



EXPERIENCES OF PUPILS WITHOUT PARENTS IN THE MIDST OF PANDEMIC: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

Bebiejean C. Dellosa¹, Roel P. Villocino²

¹Master of Arts in Education Major in Elementary Education, Assumption College of Nabunturan, Philippines

²Doctor of Education, Professor, Assumption College of Nabunturan, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Pupils without parents are considered to be one of the most vulnerable sectors in the community suffering from many psychological challenges brought about by the pandemic. Their struggles do not comprise on emotional aspects only but it also covers educational battles and enduring pain on the absence of their parents. The main purpose of this study was to unveil the prevailing struggles and hopes of selected pupils without parents during pandemic in Baylo Elementary School, Municipality of Monkayo. It also aimed at suggesting possible ways that help in promoting the well-being of the participants of this study who were in great need of help when it comes to academic, financial, and emotional aspects. This study employed a multiple case study research approach. In gathering the data, five informants were interviewed through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic and content analysis were used to arrange and analyze the information. Results of the study showed that pupils without parents were totally struggling when it comes to both academic and emotional aspects and thus need and immediate support in all aspects of their lives especially that they were vulnerable of kind. It was revealed in the study that despite the absence of their parents and their daily struggles when it comes to tasks in school, they continued going to school and remained optimistic in life. Finally, the findings of this study emphasized that the creation and implementation of programs and initiatives in order to give assistance to these pupils should be taken action. The school can tap stakeholders in the community to take part in upholding the welfare of the informants. With this, pupils will have a positive attitude in life and be inspired to work well in school regardless of the circumstances.

KEYWORDS: *pupils without parents, pandemic, struggles, insights, multiple case study*

INTRODUCTION

During pandemic, interaction between is an indispensable factor for the normal development of children in these trying times but how about those pupils with no parents in the middle of the pandemic? Children who are left alone or who do not have enough parental supervision are more prone to being absent from school, teenage pregnancies, criminal activities, and disobedience. Some children start having discipline issues at school and others stop respecting their parents as authoritative adults (Pantea, 2011). In the study of Seepamore (2015) in Cambridge University, the propensity for abuse increases with children who are left in the care of relatives and other According to Barello and Graffigna (2020), any stressful occurrences, including disasters, pandemics, and other traumatic events, have produced significant stress and emotional anguish for everyone. Same goes with these pupils without parents, the on-going stress, fear, grief, and uncertainty created by COVID-19 pandemic have weighed heavily to them.

In the Philippines, large-scale overseas migration has raised concerns about left-behind children, who are perceived to be most affected by the absence of fathers, mothers or both. Without their 'real' parents (especially mothers) to rear and guide them, left-

behind children are perceived to bear the brunt of the social costs of migration.

Growing up without parents at young age is a complete struggle among pupils. I observed in Baylo Elementary School, Monkayo West District, Division of Davao de Oro that 1 out of 10 pupils have no parents with them. Mostly are living together with their relatives and in worst cases there are those who live with someone not related to them. These pupils suffered a lot financially and emotionally especially during pandemic. Some of them even spent time to work as laborer in farms for a petty amount while others use to do house chores in the neighborhood just to earn a little amount of money. There were even cases in which one of my pupils used to go to school without breakfast and showed up once or twice a month right before the pandemic.

The intention of this multiple case study was to show and disclose the experiences of pupils without parents in the midst of pandemic. The researcher wanted to understand and discover more about the lives of the pupils in times of crisis, dig more of their struggles and educational experiences to pursue life even without the presence of their parents. Moreover, this study also aimed to gather, seek, listen, and understand the unheard stories of the participants as they willingly share their insights during the



conduct of this undertaking as to what they have gained as having no parents in the midst of the pandemic

This multiple case study could also add to the growing body of knowledge concerning social issues on pupils without parents. Through this study, I would be able to acquire salient information that would help everyone understand how these children cope with the struggles and challenges of having no parents with the threat brought about by the pandemic.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Learners without Parents and their Coping Strategies.

For children, life without parents is incredibly difficult and bruising, and for older boys or girls, it might be purposeless. Affection and love coming from parents are like ambrosia. This magical enclosure can only be given to us by a parent after God. Life without parents has wet eyes that bleed tears and forget the happiness of dryness. The agony associated with losing parents is too much painful, especially in times of crises (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2015).

Students utilize a variety of coping strategies, including seeking out social support and making modifications to the challenging circumstances, according to studies on coping mechanisms used by students. In addition, they might turn to drugs, comfort foods, or other means of escape in an effort to avoid trying circumstances. Two effective coping techniques include seeking assistance and engaging in recreational activities (Gore et al., 2014). Avoiding the problem, not receiving help from others, and turning to drugs for escapism are some other ineffective coping strategies. As a result, some students, particularly young people, ponder suicide and self-harm (Vazquez, 2012).

Due to the stress that the COVID-19 epidemic brought about, people had psychological issues, physical symptoms, and drowsy behavior throughout the outbreak. These symptoms are a representation of the stress-related side effects (Liu, 2014). According to Park et al. (2014), family cohesion can lessen individual psychological problems causing mental health issues. A person can receive more support and assistance from others and lessen the negative effects of stress if there is greater family cohesion (Zeng et al., 2021).

Challenges Experienced by Children Living without Parents.

Atwine et al. (2012) stated that orphans and children living without or apart from their parents are found to be more vulnerable to psychological problems, and its effects may not manifest until many years afterward. Murray et al. (2013) also mentioned that orphans and vulnerable children are more susceptible to abuse, neglect, stress, and bullying especially at school.

Depression is also among the more serious challenge for vulnerable children, especially orphans. This often comes with long-term harmful effects on the health and development of the

children. For orphans, when their parents die, they not only miss their physical presence but also the positive things they gave them when they were alive such as love, care, and protection. They have no one to share their grief with, and this can add to their sense of helplessness. This is also true for other vulnerable children including those who are emancipated and living with relatives or apart from their parents. As Masmas et al. (2012) stated, the lack of support during and inadequate help in adjusting to an environment without their parents may lead children to become depressed.

As a result of long periods of physical absence, Heymann (2009) said that a cultural gap may develop between the parents and their children.

Inability to establish and maintain a sense of togetherness and shared purpose may result from parents being absent during their children's formative years (Madziva & Zontini, 2012); teenage delinquency may also rise (Smit, 2001). Seepamore (2015) emphasized that children are affected by distance parenting, in spite of their ages or level of family care and support.

In addition, Seepamore (2015) mentioned how the propensity for abuse increases with children who are left in the care of relatives and other caregivers. Children who are left alone or who do not have enough parental supervision may be more prone to being absent from school, teenage pregnancies, criminal activities, and disobedience. Some children start having discipline issues at school, and others stop respecting their parents as authoritative adults (Pantea, 2011).

Experiences of Learners during Pandemic. According to Logel et al. (2021), many students had trouble settling into a new habit, felt unmotivated or drowsy, and encountered practical issues with online learning. Additionally, students reported feeling lonely, unhappy, and having financial problems. They also discovered that students had expressed feelings of anxiety, depression, and excessive worry. Concerns among students before the semester began included a lack of enthusiasm, missing loved ones and friends, and missing a regular routine. These issues have an impact on students' overall well-being, resulting in lower levels of life satisfaction, a sense of control, a sense of belonging, poorer mental and physical health, and more stress.

According to Fura and Negash (2020), psychological difficulties faced by students include dread, worry, lost confidence, anxiety, stress, boredom, and feelings of worthlessness. Additionally, their research discovered psychological issues linked to COVID-19, such as discomfort, helplessness, disturbed sleep, hesitation, mental ignorance, mental state disruptions, bewilderment, feeling insecure, mistrust, and an inability to regulate issues. Any stressful occurrences, including disasters, pandemics like COVID-19, and other traumatic events, have produced significant stress and emotional anguish for everyone, especially for those



who work during the epidemic, according to earlier research by Barello and Graffigna (2020).

Major issues include social challenges as well. The same study by Fura and Negash (2020) revealed that among the primary difficulties encountered are negative feelings to the lost interactions, inability to shake hands, a loss of group enjoyment, a fear of making up for missed interactions, and staying at home. According to previous research, school isn't just about academics for the majority of students; it's also about social connections including friendships, group walks, and lunchtime meals.

Students have been dealing with a lot of challenges in various areas of their lives long before the Covid-19 pandemic. Mazo (2015) noted that difficulties experienced by children can be found anywhere, including at home, with friends, at school, and in the classroom. It is just around the corner. Simply said, it cannot be avoided because it is a reality of being a student. In actuality, many kids suffer on a daily basis. There could be a variety of causes for it. Each person experiences struggle differently, as do its origins and intensity. No one is immune to it, no matter how well-off, sensible, cunning, or intelligent he may be. Every student will occasionally face difficulties due to disappointments, mistakes, setbacks, losses, changes, and disputes.

Common reasons why students suffer include their academic courses, requirements and projects, oral and written exams, scheduled or unscheduled quizzes and graded recitations, money, problems with parents or guardians, love lives, their professors and instructors, and many other things (Salvacion, 2004). According to Blona (2005), some students struggle to adjust to the pressures of a new living situation, new friends, academic pressure, and sexual worries, which leads to stress.

OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to explore the experiences of pupils without parents in the midst of pandemic with the following research questions being developed;

1. What are the educational experiences of the participants in learning during the pandemic?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the students without parents in the midst of the pandemic?
3. What are the coping strategies the participants employed in combatting the challenges?
4. What are the insights gained by the participants during pandemic?

METHOD

The focus of this multiple case study was on the experiences, insights, challenges, and coping mechanisms of pupils in the midst of the pandemic of Baylo Elementary School, Monkayo Davao de Oro. This research highlighted the observations and caters both the positive and negative experiences of pupils without parents during the pandemic. Moreover, this study was delimited only to five pupils of Baylo Elementary School for

School Year 2022-2023 wherein a combination of pupils from Grade 5, and 6 will be interviewed. These participants were the subjects of my in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and participants' observation.

In this study, the researcher utilized a qualitative multiple case study. The researcher used this design to explore the experiences, struggles and challenges, and coping mechanism and insights of pupils without parents in the midst of pandemic. This study examined the cases of pupils who still prefer to go to school and go on with life despite being independent and the stress that the pandemic has brought.

This study was conducted in Baylo Elementary School as shown in figure 2. Baylo Elementary School is one of the schools in Monkayo West District in the Municipality of Monkayo. The Municipality of Monkayo, which is part of the Province of Davao de Oro, serves as the boundary of Davao de Oro and Agusan del Sur. It is composed of 21 barangays with a total population of almost 100,000. Based on the testimonies of the first group of settlers in the area, the word "Baylo" was derived from the term "barter" which means locally Baylo. Barter system was usually done during the early times where the first settlers' barter there lands with basic and other prime commodities. The early settlers wanted that the place they called Baylo would be one of the barrios of Monkayo, Davao de Oro formerly Compostela Valley. It was realized through Executive Order Number 65, dated September 4, 1954. It has a land area of 3,914 hectares, accessible by land transportation.

Additionally, Baylo Elementary School is one of the barangay elementary schools selected as the site of interest in this study because of the number of pupils without parents enrolled in the school. It comprises 3% of the entire population. With 555 total numbers of enrollees, there was a rapid increase in its population as residents from nearest area were relocated in the housing project where the school is situated. There was an increase of 5% in the total number of enrollees for this school year that has paved the way on the establishment of additional buildings for the pupils.

Due to the small number of pupils without parents at Baylo Elementary School, the researcher found it difficult to identify the research participants. Yin (2005) suggested that it would be preferable to choose 5 subjects for a case study who each had distinctive cases but shared a common ground.

Using purposive sampling, the participants of this study were officially enrolled pupils of Baylo Elementary School belonging to those without parents during the pandemic. Some of them were living into their relatives while some were living together with their neighbors not related to them. The research participants were two females and three males coming from grades five to six with age ranging from 11 to 12 years old. Five informants were



selected for the in-depth interview and focus group discussion in which each participant were given codes.

With their consent warranted, studying of the cases formally started and during the interview, the participants gave me information about their lives both schooling and being at home during pandemic as the study aimed to discover their struggles, experiences, and insights.

Sources of qualitative research data include profoundly interviews, personal observations, and reliable documents. In this study, I used specific strategies in obtaining information such as substantial interviews using audio recorder, taking down notes, and focus group discussion. To validate my gathered data and make all the information reliable, triangulation was assured with the use of variety of sources like interviews, FGD, journals, and participants observation.

I employed in-depth individual interviews with the informants in collecting data using multi-lingual in interviewing the participants after my questions were validated by experts. This means that, the answered in English, Filipino, Bisaya, or mix of any of these languages. I also employed focus group discussion and participant's observation in gathering the data in which the responses of the participants were also recorded and each of them was given codes for security and confidentiality.

I started my interview through an orientation of the possible questions to be asked to the informants so that they will be comfortable in answering the questions. In-depth interview and FGD was conducted in Baylo Elementary School. The data that will be collected will be transcribed and divided in themes in preparation for data analysis.

Moreover, before the steps mentioned above were initiated, consent letter was given to the participants as this is the most important way of showing respect to persons during research. Approved form to conduct the study coming from the Schools Division Superintendent and letters for the school principal and for to the Department of Education were also shown as proof of permission to conduct the study. This is to let all concerns became aware on the purpose and objectives of the research study that they are going to involve. Of course, they were informed of the results and findings of the study.

The answers that I collected from the participants were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing and reporting pattern of themes with a data. Using thematic analysis in this study is very helpful because it is flexible and a useful research tool that can probably grant a substantial, complex, and rich account of the data. I performed the following steps in analyzing the data as to mention: familiarize data, generate initial codes, search for themes, define and name themes, and construct the report.

In this study, I utilized two ways in presenting the by directly quoting the participants words and translating the data in my own words.

I used data reduction to analyze the data in this study in which I removed any irrelevant information and transformed it into more understandable study materials for me to more easily combine, manage, sort, and categorize the data.

Drawing conclusion and verification was the last step that I used analyzing the qualitative data that I collected. I reviewed and revisited my data many times to double check and verify the existing conclusion. These conclusions were generated from the descriptive themes that came out from the interview of the participants; these were woven together making it a useful material for results and discussion.

The research questions stipulated in the interview guide were validated by a group of experts identified by the dean of the graduate school. The said interview guide was utilized for the actual in-depth interviews. But before conducting the interview, a letter of permission was served first to the school principal to ask for his consent and to inform him about the research endeavor.

Before the data were analyzed, it was transcribed in a verbatim fashion for more comprehensible and organized output. To determine answers to the research questions, data interpretation followed.

A set of steps were followed in conducting the study. The researcher sought permission from the Division Superintendent of Davao de Oro through a letter conveying the reasons to conduct the study. Upon the approval of the superintendent, another letter was prepared for the principal of Proculo Fuentes Sr. Elementary School to allow her to conduct the study at the same time the parents of the five severely wasted students were also informed that their children were the participants of this study.

The data were collected through IDI which was the only method of gathering data from the participants to provide a more profound understanding of specific viewpoints. The said interview utilized the interview guide prepared by the researcher. A free-flowing discussion with the participants as well as a non-threatening environment was assured during the interview. The identified participants were informed personally ahead of time about the discussion so they would not be taken by surprise. Upon the conduct of the interview, it was ensured that health protocols were applied to maintain safety for both the researcher and the participants. After the data collection, transcribing, analyzing through thematic analysis, coding, and interpreting the findings were done.

During the data collection period, the analysis also began. The newly collected data were reviewed, synthesized, and recorded to keep absolute, careful, and detailed records useful to the study.



After gathering a sufficient amount of data through the conduct of IDI, thematic analysis is used to analyze further the results and to check the disparities and similarities of all responses gathered. This is the time wherein responses are categorized and organized into themes.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

In this study, I ensured trustworthiness in my research by considering credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

I instituted credibility through ensuring firmness in my data collection such as interviews, which were directly taken from the participants and not a craft-up story. In addressing the elements of credibility, the data triangulation technique was utilized by having multiple sources data, debriefing, and repeated contacts with my participants.

Credibility concerns with the extent on how the viewpoint of the participants corresponds with the description of the researcher. Ample times to interview the participants were facilitated with the interview questions as guide. To be sure on the process and interpretation of the collected data, I employed peer debriefing to the dissertation adviser and to someone who is quite familiar on the complexities of qualitative research. As a researcher, I am really a part of the entire research process. I conceded my personal biases. on the way I communicated my participants and on how the data were treated. To check the credibility of the findings and interpretations, I went back to the participants to find out what they were trying to convey during the interview.

Ensuring confirmability or auditability of my study, I kept the audiotaped interviews, my personal journal or diary, transcripts, and note- takings. I avoided my personal viewpoints, hypothesis, and conclusions to guarantee that the findings of the study have no biases and misinterpretation of data.

Dependability challenged me as a researcher to read the book of Creswell and other authors that I may get deeper understanding on how to effectively conduct a research and accurately analyzed the data gathered. I kept tract on the documentation undertaken in the data collection and analysis, the recorded interviews, and the utilization of the exact transcript.

In terms of transferability in my study, parts of the transcripts of the interviews that are thick and rich in details were quoted and cited. This means that the participants in future studies like this will be selected reasonably. Transferability or fittingness of research findings means that the findings of my study are fitting outside the particular study and may possibly have another meaning in another group or could be applied in another context.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, I considered ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research, there are three

principles that are needed to be considered, this include respect for person, beneficence and justice, and respect for communities.

In this research, I avoided self-sufficiency in order to maintain friendship, trust, and confidence among the participants and the researcher. Beforehand, the researcher sought permission from the persons who are involved in this undertaking to show respect of their time and availability. I informed all the participants about the purpose and objectives of the research project as part of the written agreement that is supplied to them for their acceptance. This is so that the participants may take part fully in the focus groups and in-depth interviews. Of course, they were informed of the study's outcomes and conclusions.

In addition, I ensured anonymity in order to protect each participant from risk. Participants were always protected; therefore no information files were never abandoned or left without protection. This requires a commitment of minimizing risk to the research participants rather maximizing the profits that are due to them.

In interviewing the informants, I was extra careful with questions and due respect was given importance. At first, some informants were hesitant to answer my questions and some are afraid to be interviewed. But because of the reassurance to them regarding the confidentiality of their responses, the later gave the researcher the chance and showed comfort in answering the interview questions. Confidentiality towards the results and findings including the safeguard of the participants, coding system were used during the conduct of the study.

Lastly, I acknowledged the contributions of the participants as generally part of the success of the research. As they were given due credits in all their endeavors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The structured themes and the emerging therein were made as bases for broadening the discussion of the findings in this study. As each theme was linked to related literature and studies, a substantial discussion was made to find their alignment with the theme.

Experiences Related to Schooling during the Pandemic. The emerging theme in this structured theme are going to school while parents not around, quite fine but difficult without parents, always confined at home to answer modules, experiencing difficulty after parents' break-up, and always confined at home.

Covid-19 pandemic has changed the entire course of life among all types of people around the globe. It has altered the educational set-up and even more affected the most vulnerable sectors in the community. For pupils without parents, the pandemic had made their lives difficult especially when it comes to both emotional and academic. At school, the first educational struggle experienced by the pupils is going to school while parents not



around. However, despite all these, pupils still continue to go to school with the absence of their parents and were even more motivated to pursue their studies amidst the pandemic. For some pupils, it is quite difficult to go to school without parents as no one would assist them in doing their modules.

This situation simply projected the idea regarding the importance of parental involvement in school especially in this time of crisis. With no faculty around for face-to-face interactions and no classmates who can help with constant reminders about pending assignments, the chances of getting distracted and losing track of deadlines are high (Sadeghi, 2019). Thus, learning at home needs focus and high motivation from both parents and children.

Additionally, there were pupils who also experienced difficulty after parents' break-up. They were used to having their parents around to guide them and being into the situation caused them a lot of psychological problems. Their desire for love and commitment is when the effects of parental break-ups are felt most acutely. Their search is severely hindered by their lack of internal representations of a man and a woman in a committed relationship as well as their memories of their parents' failure to keep the marriage together, which causes them to feel grief and even despair.

According to Felitti and Anda (2010) parental separation has been related to diverse negative outcomes of the child, including mental and physical health problems. Many children from separated families show difficulties in functioning, including frequent emotional and behavioral problems (Amato et. al, 2011).

Moreover, being confined at home and to answer the modules are also some of the common experiences that pupils without parents encountered during the pandemic. In order not to get in contact with virus, they have to stay at home and do the activities and other forms of assessment indicated in their modules. For some pupils, the need for guidance in the teaching and learning process is considered crucial especially in their case being in the elementary level. However, with their situation, pupils do not have choice but to do their modules alone. As Sadeigh (2019) pointed out, learners will often be studying alone, and so they may feel isolated and miss the physical interaction that comes with attending a traditional classroom.

Experiences Related to Compliance of Requirements. The emerging theme in this structured theme are finding it hard to answer without help, nobody to assist in the modules, grandmother assisting in answering the modules, and not allowed to go out to answer modules. These were the experience encountered by pupils without parents when it comes to the compliance of assignments and requirements during pandemic.

In this study, it was revealed that pupils without parents faced difficulties in doing their tasks in school. It is not only the pandemic that affected them academically but also because of the

absence of their parents. As these pupils were not allowed to go out because they need to answer the assessment tasks given by the teacher, they were prone to fail academically. There were pupils who cannot submit their modules on time and there were pupils also who cannot comply the requirements assigned with them. Some pupils even chose to stop schooling not only because they struggle financially but also they lack the assistance they needed in their academic endeavor.

Moreover, being locked at home and bombarded with a lot of modules to answer at the time caused some pupils to suffer psychologically. This will lead the pupils to studying alone and so they may feel isolated and miss the physical interaction that comes with attending a traditional classroom (Sadeghi, 2019).

Challenges and Struggles Encountered. Students have been dealing with a lot of challenges in various areas of their lives long before the Covid-19 pandemic. Mazo (2015) noted that difficulties experienced by children can be found anywhere, including at home, with friends, at school, and in the classroom. In this study, there were challenges and struggles that pupils encountered when it comes to schooling. Based on the responses taken from the participants, there were emerging themes revealed concerning the problems they faced with the absence of their parents. These were; nobody to help in answering modules, really difficult without parents, and getting used to the situation. This proves that children around the world are greatly affected by the pandemic's physical distancing, quarantines, and nationwide school closures.

Moreover, not only academic problems were being faced by pupils. There were also psychological problems that has caused them to perform poorly in school. As Fura and Negash (2020) pointed out; psychological difficulties faced by students include dread, worry, lost confidence, anxiety, stress, boredom, and feelings of worthlessness.

Difficulties Encountered in Answering Assignments and Projects. When the pandemic took the world by surprise, globally, everything stopped especially in the education sector. However, pupils continued their education through modular learning by the help of their parents at home but in the case of the informants in this study, problems like difficulty in understanding the content of the module come on top as one of the difficulties encountered in answering assignments and doing projects.

According to Apriyanti (2020), discussing the parents as a vital role in handling the home education of their children, all parents play a significant role in the education of their children at home. This means that in order for the pupils to combat with academic difficulties, the presence of the parents should be of great consideration.

Moreover, many pupils enrolled in home education programs claim that modular classes have a heavier effort than traditional



classes. Home-learning programs, while highly advantageous and a good substitute for school during school closures, are generally agreed to need some getting accustomed to by pupils. However, on the part of pupils without parents, this is a lot more difficult and would definitely lead them to poor academic performance in school.

Coping Strategies Employed in Addressing Challenges. It is said that coping involves using one's thoughts and actions to control both internal and external distressing situations (Stoerber & Janssen, 2011). In this research, the coping strategies employed by the pupils without parents during pandemic were crafted based on the emerging themes during interview. These are trying to enjoy oneself, continue to be in school, and ask help from relatives.

According to Gore et. al (2014), there are two effective coping techniques, it includes seeking assistance and engaging in recreational activities. As shown in the result of this study, some pupils during pandemic, despite the absence of their parents, chose to enjoy oneself rather than killing it with psychological problems. Still went to school over dropping, and sought help to people related to them rather than handling their problems alone.

In addition, in their study, Logel et al. (2021) listed three coping mechanisms: preserving social links, creating a fulfilling routine, and trying out new things to do. Their research highlights the importance of placing a priority on social support and connection during trying times and suggests that giving students the chance to contact with one another and set aside time to meet with others outside of the classroom may improve students' wellbeing.

Ways to Comply Assignments without the Parents. Some pupils need guidance in the teaching and learning process especially those who are still in the elementary level. As what is revealed by the informants of this study, there were three emerging themes concerning compliance of assignments for pupils without parents. These were; ask help from relatives, try to understand the module, and ask help from stepmother.

In terms of modules, some pupils asked for help from their relatives. In this way, they will be guided with their assignments and projects in school. As Seepamore (2015) emphasized, putting children in the care of relatives may be perceived to be a good strategy especially when it comes to parents having to migrate for job opportunities or children moving away for educational purposes.

Moreover, there were pupils who chose to interpret the modules on their own due to lack of assistance coming both teachers and parents. Some pupils also sought help from their grandparents who, according to them, does not even have the idea on what the module is all about.

Insights Gained from Experiences during the Pandemic. For pupils without parents, the pandemic had taught them life lessons both academically and emotionally. As shown in the emerging themes, it was found out in this study that their experiences during the pandemic were life becoming harder without parents, continue to go to school despite the absence of parents, work harder despite the absence of parents, and getting used to parents' absence.

As the pandemic increased pupils' workload, uncertainty about school year completion and confusion about study expectation resulted a higher level of stress. However, despite all these experiences, pupils were still very optimistic to go to school. Although some pupils found their situation even more difficult due to lack of support coming parents but it did not stop them from going to school. There were pupils who were used into the situations that they are into and come up with adjustments when it comes to both emotional and psychological. Sometimes, due to limited social life during the pandemic, these pupils were also reported feeling lonely, anxious, and depressed (Essadek & Rabeyron, 2020).

In addition, parents' absence during their children's formative years may have a negative impact on their ability to build and sustain a sense of unity and shared purpose; teenage misbehavior may also increase (Madziva & Zontini, 2012). (Smit, 2001). Regardless of their ages or the extent of their family's care and support, children are impacted by distance parenting, according to Seepamore (2015).

Kind of Support Participants want from School and other People. Despite the worldwide health concern, education and learning must continue, as school closures have severe repercussions for student safety, protection, well-being, and learning equality (Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020). To achieve all these, emerging themes concerning the kind of support the participants want from school and other people were highlighted. These were to get support from mother, to discourage acts of bullying, for other pupils not to undergo similar experience, to get help to finish studies to earn respect from classmates, and to be taught by teachers.

The fact that the participants of this study were all pupils without parents during pandemic, it can be figured out based on emerging themes that these pupils need more of the emotional, psychological, and academic support. As parental involvement is absent to all these pupils, there were participants of the study who put more emphasis about getting support from parents. As Seepamore (2015) stated, children are affected by distance parenting, in spite of their ages or level of family care and support.

In the study by Essel and Owusu (2017) about the causes of students' stress, it was revealed that different factors cause stress among students. Relationship variables, contextual factors, academic considerations, and personal issues were among them.



Thus, in this research, academic support from teachers and respect coming from their classmates were being highlighted by the informants as what was being presented in the emerging themes. This simply implies that pupils without parents, despite of their situation needs respect and should not be bullied in school. On the part of doing their modules, the participants of this study also wished to have the helping hand of their teachers in doing the tasks related to schooling.

Moreover, with the situations that these pupils are into, government agency such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development could be of great help to administer and implement relevant programs and initiatives. They can provide rehabilitation services through its residential care facilities to improve their social functioning and promote the welfare of these pupils who are in great need of their help.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings, the following implications for practice are offered.

On Experiences Related to Schooling during Pandemic. The research informants relayed that the educational experiences they come across as pupils without parents were going to school while parents not around, quite fine but difficult without parents, always confined at home to answer modules, experiencing difficulty after parents' break-up, and always confined at home. As teachers and parent at the same time, acknowledging these difficulties would help them to be more optimistic with their individual lives especially when it comes to both academic and psychological aspects. As pupils without parents, they need to accept their situations and use it as a motivation to do well with their studies despite the absence of their parents.

On Experiences Related to Compliance of Requirements. The experiences related to compliance of requirements were finding it hard to answer without help, nobody to assist in the modules, grandparents assisting in answering the modules, and not allowed to out to answer the modules. These difficulties faced by pupils without parents is a wakeup call among educators as these need an immediate action. At school these pupils should be given special attention as these pupils suffer academically and emotionally. As facilitator of learning, teachers must be considerate into these types of learners when it comes to modules and school requirements. They should take note what these pupils were going through in schooling and in their lives and consider them as the center of the teaching and learning process because they badly needed it overcome the difficulties concerning schooling.

On Challenges and Struggles Encountered. This structured theme gives a clear view on the challenges and struggles encountered by pupils without parents in the middle of crisis. The significant emerging themes elicited were; nobody to help in

answering modules, really difficult without parents, and getting used into the situation. As a teacher, I know for a fact how these pupils struggle from the absence of their parents and the pandemic as well. The fact that they were having home learning without someone to assist, their situation might lead them to stop going to school or still attend schooling but perform poorly in their academics.

In addition, as what the informants highlighted, it is really difficult without parents. With this, teachers should take immediate action since these struggles are mostly on academics. As second parent of the pupils in the school, they should let the pupils feel that the school is a place where they can feel safe and comfortable. The school must be a place where pupils find the lacking part of their lives- the family.

On Difficulties Encountered in Answering Assignments and Projects. The specific themes unveiled after thematic analysis were difficulty in answering modules and painful but felt mothers' intention. As the result of this study revealed, difficulty in answering modules comes on top as almost all of the participants answered the same during the interview. As teachers in the academic community, this difficulties encountered by pupils calls for special attention. Speaking of assignments and projects, the immediate contact of these pupils are their teachers as they are the one giving the tasks to them. To this end, it is the high time that the school especially the teachers should be reminded that they are of great help in order to solve this problems that the pupils faced considering that they lack the assistance coming from their parents.

On Coping Strategies Employed in Addressing Challenges. The structured theme discusses the coping strategies in facing the challenges of going to school during pandemic the fact that they do not have parents. As what is being revealed in the study, the coping strategies were trying to enjoy self, continue to be in school, and ask help from relatives. Relatives of the participants must take part in promoting the well-being of these pupils as members of the family. While they tried to enjoy themselves in the middle of their situation, their relatives should be sensitive enough with their feelings. At least in this way, their problems about the absence of their parents will be lessened.

Moreover, the study also showed that pupils without parents still continue to go school. This is a manifestation that they were showing positive attitude in life despite of what they were going through. This coping strategy proved that there were pupils who still considered their situation as a challenge to study hard.

On Ways to Comply Assignments without Parents. Based on the responses of the participants, there were three emerging themes being generated on the ways in which pupils complied their assignments even without their parents. These were ask help from relatives, try to understand module, and ask help from stepmother. As findings had it, pupils without parents sought help from their relatives and some from their stepmother. This means that their



relatives must be understanding with them and should always extend their help to them knowing that they are still part of the family. Aside from that, it is in this way that these pupils will be guided in both academic and emotional. It is in this way wherein they can feel the love that they missed from their mother or father. While some pupils tried to understand and interpret the modules on their own, this is the right time for the teachers to do their part aside from by just merely handing the modules to the pupils. They should take their roles as teachers as these pupils badly needed it.

On Insights Gained from Experiences during Pandemic.

Different insights of the pupils without parents were exemplified as to the experiences they gained during pandemic. As one of the emerging themes revealed, life for these pupils become harder without their parents. This proved how important is the role of the parents for them. As they lack in this aspect, teachers and relatives of these pupils should take the role for them to go along with their studies and for them not to continuously feel the idea that they are not being loved. It was also found out in this study that pupils still continue to school despite the absence of parents and good thing was, they even strived more with their studies. This showed that some pupils were taking their situation positively.

On the Kind of Support the Participants Want from School and other people.

During the conduct of the study, the themes like to get support from mother, to discourage acts of bullying, for other pupils not to undergo similar experience, to get help to finish studies, to earn respect from classmates, and to be taught by teachers were the kind of support that the participants want from school and in the school community. To suffice them all these, the school create a program or initiatives that would cover all the support that these pupils need both in academic and emotional. The school should take into consideration that although these pupils are just a small percentage of the school, they are considered to part of the most vulnerable pupils in school and should not be taken for granted.

Implication for Future Research

In as much as the study was limited to the responses of the selected pupils without parents during pandemic in Baylo Elementary School, Monkayo, Davao de Oro; the following implications for practice are considered.

First, future research must be conducted by selecting other group of pupils without parents during pandemic coming from the same school.

Second, another research of the same focus may be conducted to another school of different location to investigate the same case on the experiences of pupils without parents during pandemic.

Third, a re-interview of the same research participants and informants may be conducted to see whether their understanding about their experiences have changed over a period of time.

Fourth, another research could be conducted to find out the understanding of the experiences among pupils without parents during the pandemic in other schools in the municipality and outside the municipality.

CONCLUSIONS

Parents have significant roles to play on their children's lives and have influenced on how they will turn out to be as a person. Most of the time, mothers will assist with the emotional part of a child's growth while fathers tend to have more of an impact on a child's physical characteristics aside from providing for the family. A child's development into a well-rounded person is considerably aided by having both parents around. Since neither parent must shoulder the entire burden of parenting a child, families with both parents present function better. Children who have both parents involved in their lives tend to feel more secure and at ease with themselves. With the experiences, struggles, and hopes of pupils without parents during the pandemic as the main focus of this research undertaking; the understanding of pupils, either both struggles and hopes were highlighted. The understanding of their cases were drawn from their experiences in school during the pandemic and at home.

There are numerous physical, emotional, and psychological effects that occur when parents abandon their child due to their own choice or passing. As the result of this research showed, pupils without parents during the pandemic suffered more in both academic and emotional aspects. This calls for an immediate action since these pupils are truly vulnerable and that they need help in order to free themselves from the possible negativities that life may bring to them.

As the risk of abuse, exploitation, and violence increases when a child is isolated from their parents or other family members, they have difficulties getting access to vital, life-saving services like education and healthcare especially in times of crisis. These are but just some of the struggles experienced by the pupils during pandemic aside from the emotional torture that the absence of their parent has brought to them. To extend a helping hand, it will be of great help if we show more concerns with them. The teachers, as said to be their second parents, can now be the first. They can be the best source of inspiration and encouragement as they take their part in shaping the lives of these pupils under their care.

As some of this pupils come from a broken family, while other do not have their parents and live with their immediate relatives; the school as a community can create programs and initiative in order to give assistance for these pupils. The school can tap stakeholders in the community to take actions in promoting the welfare and well-being of these pupils who are in great need of help when it comes to academic, financial, and emotional aspects. With this, they will have a positive outlook in life and will be motivated to study hard despite of the situation that they are into.



REFERENCES

1. Adumitroaie, E., & Dafinoiu, I. (2013). Perception of parental rejection in children left behind by migrant parents. *Revista de cercetare si interventie sociala*, 42, 191.
2. Amato, P. R., Kane, J. B., & James, S. (2011). Reconsidering the "Good Divorce". *Family Relations*, 60(5), 511-524.
3. Apriyanti (2020). *Distance Learning and Obstacles During COVID-19 Outbreak*. Mendely.
4. Arguillas, M. J. B., & Williams, L. (2010). The impact of parents overseas employment on educational outcomes of Filipino children. *International Migration Review*, 44(2), 300-319.
5. Asis, M. M. (2006). Living with migration: Experiences of left-behind children in the Philippines. *Asian population studies*, 2(1), 45-67.
6. Atwine, B., Cantor-Graae, E., & Bajunirwe, F. (2005). Psychological distress among AIDS orphans in rural Uganda. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(3), 555-564.
7. Atkinson, P., & Delamont, S. (2006). Rescuing narrative from qualitative research. *Narrative inquiry*, 16(1), 164-172.
8. Arora, A. K. & Srinivasan, R. (2020). *Impact of Pandemic COVID-19 on the Teaching-Learning Process: A study of Higher Education Teachers*.
9. Atwine, B., Cantor-Graae, E., & Bajunirwe, F. (2005). Psychological distress among AIDS orphans in rural Uganda. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(3), 555-564.
10. Barello, S. & Graffigna, G. (2020). Caring for health professionals in the covid-19 pandemic emergency: toward an "epidemic of empathy" in healthcare. *Front. Psychol.*, 11, 1431.
11. Barrett, S. (2020). Coronavirus on campus: College students scramble to solve food insecurity and housing challenges.
12. Blona, R. (2005). *Coping with stress in a changing world*. The McGraw Hills Companies. Inc.
13. Boccagni, P. (2012). Practising motherhood at a distance: retention and loss in ecuadorian transnational families. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(2), 261-277.
14. Burgess, S. & Sievertsen, H.H. (2020). *Schools, Skills, and learning: The impact of COVID-19 on education*.
15. Barello, S. & Graffigna, G. (2020). Caring for health professionals in the covid-19 pandemic emergency: toward an "epidemic of empathy" in healthcare. *Front. Psychol.*, 11, 1431.
16. Berinato, S. (2020). That discomfort you're feeling is grief. *Harvard Business Review*, 23(03), 2020.
17. Boccagni, P. (2012). Practising motherhood at a distance: retention and loss in ecuadorian transnational families. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(2), 261-277.
18. Cambridge University Press (2020). *Cambridge Dictionary*. Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/dictionary.cambridge.org/us/amp/english/preparedness>
19. Carling, J., Menjivar, C. & Schmalzbauer, L. (2012). Central themes in the study of transnational parenthood. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(2), 191-217.
20. Chib, A., Malik, S., Aricat, G. & Kadir, S. Z. (2014). Migrant mothering and mobile phones: negotiations of transnational identity. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 2(1), 73-93.
21. Contreras, R. & Griffith, D. (2012). Managing migration, managing motherhood: the moral economy of gendered migration. *International Migration*, 50(4), 51-66.
22. Carling, J., Menjivar, C. & Schmalzbauer, L. (2012). Central themes in the study of transnational parenthood. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(2), 191-217.
23. Chib, A., Malik, S., Aricat, G. & Kadir, S. Z. (2014). Migrant mothering and mobile phones: negotiations of transnational identity. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 2(1), 73-93.
24. Contreras, R. & Griffith, D. (2012). Managing migration, managing motherhood: the moral economy of gendered migration. *International Migration*, 50(4), 51-66.
25. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
26. UNICEF (2022). *Nutrition. Unlocking children's potential*. Retrieved at: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/what-we-do/nutrition>
27. UNESCO. 2011. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict*. Paris: UNESCO
28. United Nations. 2012. *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. New York: United Nations.
29. WHO (2023). *Explore a world of Health Data*. Retrived at: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-2-malnutrition>
30. David, R., Pellini, A., Jordan, K. & Philips, T. (2020). Education during the COVID-19 crisis. Opportunities and constraints of using Ed Tech in low-income countries.
31. Department of Education (2020). *Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in Light of the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency*. DepEd Order No. 12, s. of 2020.
32. DepEd Memorandum No. 98, s. 2020. *New Schedule and Additional Guidelines on the Conduct of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services for the Opening of Classes, School Year 2020-2021*.
33. Dooley, B. & Fitzgerald, A. (2015). My world survey: "National study of youth mental health in Ireland. Dublin: Headstrong and University College Dublin School of Psychology". *Medical Education*, 29.
34. Essadek, A. and Raybeyron, T. (2020). Mental Health of French students during the covid-19 pandemic. 277, 392-393.
35. Essel, G. & Owusu, P. (2017). Causes of students' stress, its effects on their academic success, and stress management by students. Master's thesis, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, Finland).
36. Felitti, V.J., & Anda, R. F. (2010). The relationship of adverse childhood experiences to adult health, well-being, social function, and health care. In R. Lanius, E. Vermetten, & C. Pain (Eds.), *The effects of early life trauma on health and disease: The hidden epidemic*. Cambridge, USA: Cambridge University Press.
37. Fura, D. L. & Negash, S. D. (2020). A study on the living experiences of people during the Covid-19 pandemic: the case of Wolisso town home-stayed university students. *Journal of Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 10 (5).
38. Fink, Anne Sofie (2000). *The Role of the Researcher in the Qualitative Research Process. A Potential Barrier to Archiving Qualitative Data [69 paragraphs]*. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(3), Art. 4, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs000344>
39. Fura, D. L. & Negash, S. D. (2020). A study on the living experiences of people during the Covid-19 pandemic: the case of Wolisso town home-stayed university students. *Journal of Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 10 (5).
40. Gore, F., Bloem, P.J.N., Patton, G. C., Ferguson, J., & Joseph, V. (2014). *Global burden of disease in young people aged 10-24 years: a systematic analysis*. New York: Routledge, 18.
41. Guevarra, R. & Cimanés, R. (2017). Stress coping mechanism and its impact to their age among Senior High School students at Parañaque National High School-Baclaran. *International Journal for Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Field*, 3(7).
42. Heymann, J., Flores-Macias, F., Hayes, J.A., Kennedy, M., Lahaie, C. & Earle, A. (2009). *The impact of migration on the well-being of*



transnational families: new data from sending communities in Mexico.
Community, Work & Family, 12(1), 91-103.

43. Heymann, J., Flores-Macias, F., Hayes, J.A., Kennedy, M., Lahaie, C. & Earle, A. (2009). *The impact of migration on the well-being of transnational families: new data from sending communities in Mexico.* *Community, Work & Family, 12(1), 91-103.*