teacher, create a learning routine, set goals—and celebrate their completion, get creative with lessons.**

#### **TIME MANAGEMENT IS LIFE MANAGEMENT**

In order to accomplish answering their module and doing household chores and other responsibilities at home, time management is a must. These were the common responses of a mother to me. "I still try to manage my time, I usually teach my son in the evening while in the morning I do all my household chores."

*"When my younger son is asleep, that was our time to do the module. We choose first the easiest subject and when we are done we focus and give more time on the major subject like Math, English and Science."*

Based on the parent response, it can be noted the effectiveness of managing your time. Having time management has given parents and pupils satisfaction in finishing their modules on time.

This result is in line with the results of Hearon's (2015) study where she studied the stress and coping strategies of High School students in Accelerated Academic Curricula and its relationships with students' success. She found that the students who employed time and task management to cope with stress were more likely to experience higher academic achievement as compared to those who don't.

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## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) The experience of a mother and a learner in time of COVID-19 pandemic can be described as unprepared. Since the pandemic was so sudden, parents experience difficulties in balancing their work, home and teaching responsibilities while learners find it hard to deal with a new set-up of education where their parents are the one who teaching them.
- 2) Parents and learners had experienced challenges. These were: lack of knowledge in content pedagogy, balancing responsibilities, dealing with multiple children/siblings.
- 3) The parents and learners were able to overcome their problems with the support of the people around them like their teachers and relatives and using technology like google and youtube and managing time.
- 4) There are significant insights that can be drawn from the experience of a mother and learners such as the importance of the roles of parents and teachers in education.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

In the light of the aforementioned findings and conclusions, the following are hereby recommended:

- 1) Parents and students should undergo major adjustments both in social and emotional aspects. This is deemed necessary at this time of crisis and Covid Pandemic.
- 2) Time management is very important in home schooling especially in balancing responsibilities for families with multiple number of school-aged children. Adhering or adopting to the Weekly Home Learning Plan provided by the teachers is a must.
- 3) Support system from the Local Government Unit specially from the barangay is crucial. Provision of internet connectivity and/or load allowance and gadgets for marginalized families should be prioritized/included in the next year LGU Budget.
- 4) For the school, help their students and parents to cope effectively in dealing with the problems. The school should create programs and activities for the students and parents that will enhance their coping mechanisms and allow them to explore various ways and avenues to alleviate their struggles and problems. Educational videos should be compiled and shared with the parents to help them on the lessons that they find difficult to assist their children.
- 5) The school should conduct and implement Parent's Academy which will help parents to be knowledgeable and well-informed regarding the content of the learning modules, so that they can guide their children in accomplishing different tasks and activities.
- 6) For the students/ pupils to take their study seriously even if they are home-schooled. They should develop their study habits and manage their time wisely so that they can submit their self-learning modules and activity sheets on time.

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