CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS IN THE NEW NORMAL AND PUBLIC SCHOOL INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTATION IN CLUSTER 9 DIVISION OF TANAUAN CITY

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this study was to determine the challenges encountered by junior high school parents and public school initiatives implementation in Cluster 9 Tanauan City. The study aimed to determine if there was a significant relationship between the two variables and to propose an action plan that helped in managing the challenges of the school's stakeholders. The study was descriptive-correlational research. The study selected 440 respondents through proportional stratified random sampling from junior high school parents of Tanauan City Integrated High School and Pantay Integrated High School. A two-part survey questionnaire was used to gather data. The study used a four-point Likert scale, simple mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to determine the variables' relationship. Upon analyzing the data, only parental distress showed a significant relationship between public school initiatives in terms of the physical environment and school health policy. An action plan to address the physical environment and school health policy was created to give directions on how schools could help minimize parental challenges during the new normal education system.

Keywords: new normal education system, school initiatives, parental challenge and stress, school administration

INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) wreaked havoc around the world affecting millions of lives. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus experienced mild to moderate respiratory illness and recovered without requiring special treatment. The best way to slow it down was to be well-informed about COVID-19 and how it is transmitted. Social distancing was one of the major solutions against COVID-19. With distancing, it changed a lot of things and one of those affected was the educational system. From the traditional face-to-face learning setup, schools needed to be shut down to lessen individuals who

fall victim to COVID-19. However, learners should continue to receive education during the pandemic. Thus, the New Normal System of Education was introduced.

In June 2020, the Department of Education released DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020 entitled "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency" as an action plan on how to continue the educational system in the Philippines. It provides modular distance learning and online distance learning as strategies on how to protect the health and safety of learners, teachers, school personnel, and school administration.

In Modular Distance Learning, modules are made by teachers with different tasks and learning activities based on the essential learning competencies. Learners answer the modules at home with the assistance of their teachers and parents. The modules are then retrieved from schools for the teachers to check and record.

In Online Distance Learning, instructions are given through online classes, video recordings, video conferencing, or any other audio/visual technological medium. It made sure that learners could receive education without the need for physical presence. Learners were assisted by their teachers and parents during this time.

In both learning modalities, most of the learner's time is spent at home. This is where the role of the parents is intensified. Unlike before, when the learning is mostly managed by their child advisers at school, they have more responsibility to oversee and assist their child during this challenging time. The students need to be guided properly by their parents in making sure all activities are completed and submitted on time.

In providing such added support for their children during homeschooling, parents are faced with added challenges in their everyday lives. In one article published by UNICEF (2020), most parents endured added stress emotionally and financially during a pandemic. Since parents juggled work and support to their children, they were stressed about the added workload, and to add handling bad behavior towards schools by their children. Parents were also financially stressed since they needed to provide additional investments in technology like the internet, gadgets, and other online platforms. Sari and Maningtyas (2020) mentioned that the increased parental involvement had generated additional stress for parents and conflicts with their children.

To assist parents in coping with such stress, the school administration provided school initiatives. Schools had prepared appropriate measures during this challenging time to ensure that education would not be compromised, and parents would be properly guided along the way.

Bhamani (2020) cited that teachers' sending daily reminders and involving the parents in the learning process were effective ways to address challenges encountered by the latter.

Schools were also expected to spread awareness of COVID-19. This helped in preventing transmission of the virus among parents who were responsible for retrieving and distributing modules. Innovations in learning were not always convenient, especially to those parents who were technologically challenged, schools that went the extra mile in making sure how technology works and how to handle such provided great assistance to lessen parental burden during the new normal.

The purpose of the study was to identify the challenges the parents were currently battling. Since the researcher started teaching, she realized that the parents' role was as big as the teachers' role. With the added responsibility to the parents, this study aimed to know what challenges the parents were encountering and how the school administration could help these parents to lessen the stress this brought upon them. And with great teamwork of parents, teachers, and the school administration, it would greatly impact the learners' achievements. This was the concept on which the study will be anchored.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to shed light on the following.

- 1. To identify the level of challenges encountered among junior high school parents during the new normal education system.
- 2. To determine the level of implementation of public school initiatives addressing the challenges encountered by junior high school parents during the new normal education.
- 3. To discover if there is a significant relationship between the extent of challenges encountered among junior high school parents and the level of implementation of public school initiatives to address these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

In order to know the relationship of challenges encountered by Junior High School

parents in the new normal and public school initiatives implementation in Cluster 1 Tanauan City, the researcher utilized the quantitative method and descriptive correlational design of research.

Siedlecki (2020) defined descriptive research as a research design that involves observing and describing the phenomenon without influencing the phenomenon. It involves the collection and analysis of data about people or materials with the intention to compare existing and required standards and to identify information that is likely to be used to improve the existing condition of people. Correlational research was defined by Mcleod (2020) as a study that sought to understand the association between two things in a larger sample. It involved measuring the relationship between two variables.

The descriptive-correlational research was a great fit for this study since there was a need to determine the measure of challenges and school initiative factors. It also helped in determining any significant relationship between the two variables. And ultimately identified the most effective school initiative to be used to handle parent's challenges.

This study was conducted in schools that belonged to Cluster 9 of the Division of Tanauan City. Cluster 9 of Tanauan consisted of two schools namely, Tanauan City Integrated High School (TCIHS) located at Brgy. Trapiche 1, Tanauan City and Pantay Integrated High School (PIHS) located at Brgy. Pantay Matanda, Tanauan City. These were deliberately selected by the proponent of this study since she saw that it was beneficial for her cluster to conduct such a study in her area of work.

Tanauan City Integrated High School had a total of 68 sections in Grades 7-10 with 54 students each and Pantay Integrated High School had a total of eight sections in Grades 7-10 with 50 students each. The population of the respondents totaled 4072 pairs of parents. The respondent pair only received one survey questionnaire. Proportional Stratified random sampling was used to represent the entire population since it is currently divided into four grade levels as strata. 60% of the sample were from Tanauan City

Integrated High School and 40% of the sample were from Pantay National High School. G* power software determined that 440 respondents would be needed for the study. This study used two-tailed t-tests with an effect size of 0.5, an alpha level of 0.95, a power of 0.95, and an allocation ratio of 1 that computed 440 respondents on the minimum.

Since proportional stratified random sampling was used in the study, 60% of the 440 respondents were from TCIHS and a total of 264 respondents were then divided into four strata represented by grade levels. The remaining 40% of the respondents were from PIHS that totaled 176 respondents, which were also divided into four grade levels.

Atwo-part survey questionnaire utilized in the study. The survey questionnaire was printed and was distributed amongst the parents during module distribution/retrieval. The First Part was used to determine the extent of challenges encountered by Junior High School parents. Part 2 established the effectiveness of public school initiatives to address the challenges encountered by Junior High School parents in the New Normal. The variables that were applied in this research include those cited in the study by Spinelli et al. (2020) which used the Parenting-Stress Index Form and those enumerated by Kwon et al. (2020) which compromised the Prevention Safety Belt Strategy. Parts 1 and 2 of the survey questionnaires used of 4-point Likert Scale ranging from four (4) as the highest and one (1) as the lowest. The questionnaire was sourced from different studies related to this topic and was validated prior to its distribution.

To validate the survey questionnaire, the researcher sought assistance from different experts such as the dean of the graduate school, research adviser, statistician, principal, school heads, and head teachers. The said experts also checked the clarity and understandability of the questionnaire for the targeted respondents. Any corrections and suggestions were taken into consideration and were added to the final draft of the questionnaire.

A reliability test was conducted to ensure the validity of the survey questionnaire used in this



study. The reliability was established by professors in LCBA before the conduct of the study. A pilot test for Cronbach's Alpha for the reliability of items commenced after. For independent variables, the reliability tests showed acceptable (.730) results for parental distress, good (.876) results for parent-child dysfunctional interaction, and excellent results (.936) for difficult children. On the other hand, the reliability test for the dependent variable which was the implementation of public-school initiatives showed a good (.882) result.

To validate the content of the questionnaire, it was presented to the four (4) professors at graduate school and one (1) school principal wherein their suggestions for improvement were considered. In addition to the contribution of the validators, the Score-Content Validity Index (S-CVI) was computed, and the results equated to 100%.

A letter of request to conduct the study in different schools was sent to the school division Superintendent through an HR officer to grant permission for such conduct. Upon approval, the letter was sent to the principals of TCIHS and PIHS along with another letter requesting a specific date to conduct the study. Afterward, the Junior High School advisers were informed about the research and were asked for their assistance in the distribution of the survey questionnaire to the parents. The answered questionnaires were then collected by the researcher on the next day upon receiving a message from its distributor. The data were tabulated and analyzed.

The ethical concerns were followed by the researcher as those who were considered throughout this paper. Data Privacy Act of 2012 was strictly followed in this study. Consent was asked wherein confidentiality will be assured. All the necessary details were explained by the researcher for them to understand their role upon the completion of the study. There was no data sought that could exhibit participants' direct identity like names. telephone numbers. addresses, national identification area, or numbers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This provides a summary of findings between the two variables of the study, conclusions, and recommendations based on the data gathered and presented.

1. The extent of challenge encountered among Junior high school parents in New Normal in terms of Parental Distress

This had a composite mean of 1.54. It implies that Junior high school parents in New Normal did not encounter challenges in terms of parental distress. Their child had caused more problems in their relationship gathered the highest mean since parents were more sensitive to their child's actions towards their relationship. A study conducted by Ongoren (2021) cited those parents who were sensitive, concerned, and attentive towards how their child behaves had positive parent-child relationships.

The assessment of the challenges encountered by junior high school parents during the New Normal in terms of Parental Distress was supported by May and Hoerl (2022), where parents had remained resilient during the pandemic and found other ways out of difficult circumstances. Parents reflected that optimism was the best solution to minimize their stress. Agaton and Cueto (2021) concluded that parents understood the need to transition to a new normal that helps in coping with challenges.

2. The extent of challenge encountered among Junior high school parents in the New Normal in terms of Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction

This had a general assessment of 1.56 and was interpreted as Never Encountered. This implies that Junior high school parents in New Normal have maintained strong relationships with their children throughout the pandemic. Azubuike and Aina (2020) cited that since the pandemic began, parents were now taking on a more support-oriented role by guiding their children during homeschooling which consequently favored the assessment of the challenges

encountered by parents in terms of parent-child dysfunctional interaction.

The indicator with the lowest mean that showed that students appreciated the efforts given by their parents during New Normal was backed up in an article by Packman (2020) where she cited that 53% of parents surveyed felt more engaged in helping their child during the lockdown and have maximized to build strong bonds because of having more time together at home.

3. The extent of challenge encountered among Junior high school parents in New Normal in terms of Difficult Child

This had a general assessment of 1.55 and was interpreted as Never Encountered. This implies that Junior high school parents in New Normal have used different strategies to have their children behave and be disciplined during the pandemic.

The American Academy of Pediatrics surveyed that positive parenting practices were the most common among the strategies in 2021. Positive strategies were defined as explaining to children that their actions were wrong, placing them in timeout, sending them to their room, or distracting them with new activities. These helped in making sure children remained disciplined and supported the general assessment of these challenges to not be encountered.

4. The Level of implementation of public school initiatives to address the challenges encountered by junior high school parents in the New Normal in terms of the Physical Environment

The general assessment was 3.46 and interpreted as Fully Implemented. This suggests that Junior high school parents notice the preparation made by the schools in Cluster 9 Tanauan City. Controlling the traffic of students, parents, personnel and others who went in and out of the school played a huge role in lessening the challenges encountered during the new normal. Clean comfort rooms are highly implemented however, it receives the lowest mean. During the new normal, students were not tasked to clean rooms to ensure their safety. This

is delegated to the school facility which was outnumbered by the number of comfort rooms they needed to maintain.

This was supported by UNESCO in an article published in 2020 which stated that an inviting physical environment that guaranteed the safety and well-being of students helped parents in deciding to let their child attend the school. It was important for the parents to see that the school went beyond the minimum standards for health and safety.

The Level of implementation of public school initiatives to address the challenges encountered by junior high school parents in the New Normal in terms of Social Environment

This had a general assessment of 3.49 and was interpreted as Fully Implemented. Junior high school parents show great satisfaction with interacting with school personnel in general. This implies that even though there was social distancing amongst everyone, the school personnel remained sociable and always tended to junior high school parents' needs. Teachers being approachable and kind to others received the lowest mean that constituted different interpretations of parents towards different teachers' personalities.

Haller and Novita (2021) indicated that cooperation between school personnel and families, including good communication between teachers and parents are key elements to parental satisfaction with school.

6. The Level of implementation of public school initiatives to address the challenges encountered by junior high school parents in New Normal in terms of School Health Services

The general assessment was 3.51 and interpreted as Fully Implemented. This indicates that Junior high school parents know where the clinic and the alcohol sanitizers are due to the signage posted by the schools. This is related to physical environment which is mentioned above

where parents remain vigilant in checking their surroundings during school visits.

A study conducted by Zhan, et al. (2022) explored parents' attitudes towards school preparedness after the pandemic. It showed that 49% of parents, which composed the majority wanted to let their children go back to school if the school can cater to everyone's health concerns. The parents factored in checking whether the school health facilities were sufficient for their needs. Parents encountered problems in using the clinic due to the huge number of individuals the clinic needed to assist which supported the lowest mean in this survey.

7. The Level of implementation of public school initiatives to address the challenges encountered by junior high school parents in New Normal in terms of Individual Health Skills and Activities

The general assessment was 3.49 and interpreted as Fully Implemented. Ceka and Murati (2020) exposed that teachers' healthcare and hygienic conditions played a huge role for the learners to go back to school since this provided an appropriate physical and social environment to them. This suggested that Junior high school parents appreciated the efforts of the teachers to implement health protocol though some parents were not asked to wear their facemasks properly due to the huge traffic of people that needed to be guided by each teacher.

8. The Level of implementation of public school initiatives to address the challenges encountered by junior high school parents in New Normal in terms of School Health Policy

This had a general assessment of 3.47 and was interpreted as Fully Implemented. This shows that Junior high school in cluster 9 tracks the different people going in and out of their premises. This is noticed by junior high school parents and helps them understand the importance of public safety in schools during the new normal.

In research conducted from different schools in Nepal by Shrestha, et al. (2019), they found that school health policy aimed to provide timely support and preventive measure to improve learner's health. Parents or stakeholders played significant roles in its implementation and success. Parents' perceptions of its effectiveness were highly considered since this policy also impacted their community. This supported the lowest mean of 3.32 which suggested that parents were keen to what policy was ineffective.

 The Level of implementation of public school initiatives to address the challenges encountered by junior high school parents in New Normal in terms of Community Network

The general assessment was 3.52 and interpreted as Fully Implemented. This implies that Junior high school parents appreciate when teachers message their students about health protocol that need to be followed when going to school just to over-communicate how important their health and safety is to the school. Communication becomes the key to making sure that everyone is directed to safety during the pandemic. Over-communication reminds the school of the dos and don'ts during the pandemic.

Sison (2020) cited that reopening classes calls for community effort and not just schools ensuring the safety of students and personnel. It played a vital role in communicating health policy updates from schools and local government.

10. Significant relationship between the extent of challenges encountered among Junior High School parents in the New Normal and the level of implementation of public school initiatives to address these challenges

There was a significant relationship between parental distress and physical environment and a significant relationship between parental distress and school health policy. As shown their probability values of .038 and .012 respectively, were all less than the level of significance at .05.

On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between the extent of challenges encountered among Grade 7 parents in New Normal and the level of implementation of public school initiatives to address these challenges. The probability values were greater than the level of significance at .05.

It implies that the higher the parental distress, the higher the implementation of the physical environment and school health policy. Parents are focused and wary of their physical surroundings and school health policy once they are stressed. This means school personnel need to put more effort in maintaining school facilities and implementing their health policy.

Adams (2021) Stated that parents' anxiety or worry has increased during the pandemic. During this time, parents were keen on disorganization. Parents were able to point out things that were not in order. Since the physical environment and school health policy were things that they could observe, their stability or order was necessary to impact parents' challenges.

After an in-depth analysis of the data collected, the following are the findings of the study in summarized form.

11. The Extent of Challenges Encountered among Junior High School Parents in terms of:

Parental Distress had a general assessment of 1.54 interpreted as Never Encountered.

Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction had a general assessment of 1.54 interpreted as Never Encountered.

Difficult Child had a general assessment of 1.55 interpreted as Never Encountered.

12. The Level of Implementation of Public School Initiatives to Address the Challenges Encountered by Junior High School Parents in the New Normal in terms of:

Physical Environment had a general assessment of 3.46 interpreted as Fully Implemented.

Social Environment had a general assessment of 3.49 interpreted as Fully Implemented.

School Health Services had a general assessment of 3.51 interpreted as Fully Implemented.

Individual Health Skills and Activities had a general assessment of 3.49 interpreted as Fully Implemented.

School Health Policy had a general assessment of 3.47 interpreted as Fully Implemented.

Community Network had a general assessment of 3.52 interpreted as Fully Implemented.

13. The Test of Significant Relationship between Extent of Challenges Encountered among Junior High School Parents in New Normal and Level of Implementation of Public School Initiatives to address these Challenges

There was a significant relationship between parental distress and physical environment and significant relationship between parental distress and school health policy. As evidenced by their probability values of .038 and .012 respectively, were all less than the level of significance at .05.

On the other hand, there was no significant relationship between parental distress and: social environment (.950), school health services (.958), individual health skills and activities (.624), and community network (.319). No significant relationship also existed between parent-child dysfunctional interaction and: physical environment (.927), social environment (.515), School Health Services (.099), Individual Health Skills and Activities (.956), School Health Policy (.069), and Community Network (.440). There was also no significant relationship

between difficult child and: Physical Environment (.440), and Social Environment (.232). The probability values were all greater than the level of significance at .05.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above-mentioned findings of the study, the following conclusions have been obtained:

The Junior High School Parents of Cluster 9 Tanauan City remain strong towards challenges during the new normal education. Parents have never encountered the listed stress factors and remain optimistic during the pandemic. It is evident that parents can deliver what is needed for their children to continue learning during the new normal. They can maintain a sense of discipline, have a work-life balance, and be able to support their children.

That the public school initiatives are successfully implemented in schools in Cluster 9 Tanauan City. Junior High School Parents confirm the initiatives are highly implemented. Public schools focus on community networks that led to information campaigns through different platforms. Parents know and appreciate the public school initiatives conducted by schools in Cluster 9 Tanauan City.

The challenges encountered by junior high school parents in Cluster 9 Tanauan City in terms of Parental Distress have a significant relationship with public school initiatives in terms of Physical Environment and School Health Policy while other initiatives have no significant relationship with the rest of parental challenges. Thus, distressed parents are more aware of their physical environment and social health policy. They are keen to remember details and are more appreciative of these two school initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The outlined findings and finalized conclusions, the following recommendations are highly encouraged:

The parents may share with their community what they have exercised in the

household during the new normal. For them to inspire other families on how to remain resilient and optimistic towards the challenges they encounter being a parent in the new normal education system.

The school administration may continue with the school initiatives they are practicing and share with other schools how they effectively establish said practice to help in managing the school and promoting health and safety to students and stakeholders.

The teachers may work together with parents and guardians to create a better learning experience considering the safety of the learners. Hence, redefining how they teach from the traditional to the new normal education system.

The school administration needs to focus on making sure the school remains clean and that health policies are implemented all the time. The school administration may use the proposed action plan as a guide on how to manage their physical environment and school health policy.

Future researchers of this topic may include the perspectives of teachers and school heads regarding their school initiative and determine whether the parents of their students view them the same way or not.

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Gumabay has been working at Tanauan City Integrated High School as a Teacher 1 since 2018. In addition to helping to establish and enhance the educational programs at the school, this position probably entails instructing pupils in her area of expertise.

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